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# SAMUDRA

REPORT

THE TRIANNUAL JOURNAL OF THE INTERNATIONAL COLLECTIVE IN SUPPORT OF FISHWORKERS



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**Migrant Fishers on Offshore Fishing Vessels**

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**Ocean Health Index**

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**Philippines after Typhoon Yolanda**

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**Global Partnership for Oceans**

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**Seaweed Collectors of India's Gulf of Mannar**

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**A Biodiversity Register of the Sea**

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ICSF is an international NGO working on issues that concern fishworkers the world over. It is in status with the Economic and Social Council of the UN and is on ILO's Special List of Non-governmental International Organizations. It also has Liaison Status with FAO.

As a global network of community organizers, teachers, technicians, researchers and scientists, ICSF's activities encompass monitoring and research, exchange and training, campaigns

and action, as well as communications. *SAMUDRA Report* invites contributions and responses. Correspondence should be addressed to Chennai, India.

The opinions and positions expressed in the articles are those of the authors concerned and do not necessarily represent the official views of ICSF.

All issues of *SAMUDRA Report* can be accessed at [www.icsf.net](http://www.icsf.net)



JACKIE SUNDE

# SAMUDRA

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SUMANA NARAYANAN / ICSF

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Fisherman mending a net  
Painting by Eli Smith

Email : eli@eli.fo

## PUBLISHED BY

the International Collective in  
Support of Fishworkers  
27 College Road  
Chennai 600 006, India  
PHONE: (91) 44-2827 5303  
FAX: (91) 44-2825 4457  
EMAIL: icsf@icsf.net

## ICSF BELGIUM OFFICE

Sentier des Rossignols 2  
1330 Rixensart, Belgium  
PHONE: (32) 2-652 5201  
FAX: (32) 2-654 0407  
EMAIL: briano@scarlet.be

## EDITED BY

KG Kumar

## DESIGNED BY

P Sivasakthivel

## PRINTED AT

L.S. Graphic Prints  
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## ILLUSTRATIONS BY

Sandesh  
(sandeshcartoonist@gmail.com)

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## BACK COVER



Fisherwoman at Can Tho River, Mekong  
Delta, near Can Tho City, Vietnam

Photo : Vishnu Narendran/ICSF



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Chandrika Sharma, Executive Secretary, ICSF and Publisher, SAMUDRA Report, was on board the Malaysian Airlines MH370 that disappeared on 8 March 2014 en route to Beijing, China from Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. Chandrika was on her way to Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, to attend the 32nd Session of the FAO Regional Conference for Asia and the Pacific, representing ICSF. The location of the aircraft is, to date, not known. Chandrika is very much missed by all of us. Along with anxious friends and members of her family, we still remain in hope for her safe return.



SAEED KHAN / FAO

A fishing vessel at Ban Nam Khem  
village in Thailand

# Human Rights of Migrant Fishers

**The Dialogue on Migration, Labour and Fisheries Management, held at Bangkok in December 2013, reached a consensus on the rights of migrant fishers**

**T**he migration of workers has been a global reality for long, but the circumstances and areas of labour migration have changed. While official attempts strive to make migration safe and decent, the fact remains that migrants continue to provide the 'cheap' labour that all kinds of industry are only too willing to engage. The fisheries sector also attracts migrant workers, particularly in the medium-sized offshore fleet where owners try to reap profits by any means, thereby not only harming the fish stocks but also compromising the safety and human rights of migrant fishers on board fishing vessels. The current issue of *SAMUDRA Report* highlights the various facets of this problem as played out in Thailand and captured through a dialogue in Bangkok between all the stakeholders (see page 40).

Migrant fishers—those employed or engaged on board vessels registered in States of which they are not nationals—are often found in many inshore, offshore and distant-water fishing operations around the world. In Asia, migrant fishers form a significant share of the fisher population in Thailand, Korea, Malaysia and Taiwan. Nearly 80 per cent of fishers in Thailand, for example, are believed to be migrants. They include about 100,000 migrant fishers mainly from Myanmar, Cambodia and Lao PDR, making Thailand the top destination for migrant fishers in the world.

The outcome of the Bangkok Dialogue on migration, labour and fisheries management clearly demonstrates the dependence of the Thai fishing industry on migrant fishers. While most of them work on a voluntary and regular basis, significantly many have been trafficked and are engaged in conditions of forced labour on board fishing vessels. The Dialogue discussed the major problems beleaguering migrant fishers on board Thai fishing vessels in Thai and adjacent maritime zones. It examined how existing legal and policy measures address these issues.

The Dialogue recognized that migrant fishers are the engine of Thai fishing. An effective labour standard for the Thai fishing industry could guarantee decent work for migrant fishers—and, importantly, become a rousing example for other policymakers around the world. It can achieve this by guaranteeing direct benefits, especially by regularizing migrant fishers, providing them access

to labour protection and welfare, and ensuring more transparency in remuneration and greater accountability of the fishing vessel owners. A labour standard could also function as a fisheries-management tool to eradicate the perverse incentive of access to cheapened labour to fuel an unhealthy fleet expansion in the region.

There were varying shades of perception at the Dialogue about the scale and scope of the problems of migrant fishers and how to address them. Among the concerns were: Are fishing vessel owners indeed serious about regularizing undocumented fishers? Do fishers have a long-term interest in remaining in marine fishing? Should the reforms begin from the labour-supplying or the labour-receiving end of the spectrum? And, finally, should it be the fisheries department or the labour ministry that ought to take the initiative to meaningfully address these problems?

In spite of differences, there was consensus among the Dialogue partners that the existing legal protection afforded to migrant fishers is grossly inadequate, and that it had to be updated, improved and implemented, employing the best practices, especially some of the key provisions of the ILO Work in Fishing Convention, 2007. Instruments were deemed necessary to improve recruitment practices, to provide hours of rest and to specify hours of work on board fishing vessels, to prepare fishers' work agreements in their own language and to draw up a crew list, to repatriate abandoned fishers, to ensure regular and transparent payments, to protect occupational safety and health, to provide social security, to impart training in the use of fishing gear, to assist with unionization and setting up a complaints redress mechanism, and to open effective communication channels, among other things, towards improving conditions of migrant fishers on Thai fishing vessels. It was agreed that adopting these measures could help address issues related to trafficking and forced labour, on the one hand, and retention of fishers in Thai fishing, on the other.

What was gratifying about the Bangkok Dialogue was that it was able to arrive at a broad consensus on what could have been a contentious issue. Migrant fishers, it was universally felt, are workers with inalienable rights, both labour and human.



# Counting the Uncountable

Conservation International's "Ocean Health Index" is misleading and unfit to provide the basis for action towards improving the health of the world's oceans

Not everything that counts can be counted and not everything that can be counted counts" is a famous quote sometimes attributed to Albert Einstein and sometimes said to originate with the sociologist, William Bruce Cameron.

Conservation International (CI), the nonprofit environmental organization, has, in its document titled *Ocean Health Index* (available at [www.conservation.org](http://www.conservation.org) or [www.oceanhealthindex.org](http://www.oceanhealthindex.org)), spent a lot of time and resources to try and disprove the sentiment behind this quote.

how close or far each country is to a balanced use of the sea."

The "Index by Country" page states: "The Index measures the global state of the world's oceans. The scores tell us what is working and what needs attention. An index score for 221 countries and territories is calculated based on their exclusive economic zones (EEZs). Each EEZ is evaluated by the 10 public goals and is globally ranked according to the average of its 10 goal scores. Compare countries and explore the interactive map or tables below." (see Table)

It is further stated: "Overall scores and individual goal scores are directly comparable between all countries." "A healthy ocean sustainably delivers a range of benefits to people both now and in the future. The Index evaluates the world's oceans according to 10 public goals that represent key benefits of healthy marine ecosystems."

The final results rank Heard and McDonald Island as No. 1 and Iceland as No. 156. Note that Heard and McDonald Island is uninhabited. Iceland, which otherwise is well-recognized for clean waters, well-managed fisheries and good living conditions, is ranked 156th, well beyond Western Sahara (60th) and Bangladesh (112th). Puzzling? Rest assured, there are more surprises ahead. The uninhabitable Clipperton Island in the Pacific scores only a rank of 209, far from the ideal of a "balanced use of the sea".

## Public goals

Consider some of the specifics of the 10 public goals in the Country Rankings: Under 'Coastal Protection' (preserving habitats that safeguard shores: "This goal measures the

The problem is not with CI's attempt or its report but that many use the result as a reference for "how it is".

The problem is not with CI's attempt or its report but that many use the result as a reference for "how it is". Which it is not, as I shall attempt to show with some random examples and comments on the rankings made in the report, which I found hilariously entertaining.

The lead scientific partners in CI's enterprise are the University of Santa Barbara's National Centre for Ecological Synthesis and Analysis and the University of British Columbia's "Seas Around Us" project.

The front page of the document states the single goal: "Establish a new world standard for measuring ocean health". It adds further: "Scientists and marine experts calculated sustainable standards for the many ways we use the ocean, and offer hard numbers to show

This article is by **Johán H Williams** ([Johan-H.Williams@nfd.dep.no](mailto:Johan-H.Williams@nfd.dep.no)), Specialist Director, Norwegian Ministry of Fisheries and Coastal Affairs, Norway

condition and extent of habitats that protect the coasts against storm waves and flooding”), leading the pack are Bangladesh, Benin, Belgium, Netherlands and a few more with a score of 100, while the United States (US) ranks 61 and Iceland, 115. Iceland’s ranking can be explained by the fact that a country that randomly lets volcanoes throw ashes and hot lava down on its coast has to emerge with a low score.

Under ‘Artisanal Fishing Opportunities’ (ensuring access to artisanal fishing to local population: “This goal measures whether people who need to fish on a small, local scale have the opportunity to do so” and/or “This goal measures the degree to which a nation permits or encourages artisanal fishing compared to the demand for fishing opportunities”), Amsterdam Island and Saint Paul Island, Kerguelen Archipelago and South Georgia and South Sandwich Islands lead with scores of 100.

Apparently, the opportunities for artisanal fishing are best in these uninhabited islands. What a pity no one lives there, though there are staff running research stations. With no “demand for fishing opportunities” and no “permits or encouragements”, it doesn’t take a mathematical genius or an Einstein to award a score of 100, which, as promised by CI, is “a hard number offered”. How meaningful is the moot point, though.

Jan Mayen Island in the Northeast Atlantic scores 27 but unfortunately it lacks a harbour, which limits opportunities for artisanal fishing. There are only around 20 people living there who run a meteorology station.

Under ‘Clean Waters’ (minimizing pollution, a goal that measures contaminants by trash, nutrients, pathogens and chemicals), the winner is, again, Heard and McDonald Islands with a top score of 100, together with Kerguelen Archipelago, Bouvet Island and some other uninhabited (and uninhabitable) islands. The United Kingdom is ranked ninth, Egypt, 34, the US, 62 and Benin, 219.

The irony is delicious: Benin is among the best in the world for preserving coastal habitats and

safeguarding shores, and among the worst in polluting the same areas.

Under ‘Coastal Livelihood and Economics’ (sustaining jobs and thriving coastal economies: “This goal measures a country’s ability to maintain coastal livelihoods and economies in 10 marine sectors, from shipping and transportation to wave and tidal energy”), Albania, Bangladesh, Gambia and Liberia are the nations with a top score of 100.

Haiti scores only 40, understandable perhaps in the wake of the problems the country is struggling with after the earthquake. Much worse is the situation in the Netherlands, which is ranked 120, and must clearly put in substantial efforts to clamber up to the level of Liberia.

Norway, with a coastal population struggling to meet the petrol consumption costs on the family’s three cars, scores a rank of 127, slightly ahead of Jan Mayen Island, whose rank of 128 is well-deserved since no one lives there.

**Table: Top 20 countries by rank (Ocean Health Index)**

Selected Countries	Rank	Score
Heard and McDonald Islands	1	94
Saba	2	90
Howland Island and Baker Island	3	88
Kerguelen Islands	4	86
Sint-Eustatius	5	85
Phoenix Group	6	84
Bonaire	7	84
Prince Edward Islands	8	83
Northern Saint-Martin	9	82
Curaçao	10	81
South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands	11	80
Seychelles	12	77
Tuvalu	13	77
Wallis and Futuna	14	76
Aruba	15	76
Vanuatu	16	75
British Indian Ocean Territory	17	75
Croatia	18	75
Norway	19	74
Macquarie Island	20	74

Source: [www.oceanhealthindex.org/Countries/](http://www.oceanhealthindex.org/Countries/)

That Somalia comes out ranked 134th is also not so difficult to understand, but it might be a comfort to the marginalized Somali coastal dwellers to know they enjoy better living standards than their fellow “brothers with arms” in the US, which boasts a prominent 146 rank with respect to coastal livelihood and economies.

Under ‘Food Provision’ (harvesting seafood sustainably: “This goal measures the amount of seafood captured or raised in a sustainable way”), Solomon Islands tops the

only surmise that a professional organization like CI must have undertaken this exercise with a purpose.

And the only purpose I can see is to purposely mislead and misinform. I would urge CI to abandon this “index” and join forces in the challenge ahead to improve and increase the ocean’s ability to produce and provide, in an environmental, economic and socially sustainable manner, more food and other goods for the benefit of our world’s growing population. **3**

**It is difficult to understand why CI continues to revise and publish this absolutely misleading ‘Ocean Health Index’.**

6

ranking, with Heard and McDonald Islands at No.9 and Kerguelen archipelago at No. 15. The uninhabited Kerguelen, which has the globally best opportunities for their nonexistent artisanal fishermen, scores only 15 on providing seafood sustainably. This is most likely due to the bad performance from their nonexistent industrial fishing fleet.

At rank 26, we find Romania, which is well ahead of large seafood producers like the US (ranked 31), Spain (39) and Iceland (75). These three apparently have an unsustainable seafood sector.

Bouvet Island (ranked 147) and Clipperton Island (ranked 149) boast more sustainable seafood production than the world’s sixth largest fishing nation, Russia (ranked 150).

The ‘Ocean Health Index’ is clearly unfit for any serious purpose, as I have argued in meetings with senior CI staff. They admit that the lack of hard facts has made it necessary to use to numerous proxies that give “surprising results”. No hard facts, but hard numbers aplenty.

It is difficult to understand why CI continues to revise and publish this absolutely misleading ‘Ocean Health Index’. Since the work behind it is substantial and costly, one can

#### For more



[www.oceanhealthindex.org/](http://www.oceanhealthindex.org/)

**Ocean Health Index**

[www.conservation.org/global/marine/initiatives/ocean\\_health\\_index/pages/ocean\\_health\\_index.aspx](http://www.conservation.org/global/marine/initiatives/ocean_health_index/pages/ocean_health_index.aspx)

**Conservation International**

# Looking Back, Looking Ahead

The 65-year history of a local committee representing professional fishermen in France reveals an opening up to global concerns on fisheries

*“Homme libre, toujours tu chériras la mer”* (“Free man, you will always cherish the sea”) — Charles Baudelaire

While the exhortation above might remain just as earnest, in many respects, as when he wrote them in the middle of the 19th century, the conditions of access to the sea have changed considerably since Baudelaire’s time. Then, the fishermen of the South Finistère were dependant on the large numbers of oily pelagic fish, whose annual migration caused populations to move towards Guilvinec and Saint Winwaloe. Access to the sea was unhindered, except for those obstacles the elements themselves brought in, which prevented fishermen from leaving the quay more regularly than today. Indeed, modern advancements allow today’s fishermen to head out to sea more often, for longer periods and further away from their home port. A trawler from the Bigouden region carried out the first trawling in the Celtic sea in 1947 and this began a long tradition of high-sea fishing, with the port of Le Guilvinec supplying many boats. And yet free access to a space that is almost infinite is a long-held, though distant, hope.

This article attempts to describe the development, over its 65-year history, of the Comité Local des Pêches Maritimes et des Élevages Marins du Guilvinec (CLPMEM)—the Guilvinec Local Committee of Marine Fisheries and Fish Farming—a body that represents the fishing community of the Bigouden region. This history throws up questions that are, in many ways, universal. For an easier understanding, the history is

divided into distinct chronological periods. But in complex reality, it is quite rare that one period ended before another began.

Born as the result of an ordinance on 14 August 1945, and in a general context of reconstruction, CLPMEM possessed a certain independence of action and decisionmaking vis-a-vis the national committee in Paris (National Committee of Marine Fisheries and Fish Farming, the apex governing body). Financed from a sales tax set by each local committee (on an *ad valorem* taxation on the

...yet free access to a space that is almost infinite is a long-held, though distant, hope.

sale value of fish at auction), this gave the emerging body a certain financial stability.

The goals, at this stage, were to create and manage the collective services dedicated to the profession, to improve training within the sector and to ensure social support. Local newspapers of the day inform us of the concerns of the profession and, beyond, of the body that represented it locally.

The question of the price of fish fuelled worries, and the fishermen called for an end to regulated prices. Production to supply the region was a priority, and regulated prices remained in effect until 1948, to ensure a cheap source of protein.

## Free trade

The question of free trade was also at the heart of debates: the import

This article by **Antoine Fry** ([antoine\\_fry@hotmail.com](mailto:antoine_fry@hotmail.com)), a fisheries researcher with a diploma from Nantes University, has been translated by **Akhila Padnis** ([alias.phadnis@gmail.com](mailto:alias.phadnis@gmail.com)) and **Brian O’Riordan** ([briano@scarlet.be](mailto:briano@scarlet.be))

of Moroccan mackerel, which led to a fall in market prices, provoked demonstrations in the capital in 1950. Despite these grounds for protest, the sector was in a phase of expansion, based especially on technological progress and port modernisation. CLPME threw itself into defending this sector and, little by little, won the hearts of the fishermen.

From the 1970s onwards, the atmosphere changed and new challenges arose. First of all, the issue of fishery resources took

**While the market had long been international, other issues now crossed borders or were imposed on fishing communities worldwide.**

pride of place on the agenda of decisionmakers. The environmental movement was taking shape at the international level and would, slowly, change our understanding of resource management, especially as regards fisheries. These changes materialized with the implementation of 'Blue Europe' in 1983, following the establishment of a distinct Common Fisheries Policy (CFP), which initiated, *inter alia*, total allowable catches (TACs) and quota management of stocks.

