



35 Years in Support of
Small-scale Fishworkers



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Yemaya

ICSF'S NEWSLETTER ON GENDER AND FISHERIES

From the Editor

Across the world, more than a year since it first struck, the COVID-19 pandemic continues to take lives, destroy livelihoods and paralyse economies with unprecedented lockdowns and supply chain disruptions. Lockdown and physical distancing measures in particular impact vulnerable small-scale fishers; the frequent disruption of economic activity is an enormous challenge for sustenance of the small-scale fishery activity, which is based on small margins and business turnover. Women fishers in particular have been hard hit; the pandemic has served to intensify systematic inequalities that have always discriminated against them. The safeguard of their rights, in particular livelihood rights, is critical for the sustainability in the fishing sector during this difficult period.

In these times, examples of mutual support, innovation and solidarity in struggle among small-scale fishing communities continue to provide lessons in sustenance.

In this issue we see how women engaged in small-scale fishing in the Netherlands and supplying fish through fish retailers found new ways to directly reach consumers. They combined new product development with the use of social media to contact their customer base. These measures promise to increase viability, and direct outreach may be a sustainable way to carry on activities despite the pandemic-induced disruption of traditional marketing chains.

Mutual aid and support have been crucial factors in the resilience of fishing communities in COVID-hit Alaska where women form over ten percent of the fishers and 30 percent of fish processors in the artisanal sector. The Alaska Longline Fishermen's Association along with the Alaska Sustainable Fisheries Trust distributed over 630,000 seafood meals to families in need in Alaska and the Pacific Northwest, thus helping forge new partnerships. One outcome has been a growing coalition of small-scale fishing communities campaigning for a paradigm change in the state, to move away from an oil-based economy to one economy based on salmon fish and renewable energy sources, in balance with nature.

In Senegal, traditional women fish processors from the municipality of Bargny, about 35km from Dakar, have been for more than a decade struggling against development projects that jeopardise their environment, health, and livelihoods. From July 2020, the Association of the Women Fish Processors of Bargny Guedj Khelcom has strongly opposed the setting up of a mining and steel complex operated by the Turkish company, Tosiya. This struggle, coming at a time of COVID, underscores the importance of continuing solidarity against non-sustainable development.

A study on the impact of COVID-19 on fisheries and aquaculture food systems by the FAO published in November 2020 underlined the importance of local food sourcing and markets when the pandemic has created barriers to logistics and long distance transport. Producing fish closer to consumption could serve both food security and sustainable livelihood during this juncture. Even when the effects of the pandemic wane, it is unlikely that life can return to pre-COVID ways. More sustainable development paradigms will become necessary. The examples of women from small-scale fishing communities could provide some of the essential learning for these times to come. ■

Why small-scale fisheries matter

A growing coalition of small-scale, community-based fishers is calling for the recognition and protection of Alaska's invaluable coastal fisheries

By **Linda Behnken**
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Executive Director, Alaska
Longline Fishermen's
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Small-scale fisheries support a way of life that has become increasingly rare in the industrialised world—a way of life that is inexorably tied to the natural world, where individuals face forces far greater than human power and thrive only through humility and a keen awareness of natural rhythms. The humility instilled by working from a small boat on a big ocean offers humanity a path back to a way of life in balance with natural systems—a lesson industrialised countries must learn before the systems fail. Climate change, ocean acidification—these are the symptoms of a failing system. They bear witness to faltering ocean health and serve as essential storytellers for the ocean. Small-scale fishermen are uniquely positioned to alert humanity to the destruction driven by human greed and arrogance; and are also essential leaders in the immediate struggle to redefine our relationship with the world around us.

In Alaska, small-scale fisheries have been the economic engine of coastal communities for over a century. Since time immemorial, fisheries have supported Alaska's diverse indigenous

cultures. Fishing uniquely allows self-sufficient people, businesses, and communities to flourish in places where other economic opportunity is scarce. Alaskans want – and in many places, need – access to sustainable, vibrant fisheries. Once fishing access is lost, families must relocate to seek sustenance and employment elsewhere. Losing access means losing a way of life, losing strong voices for ocean health, and ultimately, losing community. Alaska, and the rest of the world, cannot afford to lose these small-scale fisheries and their contribution to a sustainable future.

