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# SAMUDRA

REPORT

THE TRIANNUAL JOURNAL OF THE INTERNATIONAL COLLECTIVE IN SUPPORT OF FISHWORKERS



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**Human Rights in Thai Fisheries**

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**Salmon Workers in Chile**

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**COVID-19 and Women in the Philippines**

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**Fish and Nutrition in Kenya**

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**Climate Change and Bangladesh**

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**UN Food Systems Summit**

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**Fisheries, Communities, Livelihoods**



ICSF is an international NGO working on issues that concern fishworkers the world over. It is in status with the Economic and Social Council of the UN and is on ILO's Special List of Non-governmental International Organizations. It also has Liaison Status with FAO.

As a global network of community organizers, teachers, technicians, researchers and scientists, ICSF's activities encompass monitoring and research, exchange and training, campaigns

and action, as well as communications. *SAMUDRA Report* invites contributions and responses. Correspondence should be addressed to Chennai, India.

The opinions and positions expressed in the articles are those of the authors concerned and do not necessarily represent the official views of ICSF.

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ADRIANO GAMBARINI, OPAN / Paumari fisher in the Tapauá River, Amazonas, Brazil



# SAMUDRA

REPORT

THE TRIANNUAL JOURNAL OF THE INTERNATIONAL COLLECTIVE IN SUPPORT OF FISHWORKERS

NO.86 | NOVEMBER 2021

CYPRIN HAUSER

## FRONT COVER



Painting by Oscar Amarasinghe,  
September 2021  
Oruwa (outrigger) artisanal Craft,  
Sri Lanka.

By Oscar Amarasinghe  
(oamarasinghe@yahoo.com)

This painting was presented to  
Professor Maarten Bavinck of  
the University of Amsterdam, the  
Netherlands, on 30th of September 2021,  
the day of his retirement, as a  
token of comradeship, friendship,  
affection and love.

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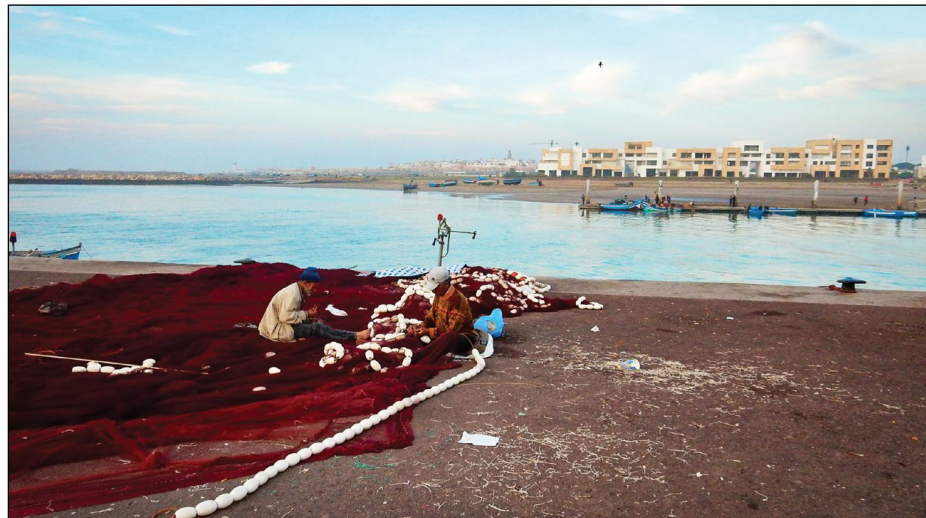
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A woman sits on a canoe beached at  
Ouakam, a small fishing village near  
Dakar, Senegal by Franco Mattioli/FAO



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GIUSEPPE BIZZARRI/FAO

Fishers unloading crates of fish from the day's catch on to the wharf of El Jadida harbour, Morocco



# Time to Shift Gear

**It is high time that negotiations on subsidies at the WTO result in an agreement whose primary goal is transparency and universality in fisheries conservation and management measures**

The draft Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies (WT/MIN(21)/W/5) from the Chair of the Negotiation Group on Rules of the World Trade Organization (WTO), ought to be welcomed. This text is to facilitate the final negotiations ahead of the 12th Ministerial Conference (MC12) to be held soon in Geneva (30 November to 3 December).

