



# Yemaya

ICSF'S NEWSLETTER ON GENDER AND FISHERIES

## From the Editor

**G**reetings! It gives us great pleasure to bring you this issue of *Yemaya*, redesigned, in response to your feedback, to don a new, more contemporary look and now with theme-based coverage of the key issues facing women in fisheries. The new look has been put together by the team at Design Difference ([www.design-difference.com](http://www.design-difference.com)).

With this issue, each edition of *Yemaya* will focus on a specific theme, but, as before, in the words of women speaking about their lives, their struggles and their aspirations. Interesting box items have been added that introduce you to inspiring women and point out significant news. And finally, we are delighted to introduce in this issue a new character who will, going forward, in a regular cartoon strip provide a quirky and humorous take on all the issues we find ourselves grappling with.

Happily, *Yemaya*'s redesign coincides with the occasion of March 8, the International Women's Day—a historic day that symbolizes women's unity and resistance. The theme of the current issue is, therefore, women's struggles in the fisheries.

Though the origins of March 8 are rooted in the militant protests of New York's garment workers a hundred years ago, the spirit and significance of the day remain unchanged. What can ring truer for women fishworkers battling injustice both inside and outside the home than the call for freedom from hunger, indignity and exploitation?

A hundred years of struggle. How substantive have the gains been? Women's issues have no doubt gained tremendous visibility. Their struggles are slowly forcing a change in the political landscape, and in some countries, paving the way for women's entry into leadership roles. However, it could be argued that the benefits of such political power-sharing are being undone by the simultaneous erosion of social, economic and human rights.

We might well ask whether the term 'gender', today used to describe the social basis of women's oppression, runs the danger of being reduced somewhat to rhetoric. Are research and advocacy efforts making a material difference to women's lives or do they merely follow an add-gender-and-stir approach, ignoring the symbiotic inter-relationships between women's oppression and other forms of injustice?

Indeed, globally, women in fisheries face multiple crises. The corporate takeover of the coasts; the retreat of the State from basic sectors; inequitable modes of fishing; iniquitous trade and tariff regimes; the large-scale depletion and pollution of coastal resources: while these adversely affect communities, the impact on women's lives is particularly pernicious. Forced to fend for the family, women find themselves pushed into the most exploitative labour arrangements, shackled in domestic chains and left vulnerable to fundamentalist forces within communities who recast women's roles in the most regressive terms.

To combat the crises, vital links must be made for what use are political actions that ignore the domestic sphere or advocacy efforts not rooted in women's struggles? How can the struggles of women in fisheries succeed in isolation of the struggles of all women? How can the struggles of women succeed in isolation of the struggles of all other marginalized sections? To be sure, as history has repeatedly demonstrated, there exists no short cut to women's freedom and wellbeing. We look forward to receiving your feedback at [icsf@icsf.net](mailto:icsf@icsf.net).

Reflections .....	2
South Africa .....	3
The Netherlands ....	5
Profile .....	7
The Philippines .....	8
Yemaya .....	10
Book .....	12