In Alaska, women represent 10 to 12 percent of the harvesting workforce and 30 percent of the processing workforce. Women work with their families on boats, crew on other boats, and some own and operate their own boats. Women face challenges breaking into fishing in Alaska, but less cultural barriers than in other parts of the country and certainly than in other parts of the world. Some skippers prefer to have women on their crew; other skippers will not hire women because their wives do not want a woman fishing with their spouse. Our organization, the Alaska

JOSH ROPER



In Alaska, Women work with their families on boats, crew on other boats, and some own and operate their own boats. Women face challenges breaking into fishing in Alaska, but less cultural barriers than in other parts of the country and certainly than in other parts of the world

Longline Fishermen's Association (ALFA), has launched a crew apprentice programme to assist young people interested in fishing with safe entry. To date, over half the young people who have gone fishing through our crew programme have been women—a fact that makes us proud!

When the COVID-19 pandemic hit the US, the small-scale fishermen in ALFA quickly realized rural communities were at risk. Climate change and multiple years of exceptionally warm water in the Gulf of Alaska has stressed local salmon runs around the state, which support subsistence harvest and coastal economies. Coupled with pandemic related job loss, poor salmon returns quickly led to food insecurity. Drawing on the generosity of our fishermen, ALFA launched a seafood distribution programme. We relied on locally abundant seafood to meet the need in our hometown and nearby Southeast Alaska communities, then incorporated salmon from Bristol Bay—which is experiencing record-high runs—to meet the growing need from a broader region. With grant support from the Alaska Community Foundation, Catch Together, and Multiplier, ALFA and our partner organization the Alaska Sustainable Fisheries Trust have to date distributed over 630,000 seafood meals to families in need in Alaska and the Pacific Northwest. This effort has resulted in not only making nutritious and culturally appropriate seafood accessible to more families, but has also forged new partnerships that will make our communities healthier and more resilient in the future.

And yet, at every level, decision makers are compromising our fisheries and a sustainable economy for non-renewable resource extraction

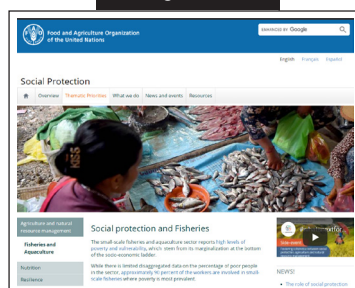
and non-sustainable resource harvest. The proposed Pebble Mine in Bristol Bay, which threatens the greatest salmon run on the planet, has garnered international attention, but fisheries around the world are threatened by mines, logging, fish farms and, of course, climate change. Meanwhile industrial fisheries are permitted to harvest as bycatch the fish that small-scale fishermen and fishing communities depend on both culturally and economically, relentlessly undermining historic fisheries.

In Alaska, a growing coalition of small-scale, community-based fishermen are speaking out, calling for decision makers to recognise the value of coastal fisheries and to protect historic access. This group, Alaska Fishing Communities, has documented the cultural and economic value of coastal fisheries while calling attention to the role of systemic racism in resource allocations. While calling for a paradigm shift in fisheries management, the new group is also highlighting the overwhelming threat of climate change to the ocean and coastal fisheries. As the group grows in number and momentum, these small-scale fishermen become the essential force demanding a new Alaska—Alaska as a salmon state instead of an oil state, with an economy based on renewable resources harvested in balance with natural systems by coastal residents.

Our world is at a tipping point. We tip away from environmental bankruptcy only if we listen to an older and more tested wisdom. Native cultures offer that deeper wisdom, as do the small-scale fishermen whose lives have been regulated by wind, tide, and current. Perhaps the ultimate value of small-scale fisheries is its ability to lead us back to a sustainable relationship with the ocean and planet that sustain us. **M**

Perhaps the ultimate value of small-scale fisheries is its ability to lead us back to a sustainable relationship with the ocean and planet that sustain us

What's New, Webby?



By **Vandana Babu Menon** (menonvandana93@gmail.com), media professional and content writer, Bengaluru, India

Social protection for fisheries

Before the world could lift itself out of the devastating impact of the first wave of the COVID-19 outbreak, further waves of the virus are storming through different countries leaving a trail of death and devastation. Across the world, while the worst brunt of the health and economic impact of the pandemic has been borne by the poor and vulnerable, the communities and workers in the fisheries sector who find themselves among the poorest of the poor have been the hardest hit. Never has the need for social protection for the fisheries sector been more urgent than it is today in a world caught in the throes of the pandemic.

Through its many programmes, the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO) is trying to address the high levels of poverty and vulnerability in fisheries, which stem from its location at the bottom of the socio-economic ladder. Its attempt is to help reduce poverty, food insecurity and hunger while fostering sustainable fisheries management and strong livelihoods.

The Fisheries Division of the FAO has launched a new webpage which addresses the systematic exclusion of small-scale fishery and aquaculture-dependent communities who are excluded from access to basic services and social guarantees, secure tenure rights, and participation in decision-making processes. The webpage discusses the role of social protection in not only helping reduce poverty, food insecurity and hunger, but also fostering sustainable fisheries management and resilient livelihoods.

