

Yemaya

No. 12

ICSF's NEWSLETTER ON GENDER AND FISHERIES

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From the Editor

Dear Friends,

Greetings from ICSF! This issue has a special focus on women in European fisheries. We carry a report of a meeting organized by the European Commission (EC) to discuss ways in which to enhance the role of women in fishing communities. As is noted, this was the first time such a meeting has been organized by the EC.

It is positive to note that there is finally recognition being given to women's roles in the fisheries, not only as workers in fish processing, marketing, aquaculture and fishing, but also to their support roles within the family and industry. But, as women pointed out at the meeting, more recognition is needed of the roles women play within the family and community, especially in fostering community links and sustaining its social and cultural fabric.

It may well be asked why words like community, cultural fabric and social cohesion figure in a fisheries debate. As the importance of institutional factors, in the face of increasing stress on fisheries resources in various parts of the world, is increasingly realized, the answer to this question becomes, in a sense, obvious. It is becoming evident that where cohesive and strong community institutions exist/ are fostered, it is easier to sustain/ set up effective and equitable management systems for sustainable management of fisheries resources. It is also clear that institutions become even more vital in times of crisis.

Can we then afford to disregard these aspects or to disregard the role women

play in sustaining families and community institutions, in promoting social links and cohesion? And especially in a sector like fisheries where it is well known that men spend a large part of their working life on sea, leaving women to handle much of all else?

At another level, where women have been given spaces within decision-making processes, they have brought in a community perspective into the fisheries debate. Women have not only extended support to issues raised by fishermen and highlighted issues of relevance to themselves as workers in the sector; more significantly, they have raised issues that concern and impact on the quality of life in the community as a whole, be it education, health, decent housing, social security or drinking water. This should not come as any surprise given that the well-being of the family and community are very much women's responsibility.

Women have thus brought in a perspective that puts improving quality of life and fisheries-based livelihoods as the bottom line. Technical and ecological ('fishery') aspects are seen as inextricably linked to socioeconomic ('non-fishery') aspects, as they surely are. There is clearly a case for adopting a perspective that recognizes and prioritizes these interconnections and that ensures that both women and men are given their rightful place in decision-making processes.

And finally, we would like to remind you that we look forward to receiving articles for *Yemaya* No. 13 by 15 July 2003.



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European Union

A new world ?

Woman's roles in European fisheries are finally given attention, but there is still a long way to go to give women the recognition they deserve

By Cornelia Quist, a member of ICSF and contact person for VinVis

A two-day conference to discuss ways to enhance the role of women in the fisheries sector of Europe under the newly reformed Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) was held on 23 and 24 January 2003 in Brussels. It was the first time in its history that the European Commission (EC) organized a conference on this subject. The conference was also unique in that a majority of the women participants came from fishercommunities themselves.

“This is a new world”, were the first words that escaped from the mouth of Commissioner Franz Fischler, responsible for Agriculture, Fisheries and Rural Development, when he was confronted with the around 150 women that were gathered for the conference. The women were from the fisheries sector of all the Member States of the EU. There was also a small delegation from Norway and Iceland, which are not EU members.



Launching the conference, Commissioner Franz Fischler said that women's roles remain little known, let alone understood. He said: “Recent statistics show that you participate actively in fish processing, in the marketing of fish products, in aquaculture and also in fishing. Around 84,000 women are employed in these

sectors, representing 22 per cent of all employment in the fishing industry.”

“Woman's activities in the family and in the industry support sides of fisheries are usually unpaid and often unrecognized. These activities become especially crucial in times of crisis when you are the key to keeping communities and families together. This is why we must take into account the role of women in studies and management decisions concerning the fishing industry.”

Mr Fischler reminded the participants that encouraging stakeholder participation in the European Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) is one of the crucial aspects of the CFP reform adopted by the European Council last December. The new CFP includes long-term management goals in fisheries, limits fishing effort, proposes to end by 2004 all public aid for the renewal of the fleet, and proposes more harmonized controls across the EU. These changes will benefit the industry and the coastal areas concerned, said Mr Fischler.

Ms. Rosa Miguelez Ramos, the vice-chairperson of the Fisheries Committee of the European Parliament, was the second to address the conference. She said that despite the fact that women have always worked and made their contribution to the sector, the family, and the community, they always have been invisible and unrecognized. It is time, she said, to change this situation by giving women access to decision-making, formal education, training and inputs for economic activities. She regretted that this conference was only organised after the CFP reform was adopted by the European Parliament and that women from the fisheries sector were not given a larger role in the CFP. She concluded that the Commission should now show it is serious about women's participation and that one way of doing this is by encouraging women's networking at the European level.

