

# Yemaya

No. 19

ICSF'S NEWSLETTER ON GENDER AND FISHERIES

AUGUST 2005

## From the Editor

Dear Friends,

In this issue, we have a special focus on women and labour issues in the fishing sector. As you may be aware, at the 93rd Session of the International Labour Conference (ILC), the proposed Convention on Work in the Fishing Sector could not be adopted for lack of quorum by only one vote—an unforeseen and unfortunate development for fishers all over the world. The Convention will come up again for voting in 2007.

At the ILC, the ICSF Statement to the Committee on the Fishing Sector stressed the need to broaden the definition of a 'fisher', to promote the rights of those whose fishing operations do not necessarily involve the use of fishing vessels, such as those undertaking commercial beach-seine operations, diving and gleaning. It is in such gathering/gleaning fishing operations, in fact, that women are commonly involved, as the article from Chile in this issue of *Yemaya* also indicates. We carry the text of the ICSF Statement, as well as comments subsequently received, highlighting the need to also promote the rights of 'collaborating spouses'—women who stay on shore but manage the fishing enterprise—whose work is rarely recognized or covered by social security.

Eight months after the 26 December 2004 tsunami in the Indian Ocean, the situation is still difficult for many victims. We carry a write-up from Sri Lanka about tsunami-displaced people. Ironically, in Sri Lanka, community settlements in the 'coastal

buffer zone' are being cleared, even as tourist resorts are being allowed to continue or rebuild in the same zone. We also carry the Statement from the 'Asian Women's Consultation on Post-Tsunami Challenges', organized in Aceh, Indonesia, from 25 to 27 July 2005 by the Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development (APWLD). The Statement highlights key issues *vis-a-vis* tsunami relief and rehabilitation, from the perspective of women victims of the disaster.

And lastly, we reproduce an article about Miya Hawa, a community leader from Trang, Thailand, who died recently. She was only 47 years old. Miya's contribution to coastal conservation is well acknowledged, proving beyond doubt the commitment of local communities to manage and protect their ecosystems, particularly where and when they are supported in their efforts. Miya blamed State greed for the vast environmental destruction in the country, cautioning that if nature dies, people cannot live. Listening to such voices, one wonders about those who primarily see local communities as threats to conservation and management of ecosystems and natural resources.

And finally, let us remind those of you who would like to contribute to *Yemaya*, that we circulate an email two months prior to each issue, requesting for articles, comments, write-ups and other news of relevance to women in fishing communities. If you would like to receive this email reminder, do let us know by emailing us at [icsf@icsf.net](mailto:icsf@icsf.net).



## Inside Pages

Sri Lanka.....	2
Asia.....	4
Chile.....	6
Labour .....	7, 8
Thailand .....	9, 10
Film.....	11
Book.....	12
Newsletter.....	12

Asia / Sri Lanka

### Disaster capitalism?

*Eight months after the tsunami, the affected populations in Sri Lanka continue to live in camps, with no clarity about resettlement and resumption of their livelihoods*

**By Herman Kumara of National Fisheries Solidarity (NAFSO)**

“I am still waiting to get land for resettlement. The land I have is situated in the so-called ‘buffer zone’. I have two daughters and we are now living in an unsafe situation, as it is not safe for young girls to live in temporary huts like this. I am really worried about the future of my children.”

These plaintive words come from Johara Hamy, one of the 90,000 internally displaced persons (IDPs) now living in camps in Sri Lanka. She is a woman leader of District Fisheries Solidarity (DIFSO) and a tsunami victim from Pothuwil, Ampara, on the east coast of the country. Ampara was among those districts worst hit by the tsunami.

It is now eight months since the tsunami struck coastal countries in the Indian Ocean. The world responded with great concern and generosity after the tsunami and substantial amounts were raised to support relief, rehabilitation and reconstruction efforts among affected communities.

With the resources available at hand, Chandrika Bandaranaike, the President of Sri Lanka, in her address to the nation, said: “We will provide everything lost by the affected communities but the lives of the people”.

To fulfil this pledge, a special task force called the ‘Task Force for Rebuilding the Nation’ (TAFREN) was appointed. TAFREN is composed of eight businessmen, who are also linked to the tourism industry. The first step that TAFREN took was for regulation of the coastal buffer zone. A majority of the people who wanted to go back and resettle on their own lands were not even allowed to build a temporary shelter in the buffer zone.

“My house and kitchen were partially damaged by the tsunami waves. The Southern Fisheries Organization (SFO) was to help repair my house and kitchen. However, the police did not allow us to undertake the repairs as my house is situated within the coastal buffer zone. I have received the LKR5,000 (US\$50) subsidy only twice although it has been announced that the payments will be up to a period of six months,” says Lalanie Kalupahana, the ex-secretary of SFO, Galle. She is from Dodanduwa, in Galle District, a village located next to Hikkaduwa, one among the other proposed tourist zones.

