

# SAMUDRA

## FORTALEZA

INTERNATIONAL COLLECTIVE IN SUPPORT OF FISHWORKERS

### Today's Agenda

- **FAO Technical Guidelines**
- **Biodiversity and Ecosystem Approach**
- **Fish Trade**
- **Panel: Disaster Preparedness**
- **Video Documentaries**

### Marginally...

A total of 57 participants are here at Fortaleza to deliberate, over three days, issues dealing with fisheries and fishworkers. Most of the participants (41) are from the South, while eight are from the North. In terms of geographic spread, Latin America is best represented, with 27 participants, while Asia and Africa have seven each.

The country-wise breakup is as follows:

Argentina 2; Brazil 18; Chile 5; France 3; Ghana 1; Guinea Conakry 1; India 4; Mauritania 1; Netherlands 3; Norway 1; Peru 2; Italy 1; Senegal 2; South Africa 2; Sri Lanka 1; Thailand 2; (Secretariat 8).

## Looking at ICSF at 20

**As ICSF enters the adolescence stage, seven of the Founding Members got together to reminisce about the past—and ponder the future**

The workshop kicked off with Rene Scharer of Instituto Terrmar, the co-host, and Chandrika Sharma, Executive Secretary of ICSF, warmly welcoming the participants to Fortaleza, and hoping that the next three days would see much meaningful discussion on the various issues that have brought them together.

In an overview of ICSF, Chandrika Sharma outlined the work done by the organization since its formation in Trivandrum, India, in 1986 by a group of concerned individuals from 18 countries, in response to an invitation from the Centre for Development Studies (CDS) and the South Indian Federation of Fishermen Societies (SIFFS).

Since then, ICSF has been working on issues that affect the artisanal and small-scale fisheries sector, especially in the developing world. It has taken part in and itself organized several significant conferences on these issues.

ICSF has engaged with several UN processes on issues ranging from labour (for instance, highlighting the need to include small-scale fishers under the proposed ILO Convention and Recommendation on Working Conditions in the Fisheries Sector); recognition of the rights of small-scale fishworkers and communities in fisheries and biodiversity management within a larger oceans/biodiversity perspective (UNCED, FAO, CBD); the rights

of small-scale fishworkers to highly migratory fish stocks (UN Fish Stocks Agreement) and the fishing subsidies debate (UN Environment Programme).

ICSF is a founder member of the Coalition for Fair Fisheries Arrangements (CFFA), which campaigns for fair and equitable fisheries arrangement between the EU and the African, Caribbean and the Pacific (ACP) countries.

ICSF, Chandrika said, has also worked steadfastly to foster a gender perspective within fishworker organizations. The organization has been especially successful in disseminating infor-

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## Unique, indispensable counterbalance

Although I became a Member of ICSF only at the end of the 1980s, I had had the opportunity to attend the Rome Conference organized by those who went on to found ICSF. That Rome meeting was determining for me, because I discovered there the burgeoning power of the organizations in the South. The NGOs that I had met up till then were dominated by representatives from the North. The Rome Conference—and, subsequently, ICSF—helped me to understand the shortcomings of industrial fishing and the impact of European policy on Southern countries. Fishworkers from the South made us understand that the future lay in artisanal fisheries.

Coming back from Rome, I decided to publish a newsletter, *Pêche & Développement*, and it has been published regularly ever since. Today, in Lorient, France, where I am based, artisanal fisheries is about the only one to survive, industrial fishing having collapsed at the end of the 1980s. After exhausting the fish stocks in Europe, the old industrial trawlers were sold off to Africa, where they went on to create great damage.

ICSF also greatly helped us to understand the importance of the role of women in fisheries. The Cebu meeting in 1984 particularly stressed this aspect. The deep crisis that affected fisheries in France in 1992-93 showed how fishermen's wives play a major role in sustaining fishing livelihoods; today, they hold important positions in various organizations in fishing communities.

