

Yemaya

No. 13

ICSF's NEWSLETTER ON GENDER AND FISHERIES

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From the Editor

Dear Friends,

Greetings! This issue carries write-ups from several countries, including the Philippines, Indonesia, India, Chile and the Netherlands.

The article from the Netherlands presents a complex case in which small-scale fishers and their families are feeling the impact of the action by the anti-cartel Authority of the Netherlands to penalize the shrimp sector (producers and trading companies) for limiting production and thereby influencing prices to the disadvantage of consumers. As has been pointed out, small-scale producers and their families find it inexplicable that they are being treated like big telecom and oil companies.

Undoubtedly the present situation, where there is overproduction and oversupply of shrimp in the market and small-scale producers are struggling to fish more to make ends meet even as prices crash, is not the optimal solution. How can the interests of consumers, producers, trading companies and environmental sustainability be balanced? That is the challenge for policymakers.

The stories from Philippines are of women who are part of local committees for coastal resources management. They describe their struggles and achievements, as they try and organize to take advantage of the spaces created for community participation in coastal resources management as a result of the passage of the 1998 Fisheries Code of the Philippines.



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As pressures on coastal lands increase in all parts of the world, fishing communities, the traditional inhabitants of the coasts, increasingly face displacement. The write-up from India describes the displacement that threatens the fishing population of Chennai, a metropolitan city on India's south-eastern coast. It emphasizes the need for greater cultural and social sensitivity in coastal and town planning.

The article from Indonesia is sad testimony to the fact that people's participation in resource management has, in practice, only theoretical acceptability. At the ground level, communities still find themselves marginalized and disempowered by decisions taken by donors and decision-makers in the name of conservation and management, in which they are not even consulted. Thus, the *apong* fishers of Kampung Laut in Java risk losing their source of livelihood amidst plans to develop the area.

The article from Chile profiles the emergence of a woman as Administrator of a fish quay in Chile, a job that is traditionally held by men. It documents the way women are taking on new untraditional roles in the fishery, even as they struggle for greater recognition of these roles, along with a greater recognition of their traditional roles in the fishery and in fishing communities.

As always we invite you to send in your responses, write-ups and feedback for the next issue of *Yemaya*, by 30 October 2003.

Asia/ Philippines

Voices from the field

These are stories of three women, part of community-based coastal resources management groups in the Philippines, who met at a recent workshop organized with the objective of enhancing women's roles in these groups.

by Nalini Nayak, a member of ICSF

Betty looks so little and frail. She giggles like a little girl and one thinks she is just a student. But Betty is 31 years old, a mother of three and the only woman chairperson of the Fisheries and Aquatic Resource Management Council (FARMC) in her region. These FARMCs were created in 1998-90 after the passing of the Fisheries Code that was lobbied for by several fishworker organizations. The Code stipulates that 15 km of inshore waters should be reserved for the artisanal fishers, where no destructive fishing will take place. The FARMC is mandated to manage these 'municipal waters', as it is called. Betty explains:

The FARMC is composed of 17 members, with the Mayor as the chairperson. There are other *ex-officio* members like the municipal development officer, the agricultural officer, etc. There are 11 representatives of the fisherfolk, one representative of the private sector and one professional. Of the 11 fisherfolk, four are women. I was elected as acting Chairperson in 1998 and the original term was for three years, which was later extended without elections. This was the decision of the Mayor, who supports the fisherfolk. It is actually the municipal development officer who opposes us. He once put me to shame at a monthly meeting when we were passing an ordinance. We had worked out all the details but he opposed us making some technical objections and treating me like an illiterate, and so I cried. But we got it through all the same and this ordinance became the model for other municipalities in the Tayabas Bay. The three provinces of Batangas, Quezon and Marindukue then created an integrated FARMC because of the common fishing grounds of the communities of this area.

There are several committees in the FARMC looking after subjects like security, education, conservation, etc. I have to participate in all these committees, besides doing paper work and also going to the field. So it is almost a full-time job for

which I am paid only 500 pesos a month (US\$1=50 pesos). There are 10 of us on the Fisheries Law Enforcement Team. When we travel, we get per diems of 200 pesos. Our municipality is not so rich, but when there was an NGO in the area that supported our work, we got some more travel and training allowance.

All this work in committees and in the public field was new to me because I was brought up in a simple family, remaining aloof from people. My father was a fisherman and all of us eight children and mother went out to fish and to vend fish. Alongside, I studied and completed the first year at the Polytechnic at the University of the Philippines, for which I had secured a scholarship. But, as there was no money for the food expenses, my mother called me back as the family could not afford it. Reluctantly, I came home and became a worker at the day care centre and got married at the age of 21. I have three children now.

The initial experience in the committee and then participation in the Asian Social Institute training programme gave me more skills. Later, I also participated in a training programme organized by the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) to become a fish examiner, that is, to certify whether fish is legally or illegally caught. I was the only woman among 30 participants and only 20 of us passed the course.