Up to this point, the European Commission had adopted various technical measures, including mesh-size regulation, which provoked widespread strikes in the fishing centres in 1976. However, according to then leaders in CLPME, the European programme at first raised enormous hopes that the market would be opened up, leading to the possibility of wider access to European waters. Indeed, it was the European Commission (EC, which became the European Union in 1993), which put an end to the privatization of national waters, which had come about through the establishment of exclusive economic zones (EEZs) in the 1970s.

The EC decided to protect historical fishing rights in community

waters and to share national waters as a common pool. But quite soon, the EC's image began to deteriorate among a profession that found it hard, sometimes, to accept the seemingly arbitrary nature of some measures. In the face of these changes, CLPME took a gamble and co-operated with scientists in order to better understand the workings of fishery recruitment, and, eventually, to adapt practices accordingly.

Along with the Institut Français de recherche pour l'exploitation de la mer (IFREMER)—the French Research Institute for Exploitation of the Sea—CLPME developed a selective trawl. Some fishermen reproached the Committee for this proximity, which they considered a sort of betrayal, given the lack of acknowledgement of their own empirical knowledge. But CLPME stayed faithful to its convictions: it was essential to be a part of the decision-making process in order to prevent ill-adapted cut-back measures. This thinking led to the creation of the Observatoire Economique Maritime (OBEMAR)—the Marine Economic Observatory—in 1983, whose goal was to collect data related to fisheries and make available a basis for discussion with actors who were new to the marine sphere.

In the third stage of its development, CLPME opened itself to the world. Study tours were organized to Denmark, the United States and Japan to observe their fisheries sectors and draw inspiration from the different ways of commercializing and consuming fish. This opening up was based on the view that it was becoming increasingly untenable to view things locally.

### **New activities**

While the market had long been international, other issues now crossed borders or were imposed on fishing communities worldwide. The emergence of new activities along the coast was one example: rising living standards in France, combined with the implementation of four, then five, weeks of paid leave drew tourists to the coasts. This change had an impact on both the ports and on resources.

On the one hand, investments swung towards enhancing the coastline and, on the other hand, tourism brought with it the growth of sport fishing. This is reflected in the deliberations of CLPMEM, which, in 1978, launched the slogan “one line, one hook”. This aimed to limit the catches of high-value white fish by recreational fishermen. Another example of the changes being brought is that CLPMEM had to act to address the issue of treating sludge dredged from marinas. Often discharged in the fishing zones, these jeopardized future fishing, and raised questions about the quality of the water.

The first issue of CLPMEM’s monthly journal launched in 1977 (*Kealouen ar mor* in Breton, “News from the Sea” in French) noted these changes. It also referred to establishing protected zones as well as the economic problems faced by subsidiary ports. On the one hand, fishing pressure intensified; on the other, fishing was becoming increasingly concentrated amongst few operators, slowly reducing the structuring aspect it had on the regional economy. Additionally, during the 1970s, the question of diesel oil became a concern for the economic profitability of the fleets, particularly so after the first oil crisis in 1973.

At the same time, social progress continued and CLPMEM persisted with its mission to put in place and manage collective services (an unemployment fund for bad weather, a review of the status of women, and so on).

The fourth period of CLPMEM’s growth, from 1980 to 1990, was a move from a stable period to a time of crisis. Despite profound changes in the context in which fisheries were evolving, the sector was in good economic health. Production progressed in the 1980s, thanks to technological advancements and rising prices, which guaranteed a comfortable income for fishermen in the maritime sector. In 1985, there were 2,000 fishermen, 700 boats and 8,000 ancillary jobs in the sector. Shipyard order books were full

while the work of extending quays and modernizing of the port fish auctions were in hand. Peak production was attained in 1985-86, which was followed by a decrease in tonnage. Nonetheless, the steady and ever rising prices in the port auctions maintained an optimistic atmosphere.

It was the rupture of this fragile balance between falling tonnage and rising prices in 1991 that threw the sector into one of the most profound crises in its history.

As a result of a decrease in customs duties on marine products, it was possible to import huge quantities of fish from eastern Europe. These relatively low-cost consignments of fish (‘torpedo consignments’, as they were labelled) effectively undermined the market for French fish, which was unable to compete. At the same time, the Mellick plan was put in place: this aimed to reduce the power of the French fleet, at a national level, by 100,000 kw, in order to reduce the overall fishing effort of the European fleet. This led to a drop in the number of vessels in the marine fisheries sector from 700 in 1985, to 461 in 1993, further accentuating the climate of depression in the sector. A strike was organized in February 1993 to save the fisheries and to demand ‘community preference’. Several of the demonstrations are memorable,

RENE-PIERRE CHEVER



Robert Bouguéon, Louis Le Roux and André Le Berre, three of the four last presidents of the Comité Local in Le Guivinec, which has a 65-year history of working with fishers

including the ransacking of Rungis, the national wholesale fish market in Paris, and the massive protests in Guilvinec and Quimper. The fishermen won a temporary reprieve from their social-security contributions and obtained support from the producers' organizations, even though this was well below the demands made during the demonstrations, especially by CLPME. At the same time, the issue of fishing for tuna by drifting gillnets was raised: non-governmental organizations (NGOs) working to

**The 2000s continued to witness these changes in the sector and saw a huge rise in the number of environmental issues which took up increasing space on the agenda of CLPME.**

protect the environment called upon the European Community to ban this activity.

The sector suffered, but its contributions to the issue of selective trawls proved that it could adapt. The square-meshed panels, introduced by a fishermen from the sector, is an example. It allowed the juvenile fish, especially the small hake, to escape, but held back the langoustine (scampi or Dublin Bay prawns), which the fishery targeted. It would be misleading to believe that all the fishermen followed the selective measures from the time they were launched; it took time for its efficiency to be proved before the majority of the fleet converted. This initiative prevented yet another reduction in the mesh size for langoustines.

The 2000s continued to witness these changes in the sector and saw a huge rise in the number of environmental issues which took up increasing space on the agenda of CLPME. Based on the environmental commission of the Committee, the strategy of involving fishermen, which was put in place several decades earlier, continued unchanged. Additionally, the team of elected and permanent staff members had to face an old problem which had now become an urgent issue among

#### *MFV Bugaled Breizh*

**T**he *MFV Bugaled Breizh* is a French trawler from Loctudy, Finistère, whose sinking with all hands on 15 January 2004 remains an unresolved mystery. While it appears likely that the ship was pulled under by a submarine, a specific submarine could not be identified as a number of submarines of several nations were in the vicinity of the accident site. *Source: Wikipedia*

the fishermen—diesel prices. This issue would lead to strikes in 2007, following the removal of a mechanism that compensated for price rises. Though this mechanism was put in place at a national level, it was rejected at the European level.

In January 2004, the affair of the *MFV Bugaled Breizh* shocked the sector and provided fishermen with an opportunity to demonstrate their solidarity with those colleagues who had died at sea, in conditions that remain a mystery.

CLPME acted as civil party in the trial, trying to help the families in their search for truth.

Similarly, in 2005, fishermen from the marine fishing sector wished to respond to the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami that affected the coastal populations of mainly south and southeast Asia. CLPME co-ordinated operations in the marine fishing sector and was honoured by being present in Sri Lanka for the distribution of relief material collected by the fishermen for reconstructing houses and boats.

#### **Links made**

This solidarity movement was part of the tradition of openness to the world which began early on within CLPME and which took shape when links were made with the International Collective in Support of Fishworkers (ICSF) in 1986, on the initiative of the elected and permanent staff. ICSF facilitated exchanges between fisher communities around the world, which provided the framework for the creation of organizations of fishers. The General Assembly of the World Forum of Fishharvesters



The general assembly of the World Forum of Fishharvesters and Fishworkers (WFF) was held in October 2000 at Loctudy, in the heart of the marine fisheries sector of Guilvinec

and Fishworkers (WFF) was held in October 2000 at Loctudy, in the heart of the marine fisheries sector of Guilvinec.

The agenda that WFF has taken on is to address the concerns of fishermen worldwide. Resource management, the role of women in fisheries, and reconciling fishing, tourism and marine protected areas (MPAs) were also topics of discussion.

The strikes of 2007-2008 led to the public powers launching a debate on fishery governance, a debate that certain members of the sector demanded, as they found the functioning of different bodies ill-adapted to modern realities. While the first steps outlined for structural reform raised fears that decision making would become centralized, the final outcome has retained space for manoeuvre for the departmental bodies which are closest to the fishermen.

On the new page being opened by the representative bodies, the agenda includes increasing pressure

on space, arising from new concerns such as the development of marine renewable energy or the setting up of MPAs. The fishermen are not opposed to these projects in principle, but only demand that their rights be given fair consideration as regards their economic and spatial existence. By the same reasoning, they will continue to engage with decision-making bodies and to valorise data collected by the profession itself on the practices and the spatial requirements of fishery activities.

Perhaps, one day, when the archives of CLPMEM are scrutinized, we will have a clearer understanding of this period in French fisheries history, so rich in changes.

#### For more



[www.leguilvinec.com/public/pages/lequartiermar\\_leportdepeche.php](http://www.leguilvinec.com/public/pages/lequartiermar_leportdepeche.php)

**Guilvinec : First Marine District of France**

[www.comitedespeches-finistere.fr/](http://www.comitedespeches-finistere.fr/)

**The Department of the Committee on Fisheries (Le Comité Départemental des Pêches)**

# Life after Yolanda

The Philippines government's proposal for a 40-m no-dwelling zone, in the wake of Typhoon Yolanda, should be participatory and consultative

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The damage to life and property in the Philippines caused by Typhoon Yolanda (international code name: Haiyan) is unimaginable, amounting to billions of pesos, not counting the incalculable trauma that befell survivors. For the fisheries sector, this has meant the loss of fishing boats that are the foundation of livelihoods, the loss of daily catch that feeds people, the destruction of homes that provide shelter, and the loss of family members. On the national level, it has resulted in a major economic setback.

Philippine President Benigno Aquino III publicly pronounced in

year, the no-dwelling zone were further categorized by OPARR into 'safe' and 'unsafe' zone to protect livelihood-related structures.

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) were tasked by the President to formulate an Executive Order on the no-dwelling zone, which should address the said immediate issues.

The long-term and strategic solution to this issue is the passage of a national land-use policy. While the policy guideline is not yet in place, the rights of the internally displaced—such as non-discrimination, the right to an adequate standard of living, and access to basic shelter and housing—should be protected.

Several civil society groups in the Philippines, led by the non-governmental organizations (NGOs) for Fisheries Reform, the Save the Fisheries Now Network, the Campaign for Land Use Policy Now, Alternative Lawyering Group, Asian NGO Coalition on Rural Development and Agrarian Reform, and OXFAM, conducted consultations and discussions with local government units (LGUs) and formulated the following principles in drafting guidelines for such a policy.

## Science-based policy

The policy should be science-based and area-specific. Science should inform the policy. A thorough study should be conducted to generate information such as, but not limited to, high-risks areas vulnerable to geological hazards like tsunamis, storm surges and sea-level rise, among others. Updated maps should be made available and put to use

**...the rights of the internally displaced—such as non-discrimination, the right to an adequate standard of living, and access to basic shelter and housing—should be protected.**

December last year a 40-m no-build zone policy in coastal areas from the highest tidemark. This was the administration's response to the devastating impacts brought about by storm surges generated by the super typhoon Yolanda.

The declaration of the 40-m no-build zone is supposed to prevent people from going back to their houses, which lie in danger areas. In early 2014, Secretary Panfilo Lacson, the appointed Presidential Assistant in the Office of the Presidential Assistant for Rehabilitation and Recovery (OPARR), announced that the no-build zone shall be changed into no-dwelling zone to protect tourism-related structures located within the 40-m zone. In March this

This article is by **Dinna Lacsamana-Umengan** ([dinnaumengan@yahoo.com](mailto:dinnaumengan@yahoo.com)), Deputy Executive Director, Tambuyog Development Centre, Quezon City, Philippines

in determining the safe and unsafe zone.

The adaptive capacity of the area and the community must be taken into account. This will help lessen chances of displacement.

Local knowledge should be tapped into, particularly on changing coastlines, to show that coastal integrity is highly vulnerable in areas with constantly changing coastlines. Substrate type, elevation and wave breakers are factors that need to be considered.

An ecosystem-based rehabilitation approach is required in the no-dwelling zone policy. Policymaking should be participatory in nature. Multi-sectoral, indigenous and community-based processes of assessments, consultations, monitoring and continued education campaigns should be conducted, which are rights-based, needs-based and gender-fair.

In coastal areas, Fisheries and Aquatic Resources Management Councils (FARMCs) ought to be consulted on any proposed area utilization and/or management, either temporary or permanent, to ensure community participation in the decision-making process and to allow community members to identify possible impacts to the fisheries sector and other stakeholders. In indigenous communities, free, prior and informed consent from tribal councils/councils of elders should be secured.

The no-dwelling zone policy should recognize and respect existing legal and customary tenurial rights. In the implementation of the policy, property rights should be protected. The policy should be inclusive, taking into account its impact on sectors and stakeholders.

The policy should not be a standalone policy. Review and harmonization of the no-dwelling zone to existing policies should be done. The policy should form part of the comprehensive land-use plans (CLUPs).

CLUPs are consistent with the State policy on provision for a rational, holistic and fair allocation, utilization, management and development of the

country's land resources to ensure their optimum use, consistent with the principles of social justice and sustainable development.

The policy should recognize the integrity of the shoreline. It is recommended that the following shoreline management principles be taken into account:

- non-disposition or alienation of shore lands and natural resources;
- regulation of private lands and property located on the margins of the coast to ensure public safety, and to protect the shoreline from the deleterious natural processes in the coastline environment, such as, but not limited to, coastal erosion, storm surges and sea-level rise;
- equal and equitable public access to, and from, the foreshore and adjacent beaches and shore lands;
- strict observance and enforcement of legal restrictions on construction of structures along the shore, particularly the setback requirements mandated by law; and
- undeveloped coastal frontage to be considered as highly valuable areas on account of their aesthetic appeal, naturally protective characteristics, support for livelihoods of coastal communities, environmental benefits, public utility and recreational use.

FELICITY MCCULLUM / TAMBUYOG DEVELOPMENT CENTRE



Survivors of Typhoon Yolanda in the Philippines have very little option but to return and rebuild in their original locations

Access to foreshore areas, especially for livelihood, should be secured. Access to the foreshore areas that are traditionally used by artisanal fisherfolk as docking sites, for fish and seaweed drying, as gleaning areas, fish-landing sites, small wet markets and fish gear storage areas, among others, should be given priority. Preferential use of these areas by municipal fisherfolk as guaranteed

**Particularly in foreshore areas, extractive industries should not be allowed as these affect coastal integrity.**

under the 1987 Philippine Constitution and the Philippine Fisheries Code of 1998, should be recognized.

Areas bordering the no-dwelling zone should, likewise, be identified on their best uses consistent with the law, and be ecologically viable, economically feasible, socially acceptable, culturally appropriate and be compatible with adjacent uses. Particularly in foreshore areas, extractive industries should not be allowed as these affect coastal integrity.

The policy should address institutional relationships to prevent overlapping of functions. A co-ordinated effort between the National Disaster Risk Reduction Management Council (NDRRMC), OPARR and other relevant national government agencies is necessary to ensure:

- the conduct of comprehensive post-Yolanda assessments with the active participation of different stakeholders, including local communities, local governments and civil society organizations;
- integration of recovery and restoration plan into the NDRRM Plan, consistent with the NDRRM framework; and
- assistance for LGUs in developing and/or reviewing their plans and frameworks, including CLUPs, Local Climate Change Action Plan (LCCAP), Local Disaster Risk Reduction Management Plan, Integrated

Coastal Resources Management Plan, Ancestral Domain Sustainable Development Protection Plan (ADSDPP) among others.

The roles and responsibilities of government agencies should be clarified. DENR, in co-ordination with relevant government agencies, shall map out the no-build zone areas. DILG, on the other hand, shall provide support to the LGUs in the implementation of the guidelines. The LGUs shall implement the guidelines, incorporating them into their comprehensive land-use plans, CRM plans, DRRM Plan and LCCAP, among others.

The following are the relevant government agencies and their functions in relation to the no-dwelling zone policy:

- DENR: generation of maps on no-dwelling zone, geo-hazards, resources (mangroves and beach forests, coral reefs, seagrass beds), mangrove and beach reforestation areas, and cadastral maps (alienable and disposable lands, government lands, titled lands);
- DILG: technical support for formulation of CLUPs, provision of guidelines on the implementation of no-dwelling zone, and capacitating LGUs on matters relating to the implementation of the guidelines;
- LGUs: formulation and issuance of ordinances on no-dwelling zone, identification of resettlement sites, implementation of the no-dwelling zone policy, DRRM Plan, ICM Plan and CLUPs, engaging stakeholders in assessment, planning and monitoring;
- Department of Social Welfare and Development: provision of livelihood opportunities for affected families/communities, basic social services;
- Department of Public Works and Highways: construction of road networks;
- Department of Agriculture: construction of post-harvest facilities;
- NDRRMC: overseeing formulation of local DRRM Plan;
- Department of Science and Technology: conduct of scientific



The community members of Barrangay Calugcog have come together to rebuild their lives and livelihoods in the wake of Typhoon Yolanda

research and generation of climate maps that are needed in planning;

- OPARR: co-ordination among government agencies in relation to reconstruction and rehabilitation; and
- National Commission on Indigenous Peoples: ensuring the protection of the rights of indigenous peoples.

The National Land Use Act (NLUA) should be passed in the 16th Congress. The NLUA should govern the determination of resource use in terms of four critical policy themes: protection, production, settlement and infrastructure. 3

#### For more



[www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/Housing/Advisory\\_Yolanda.pdf](http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/Housing/Advisory_Yolanda.pdf)

**Human Rights Advisory : Standards on Housing, Land and Property Rights of Populations affected by Typhoon Yolanda**

[bitsinbits.wordpress.com/2014/03/15/understanding-parrs-no-no-build-zone-policy-good-bad-or-what-and-who-will-have-the-final-say/](http://bitsinbits.wordpress.com/2014/03/15/understanding-parrs-no-no-build-zone-policy-good-bad-or-what-and-who-will-have-the-final-say/)

**Understanding PARR's "No-build Zone" Policy: Good, Bad, or What and Who Will Have the Final Say?**

[www.gov.ph/2014/03/14/parr-no-build-zone-policy-not-recommended-in-yolanda-affected-areas/](http://www.gov.ph/2014/03/14/parr-no-build-zone-policy-not-recommended-in-yolanda-affected-areas/)

**PARR: "No-build Zone" Policy not Recommended in Yolanda-affected Areas**

# Making Fishing Fair

**A truly sustainable vision for fisheries needs to be more holistic, protecting human rights in the form of equitable social policies and standards**

**T**he world's oceans are vast, and filled with mystery. Though many of us enjoy seafood or even an ocean view, most of us don't have a clue what happens on fishing boats, let alone under the water.