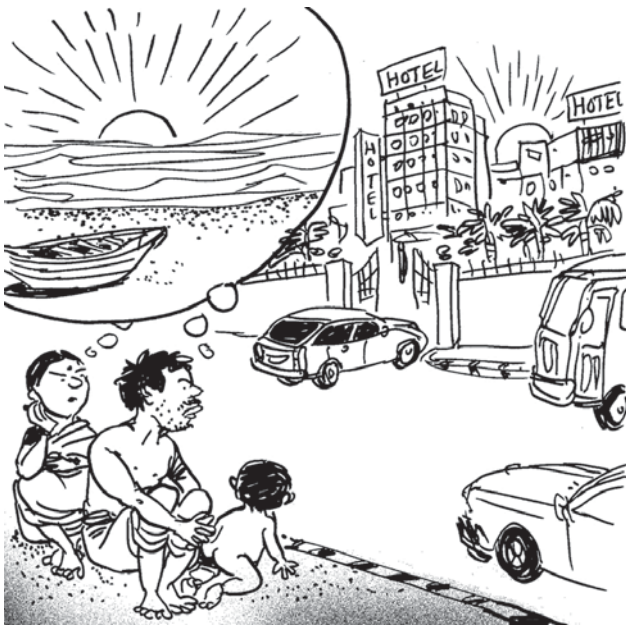
The plan prepared by TAFREN came out within 17 days of the tsunami, on 13 January 2005. Most importantly, 62 townships, large harbours and superhighways as well as 15 tourism zones were part of the proposals. This was besides the proposed privatization of the water, electricity and petroleum utilities, and also the privatization of phosphate deposits at Eppawala.

TAFREN’s plan was to promote tourism and attract investors. The tourism development plan of the Sri Lanka Tourist Board says: “In a cruel twist of fate, nature has presented Sri Lanka with a unique opportunity, and out of this great tragedy will come a world-class tourism destination”.

This is the principle behind the whole planning process for tourism. But we need to see how it will affect the displaced people in the camps. It is important to understand how the affected communities view these plans and their potential impact on their lives and communities.

“We are living here in Arugambay. It is a tourist zone. Most of the tourists come here for surfing. We are not permitted to build our house or even a temporary shelter, while hoteliers are allowed to build and repair their hotels in the same buffer zone. Some of them have built hotels within 15 m of the shore. Why this indifference to us?” asks one victim.

“This is disaster capitalism amidst a highly devastated world,” as Naomi Klein, renowned Canadian researcher and writer, says.



People are not ignorant. They know what is happening to their lives. They know that, in the name of the tsunami, they are being displaced further from the shore and that they will lose ownership over not only the land but also the sea.

“We learnt that the European Union is planning to send their decommissioned fishing vessels to Sri Lanka. We do not know how this decision was made. We were not consulted by anyone. Such a transfer of fleet will displace our beach-based fisheries industry, replacing it with harbour-based fisheries. Small-scale fishers will suffer from all these short-sighted activities,” says Lalanie Klupahana, a victim from Dodanduwa.

“The government did not consult us about our preferences. We do not want to leave our land. Besides, fishing is our occupation and we need to continue it for our survival,” says Johara. Affected communities are not just giving up. They want to save their land and sea from the investors who want to buy their land to build hotels and develop other businesses.

“We went to the streets to mark 200 days of the tsunami, to protest against unjust government policies. We want to go to the court with the help of our organizations. We have given several alternative proposals to support tsunami victims. We will not

allow anyone to drive us out from the land and sea we own. We know we will win the battle”, says Lalanie.

“This courage and strength will be put together to fight for the rights of the people against the unjust TAFREN plans. We will protest both tourism master plans and any other business plans prepared by the so-called TAFREN. We will support a people’s planning process to demand justice for the tsunami victims as well as the poor people in the country. Only then can we challenge the unjust plans and defeat them,” continues Lalanie.

“To achieve this, we are visiting tsunami- and war-affected people’s camps to consult the people there about the kind of development they hope for, to organize women and affected communities for their rights, to take legal action against discrimination and human rights violations, to prepare alternative plans through a People’s Planning Commission and to promote face-to-face dialogue with policymakers. Farmers’ organizations, plantation workers’ unions, trade unions, women’s groups and fisheries organizations have got together for this work,” says Geetha Lakmini of the National Fisheries Solidarity (NAFSO).

“The government had promised that it would provide for people’s basic needs and livelihoods within six months after the tsunami struck. But now it is already eight months and the victims are still in IDP camps. Around 400,000 people are displaced and are with their relatives or friends. There is no sign of their resettlement in the near future,” adds Geetha Lakmini.