My husband has been very supportive and lets me freely engage in this work. In fact, it is because he encouraged me that I entered this field. He is a longline fisherman and has a 3-m boat with a 30-hp engine. Nowadays, when we women take steps in the community, some men call us 'Gabriella' (the name of a feminist organization in the Philippines). But we want to do what is right and we all want to serve our community. I am not interested in politics. I only want justice for my community.

Glo comes from Tinambaac in the *barangay* of Bagacay. Together with some of her colleagues, like Rose, Glo has been very active in building up the women in fisheries organization in their area. She tells her story:

I am a mother of three children. In my earlier days, I went with my husband to collect crabs, which we sold to the middlewomen. When my children grew older, I worked in the local crèche

and preschool. That was eight years ago. When my husband became a member of Bikis Lakas, the fisherman's organization, I attended their meetings and got to know about the problems of our fishery, the causes for depletion, and I became very active and vocal about the need to stop illegal fishing in order to safeguard our fishery.

The fishermen encouraged me to stand for election in the *barangay* (local government unit) so that I could lobby there and get official support to apprehend illegal fishers. So I started to canvas votes for myself and I told women that if they voted for me I would provide free childcare for their children. Many of the women already knew me as I also taught several of them how to recycle the plastic bags as part of the zero-waste programme in my area. I was elected in June 2000. I was the only women of the seven elected members on the *barangay* council and the only one representing fishers. I realized that none of the others knew anything about the fisheries and it was very difficult to convince them about the issues.

I was fortunate to have the opportunity to participate in a training programme organized by Betty and Vir of the Asian Social Institute, and I got a good idea about how to work in the community and also how to organize for our rights. So when I returned, I not only began to organize other women with Rosa and a few others who also attended the training, but I also learnt about the Fisheries Code and understood that this was a tool in my hand. So I took a copy of the Code to the *barangay* and asked the others to read it, and we understood that we could implement the Code by issuing Ordinances in the *barangay*, and this is what we did. We set down rules and also demarcated the area where trawling and dynamite could not be used. We also decided on the punishment—fines for different crimes. So this helped us to apprehend the illegal fishers.

I was very active in the patrols as we women could handle the apprehension better than the men who would get into quarrels. We also received 40 per cent of the fines when we apprehended the illegal fishers. But since we women do not patrol at night, we felt these illegal fishers sometimes operated at night. So we got the media to highlight the problem and, as a result, this is now very



reduced.

One of the big problems that I face is that the *barangay* captain (president) is always trying to put me down and does not encourage me. It is only because most of the other men support me and because he knows that I have the support of women in the community, that he has to control himself, and I can go ahead.

We are now around 120 women in our organization, meeting in groups of 30 once a week. We do a lot of awareness-raising, especially related to conservation of the environment, guarding of the sanctuary, regeneration of the mangroves, etc. We have also started some alternate livelihood programmes and we have helped women with loans to start small cottage industries, like adding value to the fish and other food products and starting a piggery. For this, we are supported by the NGO called CARD that helps us with savings and credit. Through this, we also have an accident and emergency insurance programme. In our own women's organization, we also have a fund to which all the members contribute five pesos a week. We are trying to get our organization accredited so that we can be recognized for assistance by government programmes.

Glo has three of her own children. She fulfilled her election promise of free childcare by continuing to work voluntarily in the crèche as she got an allowance as a council member. She also got the *barangay* to open another childcare centre in the community.

Wilima lives in Dalig, Cardona, on the banks of the

Laguna Lake—a very steep bank that is densely populated too. On this bank, she and her 30-odd women friends have managed to put up a little tin-cum-bamboo shed, which is the centre of their women's group called Bulaklak. Wilima's story:

I was always inspired by the older fishermen who fought for the conservation of the lake and the passing of the Fisheries Code. (Wilima referred to Koni who was a wise, committed and charismatic fisherman leader). When I participated in the seminars organized by CALARIS, our fishermen's federation, I also realized that I was a part of the problem, destroying the lake by contaminating it. So some of us women took the initiative to clean up the lake, but later when I participated in the women's trainings organized by the Family Centre, I got more ideas, skills and courage to go ahead.

Our group of 30 women meets regularly. We continue to raise awareness about the contamination of the lake and we also have cleaning drives. As we save one peso a day, we now have a kitty of 2,290 pesos. In the initial stages, we ran a store with grains that was subsidized by the government. This was a good programme that all the women benefited from. But when the government changed, this supply was stopped. More recently, our fishermen leaders organized a training programme for us through BFAR, where we learned to do all kinds of fish processing. The products are very good. There is also a good market. But we produce some of the products only on order. We want to build up a regular market by networking with different women's groups.