Unmistakable, though, are the changes brought by globalized industrial fisheries. Major fish stocks have collapsed around the world, fishing communities have vanished, and food insecurity has become a ubiquitous concern. Meanwhile, documentation of human trafficking, forced labour, and other abhorrent social practices along seafood

As FishWise has pointed out, "issues of seafood sustainability and human rights are inextricably linked, not only from an ethical standpoint, but also from a practical one." But momentum has lagged significantly all over the world when it comes to improving social and labour conditions for fishing communities along the seafood supply chain. Indeed, a recent survey conducted by FishWise reveals how little seafood companies may even know about human-rights abuses along their own supply chains.

The world's leading sustainable seafood certifier, the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC), notably lacks social standards. Unfortunately, this means that their iconic blue 'sustainability' check mark can be found on seafood caught or processed under labour conditions bordering on slavery. Social concerns related to inequities inherent in the MSC certification process have also been raised, along with prohibitive licensing and maintenance costs for fishermen.

**Social concerns related to inequities inherent in the MSC certification process have also been raised...**

supply chains is piling up. Too often, 'sustainable fisheries' initiatives ignore inequitable policies and practices that erode the social fabric of our coastal communities.

Connecting the dots between the fish on our plates and the people who catch it is no easy task. Seafood is one of the most heavily traded resources in the world, and most of it flows along a long and slippery supply chain. In the last decade or so, a 'sustainable seafood' movement has grown in many parts of the world to try to bring more transparency to this supply chain.

From wallet-card rating systems, to retail procurement policies to third-party certification, most initiatives have focused on environmental aspects of sustainability.

## International trade

Recently, standard-setting organizations from the fair-trade movement have turned their attention to seafood. Originally aimed at coffee growers, the fair-trade model seeks "to change the behaviours of producers and traders in international trade by establishing production and transaction standards such as environment-friendly production methods, minimum age for work, and fair prices paid to producers, as well as mechanisms to enforce these standards, in order to improve the lives of the producers and their communities".

*This article is by **Sadie Beaton** (Sadie.beaton@gmail.com), Sustainable Fisheries Co-ordinator, Ecology Action Centre, Canada*

Fair-trade certification may seem like a natural fit for small-scale fisheries looking for better value and recognition for their products. However, concerns have been increasing over weaknesses in fair-trade standards and certification processes. As promoting social responsibility is good for corporate bottom lines, fair-trade certifications are at risk of being co-opted. Unfortunately, the leading social and labour standards currently under development for fair-trade fisheries certification seem to be following this trend, aligning with corporate interests and failing to engage small-scale fishing communities.

Luckily, other movements and tools related to equity and social sustainability in fisheries are emerging. As demand grows for more connection to the stories behind our food, the sustainable-seafood movement is broadening. One such movement, Slow Fish, shows some promise to connect the dots around 'good, clean and fair' fisheries. Borne out of Slow Food in the mid-2000s, Slow Fish is active in over 20 countries, working in diverse ways "to promote artisanal fishing and neglected fish species and inspire reflection on the state and management of the sea's resources."

Meanwhile, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) has been building useful guidelines for the recognition and protection of small-scale fisheries. These voluntary guidelines have been drafted with considerable participation from small-scale fishers' organizations from countries around the world, including Canada. These voluntary guidelines call for nations, markets and civil society to respect and protect the human rights of small-scale fishers while developing and implementing policies that impact fishing communities. This would involve rights associated with access to food, fish stocks and grounds, employment, fair wages and an acceptable living standard, along with the right to form and join trade unions.

The US-based Community Fisheries Network has also created elegant

and simple fisheries sustainability standards. Unlike what seems to be happening within the fair-trade movement, these standards have been built with fishing communities "from the bottom up," and holistically address ecological, social equity and economic issues.

Innovative market-based tools like ThisFish are also well poised to contribute to a more inclusive sustainable seafood movement. An initiative of Ecotrust Canada, ThisFish has worked with fishing communities to develop a traceability system that can connect consumers to clear information about who, where and how a participating bit of seafood was caught, and how it travelled to your plate. Recently, the Conference Board of Canada endorsed the concept of seafood traceability as a way to increase fisheries competitiveness.

Direct marketing initiatives, including community-supported fisheries, are also growing more equitable seafood markets. In this model, based on community-supported agriculture, people sign up in advance of the fishing season for regular deliveries of sustainably harvested fish with opportunities to directly interact with local fishing families. Meanwhile, the participating fishing families are allowed greater control of their social and economic conditions, including

SADIE BEATON



Michael McGeoghegan, President Prince Edward Is. Fishermen's Association discusses seafood value chains with processor Linda Walker at EAC's Halifax workshop, 2013

setting a price for their catch that makes small-scale fishing viable.

Small-scale owner-operator fishermen are Atlantic Canada's biggest private sector employer. However, in a marketplace that increasingly rewards large industrial fisheries, these important livelihoods are at risk. Independent fishermen continue to face threats to their fisheries access as individual transferable quotas (ITQs) are pushed their way.


**...a truly sustainable vision for fisheries needs to be more holistic, protecting human rights in the form of equitable social policies and standards.**

Momentum is building among small-scale fishermen to work together (and with other organizations), and, in Canada, a national federation has recently been formed to defend and promote community-based fishing fleets. Protecting owner-operator fisheries from consolidation in the form of ITQs is a major concern, along with the development of new marketing and distribution initiatives. Allocation tools such as community quotas, licence banks and community-based licences are also being explored as ways to protect socially sustainable and resilient fishing communities.

Last October, the Ecology Action Centre (EAC) hosted a two-day workshop in Halifax, titled "Creating a Sustainable Value Chain for Atlantic Canada's Small-scale Fisheries". Fishermen, processors and distributors gathered with market specialists for two days to explore alternative marketing tools that recognize and reward sustainable catch methods while supporting owner-operator fishermen and their communities.

A consensus emerged from the workshop that current sustainability certification schemes do not capture the full range of values represented by small-scale, community-based fishing. Several common values that could be reflected in a regional branding or set of standards were

expressed, including ensuring a fair price for fishermen, maintaining independent owner-operators, sustainable fishing practices, safe working conditions, environmental stewardship and social responsibility.

Sustainable seafood standards are an important tool, and ideally encourage fisheries to move towards low-impact, science-based management and practices. But a truly sustainable vision for fisheries needs to be more holistic, protecting human rights in the form of equitable social policies and standards. Making fishing more fair will involve not only the creation of robust standards, certifications and policy, but also better connections the people who love seafood and coastal communities with the faces and stories that make up the social fabric of our small-scale fisheries. Not to mention a whole lot of working together. 

#### For more



[www.ecologyaction.ca/](http://www.ecologyaction.ca/)

**Ecology Action Centre**

[www.fishwise.org/](http://www.fishwise.org/)

**FishWise**

[www.msc.org/](http://www.msc.org/)

**Marine Stewardship Council**

[thisfish.info/](http://thisfish.info/)

**ThisFish**

# Women for Fisheries

The following Statement was made by CAOPA, the African Confederation of Artisanal Fisheries Professional Organizations, on the occasion of World Women's Day

On the occasion of the World Women's Day, on 8 March 2014, after two days of discussions,

We, representatives of the African Confederation of Artisanal Fisheries Professional Organizations, CAOPA,

On behalf of our national professional organizations from Mauritania, Senegal, Gambia, Liberia, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Kenya, Ghana, Guinea Bissau, Morocco, Tunisia, Burkina Faso, Togo, Benin, Cape Verde and Côte d'Ivoire, which welcomed us,

In the name, particularly, of the women from these organizations, and the communities that depend on fishing for their livelihoods,

We urge the Ministers of Fisheries and Aquaculture of all African countries,

Who will meet from 14 to 18 March 2014 in Uganda, for the second Conference of the African Ministers of Fisheries and Aquaculture, CAMFA,

To take into account our concerns and proposals when they will decide the future of our sector, by voting for the Pan-African Strategy for Fisheries and Aquaculture Policy Reform.

We believe that:

- there are limitations in the legal and regulatory fisheries frameworks in our countries, including in relation to artisanal fisheries, in order to ensure the sustainable management of our fisheries for the benefit of coastal communities and populations;
- ways need to be found to limit fishing capacity in fisheries where access is currently free for all;
- there are good reasons to suspect that illegal fishing is growing in many African countries and that the difficulties in combating it, both in

terms of means and political will, remain huge;

- African artisanal fisheries are increasingly showing their potential, when they are supported adequately, to provide an engine for development that is socially, economically and environmentally sustainable; and
- that the professionals, active in the artisanal fishing sector, and women, in particular, are not sufficiently informed, consulted and involved in the decision-making processes that affect them directly, whether

**...if the women and all of our communities are vulnerable, it is because the fish is becoming rarer and more expensive, and the costs of fishing operations are increasing.**

at national, regional or Pan-African levels.

We are concerned:

- by the growing vulnerability of women in artisanal fishing communities, which does not allow them to fulfill either their role in contributing to food security, through processing and marketing activities, or their responsibilities for the well-being of families and the education of the children;
- that the women and all of our communities are vulnerable, it is because the fish is becoming rarer and more expensive, and the costs of fishing operations are increasing;
- that one of the main reasons for this situation, which has been a trend for decades, is the intensification of fishing in many African countries, by vessels flying foreign flags, or

*This statement was made by the **Confédération Africaine des Organisations Professionnelles de la Pêche Artisanale (CAOPA)**, the African Confederation of Artisanal Fisheries Professional Organizations, on World Women's Day, 8 March 2014, at Abidjan, Ivory Coast*

### **...empowering the artisanal fishing communities through integrated management of the marine ecosystems adjacent to their coastal lands...**

vessels of foreign origin reflagged, chartered or fishing illegally, and the growing export of fish away from our continent, while the needs of African countries in proteins and nutrients from fish are growing, in line with the growth of our population;

- that if part of these foreign vessels are fishing in the context of formal agreements, a large number of vessels also fish under opaque

conditions, often not complying with the legislation in force in African waters—including existing legislation for the protection of the artisanal fishing zone—using highly destructive and unselective methods;

- that foreign vessels are not the only cause of the excessive pressure on African fish stocks. There is also a largely uncontrolled growth of artisanal fisheries in many African countries; and
- that as soon as the fish becomes less abundant because of overfishing, the tendency of desperate local fishermen in some countries, to maintain the level of catches, is to use nets with very small mesh size, or even dynamite.

We call on our Ministers of Fisheries and Aquaculture, in the context of the reform of African fisheries strategy,

To improve governance for a more transparent and participatory fisheries management

- by promoting, with their respective States, the signing of the Aarhus Convention on public access to environmental information;
- by committing to publish regularly information on fishing licences granted and on the contracts and agreements signed;
- by putting in place transparent and independent licence allocation

committees, which include representatives of the artisanal fishing sector;

- by performing independent audits on the effectiveness of the fisheries administrations;
- by recognizing that the organizations representing democratically the artisanal fishing sector professionals are their privileged interlocutors;
- by developing with these organizations a dynamic partnership, including permanent consultation mechanisms with women and men of the artisanal fisheries sector and civil society, founded on:
  - the recognition of the capabilities and the knowledge of the small-scale fishing communities to develop resource management and conservation initiatives; and
  - the ability of the State to share power and responsibilities for management and conservation; to define a policy framework for the management of fisheries; to provide efficient legislation, to ensure its effective application; to provide various types of assistance to communities (means of implementation, scientific knowledge, control means, awareness activities, etc.)
- in particular, the implementation of transparent participatory surveillance schemes at the level of each country, as part of co-management initiatives, should be supported (legal recognition of the professionals involved, incentives, supply of means of communication, exchange visits, setting up of management committees);
- by giving special attention to ensure that women from the communities are represented equally (50 per cent) in decision-making consultations, as well as in the planning and implementation of these decisions;
- by empowering the artisanal fishing communities through integrated management of the marine ecosystems adjacent to their coastal lands, reaching an

agreement negotiated between the users (through their organizations), and the authority responsible for fisheries, which defines the objectives of management, rights and obligations of both parties, and is duly approved by the competent local authorities;

- by encouraging active civil society groups and the media to denounce certain practices that break regulations and are unethical; in this context, freedom of the press must be total;
- where criminal activities are detected, by imposing penalties and sanctions which are of sufficient severity and are widely circulated in the media;
- by stimulating co-operation between different departments within a State, and between African States for:
  - the fight against illegal fishing;
  - the concerted management of shared resources; and
  - the improvement and harmonization of legal and regulatory frameworks, in a way that recognizes local co-management initiatives.

To give priority access to resources for sustainable small-scale fisheries

- by exclusively providing access to small-scale fishermen to the

resources that they have the ability to fish in a sustainable manner;

- by reserving the coastal zone and the continental shelf for small-scale fishery activities, defining clearly the legislation, and protecting it effectively against the incursions of trawlers;
- by acknowledging the artisanal communities access rights in fisheries legislation and in the management of fisheries resources;
- by refusing to privatize and organize a market for access rights to resources, as suggested in the reform strategy, because these systems allow those holding capital to grab the sea's resources which artisanal fishers depends on for their livelihoods, driving our communities to poverty and misery;
- by adopting, at the next FAO Committee on Fisheries, in June 2014, and implementing as soon as possible, the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-scale Fisheries, in order to preserve coastal populations livelihoods, to ensure their food security, their economic survival and the preservation of their cultures;
- by promoting resource recovery through management and the use of

INOUSSA MAIGA



A demonstration by members of the African Confederation of Artisanal Fisheries Professional Organizations (CAOPA) in Abidjan, Ivory Coast, on 8 March 2014

INOUSSA MAIGA



A meeting of the African Confederation of Artisanal Fisheries Professional Organizations (CAOPA). Members called for action on a Pan-African Strategy for Fisheries and Aquaculture Policy Reform

tools like artificial reefs and marine protected areas;

- by promoting the use of new technologies all along the fisheries value chain, for better management and use of the fish resources; and
- by fighting against flags of convenience.

To implement the right to food, and ensure the contribution of fisheries to the realization of this right

- by encouraging their governments to sign the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and to translate it, in particular with regard to the right to food, to incorporate it in their constitution and national legislations;
- by putting in place a pan-African process whereby citizens can appeal to press governments to respect the right to food and the laws relating to it;
- concerning the promotion of aquaculture, which is an important element proposed in the reform of African fisheries policy strategy to increase fish production, we advocate:
  - restriction of the development of aquaculture to non-carnivorous species, which are not dependent on fishmeal produced from our small pelagics, that must be reserved for direct human consumption;

- promotion of small-scale aquaculture, through the establishment of a national agency for aquaculture development; and
- encouragement of private investment in such sustainable aquaculture through capacity-building and awareness-raising programmes, with financial and technical support, and ensuring, through this agency, that coastal populations are integrated in this dynamic and benefit from it.

We hope that our voices will be heard by our Ministers of Fisheries and Aquaculture, and we wish them fruitful debates on the adoption of a strategy of reform for African fisheries that recognizes and protects the rights of our communities to develop sustainable fisheries in Africa. 3

#### For more

[caopa-africa.org/](http://caopa-africa.org/)

#### CAOPA

[www.cape-cffa.org/new-blog/2014/1/7/caopa-on-line-consultation-on-the-panafrican-fisheries-policy-and-reform-strategy](http://www.cape-cffa.org/new-blog/2014/1/7/caopa-on-line-consultation-on-the-panafrican-fisheries-policy-and-reform-strategy)

**CAOPA Online Consultation on the Pan-African Fisheries Policy and Reform Strategy**

# Ocean's Bounty

**The fishers of India's Gulf of Mannar are getting together to ensure sustainable management of the area's resources**

**T**he fishing community in the Gulf of Mannar (GOM), in the southern Indian State of Tamil Nadu, has been at odds with the government over access to marine resources after the declaration of about 560 sq km as the Gulf of Mannar (Marine) National Park in 1986 under the Wildlife Protection Act (WLPA) of 1972. As a result, entry into the National Park and use of any natural resource from the area is prohibited. However, strict implementation of regulations began only in 2000. The National Park lies off two districts (Ramanathapuram and Thoothukudi) where the density of fishing village is high.

The GOM fishing community has earlier called for more community involvement in decisionmaking, and has been engaged with the government agencies at different forums, such as the workshops organized by the International Collective in Support of Fishworkers (ICSF) in 2009 and 2012. However, there has not been much progress in working on community-led management systems until now. Resource management continues to be a government-led process.

With this in mind, the ICSF, with support from the Bay of Bengal Large Marine Ecosystem Project (BOBLME), organized training programmes at two locations (Pamban and Ramanathapuram) in the GOM in October 2013. The objectives were to enhance the capacity of the community, drawing on their traditional and experiential knowledge and institutions, to relate their knowledge systems with an ecosystem approach to fisheries; explore and propose ways of enhancing sustainable and

equitable resource use, and the role that communities can play; and engage with the functionaries responsible for fisheries and the environment, towards developing a common vision and convergence in perspectives for achieving conservation and sustainable use of resources.

In the GOM, the ICSF has been working for several years with the Ramnad district Fishworker's Trade Union (RFTU), and People's Action for Development (PAD), a civil society organization, on resource management. The fishing community

**The fishing community in the area, despite being scattered geographically, is politically and socially cohesive.**

in the area, despite being scattered geographically, is politically and socially cohesive; the issues and problems were thus quite well-known to all the participants. The focus of the programme was on developing community-led proposals for resource management.

## **Rich biodiversity**

The GOM is a shallow bay with coral reefs and seagrass beds, and includes coastal waters and 21 uninhabited islands. The Gulf is a biodiversity-rich area and is estimated to have the largest dugong population in Indian waters. It is also home to sea turtles and sea cucumbers. The waters around the islands support several species of seaweed, some of which are collected by women from the fishing community and sold to

*This report has been written by **Sumana Narayanan, Ramya Rajagopalan and Vishnu Narendran** ([icsf@icsf.net](mailto:icsf@icsf.net)), ICSF*

local traders and thence to factories where agar is extracted.