While giving priority to fishworkers from the South, ICSF has been wise enough to maintain links with fishworkers from the North. The evolution of fisheries in the North makes

it possible to understand how artisanal fishing in the South may evolve, and what are the shortcomings to avoid so as to guarantee a sustainable future. One of the big challenges for artisanal fishermen in the South is to develop deep-sea fishing, making sure that they avoid using equipment that is too costly. Markets are often in the North and they have a growing impact on fishing communities in the South. Thanks to ICSF's network and documentation, we were able to take an effective part in the debate in France around the film *Darwin's Nightmare*, on the export of the Nile perch from Africa. Northern countries import more and more fish from the South, and many people question the sustainability and the equity of such trading practices.

ICSF is a unique network that enables people to understand interactions and evolutions in the world's fisheries. It is an indispensable NGO that can strengthen the voice of fishing communities, particularly to counterbalance the growing influence of environmental NGOs, who tend to impose their own points of views. Artisanal fishermen in Northern countries become invisible minorities. In order to survive, they must not only build up alliances with other groups, but also develop links with fishermen from the South, who are much more numerous, to voice their claims on a global scale, once they get organized.

We have reached the limits of the exploitation of the world's fish resources and we must now share them equally. The challenge for the world's fishermen is not only to defend their fishing activities, but also to restore the productive capacity of the coastal zones in which they operate. We have a lot of such positives experiences from around the world—and they nurture our hopes. 

### On the workshop:

This workshop should focus on topics like

- access to reserved fishing zones;
- co-management of fishing resources
- access to markets with specific rights
- certification of artisanal fishery
- empowerment of fishworker organizations and coastal communities

### On fisheries in Ceara:

The State of Ceara has no official policy on artisanal fisheries at all. The last initiative was the creation of a fishing committee in 1995. But since 1999, nothing has been done.

We fishers in Ceara face many problems. The State government has no political will to tackle the problems, and the federal agency, IBAMA, is inefficient too. Through subsidies, the government encouraged the industrial fishery, and too many boats were built. Today nearly 350 steel boats lie rusted and disused, and illegal fishing for lobster is rampant.

The solutions are well known: participation of coastal communities in co-management, monitoring of fishing resources, genuine control by competent public departments, partnership with international organizations...

### On the Instituto Terramar:

The institute was created in 1993 to defend the artisanal fishery in Ceara. Its main aims are to assist fishworker communities and give them technical aid, support coastal social movements, defend fishers' rights against land speculation, protect mangroves and oppose the setting up of shrimp farms.

— These are excerpts from an interview of Rene Scharer by Alain Le Moal, CCFD, France

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mation and analysis through its varied output, ranging from publications like *SAMUDRA Report*, Monographs and Dossiers, the Yemaya women-in-fisheries newsletter and other studies, and the ICSF website, *SAMUDRA News Alerts* and multimedia products.

After that overview, seven of the Founding Members reflected on 20 years of ICSF. John Kurien recalled that the original founders of ICSF did not go to Rome (and, subsequently, to Trivandrum) as individuals but with the strong backing of people involved in fisheries. The support of this large number of people worked towards creating a network that is a force to reckon with in the world of fisheries development.

Cornelie Quist recalled that her 22 years of involvement with the ICSF process has been a unique experience of mission and vision, and friendship shared between members. ICSF has played an important role in the valorization of artisanal fisheries at the local and international levels. This became very evident in ICSF's involvement in the post-tsunami work.

ICSF has not only championed the cause of artisanal fishworkers, Cornelie added, but also of women fishworkers and vendors. ICSF's effort to integrate a gender perspective into the dominant discourse was most challenging and unique, so much so that today women's role in artisanal fisheries has been more or less acknowledged.

The greatest contribution of ICSF, Cornelie summed up, relates to the conceptual and contextual analysis of fisheries development. She hoped that in the coming triennium ICSF would take up the challenge of a more integrated approach to fisheries policymaking.