To know more, visit: <http://www.fao.org/social-protection/thematic-priorities/agriculture-natural-resources/fisheries-and-aquaculture/en/> **M**

How we faced the COVID crisis

Miranda Bout, co-owner of a small fishery company in the Netherlands, shares her experiences of staying afloat during the Covid-19 crisis

By **Cornelie Quist** (cornelie.quist@gmail.com),
Adviser, small-scale
fisheries, and Member,
ICSF

Miranda and her husband Job Bout are co-owners of a small-scale fishery company, called 'Fish from Job', in the province of Zeeland in the south west of the Netherlands. One of their sons also engages in fishing with his father, just as his grandfather did. For four generations they have been fishing for mullet, seabass, and sprat, and now they also look for crabs. They fish according to the season, using sustainable swing and seine nets with large mesh size. They do not use fish-finding technologies, preferring to search out mullets with their eyes. Miranda enjoys joining them on fishing trips, but her main task is the marketing. She does this on her own, but in busy times, she gets help from her sister and daughter. Another son works in fisheries for a local fish wholesaler.

How has your business been affected by the COVID pandemic?

In the beginning it was a big shock. The fish prices in the local fish auction plummeted in a short while, in particular for the species we sold. Besides selling in the auction, we used to sell a part of our fresh fish directly to local restaurants. As these closed down, we lost this market as well. At the same time our fixed costs continued. The government had declared fisheries as an essential service, and so, in the beginning, there were no compensation measures for fisheries. At first, we had no other choice but to stop fishing, as we were dependent of the fresh fish market and had no storing facilities.

So how did you survive?

Fortunately we had some alternative income from Job's assignments of fish stock surveys, for which his traditional artisanal knowledge is highly appreciated.

We also used to sell a part of our fish to a fish retailer, who buys only from small-scale fishers and at a fair price. This retailer has a permanent group of regular customers who continued to buy our fish. But the quantities were small.

Before the COVID crisis, I had already started a small business of my own by selling our fish directly to customers and also by developing new fish products, in particular, mullet, which is a low valued fish, one can even say a 'forgotten' fish, for consumers. I felt the need to upgrade the image of this fish. I took the plunge by approaching a chef of a local high end restaurant,

who also has his own TV programme. I gave him a box of our mullet and asked him to try it out for his dishes. He was interested and the good taste and possibilities of the fish really took him by surprise. He successfully developed tasteful recipes with mullet and became a regular buyer and paid a good price. This is how also other local restaurants became interested in our mullet. On their menu cards, they gave it the name 'Fish from Job' with a picture of my husband, the fisher. I also taught myself how to make bottarga. Bottarga is a delicacy of salted, cured fish roe, typically of the grey mullet or the bluefin tuna and very popular in Mediterranean dishes. I studied how to make it finding instructions on the internet through trial and error. I succeeded in developing a small circle of regular customers mostly by word of mouth. Our province has a regional origin certification scheme which I succeeded in acquiring for the mullet and bottarga. This greatly helped in reaching a larger circle of customers interested in good quality artisanal products.

When the restaurants closed down because of the COVID pandemic, I felt I had to look for other marketing strategies. I saw how effectively other small producers used social media in product promotion and sales. I took the initiative to enter into a partnership with various local entrepreneurs, including colleagues who fish, from whom I would buy local products to sell, together with our own fish and fish products. Every week I would make a list of fresh fish and accompanying recipes and a variety of fish soups, fish salads or fish buns. I would also try to find all kinds of matching products, including handicraft gifts with fish images, to add to my list. I would publish the list on Facebook and other popular social media, sometimes together with a short video. I would make the videos myself, simply by using my mobile camera and often they would come out rather entertaining. I am amazed at how quickly they gained popularity. Perhaps it had to do with the lock down.

Customers place their orders and I deliver to their homes on Fridays and Saturdays on my scooter. I supply only in my local area. I now have a group of 20 regular customers, who feel more like my friends. But during Christmas time, I had as much as 80 customers.



Miranda Bout promoting her fish, Zeeland, The Netherlands. We need more support for the small-scale and artisanal producers, in particular those working in the fisheries sector

“I feel with this crisis that nature wants to tell us something. We have to listen well”

Did you get any support from the government?

When the government announced compensation measures for the fisheries sector, the small-scale sector was somehow excluded, as the measures were designed for the industrialised sector only. It was only through active lobbying that our national network of small-scale fishers succeeded in obtaining compensation. The compensation amount however was very low actually, and those who had already managed on their own to make up for the loss of income, like us, were not eligible for compensation.

