

# Yemaya

No. 3

ICSF'S NEWSLETTER ON GENDER AND FISHERIES

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## From the Editor

Greetings! We are happy to bring to you the third issue of Yemaya, the first in the year 2000!

The effort continues to develop Yemaya as a medium which 'maintains' links between women and men of fishing communities, fishworker organizations and NGOs/researchers working in different countries with small-scale fishworkers. Through Yemaya, the hope is that people from different countries will be able to follow important movements and initiatives relevant to fishworkers, especially women, elsewhere—and who can, therefore, be part of the work within their own context as part of this larger consciousness.

To make Yemaya accessible to a larger set of people, especially to people of fishing communities, its distribution is not being restricted to the electronic media. It is also being produced in three languages—English, French and Spanish. However, as we are all aware, people of fishing communities in different parts of the world communicate in a diversity of languages. For a genuine 'engagement' by people of fishing communities with Yemaya, much of the initiative will have to be taken by supporters at the local level in helping translate and making accessible the information contained in the publication, and in communicating back. It appears that, to some extent, this is happening (see, for instance, the message from Brazil on last page).

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There has been some feedback on the second issue of Yemaya, and we carry some of our readers' comments on the last page. There have also been some suggestions, which we could take on board. Cornelia Quist, a member of ICSF from the Netherlands, for example, has suggested that Yemaya could carry debates on relevant themes. We invite suggestions for such debates.

This issue carries write-ups from eight countries around the world, each unique, each thought-provoking. The write-up from Sri Lanka, for example, speaks of the destructive impact of the use of dynamite on traditional fishing communities and on their resource base. It also clearly brings out that women of fishing communities are affected by developments at sea, and are dynamic actors in protesting against such developments, along with their men folk. A similar message is evident from the write-up on France, where women of French coastal communities have taken on important political roles in influencing European fisheries policies to take into account the concerns of coastal fishing communities. These examples speak for themselves. They have much to say to those who contend that since women do not fish, they have no place in discussions on fisheries management. These, and the other articles in this issue, reinforce the central role of women in coastal fishing communities.

The next issue of Yemaya will be in July 2000. Please do send in write-ups and share your experience and views.

## From Africa/ Uganda

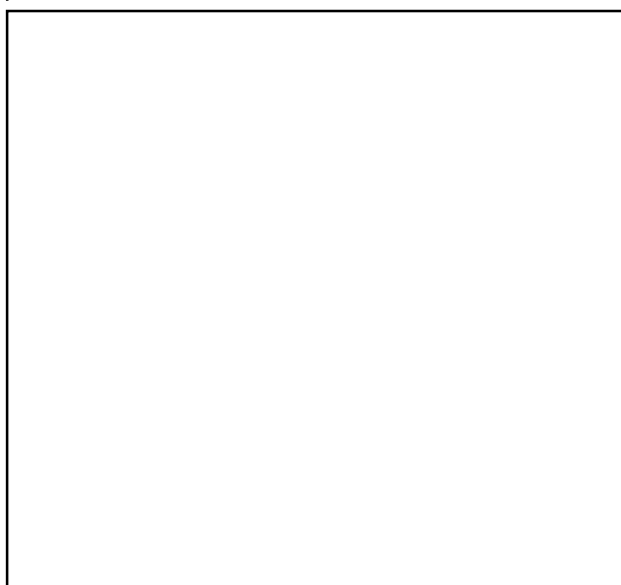
### Fishing pioneers

*A dynamic group of women take to fishing in Lake Victoria*

**by Margaret Nakato, a member of the Katosi Women's Fishing Group**

We, the Katosi Women's Fishing Group, are a pioneering group of women in the region, engaged in fishing. We are 25 women who came together with the aim of improving our general socioeconomic situation. We use a locally built boat, with a 25 HP engine, and fishing nets of a mesh size recommended in Uganda to avoid catching young fish. We do fishing as a group activity, and, from the profits, we have created a Revolving Loan Fund that is a source of loans for the women members of the group.

It has not been easy for us to fish, as the men here tend to regard fishing as a profitable activity only for men. The group was met with resistance and a lack of cooperation from the community in the beginning, and we had to work with those men who were willing to help us reduce the resistance. Despite this, there are areas that continue to be 'out of bounds' for us. There is an island on Lake Victoria, which, according to custom, should not be visited by women, even though this island is a great strategic place to go fishing in some seasons. Our group has not ventured there, as this has been a tradition for a long time.