Earlier, our husbands did not want us to get to work collectively, but later they realized that their incomes are dwindling and we cannot make ends meet in the home. So, many of our men now do the housework, while we go out to the market. Our men go to fish at night or in the early mornings and since we now sell our fish directly in the market, we manage to bypass the middlemen.

Coming together as a group has helped us fight our poverty. We know our efforts are small but we do not have great ambitions. Some of us now have small fish pens where we just let the *bangus* (milk fish) grow without feeding. Most of us vend fish and some of us also do the processing. We hope that we will be able to build a strong network of women so that together we can fight this process of marginalization.

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Asia/ Indonesia

The Sun Rises at Kampung Laut

The among fishers of Kampung Laut risk losing their source of livelihood amidst government plans to develop the area

by Uly Mulyandari of the Coalition of Indonesian Women

Kampung Laut is a *kampung* (village) on some *aanslibbings*, land that rose from the sea as a result of sedimentation. It lies in the middle of Segara Anakan, the sea in front of Cilacap bay, across which is a small island named Nusa Kambangan.

Cilacap is a small town in the southern part of central Java. During the Dutch occupation of Indonesia, it was an important port for international trade. It is from there that VOC, the Dutch trading company, sent java tobacco to Europe. The Nusa Kambangan island is today occupied by the Indonesian Ministry of Law and Justice and used as a jail for those sentenced to more than 10 years in prison.

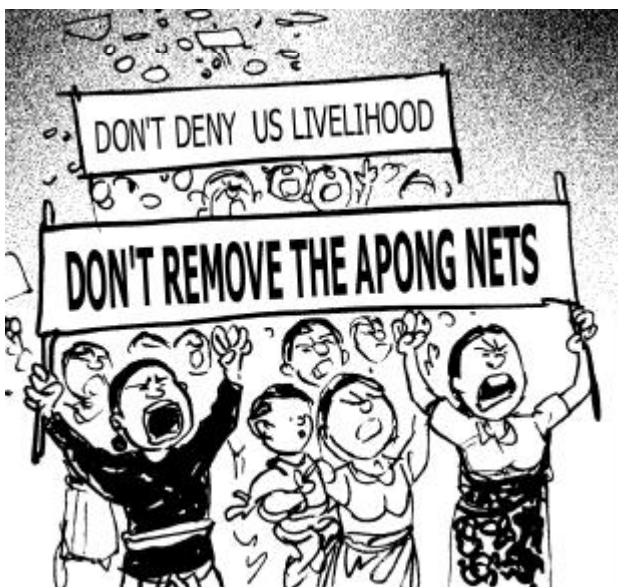
In 1942, the sea of Segara Anakan was 64,000 ha in area. Today it is 1,000 ha only. The narrowing was caused by serious sedimentation from the Citanduy and Serayu rivers, leading to *aanslibbing* or *tanah timbul*, as locally called. At first, mangroves were grown on the *aanslibbing*. As the land became harder, people started to build houses on it. Over time, the mangrove forests have almost disappeared, even as several villagers have died of fever epidemic.

As the *aanslibbing* gets wider and wider, the sea gets narrower and narrower, causing fishers to lose their source of fish. The fishers of Kampung Laut use a traditional catching method called *among*, a net that is placed under the sea surface. Each fisher family has a certain place to put their *among* nets. For them, the *among* site is like land for farmers. Their lives depend on the *among*. Ownership of an *among* is recognized by a deed signed by the chief of the village. Called *Surat Tanda Milik Tanah Air* (letter of ownership of land and water), this letter is not recognized by the national government, whose agrarian laws follow the domain principle. Villagers can legally own a piece of land only if they have been living on it for at least 20 years and if no other person lays claim to be its legal owner, nor does the State need the land for public utilities.

When the first rains start to fall after summer, fishers take in the *among* and the fish in it. The number of fish caught depends on how deep the net is placed.

As Segara Anakan gets narrower and narrower, fishers around Ujung Alang and Ujung Gagak villages say they get fewer and fewer fish. This is not only a concern of the fishermen but also of their wives, who are in charge of handling and selling the catch, apart from being responsible for food for the family.

More and more people are coming to Kampung Laut in search of a new livelihood by opening up the forest. Usually they are farmers who have lost their lands and have been evicted by the landowners. With decreasing forest cover, the newcomers and the older fishers have begun to fight among themselves, even as the mangrove ecosystem gets destroyed and the danger of fever looms large.



According to a newspaper report, the local government, with the support of the Asian Development Bank (ADB), has started a conservation project at Segara Anakan. Without taking the local fishers of Kampung Laut into confidence, a body called 'Badan Pengelola Konservasi Segara Anakan' (BPKSA, the Segara Anakan Conservation Body) decided to remove all the *apong* nets in the area. According to BPKSA, this was done because (a) *apong* nets are a disturbance to water transportation; (b) they accelerate sedimentation and lead to the narrowing of Segara Anakan; and (c) they cause the loss of a natural habitat for fish.