As a result of a momentous redistribution, thanks to the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (LOSC), the developing world now accounts for more than two-thirds of the global marine capture fishery production. Global marine fish production, however, has already peaked and there are worrying signs of overfishing. It is, therefore, high time to shift gear and move globally towards a fisheries conservation and management regime. The sovereign rights of the coastal States for exploring and exploiting the marine living resources should be matched with their sovereign rights to conserve and manage resources for present and future generations. This principle should apply to all nations.

WTO negotiations on fisheries subsidies seem to have made countries re-examine their commitments under LOSC and related instruments. The marine fisheries sector—historically one of the most marginalized at the national level—has been receiving far greater policy engagement at the highest level since the fisheries subsidies negotiations began. As a result, there are positive developments in several countries, such as the preparation of the national plan of action (NPOA) to deter illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing, or NPOAs to regulate fishing capacity. There are several new fisheries legal instruments at the national level to uphold the spirit of conservation and sustainable use of marine and coastal biodiversity. In addition, the subsidies notification regime at WTO is bringing about a great deal of transparency to fisheries subsidy schemes, worldwide.

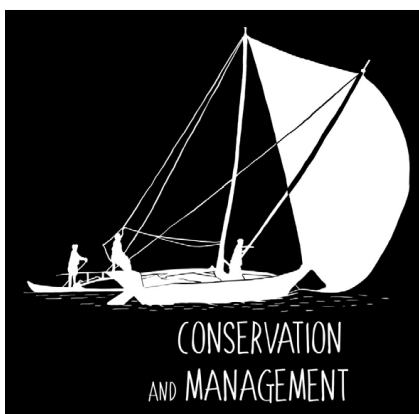
The revised fisheries subsidies text is fairly balanced. True, there are concerns about including subsidies such as costs of personnel, social charges and income support of workers on fishing vessels as subsidies that contribute

to overcapacity and overfishing. Nonetheless, there is room for relief that such subsidies may be permissible if management measures are demonstrably implemented to maintain fish stocks. This provides an opportunity not only for fishers' unions to apply pressure on vessel operators to seriously consider fisheries management, but it also encourages all WTO members, including developing-country members, to take fisheries management far more seriously, especially if they wish to hold on to certain fisheries subsidies as desirable.

Artisanal and small-scale fishers contribute about one-third of global marine fish catches. They operate a range of fishing gear, from stationary gear to towed and non-towed gear. To be reasonably fair, the kind of fishers included under "low-income, resource-poor, and livelihood fishing" should include only those operating non-towed fishing gear—and exclude those operating towed gear, especially destructive bottom trawls.

When it comes to special and differential treatment (SDT) for artisanal and small-scale fishing vessels under the overfishing and overcapacity pillar, it is pertinent that artisanal and small-scale fishing in the exclusive economic zone (EEZ) be considered for inclusion along with similar fishing in the territorial and internal waters. Under SDT, a maximum period of eight years appears reasonable for phasing out subsidies that contribute to overfishing and overcapacity. Likewise, a similar transition period may apply to the IUU pillar as well.

It is 21 years now since the Doha Ministerial Conference launched the fisheries subsidies negotiations. That is already a longer period than what was needed to conclude the Third LOSC in 1982 and to form the WTO in 1995. It is high time the negotiations lead to a proper outcome, consistent with the sustainability mandate of WTO, based on the Chair's text that, in a balanced manner, takes into account the interests of both the rich and poor members of WTO. We hope the negotiators arrive at an agreement that can positively help make a leap towards fisheries conservation and management.





# A Level Playing Field

Fishers in Thailand have formed the Fishers Rights Network to collectively demand better wages and working conditions to prevent labour and human-rights abuses

**D**espite international pressure and government efforts to revise policy, Burmese and Cambodian migrant fishers in Thailand's seafood industry still face significant labour-rights abuses. While there have been some positive steps taken to improve conditions in the Thai fishing industry, such as Thailand's Draft Fisheries Act and the ratification of International Labour Organization (ILO) Work in

and, in most cases, wages are paid in cash rather than as monthly bank transfers as required by Thai law. Fishers continue to remain at high risk of debt bondage due to unlawful migration and high broker or document fees.

