



## Milestones

By **Ramya Rajagopalan**  
(ramya.rajagopalan@gmail.com), Programme Associate, ICSF

### An Extraordinary Journey

The newly-released document 'ICSF's Journey with Women in Fisheries' marks a milestone not only in the history of the International Collective in Support of Fisheries (ICSF), an organization that has consistently supported, if not pioneered, work on issues of gender in the fisheries but also in the history of the small-scale fisheries sector as a whole, whose narrative has been made richer and more inclusive on account of it. The document embodies a feminist outlook not just in terms of its content but also in the way it was written—as a collective process with inputs from a large number of members of ICSF who participated actively in the ICSF-Women in Fisheries (WIF) programme and collectively pooled their thoughts and ideas on the basis of their long years of experience in the field.

Co-authored by Nalini Nayak from India, Cornelia Quist from The Netherlands, Maria Cristina Maneschy and Naina Perri from Brazil, and Jackie Sunde from South Africa, the document at one level is a fascinating, regional-

specific account of women's struggles in the fisheries across the world. At another, it reveals how working together enabled these and other women in the ICSF-WIF programme to forge bonds of solidarity that were deeply empowering.

Starting with an account of an extraordinary meeting on the sidelines of the 1984 FAO conference where fisherwomen from Asia and Africa and women from the Small-scale fisheries in France who identified themselves simply as 'wives' of fishermen met and talked to each other about their lives, to its formalization in the early 1990s, and the strengthening and expansion of its activities thereafter, over the years the ICSF-WIF programme has continued to give voice to and create space for women in the SSF. The commonality of issues and the power of women to overcome adversities through collective action is a powerful and inspiring message of the document.

The document may be accessed at <http://www.icsf.net/en/page/1076-History.html>