According to BPKSA clearing of *apong* nets from Segara Anakan is a precondition set by the ADB for supporting the conservation project. Though the BPKSA says it does not have any money to compensate the fishers for the loss of their *apong* nets, it plans to buy a longliner. The fishers can work on the ship, to be operated by BPKSA, as crew to catch tuna in the deep seas.

The women of the community soon got together to disseminate information to the men about the impact of the removal of *apong* nets on their families. Community meetings began to discuss the problem regularly.

During these discussions, fishers expressed fears about becoming workers on the longline ship, where they would have no control over their work. They prefer to manage a piece of land and stay close to their families. Losing their nets means losing their independence. Also, there are not enough ships to employ all the fishers they feel.

According to the fishers, no one in Kampung Laut has ever complained about the *apong* nets as a disturbance for water transportation. According to them, sedimentation, which is the result of poor management, is the main problem. This is compounded by illegal logging in the forest around the Kawunganten-Jeruklegi area. The local government has never done anything serious to handle it.

Today there are regular monthly meetings of women (called *Balai Perempuan*, an Indonesian word in bahasa meaning "Forum of women") at the three sub-villages (*dukuh*) of Ujung Alang Selatan, Ujung Alang Utara and Bondan to monitor the activity of BPKSA. The women hope these meetings will make BPKSA start consulting the local residents before making decisions. The village government has also begun to see how important it is to consult with the people. The chief of the village sometime finds time to sit with the women in meetings.

The organization Koalisi Perempuan Indonesia is conducting training programmes to impart knowledge and leadership skills to the over 300 of the *Balai Perempuan* members. It also communicates with other parties, like village government officials, NGOs and the BPKSA.

Last April, invited by *Balai Perempuan*, NGOs and mass organizations came together to set up a network to: (a) disseminate information about the problems of Kampung Laut and Segara Anakan; (b) collect information about the government-BPKSA plans for the Segara Anakan; and (c) support the plans of *Balai Perempuan* to set up a meeting between the government at the district level and the people of Kampung Laut and BPKSA, to discuss conservation plans for Segara Anakan and its ecosystem.

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Asia/ India

Planning them out?

Fishing communities settled along the coast of Chennai, a metropolitan city on India's south-eastern coast, are being threatened with relocation in the name of beach beautification

Based on an affidavit presented by T Mohan, a Chennai-based lawyer long involved with various civic environmental and community-based organisations, before the National Commission on Women, India.

The role of fishing communities in town planning and coastal zone management planning continues to be a neglected area. Town Planning in Tamil Nadu (a state in southern India) is the subject matter of *The Tamil Nadu Town and Country Planning Act, 1971*. Though seemingly wide, there is little guidance in the Act for imbuing the planning exercise with any sensitivity regarding the cultural aspects of town planning, specifically with reference to the life style and livelihood patterns of fishing communities, which are separate and distinct from those of a migrant population that usually characterize cities in India.

After the 73rd and 74th Amendments to the Constitution (strengthening the role of local government), the *Madras City Municipal Corporation Act, 1919* was amended. A Metropolitan Planning Committee was constituted to prepare a draft development plan for the Chennai Metropolitan area having regard *inter alia* to matters of common interest pertaining to the city of Chennai, including co-ordinated spatial planning, sharing of water and other natural resources and integrated development of infrastructure and environment conservation.

Despite this, comprehensive and sensitive planning still does not exist judged from the viewpoint of either statutory guidelines or actual planning. As a result of insensitive planning, the eight fishing villages along the Marina beach, which possibly predate Chennapatna (city of Madras/ Chennai as it is known today), have been subjected to enormous pressures.

There is a lack of recognition of fishing communities' control over coastal land. Though these communities have been resident along the coast for centuries, the right over these lands is not recognized. The State considers them usually as encroachers and slum dwellers. In the absence of any law in the matter, fishing communities have always been under threat of eviction as both the state and the middle class have seen the settlements as an eyesore.

Several strategies have been employed by the state to weaken the communities' claim to the lands. These have included:

- construction of inappropriate and inadequate tenements for housing fishermen and seeking the consequent eviction from existing tenements
- interference with beaching craft and net drying on the beach
- permitting high value urbanization along the coast and encouraging competing recreational use alongside the settlements
- widening the coastal road and converting the same into an alternate highway, thereby placing the lives of coastal residents at risk.
- demarcating various parts immediately adjoining the settlements as open space and recreation zone, thereby inhibiting scope for settlement expansion.

The Tamil Nadu Government attempted to remove the fishing craft and the nets of the fisherfolk along the Marina beach in 1986. A writ petition filed in the Supreme Court thwarted these attempts. The Supreme Court directed the return of the confiscated craft and gear by interim orders and the writ petition appears to have been disposed off recently.



With the enactment of the *Coastal Regulation Zone (CRZ) Notification of 1991*, there appeared to be grudging institutional recognition of the rights of fishing communities to dwell along the coast, even though the notification has been rendered ineffective by the machinations and/ or inaction of all coastal states, including Tamil Nadu.