The first day of the Conference was dedicated to the *Study on the role of women in the fisheries sector* carried out for the European Commission by the consultancy group Macalister Elliot and Partners Ltd (see http://europa.eu.int/comm/fisheries/doc_et_publ/pub_en.htm). The results of this study were presented by Mr Jorgen Holmquist, Director, EU Directorate General for Fisheries. He said that the study gave a surprisingly homogenous picture of the role and position of women in fisheries in all member states of the EU. It showed that women's occupational participation in fisheries is the highest in the fish processing industry and thereafter, to a lesser extent, in aquaculture. The

occupational participation of women in capture fisheries was shown to be very little everywhere. The study revealed that woman's role in capture fisheries is, in particular, that of the collaborating spouse, who is involved in activities such as bookkeeping and keeping contact with the auction, bank, and authorities. It also showed that the biggest obstacles for women to participate professionally in fisheries activities are the responsibility for childcare, none or limited access to decision-making within fisher organisations or trade unions and lack of prospects for better jobs or career in the sector. It showed clearly that woman's work in fisheries is generally unpaid or underpaid.

Mr Holmquist then invited the women participants to give their reactions, to which the women responded in large number. Here follows an impression of the responses:

- Many women commented that the study does not reflect what women's roles really are. They said that the study was mainly based on rather poor benchmark data and very little on interviews with women in fisheries. Women were also critical that, in general, the study was rather pessimistic and that no success stories of women's involvement in fisheries were included.
- Women also said that the approach of the study limited women's role in fisheries to women's work in the sector only. They pointed out that women generally also play a very important role in communication and social cohesion within the fishercommunity. Without woman's support, there is no future for coastal fisheries-dependent communities. More attention should have been given to women's potential roles as representatives of the interests of the sector and the community.
- Women also commented that women's roles in areas concerning safety and crew affairs were not sufficiently highlighted.
- Women from the inland fisheries sector were critical that their role was not given any attention in the study. In this sector, more women are seen in fish capture, they said.
- Women from the fish processing sector of Brittany (France) were alarmed that the study recommended that women workers be helped to exit the fish processing industry for jobs with better prospects. They said that fish processing

is mostly an old artisanal profession and that if this profession disappears, these artisanal skills also would be lost. They wondered why the recommendation was not to upgrade this work by improving the working conditions and the image of the work.

- Many women expressed their concern about the decline of small-scale fisheries, which had led to the disintegration of their communities as a result of economic distress, social problems and exodus of populations. They also were worried about the poor public image that exists about fisheries and they queried how the profession can be made more attractive. Women questioned why policy-makers are almost solely concerned with the technical and ecological aspects of fisheries and so little with the social and economic aspects.
- Women more than once called attention to the big environmental polluters of the sea. They said that the 'polluter pays' principle should be practiced and that fisherfamilies, who are the victim of serious environmental pollution, should be compensated. The practice of paying compensation years after an environmental disaster should be changed and immediate compensation should be provided.
- Women felt that it is of great importance for them to get access to organizations in fisheries (from local co-operatives to national organizations) and to be given a chance to participate in decision-making. It was suggested that women also should get representation in the Regional Advisory Councils that will be installed under the newly reformed Common Fisheries Policy (CFP).

Holmquist replied that he shared most of the concerns that were expressed by the women participants. He admitted that the study of women's roles in fisheries is incomplete, but said that it should be seen as a starting point to call attention to women's roles and to create spaces for women in fisheries.

On the second day of the conference the participants were given information on financial support available under various EU programmes of relevance to them. Unfortunately, there were an overload of presentations and too little opportunity for questions and discussion. It also became clear that access to these programmes remains dependent on the willingness and initiative of

the national governments of the EU Member States. And it has been the experience that most of these national governments are not aware of the opportunities to support women in fisheries or do not see the importance of it.

Reports of some projects that targeted women under an EU-funded programme for small-scale coastal fisheries development, were also presented. Some of these projects developed women's co-operatives or business and support networks. Some trained women in computer literacy, bookkeeping and marketing skills. Although these projects had proven to be successful, they were, in general, experimental in nature.