The people’s struggle started 200 days after the tsunami struck Sri Lanka, and will continue until the victims wrest their rights to relief, rehabilitation and reconstruction, as promised by the leaders. “We will never give up until our people receive justice. We will work to join all forces together to win the battle,” Geetha concludes.

*Herman Kumara can be contacted at [fishmove@slt.lk](mailto:fishmove@slt.lk)*



**Asia / Tsunami****Consult us first**

*This Statement is from the Asian Women's Consultation on Post-tsunami Challenges, held at Banda Aceh, Sumatra, Indonesia, 25-27 July 2005.*

We, over 60 women, survivors of the tsunami and activists involved in the tsunami relief and reconstruction efforts, from India, Indonesia, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Malaysia, gathered in Banda Aceh in the village of Lambaro Seibun during 25-27 July 2005, for the Asian Women's Consultation on Post-tsunami Challenges.

Seven months after the December 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami, affected women continue to be marginalized, discriminated and excluded from the process of rebuilding at all levels: the family, the community and the nation.

We met in Aceh realizing the significance and challenges women face in the tsunami aftermath:

1. Gender discrimination and women's human rights violations. Thousands of women and children in the affected countries still live in camps and other temporary facilities, which lack adequate sanitation, clean water, health services and security. Government compensations have not reached them or are insufficient to restore their livelihoods. In Thailand, women are discriminated even in death: funeral expenses paid for men's deaths are twice as much as for women's.
2. Women's right to food is violated. People are on the verge of starvation getting one meal a day. The food rations provided are of very low quality. This affects the health of children and pregnant, breast-feeding and elderly women.
3. Women suffer from increased domestic violence in camps and temporary shelters, especially in India, Sri Lanka and Thailand as a result of increased alcoholism. There is inadequate protection provided by the police and camp administration because of the general perception



of violence against women being a personal matter.

4. Children in camps and temporary shelters do not have access to education. Government scholarships are not sufficient to cover education costs. In Sri Lanka, Indonesia (Aceh) and India, schools are too far away from camps, and transport is not provided.
5. Both temporary and permanent housing facilities are of low standards in design and construction, and climatic conditions have not been taken into account; for example, it is impossible to stay in tin shelters that heat up in the tropical sun. Facilities do not meet women's needs: there are no kitchen and bathing facilities. In Sri Lanka, people remain uncertain regarding permanent housing. The Sri Lankan government's policy on buffer zone implies that fishermen and others are denied assistance in any rebuilding activities within 100-200 m from the shoreline. However, hotels and tourist resorts near the sea have been restored. In Indonesia, similar restrictions prevail, but some communities went back to their villages to rebuild their houses even though it means they will not receive government assistance. In Thailand, some permanent housing have ownership problems: houses are built by sponsors on rented land or on land owned by someone else, so some time in the future, resettled people will face eviction.

6. The tsunami exacerbated the problem of women's access to land. Women in Indonesia (Aceh) and India do not have ownership rights to land registered in their husbands' and fathers' names, as women are not recognized as heads of households. In Sri Lanka, joint ownership to land remains an unresolved issue in relation to post-tsunami reallocation of land. In Thailand, the tsunami has created new land conflicts, with big businesses claiming the land of entire communities, especially of minorities, who have lived on such land for several generations but never had land title deeds.
  7. Jobs and livelihoods: In all the affected countries, women lost their jobs and livelihood sources. The governments have failed to respond effectively and survivors have to rely on non-governmental organization (NGO) support.
  8. Caste and ethnic discrimination: In India, entire communities of *dalit* (so-called untouchables) and *irula* (indigenous people) have been left out of relief and rehabilitation efforts. They have not been receiving any assistance from the Indian government, as they are not seen as directly affected by the tsunami although they have lost their livelihood sources.
  9. Plight of Burmese migrants in Thailand: Burmese migrants in Thailand have been completely ignored by both the Burmese and Thai governments in the tsunami aftermath. In the immediate aftermath, they could not recover dead bodies of their family members for fear of getting arrested as migrants. Since they have lost their registration/identity cards, they do not have access to government assistance and health services. As migrants, they do not have any income-generating capacity of their own, and have to rely on their employers to give them jobs, and these latter have lost their businesses in the tsunami.
  10. The armed conflict situation in Indonesia's Aceh region and in Sri Lanka exacerbates the human rights situation. Child military recruitment in Sri Lanka has increased after the tsunami. The presence of armed forces inside the camps has increased the vulnerability of women to violence, and threatens their security, rather than provide protection. The military hinders the free movement of people and the distribution of relief aid.
- In the light of the above, we express grave concern about the lack of consultation with the people affected by the tsunami in the relief and reconstruction process. We demand that:
1. The governments of the affected countries and non-State actors consult and involve affected people in the process of reconstruction and rebuilding. International and national NGOs must consult with the affected communities in the planning, design and implementation of projects.
  2. We are also aware of significant foreign assistance received by the governments of the affected countries and international and national NGOs, and we demand transparency and accountability in the spending of funds.
  3. Both State and non-State agencies working with the displaced must recognize and address gender-specific and special needs of women.
  4. Recognize the needs and rights of children, the elderly, the disabled, women living with HIV/AIDS and affected women who need long-term medical and psychological treatment and assistance.
  5. The governments must immediately provide gender-disaggregated data in tsunami-affected regions.
  6. State and non-State actors in the tsunami-affected armed conflict areas must stop activities threatening the lives of the people, especially women and children. Rebuilding and reconstruction should promote peace-building efforts, especially in Sri Lanka and Aceh, Indonesia.
  7. The governments of the affected countries must ensure that relief and reconstruction activities are implemented without discrimination based on gender, caste, class, ethnicity, religion, age, migration, citizenship and other factors.