When the Tamil Nadu government initially submitted its coastal management plan under the CRZ Notification, the Ministry of Environment and Forest appears to have returned the same because the Chennai coastline did not figure in the plan. Thereafter the Chennai Development Authority added a chapter with five maps and three pages for the Chennai coast. This made no reference to the fishing settlement, their livelihood patterns or their cultural specificity.

Prior to this plan, efforts by the Tamil Nadu government to articulate an integrated coastal zone management plan, actually spoke of relocating fishing villages that did not exhibit potential for growth. There was also widespread concern when the second Master Plan for the City of Chennai in 1995 spoke about relocation of all the slums in the city to the outskirts. This document was, not surprisingly, published for comment only in English thereby denying crucial stakeholders space for participation in the planning process.

Fishing along the city's waterways, like the Adyar and Cooum rivers and the Buckingham canal, have almost come to a standstill on account of the fact that these water bodies have become virtual cesspools of domestic and industrial effluents. The High Court of Madras, even after 10 years of the filing of a writ petition (W.P.No. 14858/93) that sought the framing of a scheme for cleaning up the city's heavily polluted waterways, merely directed the Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board to continue action to prevent institutions and industries from letting out sewage and other pollutants into the waterways. However pollution continues and it is unlikely that the waterways will ever be reclaimed for fisheries.

Thermal plants which discharge hot water into Chennai's coastal waters and a phalanx of chemical industrial complexes, have also seriously impacted fisheries. There has also been large-scale salinization of coastal aquifers on account of excessive extraction for industrial and urban purposes along Chennai's coast. These deleterious impacts have placed serious stress and severe burden on women fishworkers in their capacity as market vendors, caregivers and resource providers.

The recent amendment issued by the Ministry of Environment and Forests, which made it necessary to obtain prior sanction for all projects involving an investment of more than Rs50 million would appear to have put a check on the Tamil Nadu government's recent move to evict the fishing hamlets and convert these lands into a complex for diplomatic missions, residences and multinational offices. The state government, which even denied access to the

Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed with a Malaysian Company stating that it was not a public document, has protested against the amendment. While the stand of the Tamil Nadu government is clearly motivated, the rights of the fishing communities cannot be solely dependent on the discretion of Central government.

In my opinion the threat to the livelihood of women fishworkers along the Marina can only be averted by strengthening the CRZ Notification, by averting development on the coast adjoining the fishing settlements, by enacting legislation which would recognize the rights of fishing community to all resources, including land, by framing and implementing national, state and local policies and plans for the small-scale fisheries sector, and by creating institutional mechanisms and processes sensitive to their distinct culture and livelihood patterns.

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Latin America/ Chile

Breaking the mould

An experience from the far south of Latin America reveals the new roles possible for men and women in artisanal fisheries

by Maria Teresa López Boegeholz, Professor of the State (Biology and Chemistry) and Specialist in Environmental Education and Gender Relations, University Deacon, University of Concepcion, Chile (Translated by Brian O'Riordan of ICSF's Brussels office)

In the history of Latin American coastal communities, the *caleta* (settlement), a dynamic system of life and work, was initiated in the first prehispanic coastal settlements. Daily survival depended on hunting birds and mammals, collecting seeds and fruits from the surrounding valleys and forests, gathering shellfish (molluscs and crustaceans) and catching fish in the inter and subtidal coastal areas.

The activities of the artisanal fisheries sector go beyond simply catching fish, molluscs and seaweed. There are tasks that are carried out on land and on the fish quays as well. These tasks include support processes such as:

- a) Pre-harvest work: This includes activities that range from the maintenance of vessels (certified by the Maritime Authority and registered with the

National Fisheries Service) and their engines, surveillance, cleaning of fishing gears and equipment, and obtaining the authorization to embark. The fishing area and the resources to be exploited need to be registered. This is especially so where fully exploited species, such as southern hake (*Merluccius australis*) and sea urchin (*Loxechinus albus*) are concerned.

- b) Post-harvest work: This includes several activities. Since 2002, all fishermen, in whatever kind of vessel (launches and boats), must fill in a catch report as part of the landing form. Artisanal vessels in Chile fall into two main categories: *botes* (boats), smaller vessels, powered by oar, sail, and small motors, making short trips and *lanchas* (launches), vessels that are larger, up to 50 GRT and 18 metres in length. Other post-harvest activities relate to the distribution, storage, processing and sale of fish.

Members of the artisanal fishing community participate in pre- and post-harvest activities: women and men, boys and girls, with varied needs and interests, who often do not show up in official statistics even though their tasks form a very important part of the sub-culture of Chilean artisanal fishworkers.

In the current context, this culture is being influenced by changes in the legal, environmental and socio-economic realms. With respect to the above, and to a greater or lesser extent, the issue of gender in productive work, at the levels of decision-making and participation, is being shaped by the evolving coastal zone policy.

