

ONGOING STUDY 2

TRENDS IN EXTERNAL AID AND INVESTMENT FLOWS TO THE FISHERIES SECTORS OF THIRD WORLD COUNTRIES

One of the important tasks of the ICSF is to monitor the impact of development programmes on the living and working conditions of fishworkers. This is a formidable task, in which the ICSF Secretariat needs the assistance of the regional networks of supporters and fishworkers' organizations as well as that committed scientists and administrators with access to the required information.

Impact monitoring is the first step in building up an early warning system through which the ICSF attempts to prevent the implementation of development programmes which are contrary to the interests of fishworkers and the public at large. To achieve this aim, the Secretariat needs up-to-date information on-planned development programmes so that in the event of projects likely to prove damaging, opposition can be organized at local and national as well as international levels

IN FAO

For a couple of years the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) has been publishing a Survey of External Assistance to the Fisheries Sector in Developing Countries (1). This survey presents consolidated data which shows the amounts and types of external assistance given by major donors, and receiving regions. According to this information external assistance to fisheries has more than doubled in the period 1974-1984 from \$US228.8 million to \$US482.4 million (in constant \$US terms). About 80% of the assistance in 1984 consisted of capital aid (vessels, harbours, infrastructure, etc), while the rest has been spent on technical assistance (training, research, etc.).

THE WORLD BANK

The World Bank (WB) and regional development banks (Asian, African and Inter-American Development Banks) are—with 42% — the main investors in fisheries, followed by bilateral donors (38%).

The UN system, including FAO, account for about 7% — consisting mostly of technical assistance. FAO's role in investments is, however, much stronger than indicated by this figure. Many of the investment projects undertaken by the World Bank and regional development banks are prepared

with the assistance of the FAO Investment Centre which is a relatively independent unit within FAO. Insiders say that the coordination between the technical units of FAO and the Investment Centre is very poor. The latter sees itself more as an extension of the WB (where the US has the main say) than of FAO (where Third World countries have the majority vote—though not the funds!).

..and the EEC

In recent years, the European Economic Community (EEC) has greatly increased its involvement in the fisheries of developing countries and accounted in 1984 for 7% of all assistance, up from less than 1% in 1979. Considering that a large part of bilateral assistance is also provided by EEC countries, the EEC is among the most influential external investors in the fisheries of Third World countries, especially in Africa where the bulk of the presently under-exploited fishery resources are located. This increasing interest on the part of the EEC is not surprising as with the inclusion of Spain and Portugal the EEC has to accommodate a vastly expanded fleet of fishing vessels, which is too large for the fishery resources within EEC waters. In the words of an EEC representative: *"Whether fishing survives as an occupation for the Community's fishermen will now depend on the conclusion of fisheries agreements with Third World countries."*

Most of the countries with under-exploited resources are indeed in the Third World, especially North and West Africa.

So-called development assistance is extremely handy when it comes to preparing the groundwork for the conclusion of joint-venture agreements: contacts are established; information on location and abundance of profitable resources is being collected and key decision-makers are financially and ideologically prepared to approve so-called 'mutually' beneficial deals. The ones who lose out on the deal are the thousands of artisanal fishing families who have no voice and who—with some development assistance provided here and there—are being made to believe that they are also benefiting.

In those countries where the carrot is not working, the EEC has the stick to hand: denial of access to the resources is met with the denial of access to EEC markets. In this man-

ner, the EEC has designed an effective system to safeguard the interests of EEC fisheries in the name of development aid.

US AND RUSSIAN INTERESTS

A new actor has recently appeared on the fishery scene of West Africa, namely the United States. So far, US involvement is confined to the provision of minor financial support, but major development programmes are under consideration for implementation by USAID. Contrary to the EEC's business interests. US involvement is stimulated by geo-strategical considerations. The US is highly annoyed by the large presence of fishing fleets from the USSR and from other East European countries off the West African coast and would like to see the influence of the East greatly reduced in this region — including the withdrawal of Cuban forces from Angola.

The role of the fishing fleets from the Eastern bloc in West Africa is quite damaging to the local fishing fleets—especially the USSR's, which has won a name for itself by indiscriminately wiping out fishery resources and infringing local laws such as the ban on operating in inshore waters to protect artisanal fisheries. The fleets are also dumping fish on the local markets (to gain foreign exchange) thereby lowering fish prices to such a level that the local artisanal fishermen have difficulties making ends meet.

The countries from the Eastern bloc are basically following the same system as those from the West in acquiring access agreements with developing countries such as outright pay-offs to corrupt government officials and the provision of capital and technical assistance. The only difference seems to be that the East is even less interested in assisting artisanal fishermen than the West.



