

News Round-up

Fishing for danger

With more than 70 fatalities per day, fishing at sea may be the most dangerous occupation in the world, according to a new report released in January by the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO).

The annual death toll among fishermen, estimated at 24,000 worldwide by the International Labour Organization, may be considerably lower than the true figure because only a limited number of countries keep accurate records on occupational fatalities in their fishing industries, says the report.

More than 97 per cent of the 15 million fishers employed in

marine capture fisheries worldwide are working on vessels that are less than 24 m in length, largely beyond the scope of international conventions and guidelines, according to *The State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture 2000*.

Where inshore resources have been overexploited, fishers have to work farther away from shore, sometimes for extended periods, and frequently in fishing craft designed for inshore fishing or not complying with security regulations, FAO says.

Hake hate

Artisanal fishermen in **Chile** are calling on fishing authorities to increase the Antarctic queen hake (*Merluccius australis*) quota in the X Region.

The artisanal fishermen said the agreement signed with the Chilean Fisheries Undersecretariat concerning a catch quota increase for that species should be modified. The quota now is 5,900 tonnes, distributed throughout April, May, June and July.

The controversy surrounds the extension of the fishing season to 11 months, with monthly quotas of 800 tonnes.

This would mean increasing the annual quota to 8,800 tonnes, the leader of the region's fishermen, Erick Vargas, told

Fish Information & Services (FIS).

According to Vargas, about 4,000 fishermen, who participate in the hake fishery, are

staging protests, and others who harvest seaweed and benthic resources have joined them.

Undersecretariat sources said the quota shouldn't be increased because the sustainability of the species is at stake. However, the fishermen insist that the agreement should be urgently modified. They have even called for a redistribution of the quota between the industrial and artisanal sector, as proposed for the quota of common hake in the central-southern region.

Pack off!

The fishing industry in **Pakistan** is suffering at the hands of deep-sea trawlers and could crumble if the federal government

continues to allow them to operate in Pakistani waters, according to Muhammad Hanif Khan, chairman of the Pakistan Seafood Industries Association (PSIA).

Pakistan's Ministry of Food and Agriculture has reportedly asked the government to review deep-sea fishing operations and reduce deep-sea fishing limits from 35 nautical miles to 12 nautical miles.

Hanif, however, thinks they should be banned from Pakistani waters altogether. He told a press conference that they could overfish Pakistan's resources, which, in turn, would cripple national fishermen, processors and exporters, causing the loss of more than a million jobs nationwide.

"If this happens, it would be a disaster for the local industry,

fishermen and the country's seafood exports," he said.

Hanif explained that deep-sea trawlers are very wasteful and throw 60 to 70 per cent, sometimes 90 per cent, of their catch back into the sea. It is estimated

that their discarded catches amount to 300,000 tonnes per year, which, if brought to the market, processed and exported, could fetch between \$500 mn and \$800 mn.

Hanif said Pakistan should work to conserve its marine sector, which earns \$140 mn per year and stressed that many countries support a reduction or ban on deep-sea trawling.

Deep-sea vessels catch more than 28 mn tonnes of fish each year, upsetting the ecosystem, said Hanif, who blamed them for practically depleting Pakistan's tuna resources.

Fish watchdog

The government of **Mozambique** will sign an agreement for satellite supervision of its rich fishing waters with British firm Racal by the end of this month, reports LUSA, quoting Fisheries Minister Cadmiel Muthemba.

The \$1 mn contract, he said, aimed to limit illegal fishing

and overfishing and to help assess and protect the country's

fish stocks, especially prized shrimp.

In 2000, fisheries exports, one of Mozambique's major economic resources, reached 15,800 tonnes, worth \$109.3 mn—20.2 per cent more than in 1999.

Labour chides

At the end of this month, the Chiloé Province Workers' Central Union (CUT) is to announce at the World Forum of Fish Harvesters and Fish Workers in Quebec, Canada, that certain salmon farming companies in **Chile** do not respect labour regulations.

The World Forum is presided over by Chilean national Humberto Mella Ahumada and is due to take place from 15-30 April, with the participation of representatives from all over the world.

CUT president Luis Sandoval will give a lecture on 18 April and, then, with the support of several worldwide artisanal fishermen's federations, he will put the accusation against the Chilean salmon industry before the Canadian State, writes *El Llanquihue*.

According to the fishing leader, some Chilean companies do not respect labour regulations. Other irregularities include a lack of respect for

maternity rights, low salaries, lack of security on floating cages, lack of basic services and anti-union practices, he said.

Sandoval believes Canada will consider the petition because Chile and Canada have a free trade agreement in force and because Canada is such an advanced salmon farming country.

The CUT will also denounce the Chilean State's subsidy policy, alleging that companies from the zones of Chiloé, Palerna and the XI Region receive a 17.3 per cent subsidy to hire staff.

However, the managing director of the Association of Salmon and Trout Farmers, Rodrigo Infante, claimed that salmon industrialists were always willing to discuss such issues with both workers and government authorities.

The Chilean salmon industry employs more than 24,800 people and generates more than 12,000 indirect jobs.

Most of the sector's problems affect the salmon farming centres and processing plants. Following its spectacular growth, the salmon industry accounts for half of the Chilean fishing sector's exports and

five per cent of the country's total exports.

No to WTO

The World Forum of Fisher Peoples (WFFP) Co-ordination Committee met in Mumbai, **India** from 6 to 10 March 2001 and decided to go for an international fisheries strike on 21 November 2001. It also decided to support the anti-WTO action in Qatar from 5-13 November 2001.

The Coordination Committee decided to reject any kind of factory fishing and also joint ventures in the name of technology transfer. It also decided to

reject industrial monoculture aquaculture and genetic manipulation. WFFP says it will not tolerate any dumping of atomic and industrial wastes in oceans and water bodies. WFFP accepts tourism only to the extent that it is decided upon together with the local fishing community and only when it is in consonance with the needs and livelihood of the local fishing community.