

Latin America/Brazil

Why Are We in CONAPE?

The results, so far, of CONAPE have been disappointing, with highly disparate workers interests being represented, including NGOs, trade unions and associations

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CONAPE, Brazil's National Council of Fisheries and Aquaculture is a consultative collegiate body, integral to the basic structure of the President of the Republic's Special Secretariat for Aquaculture and Fisheries (SEAP/PR). Its role is to review the formulation of public policies, promote debate between different levels of government and organized civil society, and develop and support aquaculture and fisheries activities in Brazil.

CONAPE consists of 54 members who represent government and civil society. Workers (15 seats), the industry (10 seats) and researchers are represented. Civil society organizations are not mentioned per se, as they are considered to be covered in the three categories. The workers' sector is composed of such a wide variety of interests that it is impossible to come to any common position.

In the SEAP/PR, fishworkers are represented by the following:

- The National Fishworkers Movement (Monape, two seats);
- Consejo Pastoral de Pescadores (CPP, two seats);
- National Women Fishworkers Platform (Articulación Nacional de Mujeres Pescadoras, ANP);
- Landless Rural Workers Movement (MST);
- Movement of those Affected by Dams (MAB);
- Movement of Professional Artisanal Fishermen (MPPA);



- The National Confederation of Fishermen and Fishfarmers (CNPA, two seats);
- National Confederation of Aquatic and Air Transport Workers in Fishing and Ports (CONTTMAF);
- National Federation of Aquatic and Related Transport Workers (FNTTAA, two seats);
- The Federation of Fishery Engineer Associations of Brazil (FAEP-BR); and
- The Brazilian Co-operatives Organization (OCB).

Notably, of the worker's organizations represented, the National Women Fishworkers Platform (ANP) is the only one that purports to represent the interests of women fishworkers.

The first meeting of SEAP/PR, during 27 -29 March 2007 in Brasilia, aimed to set objectives and define how the Council should function, but it left many disappointed. It failed to establish working groups, avoided providing an overarching perspective for fisheries and aquaculture in Brazil, and fragmented the agenda of the Council into too many areas.

Civil society has a role in SEAP/PR in defending the dignity and culture of fishing in Brazil, where food sovereignty and the environment provide the basic

pillars that support the fisher people, fishing communities and Brazilian families that depend on artisanal fishing and aquaculture.

There is clearly much work to do.

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