There are about 125 fishing villages (31 villages in Thoothukudi District and 94 villages in Ramanathapuram District) and 35,000 active fishers (including women seaweed collectors) and some 4,500 divers in the GOM. The fishing community here, as in the other maritime States of India, is not homogenous; members belong to various castes. These

**Each group used the framework questions as a basis for their brainstorming sessions and discussions on various issues...**

communities have distinct social and cultural governance structures and traditional practices. Community institutions are mostly organized along caste, kinship or religious lines and play an important role in resolving conflicts, regulating and allocating resource use, enabling equitable access to resources and providing some form of social insurance. Besides the traditional organization of fishing communities, members are also organized into craft and gear groups.

The two training programmes attracted 187 participants. They were divided into groups according to their livelihood activities. In the first location, the groups were fishers and seaweed collectors and in the second, sea cucumber divers, in addition to the other two categories.

Participants were provided with a set of framework questions on their desires for the area's resources; the kind of regulations required; how these can be communicated, monitored, evaluated, and complied with; and the type of dispute-resolution mechanism needed. At the outset, Robert Panipilla, an independent researcher who is currently preparing the first marine biodiversity register for the Kerala State Biodiversity Board, made a presentation on his research documenting the traditional knowledge of fishing communities in

the south Indian State of Kerala. B Johnson, a fisheries scientist from the State-run Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI) spoke on the concept of an ecosystem approach to fisheries. A third presentation on sea cucumbers was made in Ramnath by P S Asha of the same institute.

Following the presentations, discussions within the three groups—fishers, sea cucumber and seaweed—began. The fisheries group consisted of those who do not collect/harvest seaweed or sea cucumbers. Each group used the framework questions as a basis for their brainstorming sessions and discussions on various issues like access to the islands, duration of the fishing ban, the kinds of fishing gear used, protection for endangered species, and the value of community regulations. Discussions culminated in each group presenting its management proposals. The resolutions/proposals from the communities were grouped under various subheads such as 'regulations', 'compliance', 'monitoring', 'conflict resolution' and 'review of plans'.

The fishers group had intense discussions on the variety of gear currently used and their impact on marine resources. There was a general acceptance that some gear, such as *kedai valai* (a set net, with no mesh size regulation, left overnight in the sea), adversely impact the marine ecosystem. There was a great deal of discussion on why such gear is used even though their negative impacts are widely known. One participant said that it was one thing to point fingers at the government but quite another to get the community to look inward for self-analysis; so many things are 'easy' to do, which is why *rettai madi* (pair trawl) and *surukku madi* (ring seine) are common. But do they actually help the community?

### **Self-enforcement**

An outright ban on such gear is difficult as it would affect the community's livelihood. Therefore, it was agreed that, to start with, the use of such gear must be reduced in a

self-enforced manner (that is, by the community). The fishers group also listed the various bans imposed by the State and wondered whether they are required or not. The consensus was that some bans, like those related to accessing the islands and collecting sea cucumbers, need to be lifted.

The fishers group hastened to add that access to these resources must be regulated. The community has always protected the resources in and around the islands as the importance of these spaces is recognized. Non-fishery threats to the marine and coastal ecosystems, such as industrial pollution (in Thoothukudi district), were also highlighted, and the government was called upon to counter these.

The sea cucumber divers group wanted three species—*Holothuria atra*, *H. scabra* and *Bohadschia marmorata*—to be delisted from Schedule 1 of the WLPA, and some system of regulated collection (licensing) with government support, similar to *chank* collection was done in colonial times, be permitted. Under the WLPA, species can be listed in one of several Schedules, which provide a range of protection for the species. Schedule 1 species have the highest level of protection and include sea cucumbers. Sea cucumber does not have a local market in India, and is meant for export.

Seaweed collection, a livelihood opportunity introduced by the State that the women of the GOM have been following for a few decades, is not illegal but the islands where the seaweed grow are now off-limits. However, the women continue to collect seaweed, running the risk of encountering Forest Department patrols. The women seaweed collectors noted that, for the past five years, they have had in place several self-regulation measures; nonetheless, they admit to being amenable to discussing how they can ensure more sustainable collection of seaweed.

Over the years, the women said, the number of families collecting seaweed has increased, which is reason enough for regulation. The

number of collection days has been reduced from 30 to 12 per month, allowing time for the seaweed to regenerate.

Sometimes the women miss a day or two in the designated 12 days because of illness or other family-related matters; yet, they do not compensate for such missed days. In addition, they do not use metal scrapers to collect seaweed. They use their hands.

The flipside of this is that the dead corals cut the women's hands, said a participant pointing to old scars on her fingers. So the women now tie rags around their fingers before collecting the seaweed.

The seaweed group also discussed at length the feasibility of setting up infrastructure for adding value to the seaweed by producing agar. A resource person detailed what this would entail—a shed, large containers for the seaweed, electricity, water and labour. After much discussion, the women decided that this was not a doable option as freshwater is a limiting factor.

All the groups highlighted the existing community regulations such as the ban on use of dynamite and poisons, and the initiative of the women of Chinnapalam village to collect seaweed only 12 days a month (instead of almost every day, as was the norm earlier). They also noted

VISHNU NARENDRA / ICSF



Women seaweed collectors at ICSF-BOBLME training programme at Ramanathapuram, Tamil Nadu, India

N VENUGOPALAN / ICSF



Women seaweed collectors of Bharathi Nagar fishing village in Ramanathapuram, Tamil Nadu, India

designated persons within the village. However, for scientific inputs, they would approach researchers. It was felt, for instance, that it would be useful to monitor fish catches, for which research organizations could devise a simple protocol that the community can follow. The women seaweed collectors were also willing to discuss with scientists how to modify collection so as to ensure regeneration. Officials from the Forest and Fisheries Departments also attended the final session of the training programme and responded positively to the demands and management plans proposed by the community.

The GOM fishing community now plans to enter into a dialogue with the State, armed with the proposals for resource management and governance that were suggested at the training programmes. In preparation for discussions with the State, the community is currently holding intensive, village level discussions on the outcomes of the training programme so as to ensure that the proposals are truly community-led—namely, that all members of the community support the proposals and are aware of them. 3

that new regulations must come from within the community, particularly at the hamlet level (and not at the revenue village level) as the community's traditional governance systems can enforce these regulations effectively. For monitoring, implementation and evaluation of regulations, committees at various levels—hamlet, *panchayat*, district, etc.—need to be formed.

There was much debate on whether the union, the RFTU, should spearhead these moves. It was, however, decided that the union was not the appropriate platform as not everyone in the community are members. The hamlet and its traditional institutions would be ideal, participants felt. The groups noted that in case of inter-village problems, a dialogue would be entered into, and for larger issues, the State would be called on to intervene, if needed. For all the groups, a common complaint was the lack of access to the 21 islands. Records indicate that the community has been using the islands at least since the early 20th century. Participants shared memories and stories of families camping and fishing off the islands. Mention was also made of leases given to community members to harvest coconuts or other produce.

The groups decided that monitoring too would be done by

#### For more

[mpa.icsf.net/en/page/633-India.html](http://mpa.icsf.net/en/page/633-India.html)

**Social Dimensions of Marine Protected Area Implementation in India: Do Fishing Communities Benefit?, Chennai, 2009**

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[www.icsf.net/en/cds-videos/EN/article/20-women-seaweed-c.html?limitstart=0](http://www.icsf.net/en/cds-videos/EN/article/20-women-seaweed-c.html?limitstart=0)

**Shifting Undercurrents: Women Seaweed Collectors of Gulf of Mannar, India**

# United We Fight

**The first migrant fishworkers' union in Taiwan has come a long way in establishing rights for workers**

Even as migrant workers increasingly form the engine of the fishing industry in Asia, they remain a very exploited group, denied the possibility of organizing themselves as workers in several Flag States. In the early-1990s, the International Collective in Support of Fishworkers (ICSF) attempted to address the problems of Filipino migrant fishers aboard Taiwanese fishing vessels but not much progress was made. Subsequently, ICSF provided important inputs to the process leading to the Work in Fishing Convention, 2007, of the International Labour Organization (ILO).

The following interview with Allison Lee, Secretary-General, Su-Ao Migrant Fishermen's Union, Taiwan, was conducted at a recent dialogue on labour, migration and fisheries management, organized in Bangkok.

## How did you get involved with migrant fishworkers?

Actually, I don't know much about fishing. I was working with foreign spouses in Taiwan who all have problems of integration. My husband, who is not a migrant worker, is a Filipino. I married him when I visited the Philippines. That was when I came to realize that illegal workers exist. Since I was then working in the government's Department of Labour, I began to look into the issue. From the cases that came to my attention, I understood that there is no law to protect migrant workers who could not form unions in Taiwan. I was taken aback when the workers told me about how they are exploited by Taiwanese skippers. I quit my job and, through the Labour Rights Network, began to propose amendments

to the Employment Services Act. That was around 10 years ago. In 2012, we finally got the Act amended. Although the Act is meant for Taiwanese nationals, it includes special categories. Article 46.7, for instance, covers crew members of merchant vessels, while Article 46.8 covers marine fishing. The Act enumerates service conditions too.

## So how did you build the union?

It wasn't easy. Most of the migrant workers are recruited by agents who hold them in bondage. But once a worker loses an arm in a boat accident, for instance, he's dismissed. I took up one such case and managed to get a compensation of 3 mn Taiwan New Dollars (TWD), almost US\$3,000, as well as money for his passage home. That case made the workers believe in me and trust the rule of law.



Allison Lee, Secretary-General, Su-Ao Migrant Fishermen's Union, Taiwan, is a pioneer in the struggle for migrant workers' rights

**Most of the migrant workers are recruited by agents who hold them in bondage.**

The workers are largely ignorant of the Act and their rights. Even the government departments do not understand the complexities of labour in fishing and don't bother to take interest to see that the law is implemented.

Since my husband is from the Philippines, I took his help to explain the issue to the workers. As each case of abuse came to my notice, I understood better the problems of the workers, which I conveyed to them. We soon began to hold meetings

*This interview was conducted in Bangkok in December 2013 by **Nalini Nayak** (nalini.nayak@gmail.com), Member, ICSF*

ALLISON LEE



Filipino workers, members of the Su-Ao Migrant Fishermen's Union, on board a Taiwanese distant-water fishing vessel

with them with the idea of forming an organization of workers. That was not easy since they are often out at sea for long fishing trips. The Filipino workers are more politically conscious and, aware of their rights, they are quick to take initiatives. In February 2013 they registered the Yilan Fishermen Labour Union. Regular meetings are now conducted and, with the support of a foundation, the union has been able to set up an office and lodging for the workers to stay when they are on land. As of now only Filipino workers are members of the union. But the majority of migrant workers on the fishing vessels are Indonesian, so we need to find a way to organize them too.

**Can you tell us a bit more about how the new law protects the rights of the migrant workers?**

The Employment Services Act, 2012 lays down several conditions for workers who must be legal migrants holding official documents (like passports) from their country of origin. The new law now mandates a work contract that clearly spells out their conditions of work, the remuneration and social-security benefits due to them, as well as conditions for repatriation. Earlier, the workers were dependent on agents who received a

cut from the employers and passed on only a pittance to the workers. But today, under the new law, a minimum wage has been declared and work conditions specified in the contracts.

**What can the workers do if these conditions are not respected by the employer?**

There is a helpline that the worker can call. Once a case is registered, it is referred to the respective labour bureau. The government pays for interpreters to represent the worker. Earlier, the agents used to act as interpreters, which meant that the workers rarely got a fair deal. Now, however, either I myself or some other union member functions as the interpreter, and so we are able to ensure that the case is well represented and the worker has a fair chance of getting his due.

According to the new Act, a migrant worker can work only for 12 years, after which the work contract expires. The idea is to ensure protection of workers during their employment period in Taiwan, allowing them to save enough money to return home to start a new life. Migrant workers are discouraged from marrying locals during their employment period here, and should they do so, they can claim no rights to settle in Taiwan. 3

**For more**

[www.taiwannews.com.tw/etn/news\\_content.php?id=2230091](http://www.taiwannews.com.tw/etn/news_content.php?id=2230091)

**First Migrant Workers Union Formed in Taiwan**

<http://laws.cla.gov.tw/eng/EngContent.asp?MsgID=68>

**Employment Service Act, 2012 Taiwan**

# The Sea around Us

**In an innovative attempt, researchers in India have roped in traditional fishers to help them prepare a biodiversity register of the sea**

**T**he south Indian State of Kerala has about 38,828 sq km of land and 13,000 sq km of sea (up to 22 km) under its jurisdiction. As early as two centuries ago, studies have been done on the specific characteristics of this area and the natural resources in it.

Although minute details are available of the types of land in Kerala, that is not the case with the sea. There are many difficulties involved in doing a detailed study of the sea.

However, generations of traditional fishers, who earn their livelihood from the sea, know the environmental specificities of each nook and corner of the sea because of their work experience. This knowledge has been transferred down the generations not in any written form, but orally.

It is in this context that we should examine the call given by the United Nations (UN) to its member countries to take steps to collect and store information on the biodiversity of the sea, based on traditional knowledge.

Realizing the importance of this, the first step taken in India to

and biodiversity of the sea on the basis of the traditional knowledge of fishers was initiated in Kerala.

A sea area of around 440 sq km, along a 20-km-long coastline from Puthukurichy to Valiyathura in Thiruvananthapuram District, was chosen for the pilot study.

Protsahan, a community-based research initiative, undertook the work at the request of the Kerala State Biodiversity Board (KSBB).

The study had three major objectives:

- to prepare a register of the ecology and biodiversity of the sea based on fishers' traditional knowledge;
- to identify and prepare, with the help of fishers, location maps of the natural reefs in the seabed, which are the natural dwelling areas of marine living organisms, and enhance the sea's productivity; and
- to collect information on the living organisms in the area, classify them with the help of experts and prepare a register of them. Apart from these, information would also be collected on coastal vegetation, beach-based living organisms, shore-line changes, sea

**...the first step taken in India to study the ecological specificities and biodiversity of the sea on the basis of the traditional knowledge of fishers was initiated in Kerala.**

birds, estuaries, sea pollution and so on.

The methodology of the study was to collect data directly by travelling together with traditional fishers to their specific working spots in the sea, while also interviewing them en route. The research team members, who are also from the coastal fishing community of the study area and could thus understand the many colloquial terms and local names that fishermen use to describe what they see, sought the active collaboration of skilled fishers with deep knowledge of the hidden artefacts of the sea. Oral documentation of the traditional knowledge related

*This article has been written by **Robert Panipilla** (robert\_potsplants@yahoo.com) and **Aneesha Ani Benedict** (aneeshaani5@gmail.com), the study team members of Protsahan*

to the bio-ecosystem of the seabed was done.

The study team undertook many sea voyages with fishers. Data was collected on the shoreline changes and the different species of fish caught in various seasons at different depths and areas. Data on beach creatures, vegetation and seabirds were also collected. The KSBB Chairman, Oommen V Oommen, the Head of the Department of Aquatic Biology of Kerala University, Biju Kumar, and Protsahan members also came along on some trips.

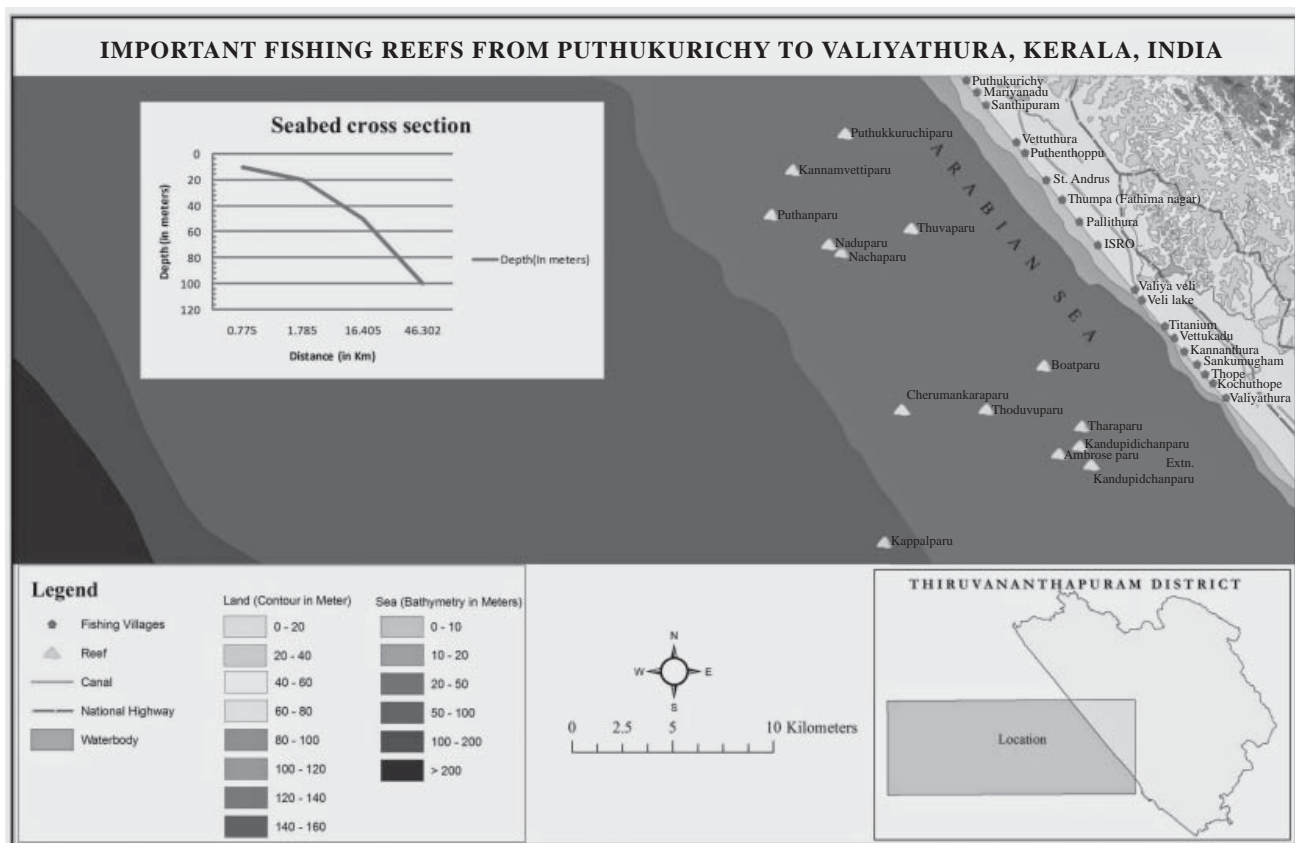
The study revealed the deep knowledge that traditional fishers have about the different ecosystems of the seabed area of the coast. For example, it was possible to classify, on the basis of specific features, the seabed into 'sandy seabed' (locally called *madakal*), 'clayish seabed' (*chenikal*), 'hard floor seabed' (*tharapparukal*) and 'high-surface areas' (*parukal*). The Marine Biodiversity Register (MBR) that resulted from the study also incorporated visual documentation, including paintings and pictures.