The attention of the participants picked up again when Holmquist began his concluding speech with the following observations:

- The CFP has an impact not only on those at sea, but also on those on land. It is, therefore, important not to leave out women anymore;
- It is clear that women lack access to information, training and resources;
- The Directorate General of Fisheries commits itself to actively supporting women's networking at the European level. To start with, initiatives will include a website and a mailbox;
- DG Fisheries will review working conditions in the fisheries sector and look into how to improve the image of the sector;
- DG Fisheries will pay more attention to the socio-economic aspects of fisheries;
- DG Fisheries is willing to promote the participation of women in the Regional Advisory Councils;
- Environmental pollution of the sea is an equally important concern for the EU Commission. They are, however, restricted in implementing stricter regulations and sanctions, because the Member States put other interests first;
- DG Fisheries will look into how to upgrade the study of women's roles in fisheries and how to follow up on this conference;
- Pressure will be exerted on Member States to pay better attention to the interests of women in fisheries, both at the local level as well as at the regional level.

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European Union/ The Netherlands

Their voices heard

Women from VinVis found the meeting on women in fisheries very interesting, if overwhelming

By Cornelie Quist, a member of ICSF and contact person for VinVis.

Six wives of fishermen from *VinVis*, the Women in Fisheries Network of the Netherlands, attended the EU conference on women's roles in fisheries.

It was their first time to participate in an event like this and they were rather overwhelmed by the formal and massive character of the conference. But all of them said that it had been a very important experience for them.

They found it very interesting and encouraging to hear about the experiences of other fisherwomen in Europe and about the importance of woman's roles in fisheries everywhere. They also learned a lot about EU programmes, although they felt inundated with information.



They also said that, earlier, the EU always had been something very abstract and far away. However, their direct interaction during the conference with high officials of the Commission, was an encouragement for both sides to promote women's role in fisheries.

The Dutch women also used the opportunity to approach Commissioner Fischler in person and to hand over to him a letter with issues concerning the women in fisheries of the Netherlands. And they were very happy that the Commissioner took time to speak with

them, showing his interest in their situation. The women attached great importance to the fact that their voices were being heard. They feel encouraged in their struggle for recognition.

The women felt, however, that the conference had given too little opportunity for women in fisheries to exchange among themselves. To be able to achieve something at the national level, they felt that strengthening women's organizations and networking was of first priority. They hoped that the commitment expressed by the Commission towards this would not remain empty words.

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European Union/ Spain

I collected oil from beaches...

An eyewitness account of the impact of the oil spill caused by the sinking of Prestige, on Galician coastal communities

Statement to the European Advisory Committee on Fisheries and Aquaculture (ACFA) by Cristina López Rodríguez, ECODESARROLLO GAIA, on 16 December 2002

Good Afternoon.

I come from Galicia, where for the last month I have been travelling along the entire coast from the mouth of the river Fo to the mouth of the river Miño.

I collected oil from beaches as a volunteer. I witnessed the desperation of fishermen who were gathering the oil on the sea with their bare hands.

I saw women discovering with their rakes that under the layers of oil there was a layer of sand, and, lower still, another layer of oil.

I witnessed directly the black tide. I attended meetings, discussions, demonstrations, gatherings of silent protest, and actions to claim rights. The Galician people have not thrown in the towel, but they need help.

I met with women whose work ties them directly to the sea—the shellfish gatherers—and with women whose work is indirectly related to the sea—fishermen's wives, net makers, and women in general. I spoke with women in the ports, in their houses, on the beaches, in the street.

There is enormous gloom and mind-boggling uncertainty about the future. Disgust and fear are widespread. But it does not seem to me that this is causing people to give up. They must move on.

In areas where fishing is banned support is being provided. Where there is no ban, the situation is even more difficult because fish is difficult to sell.

It is all very well to talk about plans to rehabilitate the environment, and about regeneration to speed up biological processes (about cleaning up, plantations, seeding etc.) or about plans to promote Galician seafood or about compensation.

But there is no work for shellfish gatherers. Young people are having to look for work far from home. That the Galician fishery sector is facing a widespread crisis is not in doubt.

It is obvious that we have on our hands a major social crisis, impacting on the Galician population in general, and on women in particular. It is affecting women who are shellfish gatherers, women whose work depends on fishing, women in general from the fishing community and women who sustain the family structure in the Galician fishing communities

We must insist that the role of women in Galicia, now more than ever, is made plain to see. Now that they have to overcome a new obstacle. Now that they see the structure of their lives and the structure and cohesion that holds their families together, falling apart. We are facing a major social impact that must be dealt with.