**Document retention and movement restrictions:** Fishers report that their passports, work permits, automated teller machine (ATM) cards, bank passbooks, and other important documents are often held by the boat captain or owner, and are not accessible. This restricts the movement of fishers and limits their ability to change vessels, access payments, freely transfer or remit earnings, and report abuse.

**Ineffective implementation and enforcement of ILO C188:** Despite ratification, significant gaps remain in the effective implementation and enforcement of C188. Thai law and labour inspections currently do not meet the standards outlined in the Convention.

However, despite these problems, fishers are now recognizing they have the ability to reshape the industry and improve their future, if they organize to build power. The International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF) has been assisting fishers in forming the Fishers Rights Network (FRN), the first and only independent and democratic trade union for migrant fishers in Thailand. Since its inception in 2018, the FRN has established organizing centres in three major Thai fishing ports, and organized over 3,000 migrant fishers. The main organizing centres are in Songkhla (in the 'Deep South'), Ranong (on the Andaman Sea coast along the Myanmar border), and in Trat (eastern Thailand on the Cambodian border). These strategic locations have allowed

4 ... fishers are now recognizing they have the ability to reshape the industry and improve their future, if they organize to build power.

Fishing Convention (C188), migrant fishers still face severe exploitation. Thailand ratified C188 in 2019, but effective implementation and enforcement remain major challenges to realizing structural reform that mitigates the significant problems remaining in the industry, both in Thailand and throughout the region.

Among the problems still facing migrant fishers in the Thai fishing industry are:

**Poor health and safety conditions:** Conditions on board vessels remain substandard. Fishers regularly report inadequate food and clean drinking water, poorly stocked and inaccessible first-aid kits, insufficient protective equipment, poor training, cramped sleeping quarters, the absence of toilets, and limited hours of rest that increase injuries and accidents on board vessels.

**Financial exploitation:** Many fishers report receiving wages significantly lower than the amount stated in their employment contracts,

*This article is by Jon Hartough (hartough\_jon@itf.org.uk), Thailand Project Lead of the International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF) Fishers Rights Network (FRN)*





A Fishers Assembly in Songkhla, Thailand, in May, 2018. Fishers have demanded that the ILO Work in Fishing Convention (C188) be enforced and that all fishers have a copy of their employment contract in their own language

the FRN to organize fishers as they enter the country and while they work on board fishing vessels.

Some of FRN's daily organizing activities include small group meetings, health and safety training for fishers, and observing government Port In/Port Out (PIPO) inspections to help ensure that labour-rights protections for fishers are enforced. FRN fisher leaders have also co-ordinated across seaports nationwide to campaign for greater labour rights at sea, recognizing strength in solidarity as the driving force to sustainably change working conditions in the industry.

FRN campaigns have played a vital role in pressuring the Thai government to ratify ILO C188 and have influenced other pieces of important legislation and policy. FRN's work was also a factor in the recent downgrading of Thailand on the United States Trafficking in Persons (TIP) report. In addition, FRN has worked with key allies to negotiate supply-chain agreements with large seafood corporations, such as Thai Union, the largest tuna company in the world. The Vessel Code of Conduct with Thai Union covers several provisions of

employment and working conditions, including health and safety, wages and payment provisions, equality/fair treatment, and freedom of association.

In June, FRN leaders called on the Thai Government to enforce employment contract provisions after conducting a three-month survey of 520 fishers in eight provinces. The research revealed that 87 per cent of fishers do not possess a copy of their employment contract, 96 per cent do not completely understand their contract, and 89 per cent have not had their contract translated or explained in a language they can understand.