Legal recognition of the *caletas* and the maintenance and administration of fish quays, which have been modernized along the 4,500 km national coastline, is creating new roles for men and women in fisheries work.

It is worth noting that until 1997, people in fishing settlements (*caletas*) had no legal right to carry out fishing activities, to make or repair their boats, prepare their fishing gears, or even live there. In 1998, the Ministry of National Defence, together with the National Fisheries Service and the National Commission on the Use of the Coastline, recognized 436 fishermen's *caletas* countrywide (Decree 240 of 1998). This means that these *caletas* can not be appropriated by those who would like to develop tourist beaches etc.

The case (discussed below) of a woman, an administrator of the artisanal fisheries quay of Puerto Natales (in the Province of Ultima Esperanza or Final

Hope) adds yet another dimension to the never-ending and unacknowledged work of women in our country's artisanal fishery. These women exhibit entrepreneurial flair and show hidden depths of personal capacity, creativity, honesty, fulfilment and persistence, as much at the professional level as in the simple tasks of artisanal fisheries.

Zoila Mayorga, a fisherman's daughter, is the Administrator of the Puerto Natales fish quay. After studying to be a kindergarten teacher, in 1995 she was sent to participate in a course for fishing *caleta* administrators, designed for fishermen. The Puerto Natales Artisanal Fishermen's Association (established in 1984), to which the fish quay had been handed over, had no fisherman able to attend the course. In this remote part of the country they put to sea for many days, even up to one or two months. They navigate vast distances to trap, with iron traps, king crabs (*centollas* or *Lithodes antarcticus* and *centollenes* or *Paralomis granulosa*), to dive for sea urchins, and long line for southern hake. In such a context the President of the fishermen's association encouraged and assisted Zoila to participate in this course of specialization.

Afterwards Zoila took on the charge of Administrator of the Puerto Natales fish quay. She formed a team of five women, who had to share night shifts and attend to running of the quay, including operating the radio telephone, 24 hours a day. For six months they worked night and day free of charge. As the members of the Fishermen's Association showed no signs of paying them, two women resigned. Zoila and the two remaining women sent a letter to the President of the Association pointing out that unless they had a contract of work they would not continue in the Administration. This got them a contract. In Chile, in the fish quays, it is generally men who work as professionals, contracted by the fishermen. In some cases they are fishermen who have been trained to carry out these tasks. It is not normal that a woman runs a quay.

As with other women who break the mould in the artisanal fishery, Zoila had to work free of charge and to demonstrate her technical capacity before being recognized in her role. Today she has an in-depth knowledge of the legal framework. She knows the importance of registering catches of fish, sea urchins and crustaceans for SERNAPESCA (the National Fisheries Service of Chile). She knows the relevance of completing, in a timely fashion, the receipts and file copies of the embarkation and landing forms of vessel owners, and of noting the destination of fishery

products. In addition she must provide facilities for investigators who measure and weigh the fish that is landed. It is very important that she completes the daily accounts, along with the status of the finances and of the outstanding debts owed by the Association.



A Fisheries Bulletin provides an annual progress report on the fish quay. Thus in 2001 it is reported that the fisheries terminal was widened, a gangway was installed to provide easier access to the vessels, a guard hut was built, and the communication system (lights, binoculars, radio station, barometer, and searchlight) for people who use the fish quay was improved.

Through SERCOTEC (the State Service for Technical Co-operation which assists small enterprises), fishermen who administer artisanal fishing port infrastructure in Region V (Valparaiso, San Antonio) and Region X (Puerto Montt, Chiloe Island) were sent on field courses to *caletas* to learn about other realities and experiences. In addition workshops were organized on themes such as a) improving the competitiveness of the sector; b) sustainable extraction of marine resources; c) solving social problems of fishworkers and those of their family groups; and d) modernization of public institutions dedicated to promoting production.

Other projects financed a library for children and adults in the *caleta* and reserved space on the Puerto Natales Radio Station dedicated to providing information to coastal communities about the work in the artisanal fishery. This parcel of micro-projects is given shape and is co-ordinated through the Associative project for the promotion of Small Enterprises called "Assistance for the Artisanal Fishermen of the Fishing Quay of Puerto Natales". It is a demonstration of work integration between the professionals of SERCOTEC,

the Members of the Artisanal Fishermen's Association and the administration of Zoila.

Thus work goes on seriously and responsibly even as the hake fishermen set out in their boats for fishing trips that last up to 30 hours, taking the bait (frozen sardine) needed for their task, and whilst the spider crab fishermen go on fishing trips that may last several weeks, taking traps and setting up island camps, and establishing storage systems for traps with crabs so that they can be brought back to Puerto Natales.