The men who support us work as our employees, or as suppliers of petrol and fishing nets, on credit. The

man who is the chief buyer of our catch has also been very supportive of our cause, and this has given us more independence, rather than having to depend on our husbands and other men for support.

We fish in the lake Victoria. The Nile perch is the main catch, though tilapia, lung fish and a few other species are also caught. The Nile perch is mainly for export, while the other species are usually consumed locally. The fishing period is not continuous, as we catch more fish during the dark days of the month and almost none when the moon is bright.

Earlier, the fishing activity was almost eliminated due to a ban on fishing, imposed because of the illegal use of poison by some people in the community, eager to reap easy profits. The spread of water hyacinth had led to a rapid decline in the fish population in the lake. It was at that time of fish scarcity that some fishermen began to use poison to catch fish. The members of our group were more oriented towards eradicating the weed, since it was affecting the whole landing site and thus the whole community. Fortunately, the government intervened to introduce a weevil that fed on the weed and, consequently, there has been a decline in the coverage of the weed, especially at Katosi Landing Site.

Since, with the exception of fishing, this area has no employment or income opportunities, the whole community suffered intensively as a result of the ban. Though the ban has since been lifted, the industry has not completely revived and is still limping.

Since our daily catch is still small due to limited equipment, it is sold to our chief buyer, who has a big boat with a freezer installed. The chief buyer patrols the lake, looking for fish from small boats like ours, and has the capacity to stay on the lake till the maximum tonnage is reached. This fish is then supplied to the fish-processing industries that are located at a distance of some 45 kms, in the capital city of Kampala.

We are thinking of going into fish processing since it is more profitable. Fish smoking and other forms of fish processing were activities local women engaged in earlier. However, due to the rise in the demand of fresh fish by fish-processing factories, women processors were forced out of business and are no longer in this activity. They took to activities, such as food vending, selling of secondhand clothes, selling fresh vegetables, local brewing, tailoring, running drug shops, poultry farming, etc. As we have been giving loans to women,

we have found that women often do the same type of business, leading to duplication and low sales.

We think a processing factory will be a major achievement for the women in the area and a source of employment. Our plans include building a freezer boat and then building a fish-processing factory so that we can process the fish for export, instead of selling it raw. If our dream is realized, our project is going to be a pioneering one in the whole country. The factory will be owned jointly by the women of the group. It will enable the women in the area to enter international trade, create employment and will answer our campaign for industrialization. The fish-processing factories presently in Uganda are mostly owned by foreign investors.

## From Asia/ Sri Lanka

### Poisoned dynamite

*Women and men of fishing communities work together to demand a ban on dynamite fishing*

**by Herman Kumara, the Convenor of National Fisheries Solidarity Organization (NAFSO)**

Vineetha Kahingala is a 35-year old housewife in a fishing village on the southern coast of Sri Lanka. She has three small children—a son and two daughters—the smallest of whom is less than a year old. Her husband is a traditional small-scale fishworker, working with two others in a boat. They go to the sea early in the morning and come back by around 9.00 am. Their income depends on the catch. The boatowner gets 50 per cent from the net income and the three workers share the rest. Some days, they each earn below Rs. 50, and on the rare better days, they may even get around Rs. 500 each.

Vineetha has been facing many problems over the last ten years due to the ongoing civil war situation. The small boat her husband works in cannot operate in the rough sea during the monsoon season lasting almost six months of the year. Prior to the start of the civil war, Vineetha's husband and the other fishermen in the area used to migrate to the north and east coasts of the country, during this period. But now, due to the civil war, it is not possible to fish anymore in the north and the east. This has affected not only Vineetha's family, but also all other fishing communities in the country.

Vineetha narrated her life struggle with tears. Earlier,

the catch during the calm season was adequate to run the family smoothly. But today they face a number of problems caused by the rich and powerful people. Purse-seine fishing using light lures and dynamite fishing are some of the worst problems affecting the fishing communities along the southern coast.

Dynamite fishing has been responsible for the present poverty of Vineetha's family. The operators use dynamite to destroy all the fish stocks. They collect as much fish as they can, while the rest of the dead fish is left in the sea. Ironically, the dynamite operators are day labourers from within the community. But they are also helpless since they depend on others for their survival. They are backed by six powerful multimillionaires. The small fisher people cannot operate their boats in the area because they face death threats from dynamite operators. At the same time, since fish production from dynamite fishing is very high, it depresses fish prices in the local market. Artisanal fishermen, who catch small amounts, cannot earn enough even for their survival.