CRITERIA FOR EVALUATION

Coming back to the FAO review, it does not provide much information on the impact of external assistance. Such impact will depend first and foremost on the kind of investments undertaken in the fishery sector. Are they geared towards the needs of fish workers or are they undertaken to generate maximum profit for a few? Do such investments contribute to the ecologically sound utilization of a fragile renewable resource *or are* they accelerating the destruction of the coastal and marine eco-system? Are such investments contributing to satisfy the nutritional needs of the under- or malnourished sections of the population or are they enhancing the flow of food from the needy to the affluent? These are some of the questions which need to be answered when assessing the impact of national and externally supported investment programmes on the fishery sector.

Many of us are aware that a great number of development programmes did more harm than good for the fishworkers in general and for small-scale rural fishing families in particular.

External assistance and national development schemes have concentrated on the introduction of capital intensive fishing technologies geared towards export production. Support to artisanal fishing communities consisted more often of lip-service than of allocation of sufficient financial, technical and manpower resources.

MORE RECENTLY

After FAO's 1984 World Fisheries Conference there was some hope that more resources would be provided for artisanal and small-scale fisheries. Preliminary data indicate that this hope has been frustrated — lip-service continues to prevail. Concessionary aid to fisheries in developing countries is declining and with it assistance to small-scale fisheries. The bulk of external assistance is still going into large-scale fisheries, which employ not more than one tenth of all fishermen world-wide.

The millions of small-scale fishermen receive less than one-fifth (about \$US 100 million) of all assistance. With an estimated number of about 15 million small-scale fishermen and at least 60 million family members, external assistance per capita works out to just above 1 \$US. This is very little, but certainly a highly profitable investment for the suppliers of fishing gear, engines, vessels, etc. from the industrialised countries.

THE JAPANESE VIEWPOINT

It's hardly surprising to read the following declaration of aims for technical assistance from the department responsible for Japanese Overseas Fisheries Development Cooperation:

- to develop the unexploited fishery resources of developing countries for Japanese utilization through economic cooperation;
- to facilitate fishing agreements favourable to Japan by offering developing countries technical assistance for the development of their fisheries;
- to allocate governmental technical assistance to developing countries so as to facilitate Japanese Private sector investments.

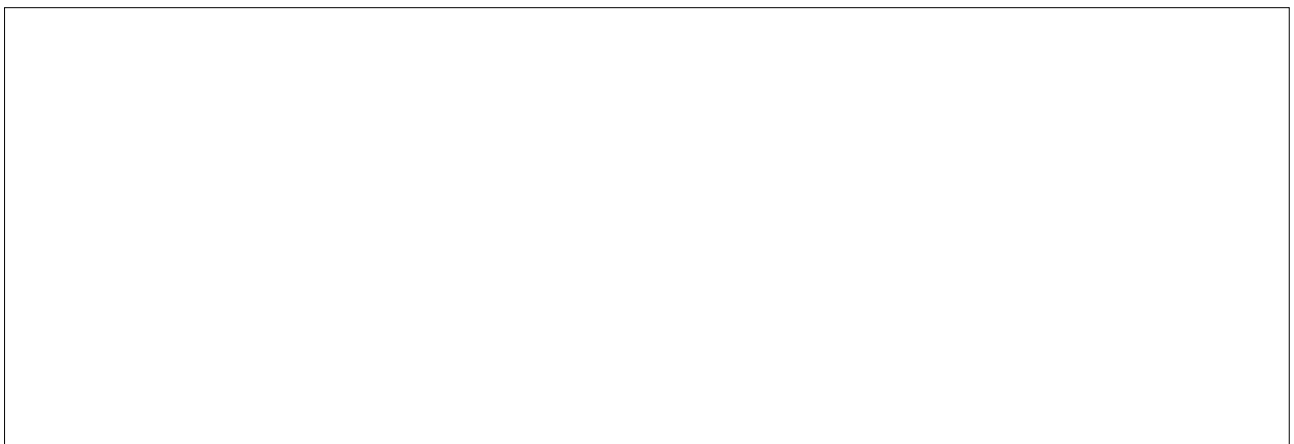
DEAR SHRIMPS...

The only major change observed in investment patterns is that more money is being invested in aquaculture, and shrimp culture in particular. However, this new emphasis is a result of old, familiar reasons: earning of foreign exchange and profits for the few.

Shrimps are turning out to be the 'cattle of the sea'. They are highly inefficient converters of protein requiring large amounts of feed in intensive forms of farming. So-called trash-fish, which in many instances is or could be used for direct human consumption, is one of the main ingredients in the preparation of such feed. Again, the poorest consumers are deprived of a cheap source of animal protein to provide a luxury dish for the rich.