What is needed now is an exhaustive study on the current situation in Galicia—a social report produced with a gender perspective. That makes visible the needs, proposals and opinions of women who live both directly and indirectly from the sea. That takes into account proposals to increase the measures provided to meet social needs.

Even if the environmental damage has already been done, now is the time to deal with the social problems that we are becoming aware of through the drama we are living in.

Now is the moment to recognize the role of women and to provide them with the support measures needed to mitigate these deplorable events.

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Latin America/ Chile

Women count here

In the indigenous Huilliche community women are socially, politically and economically active

**By Claudia Meneses Z and Maria Teresa López,
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Historically, coastal communities in the large island of Chiloe have been interacting closely with the marine and coastal ecosystem. It is important to emphasize this at a time when the country is prioritizing the modernization of public services, promoting production and seeking to give an image of being part of the outside world, and, as part of this process, is mooted the construction of a bridge over the Chacao canal that will join Chiloe with the mainland (the Bicentennial Project).



The indigenous Huilliche communities have survived the onslaught of modernization, making use of the sea and establishing themselves in coastal settlements where they have freely developed the cultural model of the *campesino* household.

These communities prefer an open access regime to fishery resources, a regime which for decades has provided them with a free source of food and income from the sea. This has also attracted large migration towards the coastal strip.

A recent study, undertaken in 2001, in Quellon district (Lat42°50' to 43°40') shows that the way of life in

rural areas combines work on the land with coastal fishing. It also shows that some 80 per cent of the population are of Huilliche ethnicity with low levels of formal education.

Today profound changes are taking place in the regulatory framework for fisheries development, the impact of which has not been fully evaluated. The expanding use of the coastal fringe for industrial fisheries, aquaculture, salmon farming, tourism, urban expansion, along with the gradual depletion of resources, has jeopardized the future of fishing and the quality of life of fishermen and fisherwomen in the district and in the island.

One can observe a deep sense of shared crisis. Local organizations (independent *sindicatos* or workers' unions) recognize the need to develop their own strategies for effective reconversion and diversification of productive activities, with a better use of natural resources and adequate integration into the market and other formal systems within society.

Quellon is a district which, until recently, had no facilities to complete basic education. As a consequence a large proportion of fishermen and fisherwomen do not have the required eight years of schooling needed to register as an artisanal fisher. However, with the unconditional help of professionals dedicated to rural development, they are looking for alternative ways to overcome this problem through special adult education programmes.

In Quellon district, about 13 *sindicatos* have been formed and several proposals and projects are being elaborated. Of the 13 *sindicatos* in the area, 10 are rural and three urban. Membership in each *sindicato* varies from between 25 to 160 persons. It is noteworthy that 10 of these have significant participation of women, ranging from 35 to 45 per cent on an average.

All the organizations have legal status and a strong bias towards the Huilliche ethnicity. All organizations show high levels of participation with members and/ or representatives carrying out in equal measure their rights and responsibilities.

Currently, with the help of Conapach, the national fishworker organization in Chile, a programme of adult education is being carried out in Quellon in three rural and one urban *sindicato*. The effort is to study gender equity not only in the education project but also in the context of sustainable development, incorporating social, cultural, political and economic aspects.

The presence of women in the organizations is something typical and cultural in the rural artisanal fisheries sector of the district. This, in part, is explained by the large concentration of ethnic Huilliche, where it is common to find women carrying out the most varied activities—as collectors, fishers, shellfish divers, seaweed and filter-feeding (bivalve) mollusc cultivators etc. Nor is it odd for these women to take on management responsibilities within the steering committees.

Research is needed on the important role that Huilliche culture and gender have played in helping put in place management strategies for the environmental conservation of the wetlands (Huilidad and Compu). Thus, for example, in harvesting the *gracilaria* beds, some mixed *sindicatos* (men and women) in the area have established self-imposed closed seasons, extracting seaweed only for four days per month, during the lowest tides.

Moreover a gender perspective promotes a better understanding about what is happening today in the rural *sindicatos*. These *sindicatos* are compiling background information to identify areas available for managing and exploiting benthic resources in the Quellon District, a pre-requisite step prior to applying for Management Areas as such. In the wetland area of Huilidad, in Compu, and in the island of Chaullin, thanks to the intervention of the team from the National Professional Services (2001), a plan was developed for a zone where there is no other concession and where there are benthic resources of interest.