Says Vineetha, 'After these dynamite operators came here, our families have been starving. My eldest son cannot go to school, because he doesn't have anything to eat, no shoes, no bus fare, no money to buy books. Some days my husband does not catch any fish. No fish at all. This year we had to get loans, at up to 20 per cent interest per month from the same merchants who support the dynamite fishing.' Vineetha is anaemic. As she herself is starved of nutritious food, she is unable to breast-feed her youngest child.

Vineetha, a very dynamic woman, works with the women's group, Savistri (Women for Development Alternatives) as a community leader. They have a savings group, but are unable to save now, since there is no money to save. Savistri and the Southern Fisheries Organization (SFO) have been working to draw attention to the problems they are facing. NAFSO, a network of 10 fishworker organizations working with coastal and inland fishing communities in Sri Lanka, has been supporting this struggle, and a street drama group has been formed to educate others and to get their support. Media tours have also been organized to ensure that these issues receive better media coverage.

The women got together and wrote a petition to the Fisheries Minister and to the President demanding an immediate ban on dynamite fishing. As a result, the Minister of Fisheries ordered that dynamite fishing be

stopped. The police caught a few boats using dynamite and jailed the operators, but both the boats and the operators were released on payment of a small fine. The dynamite operators bribe police and government officials, and small fisher people continue to suffer. Activists at SFO have even received death threats from the powerful dynamite operators.

‘This practice should be stopped. All the illegal equipment should be destroyed.’ This is the voice of Vineetha’s group. ‘This should not be the struggle of fisher peoples alone. Fish consumers must also come forward to stop this. Our husbands are under death threat if they raise their voice. That is why we have come forward.’ This is the voice of the women’s group.



The story of Vineetha is not only the story of one woman. It is the story of around 2,500 small fisher families along the southern coast. The courage of women like Vineetha clearly shows how women contribute to the life and livelihood of fishing communities in the country

**From Asia/ Indonesia**

## Skirting the ban

*Illegal trawling takes a heavy toll on fishing communities in North Sumatra*

by Chandrika Sharma, Programme Associate,  
ICSE, Chennai

I met Lely Zailani recently, during a meeting in Thailand. She spoke of the problems facing fishworkers in the region she comes from: North Sumatra in Indonesia. The most important problem, she said, is the nega-

tive impact of trawling, both on the coastal environment and on the livelihood of local fishing communities.

What she said was surprising because it is commonly known that there is a complete ban on trawling in Indonesia. In fact, the government was forced to implement the trawl ban in the 1980s as a result of the pressure from artisanal fishworkers. To the outside world, Indonesia has always been held up as an example of a country that has successfully banned trawling activities in its waters.

However, talking to Lely, it became clear that the situation ‘on the sea’ is quite different. It appears that trawling continues due to poor enforcement, as well as the nexus between trawler owners and enforcement officials. Traditional fishermen in North Sumatra have been badly affected. They have tried to draw the attention of local officials to illegal trawling. They have even ‘arrested’ trawlers and handed them over to officials, only to find that they are released the very next day.

The conflict between local gillnet fishermen and trawlers has even turned violent on several occasions, and several artisanal fisherman have lost their lives as a consequence. Between 1993 and 1998, in the district of Teluk Mengkudu, Deli Serdang Region (North Sumatra) alone, 31 fishermen were killed. Several other unrecorded incidents took place in other regions, such as in Langkat, Asahan and Belawan. Obviously, the impact of this conflict on fishermen’s wives has been high, as many of them have lost their husbands in it.

In 1998, fishworkers from three regions in North Sumatra—Langkat, Asahan Deli and Serdang—came together to form the *Sarekat Nelayan Sumatera Utara* (SNSU) or North Sumatran Fishers Union. Women are active members in this union. The aim of the organization is to draw the attention of the government to the problems of artisanal fishermen, especially the problems from illegal trawling, and to make a case for technologies that do not destroy the coastal environment.