You are also a member, actually the only woman member, of the board of the national network of small-scale fishers, Netviswerk. How did the organisation respond to the COVID crisis?


It was very hard at first, and still is. We could not meet physically and also, we were not used to meeting virtually through media like Zoom. We had to learn all that. Our first priority was to lobby for inclusion of our sector in the COVID compensation measures. We also prepared a list of all our members who sell fresh fish at home, which we promoted through the organization's website and social media. However, we still have been unable to hold a general assembly and we actually do not have a very good picture of what problems our members might be facing.

Another problem is that our ministry's attention has primarily gone towards the impact of the COVID crisis and then also to the impact of Brexit on the industrialised sector. Policy decisions harmful for the small-scale sector were sometimes made because we were not consulted.

What do you hope for the post-COVID time?

I am happy that I'm being able to manage my small business all on my own. I do not want to expand the business, because it may get difficult to manage and more stressful. I need time to spend with my family and for my activities with our fisher's organization. The most important is that my business can provide for the daily needs of my family and I find satisfaction in my work.

Experience has taught me that connecting and engaging is of essential importance for survival. I hope the appreciation for locally produced and artisanal food will continue after the COVID pandemic is over. We need more support for the small-scale and artisanal producers, in particular those working in the fisheries sector. We have valuable knowledge, experience and practices to offer society. We are used to listening to and working with nature. I feel with this crisis that nature wants to tell us something. We have to listen well.

Please visit Miranda and Job Bout's website to learn more about their work: <https://zeeuwsevis.nl/> 

Critical interventions

Protecting the wellbeing of small-scale fishing communities and their human rights crucially involves protecting the rights of women in fisheries

By **Elena Finkbeiner** (efinkbeiner@conservation.org), **Juno Fitzpatrick** (jfitzpatrick@conservation.org), and **Whitney Yadao-Evans** (wanderson@conservation.org), Conservation International, Center for Oceans, Honolulu, HI, USA

After decades of concern with addressing environmental sustainability issues in global fisheries, recent investigative journalism has brought increased attention to human rights violations in seafood supply chains, including human trafficking, forced labour, and horrific working and living conditions on fishing vessels.

The collective response of the seafood sustainability movement has been encouraging. Governments, non-profits, civil society organizations and worker-led movements have rallied together to afford greater protection to fishers and workers at sea.

In addition, industry- and nonprofit-led certifications, standards, and Codes of Conduct are rapidly proliferating. These efforts mark a step forward for social responsibility and the protection of human rights by the public and private sectors. However, these efforts are largely focused on addressing labour rights violations offshore and in the industrial sector.

Gender-blind interventions that focus on social protections at the vessel level do not afford protections to most women working in the fishing sector. The vast majority of women fishers are engaged in onshore fishing and gleaning, small-scale aquaculture, and seafood processing.

In coastal fisheries across many societies, women contribute significantly to providing protein for their households, thus contributing to food and nutritional security, and play a critical role in adding economic value to fish catches through their engagement in processing and marketing activities.

Women's rights in fisheries are critical to recognize and uphold. Gender roles, social relations, and systemic discrimination in all societies across the globe lead to increased vulnerabilities for women in fisheries. They also face the egregious issue of gender based violence. Furthermore, women have less access to social protections due to their status as unregistered workers, the temporary nature of their contracts, and their participation in the informal workforce. These systemic inequalities

have combined with the effects of COVID-19 during 2020–2021 to exacerbate vulnerabilities of women to health risks, and food and livelihood insecurity.

The characterization of human rights abuses in fisheries primarily as labour abuses at sea perpetuates a prioritization of civil and political rights over economic, social, and cultural rights. Examples of violations of civil and political rights are when workers aboard a fishing vessel are discriminated against, treated inhumanely, held against their will, and do not have formal rights to organize. There are commendable efforts to address such violations by labour organizations and grassroots, worker-led movements. However, human trafficking and deplorable labour conditions are also accompanied by other serious, but less well-recognized social issues such as chronic and institutionalized inequality and insecurity. For example, when foreign fleets overfish in the Exclusive Economic Zone of food insecure countries, fishing as a livelihood for local fisherfolk is no longer economically viable; communities' rights to food security are undermined. This is a violation of their economic, social, and cultural rights. Such rights are of particular relevance for small-scale fisheries and fishing communities. These include rights to food, water, decent work and standard of living, for women, children and migrants.

Importantly, women's rights, the well-being of small-scale fishing communities', and economic, social, and cultural rights are all inextricably linked. Through their roles as fishers, processors, and household food providers, women contribute the most consistent source of protein to their families in small-scale fishing communities. Thus, if women's rights to food, decent work, education, and healthcare, and freedom from discrimination and gender-based violence are undermined, the effects are felt at the household- and community-levels.