8. The governments must provide legal and financial assistance to women who have to fight for their right to land in disputes with business corporations.

The governments must recognize the rights of the fishing communities to the sea and the coastal land, and ensure that business interests in the rebuilding process do not negatively impact the livelihoods of the seashore people.

Contact the Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development (APWLD) at: [apwld@apwld.org](mailto:apwld@apwld.org)

## Latin America / Chile

### Questioning invisibility

*Women workers in the fisheries sector in Chile are often not formally recognized or covered by social security*

**By Dodani Araneda, Jacqueline Salas, Alejandra Pinto and Marisol Alvarez, working with the Undersecretariat for Fisheries, Government of Chile, and Cecilia Godoy, working with Prisma Consultants, Chile.**

As part of a research project, 1,571 interviews were undertaken with women who work in artisanal fisheries and aquaculture activities in 10 councils of Chiloe Province, in southern Chile, between November 2004 and February 2005. The aim was to obtain information about their activities, age profile, income and education levels, professional recognition, and future expectations.

There are 80 fish landing centres in Chiloe Province that are recognized by the government via Decree 240/1998. All these were visited for the research project. In addition, information was collected from 74 other places where women engage in fisheries and aquaculture activities.

For some years now, the invisibility of women's labour in artisanal fisheries has been a matter of reflection and research in several countries where fishing has been a traditional activity. In Chile, the existence of native groups living in coastal areas has been recognized from pre-Hispanic times, and women

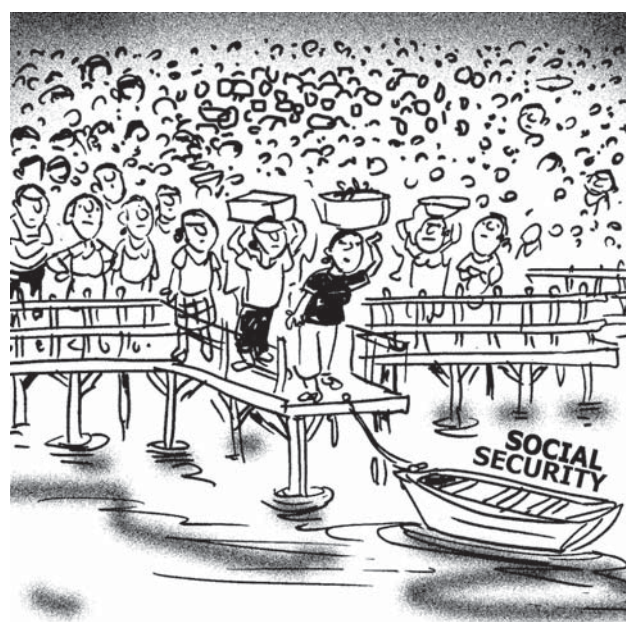
have been working along rivers and estuaries, maintaining a direct relationship with fishery activities and collection of seaweed and shellfish, abundantly available in their immediate environment.

As a first step towards looking at the activities of women in fisheries, the Undersecretariat for Fisheries in Chile felt it necessary to quantify the work, both formal and informal, of women in artisanal fisheries and aquaculture.

Towards this end, it initiated a project named "Quantification of the Formal and Informal Activities of Women in Artisanal Fisheries in Chiloe Province, X Region, Chile". This project, funded by the Japan International Co-operation Agency (JICA), was executed by Prisma Consultants between November 2004 and February 2005.