The culture of shrimps also raises serious ecological concerns. First, trash-fish has hitherto been the often undesired by-catch of trawling. The advent of shrimp farming has brought about the promotion of highly destructive trawling with extremely small mesh sizes—specifically orientated towards the capture of trash-fish which in turn further aggravates over-exploitation of fishery resources in inshore areas. Second, large areas of mangroves are being converted into shrimp ponds among the most valuable resources for the living of coastal rural people, providing fuel, fodder and employment, mangroves are also important breeding and nursery grounds for many aquatic species.

spontaneity and of being in touch with the real issues. It proved beyond doubt that initiatives at local level—when brought together with enthusiasm and commitment— produce a synergic effect.



Beaches on the move...

Post-ICFWS collaboration between fishworker groups has been on the increase. So, too, has the interaction and assistance given them by supporters.

News about this close collaboration between supporters' and fishworkers' organizations flooded in from Columbia, France, Senegal, India, Thailand, Malaysia and the Philippines—and many other countries. Very few of these contributions could claim to be national, but the qualitative nature of the links they helped establish gave them special significance. In some cases fishworkers and supporters worked together to achieve technology transfer; in some instances, to strengthen organizational initiatives; on other occasions to discuss and implement programmes for socio-economic welfare. The perceptible increase in such types of cooperation and the manner in which they were being appreciated by fishworkers' organizations lay at the very heart of the Collective concept.

A new form of consultation...

Following a letter I wrote in mid-1986, many of our supporters round the world—generally social and physical scientists and social organizers—endorsed the overall idea of the need to work together more closely so that their activity on behalf of fishworkers in their respective countries could be given a broader dimension. Such combined effort was also seen as an effective means of creating greater solidarity across such barriers as culture, language and national territory. The idea was also endorsed by many fishworkers' organizations and NGO's working closely with fishworkers.

The launching...

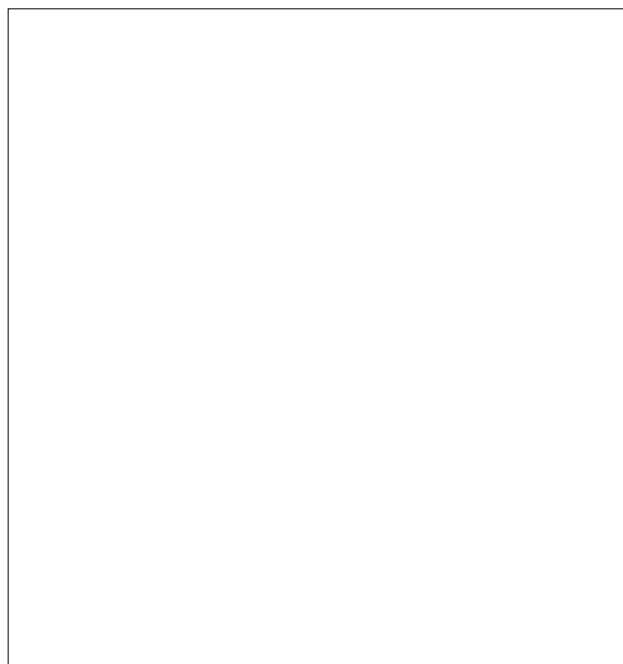
The November 1986 meeting in Trivandrum of supporters from 18 countries hosted jointly by a research institute (Centre for Development Studies) and a fishermen's organization (South Indian Federation of Fishermen's Societies) formally endorsed the idea of the Collective. The joint resolution basically sanctioned the creation of the "ocean"—the *samudra*. But creating an ocean does not mean that the "rivers" will cease to exist. On the contrary their role is greatly enhanced, continuing to pour in the fresh water of ideas, to be replenished in turn from the ocean through the rainfall of inspiration.

The Cycle of mutual dependence that binds "rivers" and ocean" together must be greatly strengthened if the Collective is to evolve into a meaningful initiative for the fishworkers and their supporters.

Our task...

The very name "Collective" and the nature of its organization emphasize the international dimensions of a forum built on the strength of its regional/national links.

Every member of the Collective has pledged a small portion of her or his time to further its objectives. The Action Team which is to breathe life into this enterprise and provide it with leadership must imitate the waves of the samudra—rise to take the initiative and act, and then, when the task is accomplished, subside to give rise to a new wave.



The task the Action Team and its members address is unique and challenging. Let us all devote our energies towards ensuring that our aspirations for the Collective will soon come to fruition.

In total commitment
John Kurien, TRIVANDRUM

BIBLIOGRAPHY

If you are interested in indigenous fisheries and the people working in them, the complete report of the Trivandrum Workshop (held in November 1986) provides a rich source of information on a wide range of issues, including the basic options confronting the Collective, its programmes and women's views on fisheries.

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