**From Europe/ France**

## Vocal, articulate and creative

*The women of Femmes de Littoral, Brittany work to defend the interests of small-scale fishing communities*

by Nalini Nayak, a social activist working with fishworkers in India, and a member of ICSF

The women of Brittany, Femmes de Littoral, together with the Comite Local, are now preparing to host the first Constitutional Assembly of the World Forum of Fish Harvesters and Fishworkers (WFF). Prior to that, they intend to have a one-day workshop only for women in the fisheries. The agenda for that has not yet been finalized as they hope to do it in a very participatory manner. The preparations are now on.

You may wonder why I write about the women of Brittany. The fact is that I was really struck to see the evolution of this coastal women's organization over these last six to seven years. Up to 1990, when I visited that part of the world, there was no organization of women. The fishworkers' organizations comprised only men. There were women in the fish plants, but they were organized as plant workers in the industrial trade unions. There were very militant women among them and we have long been associated with Annette Le Sauze, who has also documented her life and struggles as a fish plant worker. In fact, during those visits to Brittany, I tried to discuss with the men in the organizations and with some of the wives of the fishermen about the problems in the fishery and the need for the women to be a part of the organizational structure. They did not seem to think there was any such need. There was only Scarlettte Corre, a dynamic woman who set out to sea in her own gillnet boat and who was proud to be a fisherwoman.

By 1993-94, things changed in Brittany, both in the fishery and among the women. I am not going to write about the movement that evolved at that particular time of the fisheries crisis because it has been documented elsewhere. Suffice to say that the women not only led the struggle to battle the crisis, but they used this occasion to create their own organization and out of that process have emerged some very strong and creative women about whom I want to tell you.

Let me start with Scarlettte, who still continues to be basically a fisherwoman. Even in the early 1990s, Scarlettte had realized that fishers like her who could not keep up with the pressures and official requirements

to modernize and professionalize would be gradually rendered redundant. Enterprising as she is, she had begun to organize demonstrations of fish food to encourage people to eat more locally caught fish and to break out of their conservative food habits. When the crisis broke out, she paid her own way to a fish fair in Japan and there she was astonished to see how the Japanese made delicacies of all the food of the sea, including the green food in it. She returned to Brittany and decided that she would reorient her fishing and go more into gathering seaweed that she would process and market. I was, therefore, greatly surprised when, in 1999, I was taken by her not on a fishing trip but for a visit to her seaweed processing unit—a small but well-equipped unit where she produces a variety of seaweed products all of her own creation (including pralin chocolate) and markets them in very aesthetic ways. Scarlettte explained to me that although all the money she had invested in this enterprise was her own, she had benefited from the organizational training input that the local government had offered and that it was Raymonde Marrec, another woman from the fishing community, who was assisting her with the managerial aspects.

Life is not easy for Scarlettte, who now has her daughter helping her too. Her working days are much longer and there is more work pressure. She also gets some assistance from young people who come there not only for training but also as part of the government-supported employment programme. So she has not only found a way for herself to survive, but has managed to create some avenues of employment for others too, while remaining in her own field.

Raymonde Marrec, who helps Scarlettte manage her enterprise, also has a very interesting story to tell. Raymonde had participated in the Senegal Workshop conducted by ICSF on Gender Analysis in Fisheries in 1996. Raymonde had earlier worked in a cooperative bank and, as she comes herself from a coastal community, was aware of the problems of the fishermen in relation to the credit programmes of the bank. She was forced to take their side at the time of the fisheries crisis, as she was an active participant in the women's organization then. She felt the bank should come to the rescue of fishermen, as they could not repay their loans due to falling fish prices. But the bank would not relent and, finding Raymonde to be a thorn in its flesh, sacked her under the pretext of rationalization.

Out on the streets after 18 years of work was not easy for her. Fortunately for her, some of the fishermen, through their wives, had also got a better understand-

ing of the crisis. They were aware of the fact that they were trapped in the vicious cycle of their boats being economic enterprises, and they could no longer play the rules of that game if they wanted to remain viable. Some of them regrouped and took Raymonde's assistance to restructure their enterprises. She served them voluntarily for two years and, in the process, decided to develop her own consultancy to support alternative enterprises for self-employment.

Raymonde has been able to make use of the funds from the EU in order to help diversify employment possibilities. Through the committee of the Femmes de Littoral, she helped use this money to raise awareness on legal questions in fisheries, minimum wages in fishereis, and the problems related to the centralization of the fish auctioning. She also used it for retraining in order to create systems of collectivization of owner-operators.