The fishers have issued three demands to the government regarding their employment contracts: (1) Effectively enforce the ILO Work in Fishing Convention (C188) and ensure that all fishers have a copy of their employment contract in their own language; (2) Ensure that all PIPO centres allow fishers to review and verify the contract presented by their employer at inspection, and report violations in a safe and protected space; and (3) Support Thai agencies to enforce employment contract



ITF-FRN



A meeting of fishers in Ranong, Thailand, in January, 2020. Since its inception in 2018, the FRN has organized over 3,000 migrant fishers in three major Thai fishing ports

standards, and restricts migrant workers from legally forming their own union and collectively bargaining with their employer (as per ILO Conventions 87 and 98, which Thailand has not ratified). Without the fundamental right to organize (protected by law), migrant workers remain vulnerable to labour exploitation and risk employer retribution, unfair penalties, and termination if they collectively organize and demand better wages and working conditions.

By building the FRN, migrant fishers have been organizing to build power to prevent labour and human-rights abuses in Thailand, and to level the playing field with employers to negotiate fair employment contracts with decent wages, benefits and safe working conditions. Significant legal reform is still needed in Thailand to protect migrant fishers. All workers, regardless of nationality, should be allowed to exercise their fundamental human rights, including the right to join or form a union.

provisions and protect all fishers' rights, including those of migrant fishers.

Beyond national-level campaigning, FRN members have taken collective action at the vessel level. Earlier this year, 11 Burmese FRN members won nearly USD 5,000 in back pay after their Thai employer tried to cheat them out of their full pay. The fishers had worked for more than six months without payment. Acting on a complaint filed by the union, the Ranong Department of Labour Protection and Welfare ordered the employer to fully compensate the fishers.

For far too long, Burmese and Khmer migrant fishers have worked for owners who break the law and continue to make huge profits in the global seafood market from their labour. Until now, fishers have not fought hard to protect their rights, but as FRN members begin to fight back and win landmark cases such as the abovementioned one, there is a sense that the tide may be turning across the industry. This victory proves that fishers can stop corrupt owners from cheating them.

FRN fishers have overcome significant obstacles faced by migrant workers in their struggle towards organizing and collective bargaining rights. Currently Thai labour law does not meet international labour

#### For more

##### **Fishers Rights Network**

<https://justiceforfishers.org>

##### **Thai Union Vessel Improvement Program and Code of Conduct**

<https://www.thaiunion.com/files/download/sustainability/20200813-tu-vessel-code-of-conduct1.1-guidance-en.pdf>

##### **Trafficking in Persons Report – US Department of State**

[https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/TIP\\_Report\\_Final\\_20210701.pdf](https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/TIP_Report_Final_20210701.pdf)

##### **ILO Endline research findings on fishers and seafood workers in Thailand**

[https://www.ilo.org/asia/publications/WCMS\\_738042/lang--en/index.htm](https://www.ilo.org/asia/publications/WCMS_738042/lang--en/index.htm)

# The Salmon Demon

**The growing global opposition to destructive salmon farming has found vocal expression in Chile and Argentina, highlighting issues related to labour and working conditions**

**T**he industrial salmonid monoculture in Chile has a history of more than three decades of productive and territorial expansion in the country's waters, which has transformed the South American country into the world's second-largest producer of Atlantic salmon, accounting for 30 per cent of global supply. Thirty-four thousand people work in salmon cultivation farms and processing plants, and in associated activities, such as terrestrial and sea cargo.

Currently, 40 per cent of workers in the salmon industry work through various subcontractors. Temporary and precarious jobs, in the form of fixed-term jobs, prevail. This asymmetric contractual relationship allows the client salmon companies to reduce costs, while disclaiming responsibilities in instances of environmental, health and labour crises. For their part, subcontractors maximize their profits by taking advantage of the low bargaining capacity of workers, given the high unemployment rates.

This situation leaves workers without social protection, and unable to unionize and participate in negotiations to defend their rights and to improve their living and working conditions. This expression of 'savage capitalism' contrasts with that existing in Norway, the world's leading salmon producer, where the State recognizes the democratic and social rights of workers.

## **A global record for labour mortality**

The working conditions in this export industry are so precarious that more than 60 salmon workers' deaths were registered between 2013 and 2021. The industry registered an accident rate of 4.12 per cent in 2019, higher than in

Chilean agriculture and fishing (3.9 per cent) and even higher than in the construction sector (4 per cent). The most affected are divers and workers in maritime and land transport. In the case of divers, the main causes of accidents are decompression sickness and deaths by suffocation when they get entangled in the nets of the salmon pens. Associated diseases include otic barotrauma (inflammation in the ears), dysbaric osteonecrosis (damage to the bones caused by nitrogen embolism) and acute sinusitis. In the case of the ship workers, the causes were falls into the sea, collisions with other—mainly artisanal fishing—vessels and accidents on deck.