In Puerto Natales artisanal fishing is undertaken by 700 fishermen, and it sustains commercial life in the city. When there are problems with fishery resources, the lack of money in circulation is all too apparent. According to Zoila, fishermen are held in higher regard today, and whilst they go off fishing far away, their wives look after the finances and take care of the home.

Shedding light on Zoila's work, in the context of modernization of *caletas* and fishing terminals in the XII Region of Magallanes and Antartida Chilena achieves two main objectives: a) it strengthens interdisciplinary work in pre- and post-harvest fisheries, and b) it promotes self-management as well as the personal and organizational development of economically active communities in the coastal fringe of the country.

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European Union/ Netherlands

Penalized for what?

The shrimp fisher community of the Netherlands face problems in the initiatives they have undertaken for a better life and an environmentally sound fisheries

By Mariet Groen, wife of a shrimp fisherman and member of VinVis, the Women in Fisheries Network of the Netherlands

As I write this, we are facing a big crisis. The price for shrimp is crashing and, at the same time, there is a weekly destruction of thousands of kilograms of small-size shrimps, because of an oversupply in the market. Many of the shrimp fishing enterprises will not survive. My husband is now fishing seven days a week, but our

earnings are so low that we hardly have money left for our daily needs. This morning, when I wanted to pay for my groceries, I discovered I had no money left. I felt so embarrassed. How could this happen in a wealthy country like the Netherlands?

Shrimp fishing is one of the traditional Dutch fishery sectors, accounting for about 20 per cent of the Dutch cutter fleet. In the north of our country, in particular, coastal villages depend on this fishery. The shrimp fishery is predominantly a small-scale sector activity and typically family-based, where women play an important role. Women are mostly responsible for bookkeeping, dealing with banks, and auctions. Some women also go fishing with their husbands.

Some years ago, we faced a similar situation as today. Due to the low prices for shrimp, fishers tried to catch as much as possible, in order to survive. A battle for the survival of the fittest was going on. The cold stores of the traders were completely filled and there was no option but to convert the shrimp harvest into fishmeal. This is one of the worst things that can happen to a fisherman, because a real fisherman fishes to feed the population. It was then that we concluded that this situation should not continue. Shrimp fishers from Denmark, Germany and the Netherlands organized into producers' organizations, and discussed voluntary regulation of the shrimp capture. They decided autonomously to reduce the number of fishing days and to cap the supply of shrimp. With this 'trilateral' agreement, they approached the two trading companies that dominated the European shrimp market and came to a deal about the quantity of supply and a minimum price. The two trading companies would certainly benefit from the deal, because they were now guaranteed supply.

With the exception of one producer organization, all shrimp fishers complied with the agreement. The prices went up and the incomes of the fisher families improved. The fishermen could now come home over the weekends to spend time with their families. After years, my husband, the children and I could go together on a holiday again. Fishermen could now invest in the maintenance of their boats, and young fishermen were again eligible for bank loans to start on their own. Of course, there were still good and bad years, but, in general, we could make a good living from the shrimp fishery. Cold stores were no longer filled to the ceiling with shrimp, there were no bulk-purchase prices, nor destruction of shrimp harvest. Also, our initiatives were praised by environmental organizations.

Alas, all this came to an end. By mid-January this year, the anti-cartel Authority of the Netherlands decided to penalize the shrimp sector, because of our agreement and deal with the trading companies. They said that for years our practice had been putting the consumers at a disadvantage. The fines were exorbitant: Euro 4 mn for the fishermen and Euro 9.7 mn for the traders. We were totally surprised, because of all the approval we had been given until now. We had been working in line with the EU policy, which regards market supply regulation for the benefit of controlled fishing practices as one of the most important roles of the producer's organizations. We also felt it was unjust because small-scale fishermen were being treated like big telecom and oil companies.



The first response of our fishermen was to blockade the fishing port of Lauwersoog, which has the largest shrimp fishing fleet of Europe. The idea was to turn the attention of the government to our cause. Through our women in fisheries network, VinVis, a colleague fisherman's wife and I took the opportunity to hand over a letter to EU-Commissioner Fishler during the Women in Fisheries Conference last January. In this letter, we explained about our problem and asked for help. Fishler promised us a reply, which we received some weeks later. In his reply, Fishler said that the Commission would investigate the matter.

In the Netherlands, we women have worked in close co-operation with fishermen's leaders to approach politicians and government officials to mobilize support for our cause. Many journalists visited our house too. We were ill at ease, because we had no experience with the media. Sometimes we felt misled when some journalist twisted our story, only looking for sensational

news. Often we felt more miserable, because it was very depressing to recount our problems over and over again.

While we were busy with our advocacy campaign on the land, our husbands went to sea fishing. They had to, because of the huge loans that had to be repaid. As shrimp prices collapsed, our husbands had to go for longer fishing trips. We had no family life anymore. Some fishermen ended up with catches that were seven times larger than the quantity of the trilateral agreement. Within a short period, the cold stores of the traders were completely filled and they stopped buying shrimp from the open market, relying instead only on their contract fishers.