Perhaps the most interesting traditional knowledge of fishers in

the area is their navigation skills that help them seek out the exact locations of various reefs without the aid of any sophisticated devices. This traditional knowledge is called '*kanicham*' (triangulation method). The study area, which has 13 important reefs with unique features, was documented using Global Positioning System (GPS). The results are so vivid that even a layman can understand the features of the hidden seabed and also locate them.

Floor reefs are flat, hard grounds in certain specific areas of the seabed that form the habitat of diverse vegetation and small living organisms as well as varieties of medium- and large-sized fish species. On the basis of the fishers' traditional knowledge of the sea, floor reefs can be considered an important habitat for many types of marine species.

During the period of the study, around 50 floor reefs were identified, of which 15 were studied in detail and used as specific locations for collection of materials. Twelve species of black corals and soft corals and 10 types of sea fans were identified.



## An interview with Robert Panipilla

**Can you tell us briefly about the hook-and-line fishers in Thiruvananthapuram District, in the context of your own parents' in-migration from Kanyakumari?**

Most of the hook-and-line fishers in Thiruvananthapuram District (in Kerala State) had their origin in Kanyakumari District (in Tamil Nadu State), though before 1950 both Kanyakumari and Thiruvananthapuram were part of the erstwhile Travancore kingdom. There are two categories of hook-and-line fishers. One is the more skilled reef fishers who target large species like perches, sharks and rays in deeper waters with the help of large-sized hooks. The other targets small- and medium-sized varieties like horse mackerel, mackerel and squid, usually in inshore waters, with the help of small-sized hooks. My father came from Kanyakumari to Valiyathura, close to Thiruvananthapuram city, in the early 1950s. He was a skilled deep-sea hook-and-line fisherman. Even before him, some hook-and-line fishers had already come and settled in Thiruvananthapuram.

My father was the first fisher in Valiyathura to introduce artificial baits. But he and his colleagues faced stiff opposition from other fishers, including those who had come from Kanyakumari earlier and were using only natural baits. The opposition was more out of jealousy, as my father and the new group of fishers were getting good catches. Some of the fishers even said that the use of unnatural methods was against the tenets of God. But good sense ultimately prevailed and others began using artificial baits.

The introduction of new innovative techniques in fishing invariably results in conflict and opposition. The introduction of nylon nets is a case in point. These days, though, the introduction of new techniques often leads to overfishing. This year, some fishers introduced use-and-throw baits, in the form of glass tubes with luminescent liquid inside, to attract and catch ribbon fish in deeper waters. Some old hook-and-line fishing methods (such as '*mattuchoonda*' i.e. Longline) have disappeared as the target species, like some varieties of sharks and rays, have been overfished and are more or less extinct.

**Can you point out the landmark changes or developments among the hook-and-line fishers in terms of technology used?**

First of all, the introduction of '*chillamaram*' (*Albizia* sp.) as the wood for *kettumarams* (catamarans) was a major change in the 1950s. It increased the size, capacity and life of the *kettumarams*. Then came the introduction of three-cornered sails for propulsion of fishing crafts. They helped to make use of multidirectional winds. The latest major change, which is a continuing one, is the introduction of artificial baits in hook-and-line fishing.

**Can you describe the special traditional skills of hook-and-line fishers? There is a saying that a good hook-and-line fisherman has eyes on his fingertips. How far is this true?**

It is not just one or two skills that these fishers possess. Most of them have a variety of complex skills, which include navigation and fishing techniques, as well as an understanding of the nature and characteristics of the sea and seabed. Most of the traditional fishers have a good understanding of the different types of winds, currents, waves, breaking of waves, fish shoals and so on. But the complex skills of the hook-and-line reef fishers is a class above these ordinary fishers. First of all, they have the skill to locate the reefs with ease and precision, even though today's fishers have started using GPS.

However, the skill of the hook-and-line fisherman to identify the particular fish that just got trapped on his line is something unique, which cannot be replaced with modern technology. These fishers can identify the exact species of fish caught by observing its reaction to the bait and the hook. They can almost feel the reaction on the tips of their fingers.

I will explain this with a recent experience. During one of our study trip voyages into the sea, Dr Oommen, the Chairman of KSBB, accompanied the fishers. After reaching a specific reef, the fishers started fishing with their hooks-and-line. After a few minutes, a fisherman announced that a medium-sized *kozhuva para* (*Carngoides gymnostathus*) has probably been caught by his hook. We could see him testing the line and paying it out in a particular manner. Dr Oommen asked him how he knew the fish caught was a *kozhuva para*? The fisher replied that he could sense it from the way the fish was struggling with the bait, which he could feel in his fingers. When the line was pulled up, the fish caught turned out to be a *kozhuva para*. Though impressed, Dr Oommen doubted whether the fisherman could predict his next catch with equal accuracy. His next catch, the fisherman announced before reeling in his line, seemed to be a *kalava* (rock cod or grouper). He was spot on.

The fisherman explained that different fishes respond differently to the bait. Some come near it and spend time nuzzling against it or feeling it up before gulping it down, which is when they get caught. Some species are particularly greedy and swallow the bait immediately. The struggles put up by different species after taking the bait vary too. It is from these longtime observations and felt experiences that the fishers have learnt to predict the particular species of fish caught in their hooks, relying on the sensory feelings in their fingertips.

**You had some experience in the introduction of new types of artificial reefs some decades ago. You also tried to involve some scientists and government institutions in that exercise. Can you share your experiences and insights about this?**

A few decades ago, the traditional hook-and-line fishers tried on their own to create artificial reefs as fish aggregating devices (FADs). These were collectively made and managed by fishers' groups. Stems and leaves of coconut trees were largely used for the FADs. When I was working in an NGO in the late

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1980s, we interacted with these fishers and helped create larger and better structures of artificial reefs. Various types of triangular-shaped concrete models were tried which proved successful. Two scientists from the CMFRI centre at Vizhinjam collaborated in the effort. We also tried to assess the changes in and around these artificial reefs over the period, and the varieties of fish using these structures as their habitat. But we realized that the ability of the local scientists were limited, as many of them did not even know how to swim or dive. I remember some of them were so afraid of the sea that they forced us to take them back to the shore in the midst of a trip. Fortunately, we managed to get the help of two marine scientists from the United Kingdom (UK) who documented the changes over different time periods with the help of underwater cameras.

I think many of our marine scientists are interested only in land-based research inside laboratories. They do not wish to interact with the fishers and learn from them.

Providing artificial reefs is now part of the official programme of the Department of Fisheries in Kerala. However, implementation is poor because of the skewed attitude of officials towards the fishers.

**What was your experience in preparing a biodiversity register of the marine environment of part of Thiruvananthapuram District?**

For me, the work was not something totally new, but more or less a continuation of my longstanding involvement with fishers and fishing communities. Documenting the traditional knowledge of our small-scale fishers is a passion

for me. I also realize that it may not be possible to do this a few years from now, as the situation on the ground is changing very quickly and we are in a transitional period. That is why I have been spending time, for a few years now, documenting the traditional knowledge and skills of our fishers. Hence, when Protsahan and KSBB asked me to prepare a biodiversity register as a pilot programme, I was really happy and jumped at the opportunity.

In the vast and complex world of sea fishing there are several opportunities to observe new things and gain fresh insights. This particular study helped me to learn more about the importance of '*tharapparuka*' (hard floor seabed) for the productivity of our seas. Earlier, my focus was only on the rocky reefs and their characteristics. I believe there's still a lot more to learn about our sea and the life in it, and I'm convinced that one can do it only with the help and involvement of our traditional fishers.

In this particular study, my colleague was a girl from the fishing community, who is also a college student pursuing a degree course in biotechnology. I am very glad to report that her involvement in the study was an enriching experience for her too. She got an opportunity to present a paper on fishers' traditional knowledge at the National Biodiversity Congress held in Kerala. From an ordinary student, she soon became an exemplary product of the college, whose authorities conferred on her an award for 'innovative initiative'.

—Robert Panipilla ([robert\\_potsplants@yahoo.com](mailto:robert_potsplants@yahoo.com))  
was interviewed by A J Vijayan ([vijayanaj@hotmail.com](mailto:vijayanaj@hotmail.com)) of Protsahan, Kerala, India

Nearly 100 molluscs, 30 to 35 crabs, many shrimps, star fishes, murray (locally called *vlanku*), eels, sea snakes, 30 *manthals* (*Crossorhombus azureus*), *kadanthals* (*Choridactylus multibarbus*, *Thysanichthys* sp., *Pterois russelli*) and *petha* (*Antinnarius nummifer* sp.) were also identified, apart from many common fishes. All these species were classified with the help of the Department of Aquatic Biology, University of Kerala.

Perhaps the most important outcome of the study was the identification of six new marine species (five of which were found for the first time in Kerala and one for the first time in India). About 15 species were submitted to the University of Kerala for further study and analysis. Apart from some endangered fishes, other rare species of fish, sea birds, sea snakes, beach crabs and soft corals were also identified.

On the whole, the study reconfirms the value of the traditional knowledge of fishers. Our traditional fishing communities, just like forest-dwelling tribals, are a rich storehouse of traditional knowledge acquired over eons and passed down through generations. They, and their precious knowledge, need to be preserved.

**For more**

<http://keralabiodiversity.org>

**Kerala State Biodiversity Board (KSBB)**

[www.nbaindia.org](http://www.nbaindia.org)

**National Biodiversity Authority**

# Human Rights First

## A recent Technical Consultation discussed the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-scale Fisheries (SSF Guidelines)

**E**ighty-eight Members of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), and representatives of nine inter-governmental organizations (IGOs) and around 80 civil society organizations (CSOs) and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) participated in the Technical Consultation on International Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-scale Fisheries, held in Rome over two sessions, during 20-24 May 2013 and 3-7 February 2014.

The Consultation followed the forms and procedures of the FAO Committee on Fisheries (COFI). The Members said the Guidelines should be applied within the context of each country. The Chairperson noted, at the outset, that the outcome of the Consultation would become a Chairperson's text if the review of the document (No. TC-SSF/2013/2) was not completed by the conclusion of the session.

The resumed session began discussion with Chapter 7 of TC-SSF/2014/1, related to value chains and post-harvest and trade, followed by discussions of Chapter 8 on gender equality, Chapter 9 on disaster risks and climate change, Chapter 10 on policy coherence, institutional co-ordination and collaboration, Chapter 11 on information, research and communication, Chapter 12 on capacity development and Chapter 13 on implementation support, monitoring and evaluation. It also opened up for discussion square-bracketed or partially agreed upon paragraphs from chapters discussed in the May 2013 session.

The objection to the term 'governance' was mainly from one

Member State. Its delegation stated that the term has not been properly defined anywhere and thus opened up ambiguous—and thus not universally acceptable—procedures that could jeopardize decisions about international access rights to resources in presently 'international' areas. In an international context, the delegation said, the use of the term 'governance' may undermine national processes and sovereignty.

The delegation clarified that it had no problem if the reference was to local or national governance.

Thus, governance has been retained in the text where the reference is obviously to local/national processes.

In all other contexts, the term was either removed altogether or replaced by 'management'. Thus, very few references to the term governance remain.

**The Consultation followed the forms and procedures of the FAO Committee on Fisheries (COFI).**

### No consensus

Since States could not arrive at a consensus, the square-bracketed paragraph on recognizing and addressing the underlying causes and consequences of transboundary movement of fishers, leading to the arrest and detention of fishers outside the jurisdiction of their countries (see TC-SSF/2014/1) was dropped despite a strong plea from CSOs to retain this para, given the number of fishermen in every region who are

*This article was written by **Chandrika Sharma** ([icsf@icsf.net](mailto:icsf@icsf.net)) in February 2014, Executive Secretary, ICSF*

CORNELIE QUIST



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Chandrika Sharma, Executive Secretary, ICSF, at the Technical Consultation on International Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-scale Fisheries, held in Rome, in February 2014

being arrested for transboundary crossings, and whose human rights are being violated on a daily basis.

The issue of ecolabelling and certification proposed under paragraph 7.7 of TC-SSF/2014/1 proved very contentious. Many delegations and CSOs stressed that ecolabelling schemes had little relevance for small-scale fisheries, going by past experience, and they served only to discriminate against them. The need to support small-scale fishers to benefit from ecolabelling schemes and to access markets, particularly in the North, was stressed by some States.

However, as there was no consensus, it was agreed to drop the paragraph altogether. In the agreed text, there is no reference to ecolabelling and certification, reflecting the lack of consensus.

On the whole, this stand was acceptable to CSOs.

There was some discussion on where and how the World Trade Organization (WTO) should be mentioned, given the fact that some States are not WTO members, and

some felt that the WTO rules have little relevance in the context of small-scale fisheries. Finally, the reference to WTO was dropped from Section 4 (relationship with other international instruments). It is mentioned only in para 7.6 in Section 7 (on value chains, post-harvest and trade).

In the last round of negotiations there was considerable resistance from some delegations on the use of the term 'informal'. This was seen to be the same as 'illegal'. During this round, there was much debate on the issue. CSOs explained to delegations the meaning of the term. As a result, 'informal sector' is now included in the text, as a separate para 6.6 in TC-SSF/2014/2. This is a considerable achievement, given how important the sector is in many developing countries.

### **Marginalized groups**

The term 'marginalized and vulnerable groups' was not opposed during this round of negotiations, and all references to it have been retained. There is also reference to 'ethnic minorities'.

In the agreed text, there are several reference to the need to pay attention to indigenous peoples, and to the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIPS). However, some delegations, watered down the language on free, prior and informed consent (FPIC), and replaced ‘consent’ with ‘consultation’ (both in the context of indigenous peoples and local communities). This represents a considerable weakening of the text, particularly for indigenous peoples, as the principle of FPIC is clearly recognized in UNDRIPS.

In a similar vein, several delegations watered down references to ‘human rights standards’, replacing it with ‘human rights law’. This change apparently then excludes voluntary commitments of States, as under UNDRIPS. However, it is to be noted that in the earlier sections of the text, as in the Guiding Principles, there are several references to human rights standards.

A new paragraph was introduced by one delegation, in consultation with civil society groups on protecting the human rights and dignity of small-scale fisheries stakeholders in situations of occupation, to allow them to pursue their traditional livelihoods, to have access to customary fishing grounds and to preserve their culture and way of life, as well as their effective participation in decisionmaking in matters that impact them (paragraph 6.18). It needs to be noted that this was an entirely new proposal, not included in earlier rounds of negotiation or in the zero draft.

The paragraph found support among many of the delegations present, and it was also accepted, with some modification, by all delegations except one, which could not accept the term ‘occupation’. The delegation was also not inclined to accept the paragraph (given that it was supported by a majority of the delegations present) with reservation.

It is relevant to note that a similar reference to ‘occupation’ is found in the recently adopted Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible

Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security. This is in Section 25 on “Conflicts in respect to tenure of land, fisheries and forests”.

An alternative text proposed by one delegation was also discussed. Consensus on this text was almost achieved (with the exception of the mention of Section 25 in brackets, opposed by one delegation). The Guidelines (including the bracketed paragraph) will now go to COFI as the Chairperson’s text. It is hoped that the impasse can be resolved and the Guidelines can be formally endorsed by COFI.

The text on implementation that is finally agreed is quite weak, as all delegations present agreed that this was a subject that needs to be discussed and agreed on at COFI. Issues such as ensuring regular monitoring of implementation of the Guidelines by COFI, requesting the Committee on Food Security (CFS) to monitor implementation of the Guidelines from the perspective of food security, and ensuring that participatory mechanisms are put in place at all levels (international, regional, national and local) for implementation of the Guidelines (at present there is reference to the formation of national-level platforms) need to be brought to the attention of COFI.

Overall, from a CSO perspective, the Chairperson’s text, on the whole, is welcome, and is notably and firmly anchored in a human-rights-based approach. This is a considerable achievement. It is now up to everyone concerned to interpret the document, give it flesh, and ensure that it is a tool they can work with.

#### For more



[ftp://ftp.fao.org/FI/DOCUMENT/ssf/SSF\\_guidelines/TC/2014/2e.pdf](ftp://ftp.fao.org/FI/DOCUMENT/ssf/SSF_guidelines/TC/2014/2e.pdf)  
(TC-SSF/2014/2)

#### **Chairperson’s Text of the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication**

[ftp://ftp.fao.org/FI/DOCUMENT/ssf/SSF\\_guidelines/TC/2014/1e.pdf](ftp://ftp.fao.org/FI/DOCUMENT/ssf/SSF_guidelines/TC/2014/1e.pdf)  
(TC-SSF/2014/1)

#### **Provisional Agenda**

<http://vimeo.com/38230809>

#### **Chandrika Sharma Speaking with Danilo Licciardello on SSF Guidelines**

# Banking on Wealth?

**Current trends in Western fisheries economics, as exemplified by the position of the World Bank, religiously promote free markets for fishing rights**

**D**uring the last decade, the World Bank (WB) has been showing an increasing interest in world fisheries. In 2005, the WB, along with key donors and stakeholders, created the Global Program on Fisheries (GPO-PROFISH) and in 2009, to amplify its work in fisheries, another global partnership with the fishing industry, the Alliance for Responsible Fisheries (ALLFISH).

PROFISH was created also in view of the fact that around 40 per cent of the world's total fish yields are exported by poor countries to wealthy ones. "Our (PROFISH's) mission", says

in developing countries earn their living from fishing and aquaculture, and over 75 per cent of the world's fisheries are fully or over exploited. "The world fisheries", he said, "is in a crisis".

More recently, the WB came up with another concept: the 'wealth-based approach' (WBA) in fisheries management. The WB thus approaches fisheries through the GPO, PROFISH, ALLFISH, SOS and now also WBA. The WB's multifarious semantics may be confusing to fishermen's ears, innocent as they are of academic or bureaucratic lingo. All these cryptograms, in fact, symbolize one single process: privatization of fishing rights.