**Thirty-four thousand people work in salmon cultivation farms and processing plants, and in associated activities, such as terrestrial and sea cargo.**

However, the number of accidents in the Chilean salmon industry must be compared with the rate of accidents in the industry at the global level. Approximately 6,000 divers work in approximately 3,500 raft cages distributed over almost 2,000 km of the Chilean coastline, mainly in Patagonia in the south. Ninety per cent of these workers have only a basic diving licence. Most of these divers are artisanal fishers who work in salmon farms during the closed season in the fishery. Recruiting these fishers informally is cheaper for the companies than hiring professional industrial divers. Many of them do not have the necessary training and the appropriate implements to work at depths up to 30 m.

*This article is by **Juan Carlos Cárdenas Núñez** (jcc@ecoceanos.cl) and **Patricio Igor Melillanca** (patricio@ecoceanos.cl) of Centro Ecoceanos, Chile*



WIKIMEDIA COMMONS



A salmon farm in the Reloncaví estuary in Chile's Los Lagos region. The working conditions in the industry are so precarious that more than 60 workers' deaths were registered between 2013 and 2021.

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These underwater workers perform rapid cycles of successive daily dives without the vital decompression and rest time—a practice known as “yo-yo diving”. They are not provided any health insurance by their employers. In the first three months of 2021 alone, three divers died in the Aysén region.

Added to this is the fact that Chilean salmon farming has the lowest wages and the longest working hours in this industry globally. The outsourcing of diving services in the salmon industry is responsible for the prevailing job insecurity and high accident rates. This labour reality places Chile with the highest mortality rate in the salmon industry worldwide. This is in sharp contrast with the Norwegian salmon industry, where the death of only one diver was recorded between 2012 and 2018.

### Women in salmon processing

Thirty-three per cent of Chilean salmon workers are women, who constitute nearly half of direct employment in processing plants. They work long hours, standing in cold and humid

conditions. Frequent urinary infections among the women are associated with the low temperatures and humidity. Their labour rights have feeble protections: Pregnant workers are considered unproductive, so women are often forced to leave because of the working hours, in violation of the country's laws protecting pregnant workers. Also, permits for medical check-ups or facilities to breastfeed children are difficult to obtain. The employers do not provide nurseries or crèches to the women.

Although intensive working conditions, seasonal jobs and low wages are rampant in Chilean food industries, it is surprising that such practices against women have not been checked by the authorities or by the transnational salmon companies, considering that they violate the laws in the countries where they are headquartered, and contravene the Guidelines for Multinationals of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).

Added to the high rates of occupational accidents in salmon

farming are other health hazards, caused by the intensive use of chemicals, such as antimicrobials, antiparasitics, potentially carcinogenic antifungals (malachite green and crystal violet), antifouling paints based on copper and heavy metals, as well as 36 types of disinfectants whose active compounds are hydrogen peroxide, chlorine dioxide and peracetic acid.

The work system in salmon processing plants encourages exploitation since wages are linked to workers' production volumes. The consequence is a prevalence of disabling musculoskeletal diseases among workers, associated with the long and strenuous work, performed standing up and repeated at a constant speed under cold and humid conditions.

In this context, workers' organizations have denounced a recent agreement between insurers and salmon companies to exclude tendonitis, carpal tunnel, lumbago or rotator cuff injuries—usually covered by the premiums—from being classified as occupational diseases in the salmon industry. It is interesting to note that the insurers, client companies and subcontractors do not carry out educational programmes on preventive measures to reduce accidents and injuries; nor do they provide hyperbaric medicine to underwater workers.

### **Anti-union practices**

Salmon companies regularly indulge in practices such as the use of multiple fiscal identification numbers to evade audits or legal responsibilities; the creation of parallel negotiating groups during salary negotiations; 'black lists' of workers who unionize; and the establishment of joint committees controlled by the companies. Workers' organizations have repeatedly denounced such anti-union practices, often carried out in collusion with labour and health inspectors. Organizations that fight against abuses are either blocked or intimidated. This explains why only 14 per cent of workers in the salmon industry are unionized, as opposed to 50 per cent in Norway.