According to Raymond, the workshop in Senegal not only gave her the courage but also a theoretical framework that helped her understand the changes that were taking place and prevented her from descending into despair. She has been able to evolve her own thinking regarding the way the present process of globalisation marginalizes people. She also feels that there is no need to give up, as this process is fragile in so many ways. Listening to Raymonde gave me real hope too, especially after my own observations at the Senegal Workshop. At that time, I had felt that we had not been able to strike an easy communication wavelength with the participants from Brittany.

And now finally I come to the Femmes de Littoral, a very vocal and impressive committee of women indeed. Daniele le Sauze is the convenor of this committee and the other members that I met included Sylvie, Christine, Isabelle and a few others. Danielle, who had also participated in the Senegal Workshop, represented the Femmes de Littoral at the creation meeting of the WFF. She took the initiative to canvass for a 50 per cent representation of women in the WFF and this has been finally achieved. Now, together with the committee, she is preparing for the Constitutional Assembly of the WFF.

The members of the Femmes de Littoral are all wives of owner-operators and there is some difference of opinion regarding the issues that are taken up, since a large number of the women in the coastal communities are wives of workers. Most of the issues that have been taken up have had to do with the wives of the owner-

operators. It may be recalled that the new legislation in 1996 gave women the right to be managers of the fishing enterprise, the right to maternity leave and retirement benefits, and made available a number of retraining scholarships.

This organization is only in the making and it will need a great deal of support and vision to be able to offset the hurdles and build itself up constructively. It will be important that the various women's groups that meet before the WFF Constitutional Assembly have an opportunity to exchange views in some depth, so that they can learn from one another and think further ahead.

### From Europe/ Netherlands

## Remembrance of things past

*In Zoutkamp, a fishing village in the north of the Netherlands, an old fisherwoman speaks about her youth and the changes she has seen*

by **Cornelie Quist, a member of ICSF**

Those days, in the early years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, we suffered terrible poverty. The families were big—10 to 14 children—and we all had to work from early morning to late evening. When I was a kid, I had no time to play. After school, we were peeling shrimps, often till late in the evening. In the middle of the pile of shrimps was a bowl with water to wet our eyes to keep us awake.

When I was 13, I went to work in the sheds to remove mussel shells. This was done in secrecy, because child labour was illegal, and when the police came, we had to run and hide. We also had some income from grading sardines and bundling seaweed.

In fishing families, the mother played a central role. The fathers were most of the time at sea those days. Most women had a small store at home, where they sold sweets, snacks, soap and other small consumer items. These shops guaranteed a daily income for our basic needs. Nevertheless, it happened quite often that we children went to sleep without the evening meal, as there was no money to buy food. Particularly in the winter, times were very difficult. We had to buy our basic provisions on credit and then hope that in the fishing season the catch was good enough to repay our debts.

The government did not do much for us those days.

There was a public work programme for unemployed men. The work was to carry sand from a ship. The work was so depressing and the food so bad that the men went on strike. But the government only told us to pray, so everything would become all right. The people did not believe this, but had no other choice than to continue.

The highlight of my youth was the yearly fair. A carousel was brought by ship and all of us children had by then already selected his or her horse to ride. On Saturday afternoon, we all went in our best clothes to the fair. There was also a beautiful doll, dressed in lace, like a princess. We could look at her for hours.



Today all this has changed. Shrimp peeling is not done by the women of this village anymore. The shrimp trader in our village of those days is today the owner of the biggest shrimp business enterprise in Europe. It not only buys shrimps locally, but from all over the world. The shrimps are taken for peeling to Poland and Morocco, where wages are low, and labour and hygiene laws less strict. During the past years many of our fishermen have stopped fishing too, as they could not afford the high capital investments that fishing requires today. People are no longer poor these days, but, looking back, I often long again for those days. Despite all the poverty, life was much more sociable. We were always together and could still enjoy the small things of life. The village was much more alive and the fishery was what bound us all together.

**From Europe/ Portugal**

## Amphitrite's women

*The women of the Amphitrite project emphasize the multifaceted nature of their activities*

**by Alexis Fossi, a fisheries biologist working with artisanal fishing communities**

The important role of women in fishing communities is well known, especially their roles as mothers in a family context where the husband is frequently away. However, their professional competencies in the fisheries enterprise are still not adequately recognized. This was one of the goals of the European project, Amphitrite, which brought together fishermen's wives from le Havre (France), Póvoa de Santa Iria (Portugal) and Yoff (Senegal).