Yet that is not what the WB would explicitly admit. It talks about "poor governance and environmental degradation of fisheries habitat in critical areas, such as the coastal zone and coral reefs, which are primary causes of overexploited, unsustainable fisheries and poverty in fishery-dependent communities", and "pro-poor development". With hardly any increased landings from wild stocks, how will the WB create livelihoods, and improve food security and nutrition from fishing worldwide?

## Weak governance

If, as the WB is saying, we do not do something about the weak governance that led to excessive fishing capacity, overfishing, and vast loss of wealth and stagnation in catches, all that is left is to rely on aquaculture, which is already supplying about half of all food fish and is expanding at a very fast rate. The WB believes that aquaculture is able "to recapture lost wealth in

**All these cryptograms, in fact, symbolize one single process: privatization of fishing rights.**

the WB, "is to promote and facilitate the contribution that fisheries and aquaculture can make to sustainable economic growth, better nutrition, more economic opportunities for women, and poverty reduction" by "supporting an inclusive and sustainable globalization, enhancing growth with care for the environment, and creating individual opportunity and hope."

Robert Zoellick, the banking executive who, until 2012, was the WB President and presided over the formation of Global Partnership for Oceans (GPO's) strategy, thought that the world needs a new SOS: "Save Our Seas." This, because fish is the main source of animal protein for 400 mn people from the poorest countries, and since around 200 mn people

*This article is by **Menakhem-Ben Yami** (benyami@actcom.net.il), a Fisheries Adviser based in Tel Aviv, Israel*

capture fisheries". Serious challenges faced by aquaculture with its rapid growth, such as boom-and-bust cycles and environmental problems, can be overcome by "improved governance, thoughtful planning and access to information, technology and capital".

What is needed is good governance of inland and oceanic resources, says the WB, which will "enhance food security, nutrition, biodiversity, gender equity and community resilience, and mitigate climate change". The WB adds: "Potential net gains from good governance of capture fisheries are in the order of US\$50 bn per year from improvement in production efficiency alone. With market gains considered, sustainable net benefits are estimated to exceed US\$100 bn per year".

Nice words, indeed, coming from the WB which claims to be a "source of leveraged funding, with access to high-level policymakers, officials and development planners whose decisions bear upon the governance of the fisheries industry", has such "unrivalled convening power, bringing government officials, donors and stakeholders together in consultation", and "(reaches) out to the private sector and other organizations to form strategic partnerships".

The WB believes that "due to the common-property nature of fisheries, aquaculture externalities, national and international ocean-management issues and the linkages between fiscal issues and sustainable management of fisheries", both capture fisheries and aquaculture "require greater emphasis on governance". These governance issues go beyond fisheries. Fisheries governance arrangements, therefore, "often need to be addressed in a broader institutional context".

What, however, does the WB's verbosity actually mean? What does the WB imply by the expression "good governance"? Is it an overt definition found in WB publications or is it rather a sort of cryptogram shrouding a not necessarily agreeable subtext?

When it comes to aquaculture, it seems that by "good governance" the WB means securing land and water tenure. The WB does not specify

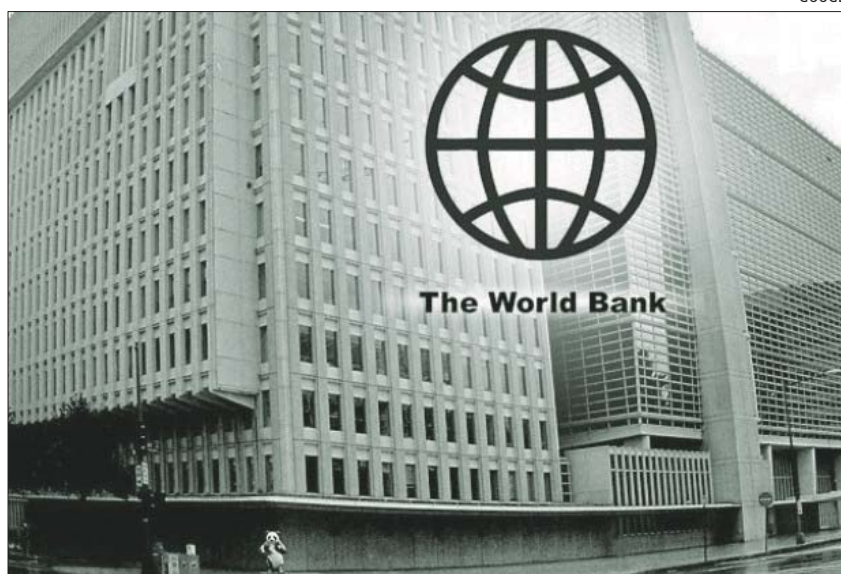
how, but presumably it implies privatization of the area and water resources where fish farms are situated. In capture fisheries, however, it probably means "controlling the 'open-access' problem", in particular through controlling the access to fishing grounds, fish stocks and harvest rights, while "using well-designed rights and responsibilities and regulatory reform." Here too, all these rights and "well-designed" regulations serve as euphemisms for privatization.

According to Zoellick, countries need to understand "the full value of the ocean's wealth and ecosystem services". He says, "We cannot manage what we cannot measure", oblivious of Albert Einstein's dictum that "not all that can be counted counts and not all that counts can be counted".

Measuring economic benefits represent the WB's (management) tool for ocean ecosystems, while taxes and subsidies can serve as incentives and disincentives to strengthen the enforcement of rights-based fishing.

From the net economic loss of about US\$5 bn per year, "we should increase the annual net benefits of fisheries to between US\$20 bn and US\$30 bn". A senior American banker, a partner in PROFISH, told Reuters: "The key to the success of this

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The World Bank headquarters at Washington, D.C., US. The World Bank has been showing an increasing interest in privatization of the world's fisheries

partnership will be new market mechanisms that value natural capital and can attract private finance”.

It is difficult to find a straight forward description of the WB's concept of 'good governance', apart from hints such as this one: "...the need for an institutional framework that provides certainty for investment, exclusive use, a setting for trade, an environment for innovation, and capacity to manage”.

Clearly, the WB/PROFISH initiative is eventually about more privatization, more marketable fish quotas—individual transferable quotas (ITQs) or catch shares—and more shifting of fishing rights from small-scale fishermen and their family businesses to bigger and corporate owners, who can produce higher 'economic rent', a euphemism for 'profits'.

As a rule, ITQ systems favour the wealthier, and invariably lead to a gradual displacement of small-scale individual or family-owned fishing enterprises, and, sooner or later, to consolidation of fishing rights in the hands of either specialized fishing companies or large holding corporations for whom fishing may be only one branch of a multifarious business.

**The WBA is indifferent to whom and how the thus-created wealth will be distributed, and whether the total "resource rent" will go to fishermen and small owners...**

Eventually this would occur even where there are legislative attempts at stipulating acquisition of quota by some maximum values. Hence, while ITQs may present a suitable solution for fisheries accessible to only large fishing vessels involving major investments, introducing this system into small-scale or mixed fisheries will have socioeconomic and political ramifications.

Semantically, the very title of the WB's latest concept, WBA, suggests an understanding that wealth is essential for good governance and management. Yet, 'wealth' has more

than one definition, depending on the context in which the term is applied. But let us not beat about the bush—the WB wants the wealthy to run fisheries. It is wrong to confuse wealth with income, for one does not need income to command wealth, and even a high income does not necessarily translate into wealth; with large enough expenses, wealth may stagnate or even shrink. According to the International Association for Research in Income and Wealth, "the world distribution of wealth is much more unequal than that of income”.

A WB study, titled *Sunken Billions*, estimated that US\$50 bn are lost annually due to "overfishing and subsidies" because of production-targeting management, and deficient user rights. The WBA is supposed to serve as "a guiding principle" for fisheries policies and management, aimed at "increasing the resource rent”.

Translated into layman's language, this means the WBA is an attempt to maximize the total profits derived from a fishery. The WB is implying that the total profits all go for "the macroeconomic benefit of society", whatever that means. The WBA is indifferent to whom and how the thus-created wealth will be distributed, and whether the total "resource rent" will go to fishermen and small owners, providing a livelihood for their families and enhancing business in their communities, or whether it will go to one or two tycoon-owned companies.

The WBA also seems to be against open and free access in fisheries, which means reducing fishing effort and, for the sake of economic efficiency, applying policies that do not discriminate between large- and small-scale fisheries. How such policies are capable of redistributing wealth to the benefit of "pro-poor development" is moot.

### **Fisheries management**

After decades of experience in fisheries development and management in several countries in Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean, I can only suggest

an opposite course: Rather than going after maximizing profits for the sake of the somewhat obscure “macroeconomic benefits”, especially in the developing world, the right approach is to allocate benefits from a fishery so that the maximum number of people and families can make their living off it.

In my report to India’s National Workshop on Low-energy Fishing, held in Kochi in 1991, I outlined the elements of what I call “MB-Y’s Allocation Principle”:

- all fish that can be caught by artisanal fishermen should be caught only by artisanal fishermen;
- all fish that cannot be caught by artisanal fishermen but can be caught by small-scale commercial fishermen, should only be caught by small-scale commercial fishermen;
- all fish that cannot be caught by small-scale commercial fishermen but can be caught by medium-scale commercial fishermen, should only be caught by medium-scale commercial fishermen; and
- only such resources that are not accessible to any of the above fishery sectors, or which cannot be feasibly caught, handled and processed by them, should be allocated to industrial, large-scale fisheries.

This ‘guiding principle’ will obviously be criticized by WBA rent-dissipation advocates. But I do not believe I am alone in disagreeing with them since the rent-maximization concept, particularly in the case of ITQs, usually leads to the dominance of more powerful (wealthier) firms at the expense of smaller firms and labour in the fisheries sector. Daniel Bromley argues that “avoiding ‘rent dissipation’ is nothing but the creation of excess profits for the fortunate firms not evicted under rationalization schemes”.

Bestowing fishing rights to those who have inherited or accumulated wealth may produce more “total economic rent”, but what about the value of fishing for sustaining livelihoods and food security? Chistoph Béné, who published several papers on this subject, mainly



Fisherwomen at a dry fish market at Nakkapalli, Andhra Pradesh, India. The privatization of the world's fisheries is increasingly affecting small-scale, private operators

in the African context, argued that generating no wealth (rent) in a number of fisheries does not mean that they are worth nothing, and that “the wealth-based approach singularly misrepresents the real contribution that small-scale fisheries play for the livelihood and food security of millions in Africa”.

The WBA adheres to the prevailing trend in Western fisheries economics that rather religiously promotes free markets for fishing rights (via, for example, ITQs), leading to consolidation of those in the hands of a few powerful interests, and to the dislocation of small-scale, private operators.

#### For more

[www.globalpartnershipforoceans.org/sites/oceans/files/images/Framework\\_Document\\_GPO\\_web.pdf](http://www.globalpartnershipforoceans.org/sites/oceans/files/images/Framework_Document_GPO_web.pdf)

#### Global Partnership for Oceans (GPO)

[siteresources.worldbank.org/EXTARD/Resources/336681-1224775570533/2011StrategicVision.pdf](http://siteresources.worldbank.org/EXTARD/Resources/336681-1224775570533/2011StrategicVision.pdf)

#### The Global Program on Fisheries: Strategic Vision for Fisheries and Aquaculture

# Migrant but Human

The Sub-regional Dialogue on Labour, Migration and Fisheries Management, held in Bangkok, sought to enhance the capabilities of fishing communities

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The Sub-regional Dialogue on Labour, Migration and Fisheries Management was organized at Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok, Thailand, from 11 to 13 December 2013 as a collaborative event between the Sustainable Development Foundation (SDF), Chulalongkorn University (CU), the International Collective in Support of Fishworkers (ICSF), and the Bay of Bengal Large Marine Ecosystem project (BOBLME) of the FAO. It was attended by intergovernmental organizations (IGOs) such as the International Labour Organization (ILO), the International Organization

number of migrant fishers in this region, with more than 80 per cent fishers on board Thai vessels originating from Myanmar, Cambodia and Lao PDR, the focus of the dialogue became Thailand.

Day 1 dealt with the experiences and issues of migrant workers. It started with the testimonies of two Burmese fishers on Thai trawlers. Surachai Meanthun, Volunteer, Labour Rights Promotion Network Foundation (LPN) shared his experience on board Thai trawlers for six years in Thai and Indonesian maritime zones. The work on board involved releasing, retrieving and repairing trawl gear, and removing and sorting fish or shrimp, and storing them in fish holds. Healthcare on board was almost non-existent. There were instances of physical punishment. The safety of fishers at work was poor. Sometimes they were dragged into the sea when they got entangled in trawl gear.

The hours of work were long, up to 19 hours a day. There were several cases of fatigue-induced fights. Fishers on board, other than the skipper, the assistant skipper, the engine driver and the cook, were not paid well. There was no written agreement regarding payment. The verbal agreement was that fishers would be paid five to 10 per cent of the value of the catch, after making deductions for fuel expenses.

## Maximum work

Communication with vessel owners was often through brokers. Threats of payment deductions were used to extract maximum work. Fishers were free to board tour boats—boats transporting food, supplies and fuel from the mainland to fishing boats at sea and also removing the catch from

**A migrant fisher is defined in the Migrant Workers' Convention, 1990, as a fisher employed on board a vessel registered in a State of which he or she is not a national.**

for Migration (IOM), the Southeast Asian Fisheries Development Center (SEAFDEC), academia, labour unions, civil society organizations (CSOs), non-governmental organizations (NGOs), industry representatives of vessel owners and fish processors, and the Thai Ministry of Labour (MOL) and the Thai Department of Fisheries (DOF).

A migrant fisher is defined in the Migrant Workers' Convention, 1990, as a fisher employed on board a vessel registered in a State of which he or she is not a national. By focusing on migrant fishers, the Dialogue sought coherence in the Association of Southeast Asian Nation (ASEAN) region across sea safety, labour conditions and fisheries-management measures. Since Thailand employs the largest

*This report has been written by **Sebastian Mathew** (icsf@icsf.net), Programme Adviser, ICSF, and **Lean Deleon** (information.sdf@gmail.com), Advocacy and Public Relations Officer, SDF*

the fishing boat for transport to the market—and return to port, but in lieu of payment.

In the second testimony, Ko Ko Aung, a Burmese fisherman and Vice-President, Myanmar Maritime Trade Union (MMTU), said migrant fishers were under intense pressure while at work. Their working conditions were far worse than those of migrant workers on land. There were cases of migrant workers, recruited by brokers under the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between Thailand and Myanmar to work in Thai factories, being trafficked to fish at sea.

Although seaman books were issued to individual fishers, they were often counterfeit, with no proper, identifiable photograph of the fisher and with no information regarding the compensation the fisher was entitled to in case of an accident on board. Even the sick were forced to work. Migrant fishers on board Thai vessels were transferred at sea, Aung alleged. The number of migrant fishers returning to the Thai port after a fishing trip to adjacent maritime zones would be fewer than those embarking on the same trip.

Bandit Thanachaisetavuth, Director, Arompongpan Foundation, said general labour laws in Thailand did not apply to fishers, agriculture workers, seafarers, transport workers and domestic workers, and that there were special regulations to protect them. Rights to a minimum wage did not extend to fishers. The 1998 Thai Ministerial Regulation No. 10 was enacted to provide protection to marine fishers, including migrant fishers, who received remuneration, or a share of the catch value. But the regulation applied only to vessels operating from Thailand and only if the number of fishers on board exceeded 20.

It did not thus apply to vessels operating continuously outside Thai maritime zones for not less than a year, or employing fewer than 20 fishers. The remuneration arrangement was in favour of employers, not fishers, since fishers were unable to ascertain the real value of their fish catch.

Fishers did not have the power to negotiate and were being exploited, Thanachaisetavuth said.

The Thai Ministerial Regulation No. 10 provides details of age of work, manner of payment, holidays and annual leave and the records that have to be maintained by the employer and kept ready for inspection. But in reality there might be no such documents, Thanachaisetavuth feared. Fishers held the right to file a complaint with the Department of Labour Protection and Welfare, (DLPW) of MOL when such measures were not followed.

Employees who were Thai nationals enjoyed the right to establish labour unions under the Thai Labour Relations Act, 1975. While documented or registered migrant fishers could join these unions, they were not eligible for election or appointment as office-bearers. Migrant fisher members of these unions had the right to strike work against discriminatory regulations. Undocumented or unregistered migrant fishers, however, could not be made members of these unions nor could they form any association or labour union. As for social security, the rights guaranteed under the Thai social security legislation did not apply to those in farming, fishing and livestock rearing, Thanachaisetavuth pointed out.

SAEED KHAN / FAO



Fishing vessel at Ban Nam Khem village, Thailand. The 1998 Thai Ministerial Regulation No. 10 was enacted to provide protection to marine fishers, including migrant fishers

Satian Tunprom, Committee Member, Action Network for Migrants (ANM), said labour unions divided migrant workers into two sections: migrant workers in non-fishery business and migrant workers in fishery business. Labour unions engaged only with factory workers. There was hardly any labour union in fishing in Thailand since there are not many Thai workers in fishing. Thai labour unions

### Legislation must be improved to recognize the rights of migrant fishers to form their own labour unions...

and federations, however, have now begun to look at sectors such as fishing, especially to support migrant workers who are unprotected or abused.

Tunprom pointed to the need for a comprehensive understanding of the labour dimension of fishing in Thai national waters and in the high seas, as well as in land-based fish-processing activities. Often health protection and welfare of migrant fishers were overlooked. There were no MoUs with countries like Myanmar, Cambodia and Lao PDR that supply labour for fishing. Hence, it is important to invest in training migrant fishers in fishing operations and sea safety in a labour-receiving country such as Thailand.

Currently, there is no training for fishers before they start work on board a vessel; they had to learn by doing. There is no survival training or inspection of fishing vessels at sea to verify compliance with sea-safety measures or onboard hygiene standards, Tunprom observed.

Thai fisheries rules and regulations should be translated, for example, from Thai to Burmese or Khmer. Migrant fishers should be told whom to contact in an emergency. Crew lists must be maintained to allow expeditious contact with family members of accident victims.

It is important that legal protection mechanisms be operational, and communication with migrant fishers be improved to enhance their

protection, especially on matters of health and legal aid.