Thus, while recognizing the critical interventions that help to protect fishers' and workers' rights and lives at sea, it is equally important for the collective seafood




Sophy, a resident of a floating village on Tonle Sap Lake, cleans fish in preparation for making fish paste as her daughter looks on. In coastal fisheries across many societies, women contribute significantly to providing protein for their households

sustainability movements to invest more resources in developing social safeguards that reach women and small-scale fishing communities onshore; to foster collaboration with researchers, advocates, unions and civil society organizations who have also been working on these issues.

Governments play an important role in advancing women's and economic, social, and cultural rights in fisheries. Embedding the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication (the SSF Guidelines) in national legislation represents a concrete and tangible way forward in this respect.

Seafood businesses have a responsibility to ensure their policies have explicit gender equity

considerations, and also consider impacts of their operations on small-scale fisheries and their communities, while respecting customary rights including tenure rights, and rights to nutritious food and decent work. Greater government accountability and business responsibility must also be met by bottom-up and grassroots efforts. It is important to reiterate the critical role of civil society organizations who were deeply involved in the co-creation of the SSF Guidelines, in the implementation of these guidelines and in upholding women's and human rights in fisheries.

This is an adapted version of the original article, <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0308597X21000932> by the authors which recently appeared in the journal Marine Policy. 

Seafood businesses have a responsibility to ensure their policies have explicit gender equity considerations

New threats

In order to preserve their livelihoods, women processors in Senegal have come together to oppose the Tosyali steel project

By **Aby Dia** (bibatou39@gmail.com), Lumière Synergie pour le Développement (LSD) in collaboration with **WoMin African Alliance**, South Africa. The article is translated from the French by **Gildas Le Bihan** (digor-mor@orange.fr), Lorient, France

Since 2009, women fish processors of Khelcom in the traditional municipality of Bargny, about 35km from Dakar, have been facing the aftermath of development projects that jeopardise their environment, health, security and livelihoods. First there was the 125 MW coal-fired power station financed by the African Development Bank in 2009. Then, in July 2020, came the announcement of a mining and steel complex operated by the Turkish company, Tosyali, within a newly established local Special Economic Zone.

The Association of the Women Fish Processors of Bargny Guedj Khelcom has expressed clear opposition to the Tosyali Holding Sénégal project. It has filed a complaint with the Turkish National Contact Point for the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and

Development (OECD) against the company which tries to “grab the land currently used by the women” to build its steel complex. With support from Lumière Synergie pour le Développement (LSD), these women have decided to speak out loud and clear. It is a unanimous “NO” to Tosyali.

The President of the Association, Fatou Samba, points bluntly to what she considers as repeated disregard for the local population. “After the cement factory (SOCOCIM) and the coal-fired power station, here they come with a steel plant. They want to kill us; the people of Bargny are tired! More than 1000 women are impacted by the coal plant. Thanks to the income raised from their processing activities, they have been able to meet family needs. If they can’t work on the Khelcom site anymore,

LUMIÈRE SYNERGIE POUR LE DÉVELOPPEMENT (COALITION FOR HUMAN RIGHTS IN DEVELOPMENT)



Bargny community protesting against the Sendou coal power plant, Senegal. The Association of the Women Fish Processors of Bargny Guedj Khelcom has expressed clear opposition to the Tosyali Holding Sénégal project

a social crisis will develop. So we say to Tosyali: buzz off!”

The chairperson of LSD, Aly Marie Sagne, who has been helping these women for some years, has clearly voiced his indignation. “As a partner of the women fish processors who have been struggling to remain on their traditional site for more than ten years now, and to oppose the construction of the Bargny Sendou power plant, we express our deep concern about this second attempt at grabbing the fish processing site in Bargny.”

The operations of the steel complex would expose the local population to environmental and sanitary risks. As part of their campaigning, the women have submitted a memo to about 20 public and private institutions: the President of the Republic, the Speaker of the National Assembly, the President of the Economic, Social and Environmental Council, the sector ministries, including the Fisheries and Environment Ministries, and a number of diplomatic representatives, in particular from Turkey and the Netherlands.

As a result of increasing lobbying by the women, some negotiations have been initiated. Women representatives took part in two meetings with the Tosyali Company, the Ministries of Fisheries and Finance, with also the presence of APIX (National Agency for investment promotion and major works).

Thanks to the mobilisation of women, work on the plant has been delayed. Tosyali is now committed to conducting an impact assessment, and also respecting the rights of the neighbouring women processors and maintaining appropriate environmental standards.