It is worth pointing out that in such cases, each organization funds the work of the team of professional advisers (four people) with its own income, using members' contributions. The organization also provides the vessel, fuel and transport and participates in the visits that define the most productive area. The organization also provides suggestions for the preparation of the report that will enable them to formally adopt a Management Area.

Today several *caletas* in Quellon have requests being processed by the Fisheries Subsecretariat to undertake base-line studies to identify, through a process of sampling, the location and quantity of benthic species to be managed. Following this they will develop a management and exploitation plan of the area that constitutes the Management and Exploitation Area. It is at this stage, which lasts for four years, that the level of conservation needed for managing the resource and

its productive potential is realized, and where the Huilliche women take on a key role in the control and monitoring of resources. At the level of the government, in the Programme of Improved Management (PMG), it is recommended that “gender equity is applied in the Management Areas of the country”.

It is hoped the women from the coastal fringe in the South of the island of Chiloe, who, thanks to the influence of their Huilliche ethnicity, will design a work programme that will provide indicators and information not only about productive activities in the Management Areas, but also about its natural capital (inventory of species), the state of the productive ecosystem, the division of labour by gender and aspects such as control over and benefits from the resource (economic and political).

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Africa/ Tanzania

What next?

Women are constantly struggling to retain a role in the export-oriented fisheries of Lake Victoria

By Modesta Medard, Researcher at the Tanzania Fisheries Research Institute, Mwanza, Tanzania. This article is based on her M Phil dissertation.

Fisheries globalization is transforming the structure of markets and, with this, gender relationships. Social, political and economic processes now operate locally *and* globally. Changes in Lake Victoria's fisheries and fishing communities, from primary reliance on local markets, equipment and sources of capital, to reliance on export markets, external equipment suppliers and external sources of funding have affected, and have been mediated by, gender relations.

Lake Victoria, the second largest fresh water lake in the world, is shared between three countries—Tanzania, Uganda and Kenya. The lake accounts for an estimated 60 per cent of Tanzanian inland fish production. Fish and fisheries products from Lake Victoria are a significant source of food for Tanzania. They also contribute to the country's foreign exchange coffers. These fisheries provide income and employment to over 32,000 full-time fishers while an estimated 500,000 people are employed, formally and informally, in fisheries-related activities.

In the Kagera Region in northwest of Tanzania, historically fish was primarily consumed fresh, except for some sales to distant markets of sun-dried or smoked fish. The sexual division of labour varied from place to place, depending on the ethnic origin of the group. Women in the eastern portion of Lake Victoria were more likely to participate in fish trading, than those in the central and western portions. Local culture generally prohibited women from being away from their homes, limiting their ability to trade fish. The dominant means of transport were travel on foot and by bicycle tending to limit fish traders to local markets.

Since the 1980s, the Nile perch fishery has attracted tremendous investment. It has become one of the most important economic activities in the area. Industrial fish processing factories and fishing camps generate revenue for communities in the regions surrounding Lake Victoria. Recent research on the Tanzanian sector of Lake Victoria indicates some of the problems that small-scale fish traders and processors have faced in attempting to benefit from the export-oriented Nile perch fishery that developed in the 1980s.

Irrespective of gender, the two dominant problems they confront are those of transport and the availability of adequate funds. However, both quantitative and qualitative data indicate that most fish suppliers in the Nile perch fishing industry are men. In the year 2000, male suppliers made up 84 per cent of those providing raw material to the processing sector, compared to 16 per cent women suppliers.

In addition, men largely control the new technologies associated with the Nile perch fishery. Fish factory owners attribute the dominance of male fish suppliers over females to men having access to more of the capital needed to buy collector boats, provide seed money and hire labourers. Other factors they point to include the fact that men are better able to travel frequently, have better access to business collateral, and are reported to be more aggressive than women in persuading owners to grant them loans and in asking for advances for fish procurement payments.

There are important differences between men and women in terms of the way they engage in the Tanzanian Lake Victoria fish trade. Women, more than men, combine fish trade with other types of work. A majority of women (57 per cent) participate only in fish trading, but 43 per cent combine fish trading with other business activities. In contrast, on the Tanzanian

side, 74 per cent of men participate only in fish trading while 24 per cent combine fish trading and other business. The high percentage of women who combine fish trading with other business as compared to their male counterparts may indicate women's greater vulnerability and greater income insecurity within fisheries-related activities.