After some weeks, the smaller inshore fishers, including my husband, could not harvest anymore. We women went to the bank again and again to ask for new loans or for postponement of repayment. Our husbands were filled with negative energy and our community began to fall apart. Relationships among the fishermen became very tense, because of fierce competition for the resources, and there were acts of aggression against some of the fishermen who were not seen to be in solidarity.

I feel very privileged to live with my husband and children in our very beautiful old fishing village that has a very long historical bond with the sea. Everybody in our village and our region has, in one way or the other, some relationship with fisheries and the sea. That is why I hope that unity will return for the sake of preserving a future for our children and our community. Recently, I was elected as a board member of our local fishermen's organization. I regard my first mission as bringing back unity among the shrimp fisher community and finding support for our cause. I also want to have a family life again. I feel strengthened by the support of our women in fisheries network, VinVis. Also when I am down, I can always call on someone in the network to talk to.

We are now almost six months into the crisis. Thanks to our campaign and the support of the Dutch Fishermen's Organization, our case is being discussed in the national and European parliaments. Everyone now speaks about the importance of our shrimp fisheries for employment, and for historical and social reasons. We hope for a solution, but, for many of us, it may be too late. We try not to lose hope for better times.

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News/ Mauritania

A promising experience

From an article published by Matthieu Bernardon of IUCN Mauritania on the project 'Conservation and Sustainable Use of Mullet'

Women's Day, celebrated in Mauritania, like everywhere else, on 8th March, was the occasion to promote traditional fisheries products processed by Imraguen women. This was part of the IUCN project: "Conservation and Sustainable use of mullets". Presented in labelled plastic bags, the products displayed were those traditionally prepared by women processing the yellow mullet (called here *azol*), *tichtar*, oil, *lekhle* and *poutargue* (dried fish eggs). This first experience involved women from the Imraguen village of Teichott, who were chosen for the pilot project in support of traditional processing.

Micro-credit was made available to Imraguen women processors groups, through the village cooperative, allowing them to purchase the raw fish, process it and ensure its marketing. Additionally, tools for processing the fish were made available in parallel.

The credit, given for a four-month period (from October 2002 till January 2003), was fully reimbursed before the deadline! Substantial benefits were made showing the determination and dynamism of the participants. All groups decided to save 10 per cent of the benefits so that the co-operative could set up a revolving fund.

The participation of Imraguen women processors at the artisanal fair of Nouakchott, organized for the Women's Day is more than a symbol. In the past years, in a context of changes in the Imraguen fishery activity, which has changed from being a subsistence activity to a commercial one, women have progressively been marginalized. This rapid change has had harsh consequences for the Imraguen society whose tradition and culture was based on the traditional exploitation of fisheries resources, and of the yellow mullet in particular.

This experience of traditional processing was not only useful to show that traditional processing can be profitable, but also to give back Imraguen women a central role in their community organization.

Film/ India***Under the sun***

A film recently produced by ICSF documents the plight of the transient fisherfolk of Jambudwip island in West Bengal, India

Jambudwip is a 20-sq km island in the district of South 24-Parganas, in the Indian State of West Bengal, in the Sunderbans delta. Since at least 1955, Jambudwip has been used as a base for fishery operations and as a fish-drying site, mostly by small-scale, artisanal fishworkers. *Behundi jal* or stake-net fishery is the traditional activity practised in different parts of the Sunderbans delta. The largest stake-net fishing operation in the Sunderbans is based in Jambudwip.

However, this traditional source of livelihood and sustenance is now under serious threat. It is being alleged that the seasonal 'occupation' of the Jambudwip island by fishermen and the fish-drying activity is a non-forest activity that cannot be permitted under the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980, without prior approval of the central government. The West Bengal government has been asked to remove all traces of 'encroachment' on Jambudwip island.

While the Fisheries Department of West Bengal has strongly defended the fishermen's claim to the seasonal use of the island for their fishery, the State's Forest Department is bitterly opposed. The fishermen are now living in the shadow of uncertainty. Will their two-generations old fishery be treated as an activity eligible for regularization or will they be summarily evicted when their fisheries are dismissed as ineligible for regularization?

These issues are dealt with in the documentary film, *Under the Sun*, produced by the International Collective in Support of Fishworkers (ICSF) and directed by Rita Banerji for Dusty Foot Productions. The film tackles the issues involved in the stake-net fishery of Jambudwip. It traces the genesis of the standoff between the fishworkers and the government, and analyzes the processes that led to the government action against the traditional fishworkers. It also documents the response of the fishworkers, as well as the actions taken by the National Fishworkers' Forum to help them regain their rights to the fishery.

Copies of the film (format: CD-ROM; duration: 36 minutes; language: English) can be had from ICSF for US\$15 each. Please contact icsf@vsnl.com.

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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.