For the first time in ten years, these women of Khelcom have been respectfully and responsibly treated by the decision-makers, including from the state and private entities. They have been invited to share their views regarding the future of the fish processing site. During an interview, the Minister of Environment had this to say: “They are full citizens, with the right to a healthy environment”. 🗣️

The operations of the steel complex would expose the local population to environmental and sanitary risks



Milestones

By **N. Venugopalan**
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For a better world

The 65th session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) of the United Nations took place from 15 to 26 March 2021. The theme of the session was: “Women’s full and effective participation and decision-making in public life, as well as the elimination of violence, for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls.” At this session, the 193 member states pledged to ramp up efforts to fully implement one of the most visionary blueprints of gender equality - the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, 1995 (the Beijing Platform for Action). It attempted to take stock of the status of women, including examining current and future challenges as well as the obstacles to implementing the Beijing Platform for Action.

The discussions at the session included in-depth assessment of current challenges that affect the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of women. It recognized that while the status of women has improved in some important respects in the past decade, progress has been uneven; inequalities between women and men have persisted, with serious consequences for the well-being of all people. It observed that equality between women and men is a matter of human rights and a condition for social justice; equality is also a necessary prerequisite for development and peace.

The UN Women’s Executive Director, Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, said: “2020 has to be the year where change is intensified. In addition to the 25th anniversary of the Beijing Platform for Action, this year marks 20 years of implementing Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and

Security. It is also UN Women’s 10th birthday and the start of the UN Decade of Action. We will continue to work hard to achieve the aspirations of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, with the support of a variety of stakeholders whom we continue to mobilise”.

The Secretary General’s report (<https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/3850087?ln=en>) drew on 170 National Reports, contributions from civil society and youth organizations to both national and regional reviews, as well as available global data. The report affirmed the positive news of the change in 274 discriminatory legal and regulatory reforms in 131 countries.

Over the past 25 years, women’s representation in national parliaments has doubled, from 12 per cent in 1995 to an average of 24.3 globally in 2019, with the global median representation of women at 21 per cent. Nearly 80 countries introduced legislated gender quotas, thus raising women’s participation. In 2019, women gained 30 per cent of parliamentary seats in countries with quotas, compared to 18 per cent in countries without quotas. Some countries had moved towards a target of 40–60 per cent. By the year 2018, 192 countries had one or more dedicated gender equality mechanisms or focal points. While in 1995, only Sweden provided for paternity leave, by 2015, this had grown to 94 countries. The global maternal mortality ratio fell from 342 maternal deaths per 100,000 live births in 2000 to 211 per 100,000 in 2017. This, it can be said, is the positive legacy of the Beijing Platform for Action.

The agreed conclusions are available at: <https://undocs.org/en/E/CN.6/2021/L.3> 🗣️

Integrating gender

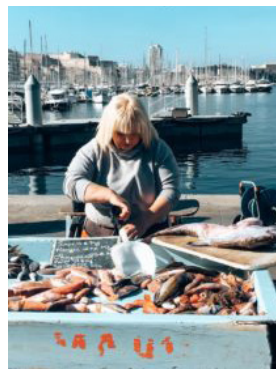
The European Network of Women in Fisheries and Aquaculture in Europe (AKTEA) urges the Office of the Commissioner for the Environment, Oceans and Fisheries to integrate gender into all aspects of European fishing policy

From <http://akteaplatform.eu/letter-from-commissioner-sinkevicius/> and <http://akteaplatform.eu/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/Letter-from-Commissioner-Sinkevicius.pdf>. Accessed on May 25, 2021

On 8 March International Women's Day, AKTEA wrote a letter to Commissioner Virginijus Sinkevičius, Commissioner for the Environment, Oceans and Fisheries, and to all the Members of European Parliament belonging to the fisheries commission urging for gender inclusivity in European fisheries. The text of the letter ran as follows:

"AKTEA, the European Network of Women in Fisheries and Aquaculture in Europe, calls for a better integration of the principle of equality and women's rights in all European fisheries policies. Women contribute in many ways to the production and distribution of seafood. They are entrepreneurs, crewmembers and workers. They prepare fishing gear, transport fish to auctions, sell and process sea products, develop tourism-related activities, manage businesses, manage logistics for vessels, etc. Women are also involved in the production and distribution of sea products.

Women are also very present throughout the seafood processing industry as well as in the organizations that manage the sector, producer organizations, cooperatives and others. The word 'woman' was first included in the CFP in 2002. The principle of equality is enshrined in the texts of the Structural Fund for Fisheries (EMFF). However, apart from Spain, there have been very few concrete achievements. It is urgent time to give women the place they deserve in the European fisheries policy and in the structural fund. When will there be recognition that translates into their effective access to decision-making, subsidies, rights and resources?