In contrast to the fish supply sector, women made up a majority of those purchasing and processing the waste from the fish plants in the first three years of factory development in Tanzania. Nile perch fish frames (skeletons), locally known as *punk*, were considered waste and factories had to pay to dispose of them. To eliminate this cost, factories began selling them to local processors. Women were the first group to look for Nile perch by-products in factory doorways. This business started in 1993, one year after fish processing firms invested in Tanzania. A study carried out in *punk* processing camps indicated that 70 per cent of *punk* dealers were women.

In six operational Nile perch processing industries on the Tanzanian side of the lake, about 67 per cent of those buying and utilizing by-products from the fish processing industries were women. The women collected fish frames in troughs, baskets, hand drawn carts, and wheelbarrows and took them to the processing camps.

By 1997, 4 to 7 tons of fresh fish frames cost Tshs. 60,000-90,000.0 (US \$75-112.50) wholesale. After processing (smoking and sun drying), the processed *punk* could be sold for Tshs. 100,000-120,000.00 (US \$125-150). Single and married women used the revenue from this activity to build houses, feed their families, buy clothing, pay school fees and for medical care.

Over time, however, the Nile perch processing factories improved their filleting process so that no meat content was left on the frames. This meant the *punk* community could not get enough fish frames for human consumption. In response, some women started to grind *punkies* in locally made mortars and feed them to their chickens.

Additional, more recent changes in this sector have further eroded the capacity of these women to generate livelihoods from fish frames. In 1996/97 processed *punk* for animal feed was commercialized resulting in new investments in local fishmeal factories. The major markets for processed fish frames were Shinyanga,

Tabora, Dodoma, Morogoro, Singida, Mwanza, Mara and in some parts of Kagera region. The main markets for fishmeal products were Dar Es Salaam, Arusha, Mwanza, Morogoro, Dodoma and neighbouring countries such as Zambia and Kenya.

In 1998, higher standards for hygiene in fish processing required by European Union export requirements encouraged Nile perch factory owners to seek wholesale buyers for their by-products. This helped ensure the factory doorways would be quickly cleared and reduced the risk of both human and by-product waste congestion. However, when the factory owners started selling their fish frames to wholesalers, many women were forced out of the trade. Most could not compete with the men buying these products for animal feed as well as human consumption. The multiple demand led to high procurement costs which women could not manage.



The strong export orientation of the Nile perch industry and limited opportunities for women to derive employment and incomes from the sector have encouraged some to focus on purchasing juvenile Nile perch harvested in illegal gear. The minimum size for legally harvested Nile perch is half a kilogram. Purchasing this fish requires access to sufficient capital to compete with the factory agents, the main buyers of this fish type. These factory agents are not allowed to purchase juvenile Nile perch of less than half a kilogram.

Because legally harvested fish has become more expensive for the small traders who serve the local markets, because small fish is cheaper, and because falling incomes among local consumers limit the price

they can pay for fish, the women traders have resorted to buying fish harvested in illegal, small-mesh gear to sell to industrial fish collectors.

However, marketing this fish provides a precarious source of income for small traders. Fish less than half a kilogram caught in beach seines and undersized gillnets may be sold to industrial agents because they can offer higher prices.

Some women fish traders have resorted to staying in the beach seine fishing camps at night so that they can get priority access to the available catch. Others have dropped out of the fish trade and moved to trading in other goods. If illegal gear is eliminated, the surviving women traders and processors could lose their access to fish.

Globalization has opened up new opportunities for some women but it has also undermined many women's economic independence and increased the challenges they face in supporting themselves and their families. It has done this by contributing to environmental change, undermining their access to fish for processing and trading, enhancing competition and theft within fishing and trading, and ghettoising women in poorer paid occupations within industrial fish processing as contingent, vulnerable workers.

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Book/ United Kingdom

Turning the Tide

We carry the Foreword of the book 'Turning the Tide: The 1968 Trawler Tragedy and the Wives' Campaign for Safety', by Rupert Creed, edited by Sara Hawkins, and published by Back Door Press (1998). The Foreword is by Rt. Hon. John Prescott MP.

"In the months of January and February 1968 three Hull trawlers sank with the loss of fifty eight men. The tragedies came in quick succession, hitting the Hessle Road community with the force of a tidal wave. For the immediate relatives, the loss of a father, brother or son was devastating, but in such a close-knit community it affected everyone. It was a mass bereavement. The women of Hessle Road had lived with the tragedy for generations, but in 1968 they refused to accept that

the loss of their men was an accident of nature or fate. They knew that the industry that provided their living was at the same time killing their men. And something had to be done about it. Out of their grief came anger and an unstoppable force for change. This book is the story of their campaign and their achievement.