In each of the three countries, animators of the network organised informal meetings with women fishworkers in order to identify the professional competencies associated with their daily work. It was observed that in each of the three communities, the activities of the wives of fishermen were multifaceted: in Portugal, women actually engaged in the fishing activity; in France, they were involved with managing the fishing enterprise; and in Senegal, with fish processing and marketing.

Women were seen to have acquired, in a variety of domains, several competencies connected to seafood products and their marketing, and, therefore, to everything related to managing the boats and the household.

During the first interviews, the local-level animators also tried to highlight the process of development within the communities, and the position of women within them. They tried to develop an understanding on how and why, for example, women in Le Havre and Yoff had been effective in organising themselves, so that other groups of women could draw lessons from their experience.

Following this, a three-day meeting was organised in Le Havre. Its goal was to create a meeting point and to enable an exchange of experiences, and a sharing of common problems (lack of recognition of their role, environmental problems which threaten their activities, future of the small coastal fisheries in the context of globalization...) amongst the different groups of women who had participated in the preparatory sessions.

During the sessions organised at the meeting, one of the important themes discussed was how best to valor-

ise the professional competencies of the women, and perhaps, how best to eventually transfer these either to a field outside fisheries or to another geographical area.

What was also evident was the women's preoccupation with the future of their children. They were also aware—being in contact with the public (fish consumers)—that it is important to explain their work and the difficulties they face. Therefore, another goal of the Havre meeting was to bring out together an illustrated, bilingual pedagogical file, in French and Portuguese, aimed at children, synthesising the information given by women of the three countries. This booklet is presently being finalised. Readers will discover in it the similarities and differences amongst the three fishing communities as well as the specific role of women in each of these. It will make readers sensitive not only to an activity largely ignored, but also to the marine environment and to the relations that exist between the North and the South through the example of fisheries. It will, therefore, be a complete document that will allow trainers interested in approaching numerous questions through the coastal fisheries activity.

The women of the Amphitrite project wish to continue sharing their experience with other fishermen's wives throughout the world, in order to take up common action against those acts and deeds which threaten their activities and the future of their children.

## From Latin America/ Chile

### Uniting for health and safety

*Unions in fish processing plants in Chile need to take up issues of health and safety as a priority*

by Estrella Díaz Andrade, a sociologist and researcher based in Santiago, Chile

The Xth Region of our country, Chile, is one of the most important fishing zones, both in terms of volumes of fish produced (particularly farmed salmon) and in the variety of shellfish (molluscs and crustaceans) processed for human consumption—fresh, frozen and canned. Production is mainly export-oriented, destined for markets in USA, Japan and Europe.

In this region, there are around 150 processing units varying in size and investment profile—transnational, national, foreign and joint-venture. A significant

number of them—about 100—employ women in labour-intensive jobs, in handling, cleaning and packing. Recently, we undertook a study of 23 fish plants, to draw attention to health and hygiene conditions of the work done by women. We found that workers are exposed to a range of hazards—the constant exposure to cold and dampness, having to stand for the entire working day of eight and more hours, the manual handling of loads (trays of raw material), repetitive and monotonous production line work—that need to be addressed if negative impacts on the health of workers are to be avoided. These conditions, essentially inherent in the performance of these jobs, frequently cause different complaints and ailments (lumbago, tendonitis, chronic colds, etc.).

The presence of workers aware of these issues is a key factor in hazard management. But in the entire region we could only find 40 unions in 150 plants. 20 of these are part of a union called the Federation of Fishing Industry Workers of the Xth Region, the President of which is a woman. This organisation has demanded that the employment authorities formulate a safety policy to address the lack of information about health and safety as well as all the other working conditions that act as aggravating factors.

The position of unions in the region is complex. The overall rate of unionisation is over one per cent lower than the national level—14.86 per cent, as against 16.19 per cent—and those affiliated to unions (33,181 workers) represent only five per cent of the unionised workers nationally (613,123). Legally, committees for health and safety, and joint committees for risk prevention are required in every establishment employing more than 25 workers. However, even where they have been formally set up they do not always work in practice or in a satisfactory manner, for various reasons. That is to say, they merely comply with the functions required by law: supervision, training, checking, etc.