Chiloe Province was selected because of the high concentration (35 per cent) of artisanal fishermen and divers in this region (Region X), equivalent to 33 per cent of the total artisanal fisheries workforce engaged in extractive activities in Chile (National Statistics Institute, 2002).

This research was the first of its kind at the regional and provincial levels. 1,571 personal interviews were undertaken in the 10 councils of Chiloe Province, as follows: Ancud (536), Quemchi (68), Dalcahue (34), Curaco de Velez (111), Quinchao (346), Chonchi (70), Puqueldon (71), Castro (72), Queilen (42) and Quellon (221).





The results showed that the principal activity of women is the collection of shellfish and algae along the coast, with 88.2 per cent women reporting themselves to be engaged in such activities. Children, teenagers and old persons were also found engaging in these activities. Additionally, about four per cent women were found to work as *desconchadoras* (workers engaged in de-shelling the shellfish), while two per cent did actual fishing.

According to the General Fishery and Aquaculture Law (Decree 430/1991), some categories of labour must be recorded in a national registry. The research found that most women work ‘illegally’ as their activities are not registered in the National Artisanal Fisherwomen’s Register or in the National Aquaculture Register.

The incomes of these women were seen to be low at about US\$ 86 per month. A high percentage (69 per cent) declared no coverage under social security. As for the age profile of women in the sector, about 45 per cent of the women interviewed were between 20 and 40 years of age, another 45 per cent were older than that, and about 7 per cent younger than 20 years. Ninety-five per cent of the women interviewed had received some education—19 per cent had completed primary school and six per cent, high school.

The project is the first institutional effort to recognize and valorize women’s participation in fishery and aquaculture activities at the national level. The main outcome expected from the project is the formal recognition of the fishing activities performed by the women in Chiloé Province, and their registration in existing records, so that their productive activities gain official recognition. It is also worth remembering that most of the funds earmarked for the artisanal fisheries sector are granted to formally constituted organizations.

The co-operation of the women interviewed for the research project indicates their yearning for a better quality of life and for changes that can ultimately lead to greater recognition of women’s work.

*Jacqueline Salas, one of the authors, can be contacted at [jsquirola@subpesca.cl](mailto:jsquirola@subpesca.cl)*

## Statement / Labour

### Right to decent work

*This is the text of the ICSF Statement to the Committee on the Fishing Sector at the 93rd Session of the International Labour Conference in June 2005.*

1. The proposed Convention and Recommendation contained in Report V (2B) concerning work in the fishing sector go a long way in protecting and promoting rights of fishers to decent conditions of work. However, it falls short of promoting the rights of fishers who undertake commercial beach-seine operations, diving and gleaning that do not necessarily involve the use of any fishing vessels.
2. While commercial beach-seine operations are widespread in Asia and Africa, commercial shellfish gathering through diving and gleaning are common all over the world. The latter category also employs a large number of persons, including women. Extending provisions of health protection, medical care and social security to this category of persons, where reasonable and practicable, would do justice to women in fishing, in particular, and it will help the proposed Convention to meaningfully address fishing activities where women’s participation is more important than that of men’s. This would, however, require broadening the definition of a ‘fisher’ in the proposed Convention also to include those employed in shore-based fishing operations, who do not necessarily work on board any fishing vessel.
3. ICSF’s consultations with artisanal and small-scale fishers’ organizations in Africa, Asia and Latin America since the 92nd Session of the International Labour Conference 2004, demonstrate an overwhelming support to the inclusion of social security provisions in the proposed Convention, and it has been suggested that such provisions should extend to fishers irrespective of their sphere of fishing operation. It has been further proposed that these provisions should be no less than those included under the

1952 Minimum Standards for Social Security Convention (C.102).

4. The December 2004 tsunami in the Indian Ocean that took an unprecedented toll of human lives, at least 300,000, including a large number of fishermen and women from coastal fishing communities, is a sad testimony to the urgent need for social security measures for small-scale fishers. Very few of the fishers who perished in the tsunami wave-surge in the affected countries came under any social security scheme.
5. Moreover, while welcoming the proposed degree of flexibility in relation to minimum age, medical examination, occupational safety and health and fishers' work agreement, the artisanal and small-scale fishers urge that the provisions for artisanal and small-scale fishing vessels undertaking international fishing voyages should be no different from those applicable to larger vessels undertaking such voyages.
6. As far as larger vessels are concerned, ICSF would like the proposed Work in Fishing Convention, 2005, to ensure that the protection afforded to fishers on board larger vessels by current International Labour Organization (ILO) instruments are at least retained, if not further improved. The ILO should make efforts to link up proposed labour standards with international instruments for fisheries management, particularly at the level of regional fisheries management organizations, and ensure that effective labour standards for crew on board larger fishing vessels are a pre-requisite for effective fisheries management, especially with regard to straddling fish stocks and highly migratory fish stocks.
7. Last but not least, ICSF would like to wish the Committee all success in its deliberations and would like to see a Convention sufficiently flexible and protective for artisanal and small-scale fishing, on the one hand, and adequately prescriptive for large-scale fishing operations, on the other.
8. We would also like to take this opportunity to announce a panel discussion on *ILO Labour*