Tunprom emphasized that terms such as 'remuneration', 'wages', 'social security', 'Social Security Fund' and 'Workmen's Compensation Fund' should be more clearly defined in the context of Thailand. Only workers under a wage system are insured under the Thai Social Security Act, 1990. Since fishers, including migrant fishers, are remunerated, or paid a share of the value of the catch, they are not insured. They are not entitled to contribute to the Social Security Fund, either. As a result, they cannot draw on social-security benefits from the Fund, unlike insured wage workers.

Unlike the Social Security Fund, to which employers, workers and the government make contributions, the Workmen's Compensation Fund, which is used to pay workers in the event of occupational accidents and diseases, is entirely based on contributions from the employers. Although the migrant fishers are entitled to benefit from the Workmen's Compensation Fund, the compensation is often meagre, Tunprom said, adding that social security provisions ought to benefit migrant fishers as well.

Thanachaisetavuth said that although Thailand is dependent on the labour of migrants and despite the Thai union leaders understanding the discriminatory practices against migrant labour, the rank and file of labour unions were biased against migrant workers as they believed the migrants took away their jobs, posed a threat to national and social security, and that they spread diseases and hence do not deserve the same level of protection as Thai workers.

### Labour unions

However, some factories provide protection and welfare, and allow migrant workers to be part of their unions but not as members of the management committees. Legislation must be improved to recognize the rights of migrant fishers to form their own labour unions, which would enhance their negotiation power, Thanachaisetavuth observed.

Sompong Srakaew, Labour Migration and Counter Trafficking Director, LPN, said information was scanty on the actual number of Thai fishing vessels, the number of tour boats transferring catch, provisions and fishers at sea, and the types of fishing vessels. There were cases of forced labour on board Thai vessels in their entire range of operations. There was no reliable estimate regarding the total number of migrant workers in Thailand and on Thai vessels—in transit on tour boats and on board fishing vessels—since many use fake documents and forged passports to establish false identity as Thai citizens. Some of them also fake documents from their own country to establish a national identity.

Even if there were MoUs between Thailand and Myanmar and between Thailand and Cambodia to procure migrant workers, irregular migration into fishing would covertly be encouraged by some Thai vessel owners who cannot afford to pay normal wages or remuneration to Thai fishers and migrant fishers, Srakaew said.

They would be forced to quit fishing if they had to pay prevailing wages. The problems of migrant fishers could be solved only if vessel owners co-operated; over two-thirds of fishing vessels were, however, unregistered, and many vessel owners were not interested in solving the problems of migrant fishers, he noted.

Satian Tunprom of ANM called for the enhancement of the capabilities of migrant fishers to make them confident in negotiations with employers. The Work in Fishing Convention, 2007 (C188) could help them negotiate for better working and repatriation conditions. He urged Thai national fishers and migrant fishers to work together for the ratification of C188.

Day 2 of the Dialogue commenced with an interactive session between all the departments and institutions that, in one way or the other, relate to the issue of labour in the fishing industry. Inaugurating the proceedings, Sunee Chaiyaros, Vice-President, Law Reform Commission Thailand (LRCT), said it is necessary to ensure that Thai national

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT FOUNDATION / THAILAND



Participants at the Sub-regional Dialogue on Labour, Migration and Fisheries Management that was organized at Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok, Thailand, from 11 to 13 December 2013

and migrant fishers are not subject to human trafficking and forced labour. Work in fishing should not be seen as atypical, and the labour protection enjoyed by workers under Thai law should be extended to fishers as well, especially when entering into a contract or work agreement, and to ensure the benefit of a minimum wage of at least THB300 (US\$10) per day. Employers should pay at least the minimum wage. Chaiyaros also informed participants that an amendment is being proposed to the Labour Relations Act, 1975, to allow migrant workers to form their own labour unions.

Max Tuñón, Senior Programme Officer/Project Co-ordinator, Tripartite Action to Protect Migrant Workers from Labour Exploitation (TRIANGLE Project), ILO, said several provisions of C188 provide reference points for the development of national labour standards, including revision of the Thai Ministerial Regulation No. 10. At least five provisions—on minimum age, hours of rest on board a fishing vessel, work agreement of a fisher, crew list,

agreements based on C188 can provide fishers greater protection in terms of setting norms for working hours, wages and deductions, and regularity of payment.

The crew list provision of C188 is relevant for migrant fishers traded to other fishing vessels at sea; it can maintain a link between the vessel, the skipper and the fisher, Tuñón said. The Thai Ministerial Regulation No. 10 requires vessel owners with 20 or more fishers to provide a crew list to DLPW; however, in practice, this provision is not enforced. It should be strengthened to ensure greater protection of fishers, he added.

Tuñón pointed out that both C188 and the Thai Ministerial Regulation No. 10 stipulate that fishers be made a basic payment, on a monthly or regular basis, and compensation be provided for workers affected by occupational diseases. A pay slip summarizing key points, such as the rate and amount of remuneration, should also be kept by employers for inspection by labour inspectors.

Magnus Torell, Senior Adviser, SEAFDEC, pointed out a perception prevailing in southeast Asia that there is no need to talk about the labour dimension of fishing. Increasingly, migrant fishers and fishworkers are being contracted to take up different types of work in fisheries. In Thailand, for example, the total number of migrant fishers and fishworkers combined would probably be over a million, although there is no comprehensive assessment of the actual number of people directly or indirectly involved, full-time or part-time, as owner-operators or as contract labourers in fishing in southeast Asia.

The total number of fishers and fishworkers, including migrant fishers (mostly men) and fishworkers (mostly women), is hugely underestimated in the region. For a socially sound fisheries-management regime, it is pertinent to know how dependent domestic and migrant workers are on fishing, he observed.

### Fishers' rights

The rights of fishers, including migrant fishers and fishworkers,

**The total number of fishers and fishworkers, including migrant fishers (mostly men) and fishworkers (mostly women), is hugely underestimated in the region.**

and payment of fishers under C188—are relevant.

They relate to the kind of activities that should, and should not, be carried out by children between the ages of 15 and 18. The kind of work children can do on board a fishing vessel in Thailand needs to be defined, Tuñón said, drawing attention to the list of hazardous activities for children jointly developed by ILO and FAO, which include night work, fishing in inclement weather, fishing in offshore waters, and diving.

Minimum hours of rest as prescribed under C188 for those vessels remaining at sea for over three days could be considered while revising the Thai Ministerial Regulation No. 10, to protect both national and migrant fishers. Work

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are defined not only in international legal instruments but are also implicit in regional policy documents such as the 2009 ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community Blueprint and the 2009 ASEAN Political-Security Community Blueprint. The 2007 ASEAN Declaration on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Migrant

Workers and the 2012 ASEAN Human Rights Declaration are also relevant for the protection of the rights of migrant fishers. There are thus several expressions at the highest political level on protecting migrant workers, Torell pointed out.

Since fisheries agencies in the ASEAN region are not equipped to

directly deal with labour issues, they should be strengthened to do so in co-operation with the institutions responsible for labour. Fisheries management and labour protection could be inter-linked as in the Philippines, where the issue of a fishing licence is contingent upon demonstrating compliance with relevant national labour laws for the crew on board.

Torell noted that collecting and sharing information must be encouraged in order to assist bilateral and multilateral arrangements for training and capacity-building. An effort should be made to identify the type of data needed to provide baseline information on the movement of migrant workers and on their living and working conditions, in line with national and international standards.

Sitthichai Wareechananon of the Department of Employment (DOE), MOL, said his department pays particular attention to the fishing industry since it allegedly engages victims of human trafficking in fishing. Thailand, which used to be a net migrant-sending country, has now

**Thailand, which used to be a net migrant-sending country, has now turned into a net migrant-receiving country...**

turned into a net migrant-receiving country, and there is shortage of labour in the fishing industry. Following the Cabinet Resolution of 9 October 2012 to prevent and suppress human trafficking of fishers, the DOE is setting up provincial labour co-ordination centres (LCCs) for marine fishers in seven provinces to streamline recruiting procedures and the registration of migrant fishers on board fishing vessels in all 22 coastal provinces.

Wilaiwan Koykaewpring, Senior Technical Labour Officer, Labour Protection Bureau, DLPW, MOL, said there are six agencies responsible for employment, working conditions, labour protection and sea safety

in fishing in Thailand. These are: (i) DLPW, which undertakes inspections—on shore and on board—to prevent child labour, trafficking and forced labour; (ii) the Thai Immigration Bureau, which checks the legal status of the fishers on board, and detains undocumented migrant fishers; (iii) DOE, which registers migrant fishers, and checks and extends their work permits; (iv) the Marine Department of the Ministry of Transportation, which inspects fishing vessels, and issues licences and registration certificates to seaworthy vessels as well as licences to skippers; (v) DOF, which licences fishing gear; and (vi) the provincial public health office, which checks for epidemics and sanitation conditions on board fishing vessels.

On behalf of DLPW, the marine police and the Thai Navy check employment practices, and working and safety conditions on board vessels, crew lists and work permits, and whether the boat meets the requirements of a standard workplace. Inspections are also undertaken in partnership with the employers' organizations such as the Thai Frozen Food Association (TFFA), the Thai Shrimp Association (TSA) and the National Fisheries Association of Thailand (NFAT), a vessel owners' association.

DLPW, together with ILO, LRCT and NFAT, is revising the Thai Ministerial Regulation No. 10, in keeping with C188 and other international conventions, while also developing guidelines for good labour practices in fisheries.

Waraporn Prompoj, Senior Expert on International Fisheries Affairs, DOF, Government of Thailand, said there are about 400,000 fishers and fishworkers in the fisheries and aquaculture industries in Thailand. Although there are currently 45,000 registered commercial fishing vessels, all are not in operation. About 20,000 fishing gear licences have been issued.

### **Working conditions**

DOF has developed a ten-step Action Plan to address labour issues and promote better working conditions in

Thai fisheries. DOF is working towards legalizing irregular migrant fishers in collaboration with the MOL and the private sector since it realizes the dependence of the fishery industry on migrant workers. Registration of migrant workers is now on and will continue until May 2014. Registered migrant fishers are entitled to welfare and social-security benefits. Identity cards will be issued to registered migrant fishers for a period of one year from the date of registration. Under bilateral MoUs, the MOL is also considering the import of workers into fishing through LCCs, she said.

Professor Surichai Wun'gao of Chulalongkorn University said human trafficking has become a serious issue in fishing. What was discussed at the Bangkok Dialogue amounted to only the tip of the iceberg, he feared. Although the line agencies are understaffed and overworked, the problems of human trafficking demand inter-agency collaboration. The issue demands new ways of collaboration, and the matter had to move from the periphery to the centre, he added.

Satian Tunprom of ANM said in order to meet the shortage of labour in the fishing industry, Thailand should grant amnesty to all migrant fishers. It should change their status from 'undocumented' to 'documented', after undertaking nationality verification. It is necessary to have binding written work agreements between employers and fishers for greater labour protection. MoUs indicating the kind of work that can be undertaken and the conditions of work should be initiated on recruitment of migrant workers. The sending country could thus prepare the workers accordingly.

Tunprom proposed that fishing vessel owners should contribute to the Workmen's Compensation Fund as they are presently exempted, and that the Labour Relations Act, 1975, should revoke the 'Thai nationality by birth' clause and allow migrant workers, including migrant fishers, to found a labour union and become members of its board of directors. Thailand should ratify the ILO Freedom of Association and Protection of the

Right to Organize Convention, 1948 (C87) and the ILO Right to Organize and Collective Bargaining Convention, 1949 (C98), he said.

Waraporn Prompoj of DOF said she was keen on co-operation with neighbouring countries to create an action plan to provide education to workers who are potential fishers on board Thai fishing vessels, focusing on the Thai fishing industry and welfare schemes for migrant fishers, and to prevent them from being trafficked into fishing.

**It is necessary to have binding written work agreements between employers and fishers for greater labour protection.**

Magnus Torell, Senior Advisor of SEAFDEC, said although it was clear that something needed to be done, it was not clear how to go about issues identified so far in a coherent manner. Often new bodies were created to address new issues in a language not familiar to all. The issue of migrant fishers involves people, and in Thailand it should be viewed in the regional context of ASEAN community-building, and of transborder relations, among other things, involving fish processing and seafood trade. From the fisheries-sector perspective, existing standards should be implemented, and scope for illegal activities reduced. He suggested that it is important to move at the sub-regional level and across different national institutions.

### **Current legislation**

Kamolsak Lertpaiboon of NFAT said it would be some time before the Thai fishing industry can talk about adopting international standards. Most Thai vessels and fishing operations are legal, he claimed. Current legislation, including immigration laws, need amendment to address all the problems. The industry has to adapt and apply good practices by improving the knowledge of employers and fishers on working conditions and sea-safety issues.

Day 3's discussions centred on developing a plan of action for protecting migrant fishers on Thai vessels. Nalini Nayak, Member, ICSF, highlighted that sustainable fisheries and responsible labour practices are essential to improve the prospects of business, work, livelihood and food security related to fishing. While some of the Dialogue partners worked only in their own country, others worked at the regional or international

but also of fisheries conservation and management measures.

Adisorn Kerdmongkol of ANM, said, from a Thai CSO perspective, based on discussions over Day 1 and Day 2, there was a seven-point action plan to be shared around three categories, namely, (i) recruitment and employment in fishing; (ii) labour protection; and (iii) regional mechanisms and collaboration with academic and research organizations.

### **1. Recruitment and employment in fishing**

Firstly, fishers, including migrant fishers, must be granted the protection of a contract or a written work agreement when being recruited to work on board fishing vessels.

Secondly, networks must be built with the States of origin of migrant fishers/workers to provide them pre-departure preparation and assistance. Specific reference was made to MMTU and the Migrant Worker Rights Network (MWRN) in the context of Myanmar and Thailand. At the regional level, ILO, IOM and SEAFDEC may be involved.

### **2. Labour protection**

Thirdly, the Thai Ministerial Regulation No. 10 must be modified, based on the draft prepared by the MOL in collaboration with LRCT and ILO, which is currently in the process of public hearing.

Fourthly, work with the LCCs must continue to protect labour in the fishing industry as well as to provide access to information on employment and labour protection in fishing.

Fifthly, rather than drawing on an ad hoc basis from the marine police and the Thai Navy, a dedicated set of labour inspectors knowledgeable about fishing and fishing labour must be created to ensure labour protection on board fishing vessels. A training course must be developed for these inspectors.

### **3. Regional mechanisms and collaboration with academic and research organizations**

Sixthly, the fishing industry must be brought under the ASEAN Labour Standard, which is currently being developed by LRCT.

**The Dialogue recognized the problems facing migrant fishers to be multidimensional, and highlighted the need to broaden the perspective of CSOs/NGOs as well as the fisheries and labour authorities.**

level. While some had a specific fishery focus, others had a specific labour focus.

The Dialogue recognized the problems facing migrant fishers to be multidimensional, and highlighted the need to broaden the perspective of CSOs/NGOs as well as the fisheries and labour authorities. The Dialogue partners should see how each of them could contribute to improving both the labour and fisheries dimensions, she stressed. A fisheries person, concerned only with nets and fish, should consider how labour regulations could help fishing, and a labour person, usually concerned only with labour in fishing, should consider how fishing regulations could help address labour issues. Thailand is the southeast Asian hub for migrant fishers from across borders. It is important to build crossborder partnerships, she observed.

Sebastian Mathew, Programme Adviser, ICSF, pointed out that the provision for training in the handling of types of fishing gear under Article 31 of C188, for example, could be broadened to serve the dual purpose of training fishers to impart knowledge regarding their fishing grounds, and conservation and management obligations. It would help them gain a broader understanding not only of the safety of fishing vessels, gear operations and working conditions,

Finally, collaboration must be encouraged among organizations like SEAFDEC and academic and research groups to work on employment and labour issues in the fishing industry.

Ravadee Prasertcharoensuk, Executive Director, SDF, and Member, ICSF, wondered about the benefits for migrant fishers from amending the Thai Ministerial Regulation No. 10. Satian Tunprom of ANM clarified that the proposed amendments would remove the exemption clauses that often exclude migrant fishers from its scope, and would bring them direct benefits, especially by regularizing them, providing them access to labour protection and welfare, ensuring greater transparency in their remuneration, and by enforcing greater accountability of the fishing vessel owners. Adopting these measures could lead to better retention of workers on board fishing vessels, he said. It was proposed that the labour network in Thailand should be asked to support the amendment to the Thai Ministerial Regulation No. 10.

Prasertcharoensuk also proposed the encouragement of the MoU route between the State of origin and the State of employment of migrant fishers (such as Myanmar, Cambodia, Lao PDR and Thailand), in addition to transforming irregular migrant fishers into regular, documented migrant fishers in Thailand.

Sebastian Mathew of ICSF felt that a labour-destination country such as Thailand ought to be the starting point in addressing the problem of migrant fishers. Engagement of irregular migrants on board Thai fishing vessels can be prevented if NFAT and the Thailand Overseas Fisheries Association (TOFA), another vessel owners' association, instruct their members to engage only regular migrant fishers on board their fishing vessels. If loopholes for illegal engagement in fishing are plugged, the labour conditions would then automatically improve.

Magnus Torell of SEAFDEC said that not only Thai labour laws but Thai fisheries laws also need to be amended to deal with the current reality in fisheries.

Ravadee Prasertcharoensuk of SDF/ICSF queried how CSOs can help LRCT in developing an ASEAN Labour Standard, including for fishing. Sarawut Pratoomraj, Law Reform Officer, LRCT, observed, that a subcommittee had been formed under LRCT to develop an ASEAN Labour Standard. Whatever was learnt from the Bangkok Dialogue would be used for defining fishing labour standards. Once the draft labour standard is developed, it would be circulated for feedback from the public.

In order to take the action forward, Adisorn Kerdmongkol of ANM said a small working group may be formed in Thailand, with Ploenpit Srisiri, Committee Member, Arompongpan Foundation, as co-ordinator. ANM would follow up the Dialogue through legal reforms, pilot projects, LCCs, training and capacity-building, and awareness-raising programmes. He requested SEAFDEC help follow up with the governments of Myanmar and Cambodia, especially to ensure that both civil society and the government collaborated in implementing the action plan.

Summarizing the discussions, Ravadee Prasertcharoensuk of SDF/ICSF said it was decided to initiate capacity-building to ensure migrant fishers are legalized and there are adequate labour-protection mechanisms in seven coastal provinces, four of which the Thai working group would engage with.