"For AKTEA, European decision-makers must radically rethink fisheries policy to translate the principle of equality and women's rights into action."

So far, the only response has been from the Office

of the Commissioner for the Environment, Oceans and Fisheries. The text of this reply is reproduced below:

"Thank you for the message of AKTEA at the occasion of the International Day of Women's Rights on 8 March 2021.


"Your message is an important reminder of the need to increase the recognition of the role of women in fisheries and give them the place they deserve in decision-making.

"As I have underlined in my video-address to your meeting that took place in February 2020 ('AKTEA, Revive, Renew and Relaunch the European Network of Women in Fisheries and Aquaculture', EESC, Brussels 24-26 February 2020), the Commission is working in various ways to ensure a better position for women in EU fisheries.

On the policy side, we are enhancing the collection of social data, including data on the role of women, for instance in non-remunerated jobs. These social data will in particular provide an input to the 2022 report on the functioning of the Common Fisheries Policy and pave the way towards a better assessing of social impacts of fisheries management measures.

"The recent adoption of the new European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund (EMFAF) ensures the continuation of funding for measures to support women in fisheries and aquaculture. As you know, the Fisheries Local Action Groups (FLAGs) play and will continue to play a key role in this regard. They provide a support network for women entrepreneurship and often foresee a central role for women in governance. Since member states are currently preparing their programming for the upcoming seven years, I would call upon your national members to contribute to that process.

"Finally, I can inform you that, as announced in the EU Gender Equality Strategy ('COM(2020)152 of 5.03.2020'), DG MARE will launch in 2022 a new call dedicated to women in the "blue economy" under the EMFAF.

"I thank you once again for your message of 8 March 2021 and look forward to our continued cooperation." 



PROFILE

Linda Behnken : A leader, a fisher, a mother and a strong advocate of sustainable fisheries, she occupies a unique and significant place in the world of fisheries

By Natalie Sattler (asft.alfa.programs@gmail.com), Programme Director, Alaska Longline Fishermen's Association, Alaska, US

JOSH ROPER



Linda Behnken

Linda came to Alaska in 1982 after her first year of college with a love of wilderness and vague ideas of earning money for college by working on commercial fishing boats. She landed her first job when a deckhand failed to show up after a night of drinking, and the skipper hesitantly agreed to give her a chance. On that first trip Linda was hooked. She loved

fish. In 1991 she bought her own boat, which she owned and operated until marriage and the addition of two small boys led her husband and her to buy a slightly larger boat that more safely accommodates her family. The small boys have become tall boys who work with them to harvest halibut, sablefish and salmon from the sparkling waters of the Pacific. Her hope is that the ocean will continue to sustain them and their children's children for long.

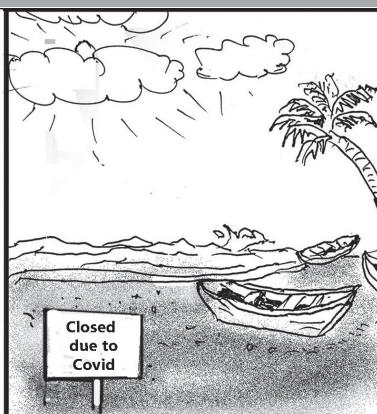
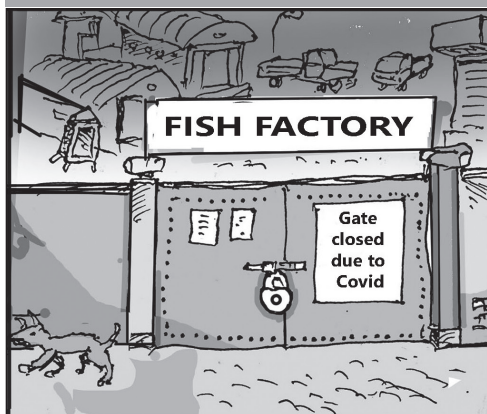
Their biggest threat now is climate change followed closely by industrial fisheries. Temperatures in Alaska are rising at twice the rate experienced in other parts of the country, sea ice is disappearing from the Bering Sea and shrinking in the Arctic, salmon are returning to streams so warm that they essentially cook before spawning, and sea bird populations have plummeted. As climate change reduces ocean productivity, the competition for available resources intensifies. Industrial fisheries are crushing fish stocks and fishing communities as they intensify fishing efforts to maintain production. Small-scale fishermen are calling for climate action and social justice. They are building coalitions to speak for ocean and fishing community health. Many of their tribal and fishing community leaders are women—strong women who will not give up until our government takes meaningful and effective action to address climate change and prevent industrialization of their nation's oceans. 🐟

working on the ocean, loved being part of the fishing community, and above all was awed by the beauty and wilderness of Alaska. Fishing has challenged her, humbled her and redefined her spirituality. Fishing has also in turn exhausted, exhilarated and inspired her.