### **Salmon transport workers**

The Chilean fleet for transporting live salmon and supplies has 729 vessels,

including 54 well boats whose number has been increasing steadily since 2020. There is a growing presence of Norwegian capital in these services.

The Federation of Officials of Merchant and Special Ships of Chile (Fenasiomechi) is fighting to implement minimum security provisions according to the guidelines and recommendations of the International Maritime Organization (IMO). In turn, it has promoted a bill to modify Decree Law 2222 on maritime navigation and accidents, to be able to establish responsibilities in the face of frequent fatal collisions between salmon farming vessels and fishing boats, partly due to the former's use of automatic pilot systems in internal waters in the Chiloe, Aysén and Magallanes regions.

Fenasiomechi has also demanded decent wages, since the transport workers' salaries are 25 per cent lower than the market standard. They have also demanded that the companies comply with stipulations for working hours and hours of rest in the labour code.

### **Salmon and the international market**

Fish is very important to the Chilean economy and livelihoods. Chile is the seventh-largest fish producer in the world—the global leader in cultivated trout, fifth in the export of algae for human consumption, and second in the production of both salmon and fishmeal. More than 80 per cent of Chilean industrial fisheries and aquaculture production is destined for international markets.

The new context of political, social and cultural transformations in Chile constitutes an opportunity to build a broad alliance between the socio-environmental movement, workers' and human-rights organizations, as well as coastal communities and indigenous peoples, with consumer organizations in international markets.

Social mobilization and citizen pressure in Chile, together with international influence, will lead to the necessary political will required to address the abusive practices of the salmon industry, which threaten the human rights of workers and the health



ECOCEANOS



Thirty-three per cent of Chilean salmon workers are women, who constitute nearly half of direct employment in processing plants. They work long hours, standing in cold and humid conditions.

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of the oceans. Argentina has recently set an example, witnessing the first victory of the coastal communities over the salmon industry Goliath.

### Argentina: The first to ban salmon farming

On 30 June this year, the legislature of the Argentine province of Tierra del Fuego enacted into law a bill prohibiting the salmon farming industry from the waters of the Beagle Channel (Onashaga in the Yagán language) in the country's Patagonia region. The bill by deputy Pablo Villegas of the Fuegian Popular Movement, was approved unanimously by legislators, making Argentina the first country in the world to ban this transnational industry.

In Argentina, the only viable place for the establishment of the salmon farming in open-net pens is the pristine waters of the Beagle Channel, which is home to great terrestrial and marine biodiversity, including iconic species of mammals, birds and 50 per cent of the macroalgal forests—key carbon sinks—in the country.

Villegas pointed out that what happened “is a bet in favour of life and economic activities such as tourism, which generates employment and benefits various social sectors.” The message is clear: saying no to salmon farms is possible.

This blow to the transnational salmon industry was despite a major diplomatic push in both Argentina and Chile. In March 2018, the Norwegian King Harald V and Queen Sonja visited the Casa Rosada—seat of the Argentine government—to sign a co-operation agreement to study the feasibility of developing intensive salmon farming in Argentine Patagonia. The agreement was rejected because of demonstrations carried out by the inhabitants of Tierra del Fuego and the neighbouring Yagan communities of Puerto Williams, the Commune of Cape Horn and Kawesqar of Puerto Natales in Chile, together with the various environmental organizations of both the South American countries.

Following this, the Norwegian Royals visited Chile in March 2019 to lobby for the expansion of the salmon industry into the pristine waters of the Magellan region. They travelled with an entourage of 60 businessmen to the cities of Punta Arenas and Puerto Williams in Chilean Patagonia, where they were received with strong protests from the local Yagan and Kawesqar communities and NGOs.