Hector Luis Morales characterized ICSF as a network of not only support but also tolerance. It is important for ICSF to recognize and address the environmental and social changes that have taken place over the past 20 years. The future lies in allowing communities to be stakeholders in the struggle, he said.

Nalini Nayak chose to highlight what she labeled as "some of the confusions" that have evolved over the last 20 years. When ICSF was started, the founders and supporters seemed to be rather sure what the small-scale sector in the Southern part of the world was and quite sure of whom to support. Massive changes have since taken place and, Nalini added, "I am rather confused who the small-scale sector includes and what it represents. This is one of the challenges for us to redefine with our fishworker friends – who we are going to support and for what in the coming years?"

Although ICSF has given importance to the question of women in fisheries, Nalini pointed out, the issue has not gained much ground, mainly because ICSF's principal constituency has been fishworker organizations, which are mainly male-dominated. Where the local community is given power in decision-making processes, there women definitely play a role. Nalini hoped that in the coming decade, ICSF would be able to articulate and realize the concept of sustainability where women, men and nature do actually matter.

Rolf Willmann, Senior Fisheries Officer, FAO, said that ICSF has become mainstream for FAO and is filling a void to counterbalance the presence of the environmental groups by representing the fisheries sector, in general, and fishworkers, in particular. Though ICSF is now mainstream, Rolf said, the crucial issue is translating good policies into ground realities so that we can see real changes in the lives of fishing communities.

James Smith recalled that one of the things that impressed him most at the Rome conference was how the organizers were able to allow the voices of fishworkers from the villages to reach the international level. As for the future, James pointed to the need to think in terms of workers' and human rights, and the place that fishworkers should find in the maritime world. There should be fewer and fewer distinctions between the workers in the maritime field, he said.

A minute's silence was observed in memory of Michael Belliveau, a Founding Member of ICSF, who passed away

in 2002. Just before the reminiscence session ended, Nalini reminded the audience that there were actually not just the seven at the founding meeting of ICSF, but a total of around 24 people who came together. Some of them have since moved out due to a lesser involvement with the sector as a whole, while some others remain very active, although at the periphery. In conclusion, Rene quipped, "If ICSF didn't exist, we would have had to invent it."

## Lovers on Aran

*The timeless waves, bright, sifting,  
broken glass,  
Came dazzling around, into the rocks,  
Came glinting, sifting from the  
Americas*

*To possess Aran. Or did Aran rush  
to throw wide arms of rock around a  
tide  
That yielded with an ebb, with a soft  
crash?*

*Did sea define the land or land the  
sea?  
Each drew new meaning from the  
waves' collision.  
Sea broke on land to full identity.*

— Seamus Heaney

## <On the Web>

The ICSF website, <http://www.icsf.net>, has several resources on fisheries, fishworkers and fishing communities, including all issues of *SAMUDRA Report*, ICSF's triannual journal, and *Yemaya*, the newsletter on women in fisheries. All these, as well as the other publications, are available for free download from the site. You can also subscribe to *SAMUDRA News Alerts*, the free news service designed to deliver fisheries-related news and analysis daily or weekly, in either plain-text or HTML format.

For this workshop, a special website has been created at <http://www.icsf.net/jsp/conference/gb2006>. The site features all the presentations made at the workshop as well as useful information and links related to the themes discussed. The final report of the workshop will also be uploaded to the site.