The working group would also facilitate access to information for migrant fishers, documenting and regularizing migrant workers, and reporting complaints to the authorities about poor working conditions. The activities of the working group should be reviewed after one year, to ascertain progress. The working group would engage with the LRCT to incorporate human-rights principles into the ASEAN Labour Standard.

Thanking everyone at the end of the Dialogue, Sebastian Mathew, on behalf of ICSF, observed, "Migrant fishers are the engine of Thai fishing; they should be treated with respect, as human beings with dignity".

#### For more



[www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/-/asia/---ro-bangkok/documents/publication/wcms\\_220596.pdf](http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/-/asia/---ro-bangkok/documents/publication/wcms_220596.pdf)

#### **Employment Practices and Working Conditions in Thailand's Fishing Sector**

[http://ejfoundation.org/sites/default/files/public/EJF\\_Slavery-at-Sea\\_report\\_2014\\_web-ok.pdf](http://ejfoundation.org/sites/default/files/public/EJF_Slavery-at-Sea_report_2014_web-ok.pdf)

#### **Slavery at Sea: The Continued Plight of Trafficked Migrants in Thailand's Fishing Industry**

[www.iom.int/cms/en/sites/iom/home.html](http://www.iom.int/cms/en/sites/iom/home.html)  
**International Organization for Migration**

[www.ilo.org/global/topics/labour-migration/lang--en/index.htm](http://www.ilo.org/global/topics/labour-migration/lang--en/index.htm)

#### **International Labour Organization**

## OCEAN POLLUTION

### Search for MH370 shines spotlight on trash-strewn oceans

It's been quite a pattern of frustration for investigators looking for a trace of Malaysia Airlines Flight MH370. Satellites and searchers locate debris in the Indian Ocean, only to discover that the objects are not related to the flight at all, complicating an already tricky search for the plane missing since March 8.

All of the world's oceans are cluttered with debris. Even the most remote places on the globe have been touched by the stuff humans toss, including the search site in a remote area of the Indian Ocean.

Five large gyres of junk swirl in the world's oceans, the largest of which is located in the north Pacific Ocean, according to NOAA. A gyre is a spiraling ocean current. That gyre "spans an area roughly twice the size of the US," though its size and shape fluctuates, the nonprofit organization 5 Gyres stated.

Smaller gyres also exist off the coast of Alaska and Antarctica, though researchers don't know yet just how much trash lurks in the oceans.

Because it's located far away from population areas, the

Indian Ocean gyre is not as well researched as some of the other gyres.

However, large amounts of trash have reached distant mid-ocean islands such as Christmas, Cocos and Diego Garcia, according to a report by David K.A. Barnes of the British Antarctic Survey.

"Hermit crabs on such remote Indian Ocean shores are even starting to use debris instead of the more usual gastropod shells as the debris is so abundant," Barnes noted.

The trash collects in gyres through the action of meanders and eddies in the oceans, influenced by the interaction between surfaces and surface waves, according to NOAA.

Debris in the world's waters is carried from land via storm drains and sewers into streams, as well as from shoreline and recreational activities.

"Today, there is no place on Earth immune to this problem," NOAA said in its special section devoted to ocean pollution.

Marine trash includes abandoned fishing gear, derelict vessels and plastics. "Abandoned or discarded fishing gear is also

a major problem because this trash can entangle, injure, maim and drown marine wildlife and damage property," NOAA stated.

Thousands of scuttled vessels can be found in areas such as ports and estuaries, threatening navigation and polluting the environment.

Plastics are dangerous for sea creatures because, when eaten, the material can block the digestive system, causing creatures to dehydrate, starve and die.

NOAA noted that most plastics are intended for temporary use, yet plastic litter doesn't really go away. It merely breaks down into smaller and smaller pieces, into microplastics of less than 5 mm in length, some pieces even microscopic.

"Cetaceans, all sea turtle species, and a growing list of fish species have been documented with plastic in or around their bodies," 5 Gyres noted.

Plastic debris collects pollutants such as polychlorinated biphenyls "up to 100,000 to 1 million times the levels found in seawater," according to NOAA.

The jury is still out as to what affect plastics will ultimately have on the animals

further up the food chain.

The ocean trash problem is immense, and has been building up for decades with the rise of disposable packaging. However, people can make an impact locally by properly disposing of trash, opting for reusable items and recycling what they can.

Source: Kimberly Wright / Raycom News Network  
[www.myfoxal.com/story/25136541/search-for-mh370-shines-spotlight-on-trash-strewn-oceans](http://www.myfoxal.com/story/25136541/search-for-mh370-shines-spotlight-on-trash-strewn-oceans)

## MARINE BIOLOGY

### Electric buzz surrounds new fish species

Scientists say they have discovered a new genus and species of electric knifefish in the Negro River of Brazil.

The *Procerusternarchus pixuna* is a small fish, ranging in size from 75 mm to 138 mm, and the voltage it discharges is so small that it's measured in microvolts, meaning a human would not be able to detect the electric current.

To put that in perspective, an electric eel, which is in the same order of species, can emit up to 600 volts of electrical discharge. Like the other fish in this genus, the *Procerusternarchus pixuna* uses its electric discharge mainly to locate other fish.

According to Professor Cristina Cox Fernandes at the University of Massachusetts Amherst, a co-author of a paper describing *P. pixuna*, the fish do not swim in schools. In fact, they stay away from one another to avoid jamming each other's electrical discharge. She added that male and females are able to change the amplitude of the discharge so as not to jam each other.

Just two decades ago, there were less than 100 species of electric fish documented, but that number has nearly doubled today, researchers said.

Source: VOA  
[www.voanews.com/content/electric-buzz-surrounds-new-fish-species/1900725.html](http://www.voanews.com/content/electric-buzz-surrounds-new-fish-species/1900725.html)

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## ORGANIZATIONAL PROFILE

### Myanmar Fishery Federation

The Myanmar Fishery Federation (MFF) was founded in 1989 as a national-level non-profit organization to encourage and promote the fishery industries of Myanmar.

MFF aims to improve the socioeconomic conditions of its member entrepreneurs and enhance the livelihood and all-round development of fishing communities who are not members of MFF. MFF also disseminates information on official economic policies, both national and international, and imparts knowledge of advanced technologies and fishery-related information.

MFF co-operates and co-ordinates with the

ministries and regional authorities concerned as well as with local and international NGOs. It encourages R&D in fisheries, and human



resource development (HRD) programmes to raise the sector's standards to international levels. It also seeks to enhance foreign exchange earnings through exports of fishery products, while ensuring sufficient domestic supply.

The recent activities of MFF have included post-

cyclone rehabilitation work, liaising with international NGOs, holding training and discussion sessions, dispute settlement of fisheries issues, organizing seminars and workshops, issuing country of origin certificates, conducting Japanese language classes and providing hospitality for visiting foreign delegations.

The Central Executive Committee Members of MFF, the Executive Committee Members of the Functional Associations, and the Executive Committee Members of the Regional Fisheries Associations are elected for a three-year-term.

As of 31 August 2012, the total number of MFF members (both individuals and companies) stood at 28,539 (27,775 individuals and 764 companies).

## FISHERIES STATISTICS

# Capture Fisheries and Aquaculture Production: Trends

According to *The State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture (SOFA)*, 2012 of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), from a database updated to 2012, the total global capture production in 2012 showed a new maximum production (86.6 mn tonnes) when the highly variable anchoveta (*Engraulis ringens*) catches are excluded.

Variations in production by country, fishing area and species are buffered at the global level through compensatory developments in different fisheries. After 1998, when extremely low anchoveta catches reduced the total catch to 85.7 mn tonnes, the widest deviations from the annual average of 91.1 mn tonnes in the best and worst years (2011 and 2003, at 93.7 and 88.3 mn tonnes, respectively) have been only about 3 per cent.

Global inland waters capture production marked a new record at 11.6 mn tonnes in 2012. Although its upward trend seems continuous, its share in total global capture production remains below 13 per cent.

Inland waters continue to be the most difficult subsector for which to obtain reliable capture production statistics.

The total number of species items included in the FAO capture production database reached 1,967 with 2012 data. However, the annual rate of increase is progressively decreasing, suggesting that the number of species for which capture statistics are collected is probably approaching a plateau.

According to the newly released statistics, the world aquaculture production in 2012 was 90.43 mn tonnes,

including 66.63 mn tonnes of food fish, 23.78 mn tonnes of aquatic algae (mostly marine macroalgae/seaweeds), and 22.4 thousand tonnes of non-food products (pearls and shells, etc.). The term 'food fish' often used by FAO includes finfishes, crustaceans, molluscs, amphibians, freshwater turtles and other aquatic animals (such as sea cucumber, sea urchins, sea squirts and edible jellyfish, etc.) produced for the intended use as food for human consumption.

On global average, aquaculture supplied 9.41 kg of food fish per person for consumption in 2012.

However, production distribution is extremely uneven across the globe and on all continents owing to the imbalance development.

Aquaculture is now fully comparable to capture fisheries when measured by

volume of output on a global scale. The contribution from aquaculture to the world total fish production of capture and aquaculture in 2012 reached 42.2 per cent, up from 25.7 per cent in 2000. Asia is the only continent producing more fish (54 per cent) than capture fisheries. The share of aquaculture in total fish production also rose in all other continents, with Europe staying at 18 per cent and others below 15 per cent.

Finfish aquaculture, especially inland aquaculture of herbivorous and omnivorous finfish species, is the most important subsector of aquaculture production in volume terms. It is the source of affordable quality protein food in many developing countries.

When feed is usually seen as the most important cost to aquaculture production, it should be stressed that over 20 mn tonnes, over 30 per cent of the total production of farmed food fish, are produced without intentional use of feeds. The non-fed species include filter feeding carps and bivalves, etc.

Though a total of 567 'species items' had been registered in the global aquaculture statistics database, it is estimated that a great diversity of over 600 aquatic species are cultured worldwide. Well over 200 aquatic species are farmed commercially in China under less than 90 'species items' currently.

Despite the large number of farmed species, the majority of total aquaculture production output rely on several dozens of species only. Geographically, tilapias are the most widespread species for aquaculture production in the world. Close to 140 countries and territories are now recorded for farming of tilapias in the FAO database.

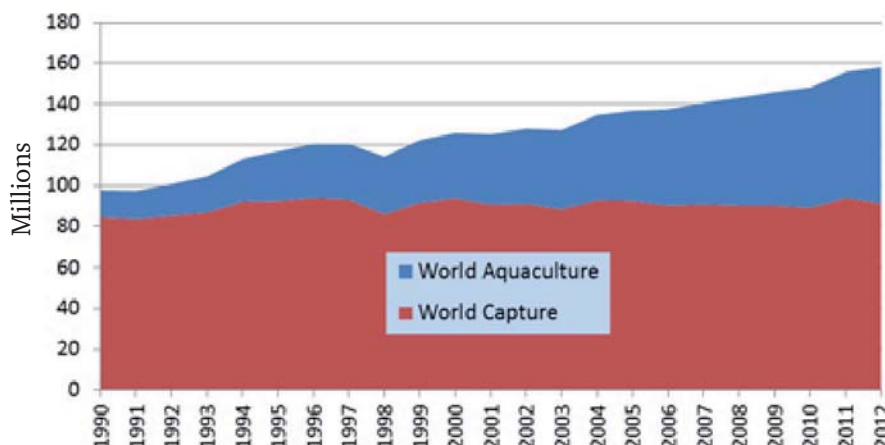
Source: FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Department, 2014.

Table 1: World aquaculture production of finfish, crustaceans, molluscs and other aquatic species in 2012 from inland aquaculture and mariculture (Unit: thousand tonnes, in live weight equivalent) \*

	Inland aquaculture	Mariculture	SUB-TOTAL	
	(thousand tonnes)	(thousand tonnes)	(thousand tonnes)	(percent)
Finfish	38 599	5 552	44 151	66.3
Crustacean	2 530	3 917	6 447	9.7
Molluscs	287	14 884	15 171	22.8
Other species	530	335	865	1.3
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>41 946</b>	<b>24 687</b>	<b>66 633</b>	<b>100</b>

\* Note: Inland aquaculture also includes operations using inland saline water in inland areas, most notably in Egypt. Mariculture also includes operations using on-shore (land-based) facilities and structures.

Figure 1: The contribution to total fish production (excluding aquatic plants and non-food products) has been rising in the world and on all continents (Unit: Million tonnes in live weight)



## INFOLOG: NEW RESOURCES AT ICSF

ICSF's Documentation Centre ([dc.icsf.net](http://dc.icsf.net)) has a range of information resources that are regularly updated. A selection:

### Publications

**Employment Practices and Working Conditions in Thailand's Fishing Sector. 2013. ILO Tripartite action to protect the rights of migrant workers within and from the Greater Mekong Subregion and Asian Research Centre for Migration, Chulalongkorn University**

This report is the result of a large-scale survey of employment practices and working conditions within the commercial fishing sector in four major port areas in Thailand.

**Implementation Guidelines on Part B of the Code, the Voluntary Guidelines and the Safety Recommendations (Implementation Guidelines)**

This publication is the result of the continuing co-operation between the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the International Maritime Organization (IMO), in relation to the safety of fishing vessels.

<http://www.fao.org/docrep/019/i3662e/i3662e.pdf>

**Governability of Fisheries and Aquaculture: Theory and Applications. MARE Publication series. Volume 7. 2013. Eds. Maarten Bavinck, Ratana Chuenpagdee, Svein Jentoft and Jan Kooiman**

This volume illustrates the contribution of interactive governance theory to understanding core concerns such as ecosystem health, social justice, sustainable livelihoods and food security. The central concept in this perspective is governability—the varied capacity to govern fisheries and aquaculture systems sustainably. The authors of this volume argue that responses to such problems must consider context, specifically, the character of the fisheries and aquaculture systems themselves, their institutional conditions and the internal and external interactions that affect them.

### Videos

#### Bangladesh Hilsa

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=WU7xqp2JO-c&feature=youtu.be](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WU7xqp2JO-c&feature=youtu.be)

This 13-min documentary, in Bangla with English subtitles, on hilsa fisheries management in Bangladesh has been produced by the Bangladesh Fisheries Research Institute (BFR I) as part of the Bay of Bengal Large Marine Ecosystem (BOBLME) project.

#### C.188 Decent Work for Fishers

This documentary film by ILO is on the Work in Fishing Convention, 2007 (No. 188). The convention is a landmark in the fishing sector, as it hopes to change the lives of fishers everywhere, guaranteeing a safer and decent workplace for the millions of people who provide a vital source of the world's food.

## FLASHBACK

### Fishermen's Rights

Filipino fishermen have suffered a great deal on Taiwanese boats. Living conditions on those boats were denounced at the international seminar held in Manila last February. All over the world, unknown fishermen undergo the same or worse treatment and have no way to defend their basic rights.

International agencies and governments do little or nothing to solve these problems. Industrial fleets have hurt small artisanal fishermen in numerous countries, either directly by



fishing in their waters, or indirectly, by negotiating with governments to obtain larger fishing quotas. Many national organizations aspire to have a zone reserved

for artisanal fishermen, and we can see the day when that right will be universally accepted as a norm.

Women do not participate in organizations and are generally kept in an inferior position. Even though they always participate in the task of processing the catch, they are not allowed to occupy leadership positions. Also, governmental decision-making agencies do not accept the participation of fishworkers' leaders, who are, therefore, forced to use pressure tactics to be taken into account.

We can see some signs on the horizon that allow us to hope for a better day for fishworkers who lack basic rights. Chile has promulgated a law for fishing and aquaculture, which provides for the participation of representatives of fishermen's organizations in fishing councils. It also establishes a five-mile zone reserved for artisanal fishing, a fisheries development fund, and priority access to aquaculture concessions. Fishermen from Brazil, Ecuador, Mexico, Bolivia, Colombia, Senegal, the Philippines, India, Norway, France and other countries are active in their organizations to achieve better living and working conditions.

This progress marks the beginning of a long and difficult road that fishermen's organizations will have to travel to ensure that their members are respected as human beings and can defend their sources of work threatened by pollution and plunder. Fishermen and fishworkers of the entire world should raise their voices to make room for the participation of women, and demand from their governments reserved fishing areas. Credit and technical assistance should be channelled through projects that are elaborated with the active participation of fishermen themselves at every step of the process.

—from SAMUDRA Report No. 4, May 1991

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### MEETINGS

#### 15th Meeting of the United Nations Open-ended Informal Consultative Process on Oceans and the Law of the Sea

27 - 30 May, 2014, New York, US

The main focus of the meeting will be discussions and panel presentations on understanding global food security and the current role of seafood therein, the role of seafood in global food security in the context of the three

pillars of sustainable development, and opportunities for, and challenges to, the future role of seafood in global food security.

#### 31st Session of the Committee on Fisheries (COFI)

9 - 13 June, 2014, Rome, Italy

The agenda for the COFI, includes endorsement of the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication (the SSF Guidelines) and discussions on

the global assistance programme for implementation of the SSF Guidelines.

#### 18th Meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice

23 - 28 June 2014, Montreal, Canada

The agenda for SBSTTA includes discussions on the programme of work on marine and coastal biodiversity, including on ecologically and biologically significant areas, ocean acidification, marine spatial planning and on ocean noise.

### WEBSITE

[www.fao.org/archive/from-the-field/detail/en/c/212878/](http://www.fao.org/archive/from-the-field/detail/en/c/212878/)

#### Video training packages

The FAO component of the SmartFish Project on Food Security has launched a new video training package to teach small-scale fisheries operators in Africa about the importance of hygiene and quality in the small-scale fisheries for better quality and business. There are five packages in this series.



## Endquote

### The Wide Ocean

*O*cean, if you were to give, a measure, a ferment, a fruit  
of your gifts and destructions, into my hand,  
I would choose your far-off repose, your contour of steel,  
your vigilant spaces of air and darkness,  
and the power of your white tongue,  
that shatters and overthrows columns,  
breaking them down to your proper purity.

*Not the final breaker, heavy with brine,  
that thunders onshore, and creates  
the silence of sand, that encircles the world,  
but the inner spaces of force,  
the naked power of the waters,  
the immoveable solitude, brimming with lives.*

*It is Time perhaps, or the vessel filled  
with all motion, pure Oneness,  
that death cannot touch, the visceral green  
of consuming totality.*

— Pablo Neruda