Civil society organizations and consumers in Chile, the United States, Canada, Argentina, Norway and Scotland—who produce and consume most of the farmed salmon in the world—must take advantage of this growing opposition and eliminate destructive salmon farming from one of most pristine regions of the planet. 3

#### For more

##### The Salmon industry and human rights in Chile: Sector-Wide Impact Assessment

<https://www.humanrights.dk/publications/salmon-industry-human-rights-chile-sector-wide-impact-assessment>

##### Blood Salmon from the Global South

<https://www.ecoceanos.cl/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/SalmonesDeSangre-Ecoceanos-27mayo2019.pdf>

##### Paradise Lost

[https://www.icsf.net/images/samudra/pdf/english/issue\\_81/4398\\_art\\_Sam\\_81\\_art15\\_Chile\\_Salmon\\_J\\_C\\_C\\_Nez.pdf](https://www.icsf.net/images/samudra/pdf/english/issue_81/4398_art_Sam_81_art15_Chile_Salmon_J_C_C_Nez.pdf)

# The Missing Link

**Mike Abaka-Edu, President of the Western Region branch of the Ghana National Canoe Fishermen Council (GNCFC), makes a compelling case for banning 'saiko' fishing in this interview with Peter Adjei, a Member of ICSF**

**T**he Ghana National Canoe Fishermen Council (GNCFC) was formed in 1982 with the objective of promoting the welfare of canoe fishermen. Since then, it has grown to become an umbrella body of fishers and fishery associations in Ghana. The leadership structure comprises district and regional executives and a national executive committee, which forms the governing body of the council. As of 2020, GNCFC had over 100,000 members made up of fishers, chief fishermen, *konkonhema* (queen fishmongers) and canoe and gear owners.

In its formative years, the council was instrumental in sourcing inputs for its members and collaborated with the government to provide subsidised premix fuel for artisanal fishers. In recent years, however, it has shifted its attention to education and advocacy efforts in response to IUU fishing and other unsustainable fishing practices. Mike Abaka-Edu, who joined the GNCFC in 1998, is the Secretary of the Western Region branch. A staunch advocate of fisheries rights and livelihoods, he has been involved in several campaigns to highlight the plight of small-scale fishers in the marine sector.

The SSF sector in Ghana plays an important role in providing food security and supporting livelihoods, contributing to 70-80 per cent of the total annual fish catch. In 2018, of the total volume of 452,679.30 tonnes realized, the marine sector accounted for 302,431.50 tonnes (67 per cent), followed by aquaculture, with 76,620.00 tonnes (17 per cent) and the inland sector, with 73,627.80 tonnes (16 per cent). In terms of nutrition, Ghanaians consume an estimated 25 kg of fish per capita per year. This is higher than Africa's average of 10.5 kg and the

global average of 20.3 kg. To sustain the socioeconomic contribution of small-scale fisheries (SSF), the Fisheries Act 2002 (Act 625) established the Inshore Exclusive Zone (IEZ) exclusively for SSF. Thus, the use of vessels of 50 or more gross registered tonnage (GRT) or bottom trawl in waters less than 30 m deep is prohibited. However, many small-scale fishers complain of frequent incursions into the IEZ by industrial trawlers. In addition, a far more debilitating practice by industrial trawlers is 'saiko', a term used in the Ghanaian fishing industry to refer to the fish passed on (transshipped) by

**...many small-scale fishers complain of frequent incursions into the IEZ by industrial trawlers.**

industrial trawlers to canoe operators at sea. According to studies by the Environmental Justice Foundation (EJF), as many as 100 foreign-flagged vessels from the European Union and China are involved in the saiko trade.

**Adjei:** You have always been a strong voice in the GNCFC. Your appointment as the President of the Western Region branch comes as no surprise to me. I am using this medium to officially congratulate you.

**Abaka-Edu:** Thank you, I acknowledge the hard work of my predecessors and support from organizations like yours.

**Adjei:** Thank you for your compliments. The GNCFC and many small-scale fishers are asking the government to ban the transshipment of fish at sea, the one you call saiko. Why?

*This article is by **Peter Linford Adjei** (pieroquz@gmail.com) of Technical Services for Community Development (TESCOD), Accra, Ghana, and Member, ICSF*



PETER ADJEI



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Mike Abaka-Edu, Secretary, Western Region, Ghana National Canoe Fishermen Council (GNCFC). The Fisheries Act 2002 prohibits all forms of IUU fishing activities, including saiko, but enforcement of the law has always been the issue, said Abaka-Edu

**Abaka-Edu:** The simple answer is that saiko is so destructive and unless immediate action is taken, the entire artisanal fishery sector will collapse.