# Darwin's Nightmare

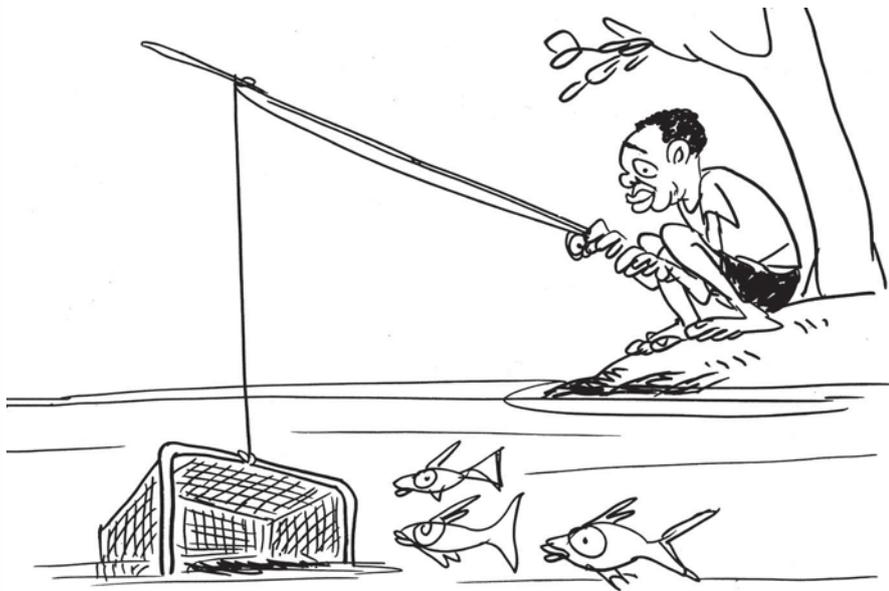
Some time in the 1960s, in the heart of Africa, a new animal was introduced into Lake Victoria as a little scientific experiment. The Nile Perch, a voracious predator, extinguished almost the entire stock of the native fish species. However, the new fish multiplied so fast that its white fillets are today exported all around the world.

Huge hulking ex-Soviet cargo planes come daily to collect the latest catch in exchange for their southbound cargo...Kalashnikovs and ammunition for the uncounted wars in the dark centre of the continent.

This booming multinational industry of fish and weapons has created an ungodly globalized alliance on the shores of the world's biggest tropical lake: an army of local fishermen, World Bank agents, homeless children, African ministers, EU commissioners, Tanzanian prostitutes and Russian pilots.

"Witty, provocative, angry and heart-breaking, this incisive, imaginative film ranges wide in the subjects it covers." — TIME OUT, London

(Darwin's Nightmare was screened here last night. Those who missed the film can request for a private screening.)



## Know Your Portuguese

### SPECIAL OCCASIONS

Congratulations!	Parabéns!
Happy Birthday!	Feliz aniversário!
Happy Christmas!	Feliz Natal!
Happy New Year!	Feliz Ano Novo!
Happy Easter!	Feliz Páscoa!
Good Luck!	Boa sorte!
Enjoy the meal!	Bom apetite!
Have a safe journey!	Boa viagem!

Take Care!

Cuidado!

### ETIQUETTE

Please	Se faz favor / Por favor
Thank you	Obrigada
Excuse me	Com licença / Desculpe
I'm sorry, but...	Peço desculpa, mas...
That's a shame	Que pena
May I... ?	Posso... ?

## Helpline

### Conference Secretariat

Salao de Eventos 2 (adjacent to Conference hall)  
Tel: 87390906

### Registration/Travel

SESC Reception (Tel: 55 85 3318 6000)

### Money Changing

SADOC (Cambio e Turismo, Fortaleza. Tel: 3219-7993)

### Emergency Numbers

Police 190  
Ambulance 3433-7373

### SESC Address

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Tel: 55 85 3318 6000  
Embratur: 20.03.612.122/0004-70



...it takes the waters of many rivers to make a mighty ocean—a samudra. And so it is with our Collective...



—Viewpoint from  
SAMUDRA Report No. 1

## Tomorrow

- Labour Issues in Fisheries
- Aquaculture
- Fishworker Organizations: Emerging Concerns
- Concluding Session
- Dinner Party/Festa

SAMUDRA FOR FORTALEZA is a special publication brought out by the SAMUDRA Team for ICSF's 20th Anniversary Meet at Fortaleza, Ceará, Brazil