*Standards for the Fishing Sector: A Small-Scale Fisheries Perspective* that will be held on Tuesday, 14 June 2005 from 14.30 to 17.30 hrs at the John Knox International Center, 27 ch. des Crêts-de-Pregny, CH-1218, Grand-Saconnex, Genève, Suisse, Tel: 0041-22-747 0000. ICSF is happy to invite all interested members of this Committee to the panel discussion where representatives of small-scale fishers from Africa, Asia, and Latin America are expected to speak.

### Comment / Labour

#### Not broad enough

*Women who work to support their husbands' fishing activities should also be covered by the proposed ILO Convention on Work in the Fishing Sector*

**This comment is by Cornelia Quist, Member of VinVis, Netherlands, and a Member of ICSF**

I was very happy with the contents of the ICSF Statement at the International Labour Conference calling for a broader definition of 'fisher'. Don't you think it is also good to include the 'collaborating spouse' in the definition? Many women who work in the family fishing enterprise have no other status than that of wife of a fisherman and her work is primarily seen as a sort of extension of her domestic activities. Therefore, she has no right to represent the family enterprise, to be elected to the boards of fishermen's organizations or to join social security schemes. The principle of equal treatment for men and women in a self-employed activity should be followed, to include spouses who are not employees or partners, but who habitually, under the conditions laid down by national law, participate in the activities of the self-employed worker and perform the same or ancillary tasks.

Regarding 'collaborating spouse', there is legislation in France that covers this. This legislation was achieved as the result of the demands of fishermen's wives in Brittany, following the crisis in the fisheries sector in the country. Women demanded the status of 'fisherman's wife' in order to benefit from social



security (retirement) provisions, professional rights and professional training. This was achieved on 18 November 1997 with the passing of the Fisheries Orientation Law. Fishermen's wives were given the status of spouse, with rights to retirement benefits, to represent their husbands on economic councils, and to training sessions.

*Cornelie can be contacted at [cornelie.quist@wolmail.nl](mailto:cornelie.quist@wolmail.nl)*

## Asia / Thailand

### For a better world

***This article by Sanitsuda Ekachai, was carried in Bangkok Post on 23 June 2005***

We all die. What matters is how we live so the world we leave behind is a better place than when we first came into it. While many of us still have to wrangle with this question, Miya Hawa has passed this criterion with flying colours.

Affectionately called Jaya by her family and friends, the cheerful Muslim mother and dedicated grassroots environmentalist passed away from heart ailment early this month, at her seaside village of Ban Jao Mai in Trang province. She was 47. Miya is survived by her husband Yahed, a fisherman and active grassroots environmentalist, and five children.

My deepest condolences to Yahed, the children, and all fisherfolk at Ban Jao Mai who share Miya's dreams and determination to return life to their once-barren sea.

I first met Miya at Jao Mai in 1994 during my trip to do a story on Tone, a dugong cutie that became the symbol of the Trang fisherfolk's conservation movement.

Outgoing and opinionated, Miya—with her trademark toothy smile and contagious laughter—did not fit one bit the submissive stereotype of traditional Muslim women. Through the years, Miya always worked shoulder-to-shoulder with her husband and other fisherfolk to fight against commercial trawlers, which were destroying their seas. But she would cringe at the idea of being called a feminist.

Her reason for rehabilitating the seagrasses and protecting the dugongs in the Trang sea was very simple. "I do it for my children," she said. You see, Ban Jao Mai, like most other fishing villages in the South, have long cried foul against big trawlers which sweep clean their sea, destroy seagrasses and corals which are nurseries for young marine lives.

Around 1990, the Jao Mai villagers, together with environmentalists from the Yadfon Foundation, started rehabilitating seagrasses in front of their home village. Only three months afterwards, abundant sea creatures returned. For Miya and other Jao Mai villagers, there was no looking back.

The trawlers, however, remained a threat until a lone, young dugong named Tone became their godsend in 1994. In a rare phenomenon, Tone came to feed on the seagrasses in front of Jao Mai every day. Tame and trusting, it also allowed humans to touch it. When news spread, people came to visit and learned about the Jao Mai fisherfolks' conservation efforts. The ensuing public concern finally forced the authorities to keep trawlers at bay. "Before, we villagers said we protected the sea to save seagrass and dugongs. Now it's the dugong that protects us," said Miya. "I then must protect Tone for my own children."

