

Yemaya

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From the Editor

Greetings! This issue of *Yemaya* brings together articles from various parts of the world that examine some of the central issues in marine protection, particularly as it impacts women.

Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) have committed to achieve by 2010, a significant reduction of the current rate of biodiversity loss. They have agreed to bring at least 10 per cent of the world's marine and coastal ecological region under protection by 2012. It is estimated that currently only 0.6 per cent of the world's oceans are under protection.

As governments, in collaboration with international bodies, gear up to meet this ambitious target, coastal communities, globally, face challenging times. What will biodiversity protection mean for the millions whose lives depend on coastal and marine resources? Are arbitrary prohibitions on access and the tyranny of official enforcement inevitable or can it mean real participation, equity and benefit sharing?

Biodiversity conservation and livelihood sustenance are intertwined issues for women in coastal communities—the loss of one leading to the loss of the other. Protection strategies that exclude women are, therefore, imperiled at the outset. Worryingly however, as the stories from India and Mexico show, such strategies continue to be willfully pursued.



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Does the problem start, as the story from South Africa suggests it does, with the conservation agenda at the highest levels? Clearly, unless this agenda recognizes the indigenous attempts being made by women to protect and manage their resources, the goal of marine protection might well prove to be a mirage. If these efforts are recognized, as the stories from Zanzibar and Chile demonstrate, powerful synergies may be built.

The coming year will undoubtedly bring fresh challenges before coastal communities who will have to be even more vigilant to ensure that conservation does not entail market-friendly reforms and the curtailment of community rights, but, instead holds the promise of social and gender equity.

This issue of *Yemaya* also carries an important announcement. In response to the feedback we have received from you, we are introducing certain changes in the newsletter. Going forward, *Yemaya* will have a new look and will be theme-based. In view of the fact that the first issue of *Yemaya* next year will be released around March 8—the International Women's Day—the theme for the issue will be women's struggles in the fisheries sector. We welcome your experiences and stories on this theme. Please address your articles to icsf@icsf.net and send them in by 15 January 2008.

And finally, we wish you the very best for a joyful new year!