I am proud to have played a part in this story. In 1968 I could see parallels between the circumstances of seamen and the conditions of work and terms of employment under which fishermen laboured, which were much worse. I was amazed to discover that fishermen had to take their own mattresses to sea and lived in quarters much worse than those in prison. Moreover, safety in working conditions carried little priority. The Merchant Shipping Act placed them both under a yoke of servitude which enforced such conditions—most unacceptable in the modern age. It was an anachronism from the previous century and a group of us from Hull began to lobby for its reform.

I was present at the wives' meeting in Victoria Hall on Hessle Road that cold night in February 1968. It was not the kind of political meeting I was used to attending. Outside were prams, and inside the hall was packed with women holding children and babies. Their grief was almost unbearable to witness. This was a meeting where political struggle was being experienced not as theory or ideology, but at the level where it mattered most—in the heart of a community that saw itself under threat and was determined to effect change.



This book gives an insight into a way of life that has almost disappeared. It tells the story of a specific period of a community's history, but it is local history with

national significance. The Hull wives' campaign of 1968, epitomized by that wonderful character Lil Bilocca, marked a crucial turning point in the fishing industry of this country. Although the wives did not see themselves as a women's movement as such, their story is also a significant chapter in the long march towards equality between women and men.

This book draws on a wealth of research and personal testimony. It has been written with the help and advice of people from the community it portrays. It offers the first-hand experience of the women and men who lived through the events. It is their story. Their achievement."

News/South Africa

Permitted to fish

From news item by Craig Elyot, Africa Eye News Service (Nelspruit) Durban, S. Africa, 12 December 2002 (<http://allafrica.com/stories/200212120305.html>)

Subsistence fishermen and women on KwaZulu-Natal's north coast will be allowed to harvest mussels and bait as of Sunday as part of the overall transformation of fisheries in South Africa.

It's illegal to harvest brown mussels and red bait, but deputy environmental affairs minister Rejoice Mabudafhasi will issue exemptions to the Sokhulu Buhlebemvelo mussel committee, most of whom are women, on Sunday.

These are the first such exemptions in the province since the promulgation of the Marine Living Resources Act that came into effect in September 1998. It will also be the first time Sokhulu fishers are legally allowed to harvest these types of marine life and the first time the committee is recognized as a formal sector.

According to Ezemvelo Wildlife spokeswoman, Maureen Mndaweni, it was previously difficult to grant fishing rights to the Sokhulu community because there was very little information about them and management systems hadn't been developed yet.

The original goal was to issue the first permits to subsistence fishers in 2001 after the chief director of Marine and Coastal Management (MCM) appointed a subsistence fisheries task group (SFTG) in December 1998.

The task group submitted recommendations to the MCM in January 2001 on ways to implement subsistence fisheries management systems. The recommendations were accepted and a feasibility study and business plan were developed.

A large proportion of subsistence fishers were identified as living on the east coast where MCM has almost no capacity or systems in place to manage the use of resources," Mndaweni said.

In 2000 the Norwegian Agency for Development (Norad) granted donor funding to MCM for five years to implement a subsistence fisheries national management programme.

The programme aims to create a unit to handle regional management issues together with MCM and to identify subsistence and small-scale commercial fisheries in KwaZulu-Natal. It also aims to develop management plans for each subsistence and small-scale commercial fishery in the province to identify management and research actions necessary for implementation.

The process of identifying subsistence communities has been completed and 80 per cent of the communities have received training on the new policies and their legal implications. The remaining exemptions will be issued to communities during 2003.

News/ United Kingdom

Women are in

Excerpted from news item 'FAL approves corporate membership with the Irish' by Morag Ledingham, The Buchan Observer, 27 March 2003. (www.buchanie.co.uk/archived/2003/Week_012/news/fish_fal.asp)

Following a report by Fishermen's Association Limited (FAL's) Cornwall director Sheryll Murray on the 'Women in Fisheries' Conference at the University of Brest in February, and considering the hugely significant campaign by the Cod Crusaders, FAL's board also decided to create a women's section to recognize and benefit from the undoubted contribution which women have made to the socioeconomic development of the UK fishing industry.