It is possible that the preponderance of women workers in processing plants is the reason why there are low levels of organisation and why only moderate pressure is applied for compliance with the norms for preventive measures. Different studies have shown that women tend to be more absent from the proactive processes of prevention, often due to their particular situations, such as their dual responsibilities (for domestic work, childcare, etc.), which makes their involvement impossible. But it is also true that both women and men workers are made to feel that the issues of health



and safety are too technical, and that to understand them requires expertise. What is certain is that despite the need for training, those with the appropriate technical capacity are hardly aware of the impact of the work on the health of women.

It would appear that there is a considerable challenge for unions to take up the issues of health and safety as a priority (at times hampered by earnings and job stability) and to involve the workers and their concerns about health and safety as a matter of union procedure, and in the joint committees. Both of these areas require coordinated action. The Federation has proposed such an initiative, which must develop concrete and proven measures, if the quality of life and work of the fishery workers is to be improved.

### From Latin America/ Brazil

## Fish, women and videotape

*A film being made in Brazil will attempt to capture, on film, the roles of women in fishing communities*

**by Maria Cristina Maneschy, Professor at the Federal University of Para, Brazil and coordinator of ICSF's Women in Fisheries (WIF) Programme**

A video film is being produced through the Women in Fisheries Project (WIF) of the ICSF. It aims to show the various roles played by women in four of the fishing communities in the state of Pará in North Brazil. It also aims to show that women in fishing communities are organizing and thus gaining recognition.

The script has three main parts. After presenting briefly the importance of fisheries in the region, it stresses the fact that both men and women are present in the fisheries. They engage in different, though complementary, activities. However, women's roles and spaces are less visible than the ones of men. Some women fishworkers will be interviewed—a shrimp fisher, a woman who fishes with fixed traps alongside husband, a net weaver, a fisherman's wife who works in agriculture and is part of a women's association, a woman who catches crabs in a mangrove thicket, and a woman boatowner who manages the familial business. They will explain their work and the relationship between home and work.



The next part of the film will present a historical background. Two women will talk about their past, when it was necessary to work hard to dry and salt fish, as well as to prepare the fishing nets and gear.

The final part of the video will focus on the way women have now organized, as part of associations. It will explore what organization means to them, and specifically, the difficulties that those who participate have to face: the resistance of their families and communities, a general lack of recognition of their roles by others, and their own lack of self-esteem. Despite these difficulties, the growing awareness of the "woman fishworker" inside fishermen movements will be highlighted.

"Land Partners," as the video is titled, is being produced by an NGO from Belém called "CEPEPO" (Center of Studies in Popular Education), in collaboration with the WIF project. CEPEPO has extensive experience in making videos that function as popular educational tools.

## MESSAGES...



### Brazil

Cristina Maneschy, an associate member of ICSF from Brazil, wrote that she was helping to translate a couple of articles from Yemaya 2 into Portuguese. This was in response to the request by MONAPE, the national fishworker organization of Brazil, which thought these were of great relevance to their work.

### Mexico

Itza Castañeda and Lorena Aguilar, working with the IUCN in Mexico, sent a message to say that they found many of the write-ups in Yemaya 2 very useful, and were using them in the preparation of a manual on gender aspects in coastal/ marine resource management. This manual will be ready by June.

### India

John Kurien, a member of ICSF from India, wrote to say that he considered the second issue of Yemaya very good. He especially commended the geographical coverage and the human interest aspects in the write-ups included, which he said, provided a lot of food for thought on issues that have been neglected for so long.

## NEWS

### Films..

The Documentation Centre at ICSF is in the process of preparing a video film on the role and struggles of women fishworkers in India. The film should be ready by the end of this year. And we have received news of another documentary film series being produced by a Canadian cable network on women who fish in marine areas. Thirteen half-hour episodes are being produced, and initially, it may be restricted to North America. For more information you could contact Karen Janigan (sangsara@ns.sympatico.ca).

### YEMAYA

ICSF's Newsletter on Gender and Fisheries

### Published by

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Please do send us comments and suggestions to make the newsletter more relevant. We would also like names of other people who could be interested in being part of this initiative. We look forward to hearing from you and to receiving regular write-ups for the newsletter.

Writers and potential contributors to YEMAYA, please note that write-ups should be brief, about 500 words. They could deal with issues that are of direct relevance to women and men of fishing communities. They could also focus on recent research or on meetings and workshops that have raised gender issues in fisheries. Also welcome are life stories of women and men of fishing communities working towards a sustainable fishery or for a recognition of their work within the fishery. Please also include a one-line biographical note on the writer.