After fishing for six years on fishing boats, she returned to school to earn an advanced degree in resource management with the goal of becoming a more effective advocate for the ocean and fishing communities that she loved. That passion has defined her work with the Alaska Longline Fishermen's Association and the Alaska Sustainable Fisheries Trust. Even though the challenges are endless, she took time every summer to

YEMAYA MAMA

Small-scale fishing for food security!



BOOK

Gender, Covid-19 and Food Systems: Impacts, Community Responses and Feminist Policy Demands, October 2020

A report of the CSM Women's Working Group, authored by Jessica Duncan and Priscilla Claeys, 35 pages, English

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This powerful statement opens the report: "We won't go back to normality, because normality was the problem". The report, authored by Jessica Duncan and Priscilla Claeys, truly imbibes this statement in its ethos, approach, policy recommendations and structure.

The report draws on six cross-cutting principles to guide policies and programmes in relation to gender, COVID-19 and food systems. These are participation and representation; human rights; non-discrimination and intersectionality; food sovereignty; feminism and gender justice; and equality and equity. On the basis of these principles a number of key policy demands are formulated in four thematic areas, of economic activities, markets and access to resources; care work, public health and gender-based violence; participation, representation and digital equity; and government responses and social protection.

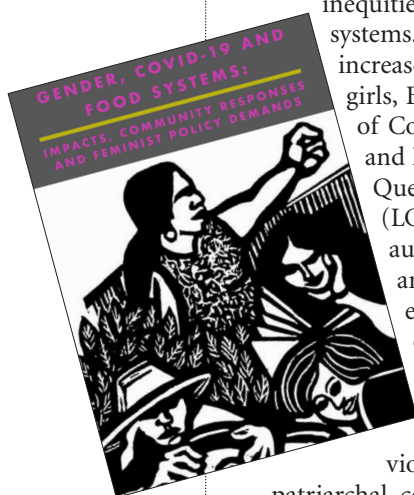
The sudden global upsurge of the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent control measures made visible the weaknesses and inequities of existing global food systems. This resulted in the increased vulnerability of women, girls, Black, Indigenous and People of Colour (BIPOC) communities, and Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Queer, Intersex, and Asexual Plus (LGBTQIA+) communities. The authors adopt a methodical and perceptive approach in examining how the pandemic exacerbated systemic inequalities, oppressions, racisms, discrimination, injustice, exploitation and violence created by pre-existing patriarchal, colonial, neoliberal and global

capitalist systems. The recommendations go beyond food systems, and have the potential to catalyse structural transformation, based on an explicit assertion of women's rights, including the right to life, food and nutrition, education, health, safety, social security and tenure as well as the recognition of women's self-determination, agency and decision making power in all aspects of their life.

Within the report, a diverse spectrum of marginalised and vulnerable groups and communities are represented through examples of the ground realities of the impacts of the pandemic, instances of solidarity and support, and most importantly though the expression of group priorities and demands. Testimonials from migrants, Dalits and Adivasis in India; domestic workers in Brazil; fishworkers in Thailand; indigenous communities in Canada; LGBTQIA+ peoples in Perú, Colombia and Panama; farmers in Pacific Islands; immigrants in the USA together reflect the intersectionality and diversity of the report.

The report further shines light on initiatives, collective actions, protests and social movements risen in response to the immediate crisis of the pandemic, and longstanding systemic, economic and social inequities. These initiatives recognise the efforts of women, indigenous peoples, feminist organisations and civil society organisations during this traumatic period, despite incredibly challenging circumstances. By weaving these examples through the report, the potential for transformation is highlighted. By May of 2021, the pandemic had taken 3.3 million lives across the world. It is estimated the pandemic might add between 83 and 132 million people to the total number of undernourished in the world. The world of work has been devastated, with the brunt being borne by young workers, women, the self-employed, medium skilled workers and those in the unorganised sector. This report calls out the systems which have exacerbated this tragic crisis that is disproportionately impacting women and workers across the world.

The full report in English can be accessed here: http://www.csm4cfs.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/NEW_Gender-COVID-19-and-Food-Systems-October-2020_compressed.pdf



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note that write-ups should be
brief, about 2000 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.
Please do send us comments and
suggestions to make the newsletter
more relevant. We look forward
to hearing from you and to
receiving regular write-ups for the
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