The little dugong was later killed by trawlers' nets. Its skeleton is still kept at Miya's home as a reminder for her family and her community to continue their fight against destructive trawlers more vigorously.



Miya was proud of the changes she helped bring about in Ban Jao Mai. The fish have returned. Husbands no longer have to work as hired hands on big trawlers, and wives no longer have to leave their children to work in factories in the towns, she once reported.

From helping found fisherfolk's clubs in her village and in Trang Province, Miya was also one of the driving forces behind the Federation of Small-Scale Fisherfolk's campaign for better fishery practices and conservation policies.

Last year, she was honoured with the Conservationist Mother Award from Mahidol University.

Miya blamed State greed for the vast environmental destruction in the country. The government, she charged, sees nature as a mere resource to be exploited for monetary gain, which is why the authorities shun the poor in favour of the rich and powerful, who destroy nature for their own profit.

"Forget money if it ends up destroying community ties," she once cautioned policymakers. "Also take good care of the environment. For we cannot live if nature dies." What if the government still turns a deaf ear? "We then must get organized," she said with deep conviction.

Miya has done her part to leave a better world behind. Have we?

*Sanitsuda Ekachai, Assistant Editor, Bangkok Post, can be contacted at [sanitsudae@bangkokpost.co.th](mailto:sanitsudae@bangkokpost.co.th)*

## Asia / Thailand

### **Making a difference**

**By Jim Enright, Southeast Asian Coordinator of the Mangrove Action Project (MAP), based in Thailand**

Miya Hawa was a special leader amongst local fisherfolk leaders in Thailand. As a woman and a Muslim she automatically stood out amongst the other leaders, mostly all men, whenever they gathered. But what really made Miya an outstanding leader was when she spoke, which was directly from the heart, in bold, passionate, colourful, terminology that

captivated her audience. I remember an interview of Miya's with the media, where she called fishing trawlers the 'tractors of the sea'. It was such a fitting, descriptive analogy of the destructive force they cause to the sea bottom habitat. Many academics that met her had difficulty believing Miya had only completed four years of school, and they thought somehow she had been trained by someone to give certain answers, when in fact she was speaking her own thoughts and insights to complex problems.

She always spoke honestly and truthfully, directly to the issue, and she was not afraid to offend anyone in the audience. I remember on another occasion, when she was in a meeting with other Trang fisherfolk, discussing with a World Bank-hired consultant about a proposal to build a huge tuna fishing port and processing facility on the Trang coast. After much heated discussion she simply said to the consultant: "We're not interested in jobs cleaning washrooms in your factory. We are proud, independent, fishers and we need a healthy coastal environment." The project never did go ahead, and I believe it was partly due to her and other fishers' strong convictions that this development would threaten their way of life.

Miya and her husband, Yahed, were a wonderful conservation team, for Miya was always comfortable speaking about her convictions with others, be it at their simple seaside bungalow or in any large conference hall with international representatives. Whereas, Yahed is totally at ease with guests in his fishing boat sharing his knowledge and showing his concern for the marine world. Both always supported and complemented each other in their conservation work, influencing many people they came in touch with over the years.

What I will always remember most about Miya is her laughter, smile, and light hearted nature even in serious discussions. She never showed anger or the heavy burden put by the pressures on their way of life. She was able to make one feel that people can truly make a real difference. And Miya Hawa truly did make a difference!

*Jim can be contacted at: [mapasia@loxinfo.co.th](mailto:mapasia@loxinfo.co.th)*

**Film / Africa****Darwin's Nightmare**

**Exports of Nile Perch from Lake Victoria do not appear to be benefiting local vulnerable populations in any way**

*By Alain and Danièle le Sann, associated with Pêche et Développement, France*

Strange title for a documentary, but this film does give you nightmares and will haunt some of your nights. Hubert Sauper made a four-year thorough enquiry in Tanzania on the shores of Lake Victoria. As in a police investigation, for two hours, he dissects all the consequences of the development of the Nile perch, and its export to Europe and other developed countries. Without any comment, he lets all those involved in the system speak, from those who make profits out of it (the European Union exporters, African politicians) to the most deprived (fishermen, women, children). He shows how globalization generates huge riches based on the Nile perch, but also how it makes poverty worse and makes more vulnerable the plight of thousands of inhabitants who try to make a living out of the resources of the lake.

The worst situation is that faced by women and children. Fishermen migrate for fishing, spending their income on alcohol and prostitution, often contracting AIDS and then passing it on to their wives before dying at quite an early age. Many villages die: there aren't any young adults left. Neglected women die and only a few teenagers are healthy enough to go fishing.

