

Yemaya

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ICSF's NEWSLETTER ON GENDER AND FISHERIES

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From the Editor

Dear Friends

This issue of *Yemaya* brings first hand accounts about women of fishing communities from Africa, Asia and the Pacific islands—women who are entrepreneurs, workers, victims of war, and mothers and members of communities.

From South Africa we get a brief report of the public hearings held in August 2003, on the situation of small-scale and artisanal fishing communities in the Western Cape. Ten years after the first free and democratic elections in the country, we hear about how black and coloured members of fishing communities are still struggling for fair and equitable rights to the resource. The author points out that, for many of these communities who were discriminated against during the apartheid regime in South Africa, the introduction of the new rights allocation system is like a second dispossession. That this issue is very much an issue for women as well—women who are responsible for shore-based processing work and for taking care of the family—has been well brought out. It becomes clear that fisheries is not just about production and harvesting, it is as much about shore-based work, and about communities, social networks and a way of life.

From the Pacific islands, we get an interesting account of how sea plants are being used for medicinal and other purposes, providing local women entrepreneurs and healers with a

source of income. The author points to the enormous potential of sea plants, as food, as medicine, for health supplements and preventive health care, and for agriculture enhancement.

From Sri Lanka, we hear about the difficult situation of women of fishing communities in war-torn regions of the country, their passionate plea for peace and their willingness to move ahead and work towards healing the wounds of ethnic war.

We would like to take this opportunity to inform you that ICSF has just brought out a dossier titled *Gender Agenda*. This is a compilation of articles on women in fisheries, written by researchers and activists, culled out from past issues of *SAMUDRA Report*, the triannual publication of ICSF. The themes covered are wide ranging and include: conditions of women workers in fish processing plants; the lack of gender disaggregated data in fisheries and the resulting policy implications and biases; the impact of globalization and liberalization processes on women fishworkers; the impact of privatization of resources through the introduction of individual quotas on coastal communities; the extent and manner in which women of fishing communities in the North and South are organizing; the need for a feminist perspective in fisheries, and so on.

And finally, we would like to remind you to send in write-ups for *Yemaya* by end of May 2004.



Inside Pages

South Africa.....	2
Benin.....	6
Pacific Islands.....	7
Sri Lanka.....	9,10