Among the early initiatives for such a section would be establishing networks with the well organized

women's organizations in France, Spain and Finland, to learn from their best practice.

The board also agreed that there would be a deferred membership arrangement to facilitate transfers of skipper/owners from their existing associations to FAL.

FAL chairman, Tom Hay said: "This has been an historic day for the association. With the undoubted support of our friends in Northern Ireland and the formation of a women's section, FAL is moving in to a new era."

"We are facing extremely difficult times at present but where there is a will there is a way. We have shown over the past eight years what can be done by a small UK association against tremendous odds, both from within the industry and from certain political parties."

News/ Ghana

Free the Fishing Boys

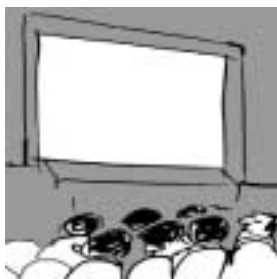
A Press Release (summarized below) dated 11 March 2003 from the International Organization for Migration (IOM), Geneva, draws attention to .child labour in the fisheries in Ghana

A programme, implemented by the IOM with the Ghanaian authorities, the ILO, Catholic Relief Service and the local NGO APPLE, aims to return to their families more than 1,200 children who have been trafficked into forced labour in the Central and Volta regions of Ghana.

To date, IOM staff in Yeji and Atebubu districts of Brong Ahafo region have successfully registered 814 children who are currently employed under slave-like conditions in numerous fishing communities established along the shores and on islands scattered on Lake Volta.

The victims, mostly boys aged between 5 and 14, are forced to work from dawn to dusk casting and drawing nets. They live separately in cramped thatched roofed huts, are poorly fed, suffer physical abuse and never get paid. Their diet consists mainly of cassava with watery soup. They never eat fish. Because of their poor diet, harsh living and working conditions, many suffer from water born illnesses and experience stunted growth.

For more information contact: IOM Geneva, Tel: 41.22.717.9111 mpi@iom.int

Film/ Canada

An Untidy Package: Women and the Newfoundland Cod Moratorium

Alison Mews, Director of the Curriculum Materials Centre at the Faculty of Education, Memorial University of Newfoundland, St. John's, NF has reviewed this film.

An Untidy Package sets out to dispel the popular misconception that Newfoundland women weren't major players in the cod fishery before the moratorium, and that the federal compensation they received was only added to their husband's claims to increase their family's allowance. We learn at the outset that one third of the 35,000 workers displaced were women. Using the viewpoint of some of these women, this video examines the cod crisis and its social implications for families. Historical film footage, showing women working alongside men, and musical interludes with artistic close-ups of net knitting, are interspersed with the stories of five women from different coastal communities across the province. One is the mayor of a small Labrador town where half of the plant workers were women. She dedicated her life to building up her community and is devastated that all the young people have moved away to find work. Another, the head of her local fisheries union, relates how sudden poverty has caused domestic violence and marital break-ups amongst union members. All women, regardless of their educational level, are eloquent in expressing how profoundly their way of life has been affected. For instance, the stupidity of overfishing and the government's inept handling of retraining are seen from their perspective. The prevalent disregard for education prior to fisheries jobs, the use of emergency funds for infrastructure, and the short-term focus of the policies are illustrated with poignant examples.

Despite the beautiful photography, the video is difficult to watch when the women are overwhelmed by emotion. Although anger and bitterness at their treatment is evident, so, too, is the tenacity and resilience that has kept these women in their home communities. This is an important video for those studying Canadian social studies or women's studies to view.

This film is directed by Debbie McGee and produced by Nicole Hubert. Montreal, PQ: National Film Board of Canada, 1997. 47 min., 36 sec., VHS, \$39.95. Order Number: C9197 131. (<http://www.umanitoba.ca/cm/vol6/no11/untidy.html>)

YEMAYA

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Please do send us comments and suggestions to make the newsletter more relevant. We would also like names of other people who could be interested in being part of this initiative. We look forward to hearing from you and to receiving regular write-ups for the newsletter.

Writers and potential contributors to *YEMAYA*, please note that write-ups should be brief, about 500 words. They could deal with issues that are of direct relevance to women and men of fishing communities. They could also focus on recent research or on meetings and workshops that have raised gender issues in fisheries. Also welcome are life stories of women and men of fishing communities working towards a sustainable fishery or for a recognition of their work within the fishery. Please also include a one-line biographical note on the writer.