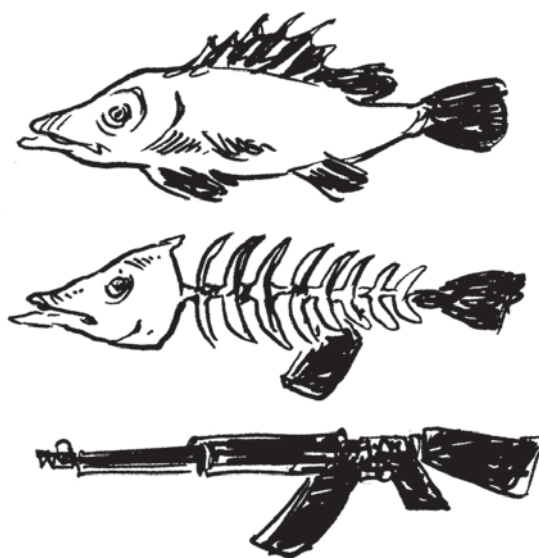
The women who cannot find jobs in the Nile perch processing factories are condemned to work on the scraps left over by the factories—in appalling conditions, and provided they pay for it.

Before, when the European norms weren't strictly applied, these scraps were given away freely outside the factory premises. But now, these scraps are carried away by lorries to be dumped, and women have to pay to try and get something out of the waste.

Before the Nile perch was introduced, there was enough fish to feed the local population. This is no longer true. While starvation spreads among the locals,

many million tonnes of fish end up on the tables of Northern countries to make up for falling stocks of cod or hake.

Abandoned, famished children survive in the streets, sniffing discarded plastic wrappings from the factory. Amidst this dire poverty, sects are fighting; as if a soldier in some African war can make you hope for a better future. It is made obvious in the film that the planes come in full of weapons, and go back loaded with Nile perch.



Such a film troubles and deeply moves those who see it, even as the consumption of Nile perch increases in Europe. Wherever the film has been shown, it has met with success. It provides food for thought on the consequences of globalization. It is an appalling and desperate testimony: no solution, not the faintest glimmer of hope. Some people suggest a boycott. According to us, it would be better to listen to those who try, against all odds, to organize and to find answers so as to improve the fate of those fishermen as well as their families.

That's why, with Daniele Le Sauce, we have decided to organize a series of conferences in France about this film and the Nile perch, and invite Margaret Nakato, who heads a women's organization in Uganda, on the shores of Lake Victoria, to give her own testimony. Some hope of getting out of this nightmare.

*Alain and Danièle le Sann can be contacted at [ad.lesann@wanadoo.fr](mailto:ad.lesann@wanadoo.fr)*



**Book / Globalization**

**Changing Tides: Gender, Fisheries and Globalization**  
**By Barbara Neis, Marian Binkley, Siri Gerrard and Christina Maneschy (Eds.),**  
**Fernwood Publishing,**  
**April 2005**

Fisheries are among the most globalized economic sectors in the world. Relying largely on wild resources and employing millions of people and feeding many millions more, fisheries provide a unique vantage point from which to view contemporary globalization, which is co-occurring with a major ecological revolution triggered by resource degradation and associated with the development of intensive aquaculture. Globalization is intensifying the export orientation and use of joint ventures between rich and poor countries in fisheries. International organizations such as the International Monetary Fund are pressuring many debtor countries to exchange access to their fishery resources for access to foreign exchange, constraining their ability to limit external ownership and the export of resources, and threatening local fishery employment and food self-sufficiency.

*Changing Tides* brings together contributions from researchers and community workers from 13 countries of the world. Juxtaposing academic case studies with accounts from activists and fisheries workers, this book points out the ways in which globalization and associated resource degradation, privatization and the concentration of ownership and control in fisheries are jeopardizing the lives and livelihoods of women fishworkers and their families.

**Newsletter / Europe****Women in European Fisheries**

AKTEA, a network of women in fisheries in Europe, has brought out its fifth newsletter on women in European fisheries. This issue focuses on marketing tasks undertaken by fishermen's wives in Spain, Portugal, Italy and France. It carries write-ups on the experiences and problems of women involved in direct selling, an activity that makes an important contribution in sustaining fisheries households. The newsletter can be downloaded from the AKTEA website: <http://www.fishwomen.org>

**YEMAYA**

ICSF's Newsletter on Gender and Fisheries

**Published by**

International Collective in Support of Fishworkers  
 27 College Road, Chennai 600 006  
 India

Tel: (91) 44 2827 5303

Fax: (91) 44 2825 4457

Email: [icsf@vsnl.com](mailto:icsf@vsnl.com)

Web site: <http://www.icsf.net>

**Edited by**

Chandrika Sharma

**Printed at**

Sri Venkatesa Printing House, Chennai

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.