**Adjei:** Just how destructive is saiko fishing?

**Abaka-Edu:** First of all, let me clarify one point — what is actually referred to as “saiko fishing” is incorrect. Saiko is not a fishing activity, rather the greedy targeting of small pelagic fishes by industrial trawlers. The law is clear on this: industrial trawlers are licensed to harvest only demersal or bottom-dwelling fish, whereas the small pelagic fishes, including sardinella and chub mackerel, are reserved for small-scale fishers. With saiko, the industrial trawlers deliberately use undersized mesh nets to target the pelagic fishes and freeze them into slabs. These are later transhipped to saiko canoe operatives and middlemen in the value chain.

**Adjei:** From what you are saying, saiko is supposed to be illegal.

**Abaka-Edu:** Absolutely. Saiko is the most destructive form of illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing in Ghana today. But our worry

is not about the illegality of saiko. We fear that if the current rate of saiko is not slowed down, the entire industry will collapse because there wouldn't be enough juvenile stocks to replenish the large quantities of the illegally caught pelagic fishes. In fact, our research shows that over 90 per cent of the saiko fish caught are juveniles.

**Adjei:** That is a sobering picture, but is it not true that members of your own organization are also involved in this illegal activity as you put it?

**Abaka-Edu:** I knew this question would come up. As an organization, we do not condone any form of illegal activity, including saiko.

**Adjei:** Are you saying that your members are not engaged in the saiko fish trade?

**Abaka-Edu:** I would not dispute that charge, but let's put things in perspective. Together with other stakeholders, we have carried out several studies on saiko and we can conclude definitely that there are no more than 1,500 saiko operatives. In contrast, there are over 140,000 small-scale fishers and close to 3 mn dependent traders in the small-scale

sector. The national constitution guarantees freedom of association and not every small-scale fisher is a member of the GNCFC. And as I stated earlier, we do not condone any illegality. It is up to the Fisheries Commission and other State institutions to enforce the fishery laws. Should any of our members be found liable, we would co-operate with the law enforcement agencies.

**Adjei:** I am happy you brought up the law enforcement agencies. You seem to be dissatisfied with their work.

**Abaka-Edu:** To be honest with you, we are not satisfied with their performance. It is true they have challenges with funds and logistics, but they can do more to sanitize the system.

**Adjei:** In what ways can they do more with little funds and logistics?

**Abaka-Edu:** In matters of prosecution, for instance. When there is enough evidence to bring offenders before the law, that should be done without delay. There are instances where fishers engaging in illegal activities were apprehended and handed over to the police, only to be released without prosecution. Similarly, the law enforcement agencies are fully aware of saiko but very little has been done to curb the menace.

**Adjei:** Are you satisfied with the laws on saiko?

**Abaka-Edu:** Yes, the Fisheries Act 2002 (Act 625) prohibits all forms of IUU fishing activities and, as I stated earlier, saiko tops the list of the most destructive form of IUU in Ghana. Enforcement of the law has always been the issue. Having said that, GNCFC and, by extension, the small-scale fishery sector would welcome a comprehensive policy to eliminate saiko once and for all time.

**Adjei:** Many NGOs (non-governmental organizations) and CSOs (civil society organizations) have added their voice to the call to end saiko. Have these yielded any positive results?

**Abaka-Edu:** Definitely. We must not forget that the campaign to end saiko and the general public awareness on saiko is the result of several years of research and engagements with CSOs, government agencies and small-scale fishers and fishworkers. Studies by the Environmental Justice

Foundation (EJF) and investigative journalists, for instance, provided enough data and video evidence that brought the destructive aspects of saiko to life. The onus now is on the Fisheries Commission, MoFAD (Ministry of Fisheries and Aquaculture Development) and other law enforcement agencies to bring a closure to the practice.

**Adjei:** You recently held a demonstration and presented a petition to government. Can you tell us a bit about it?

**Abaka-Edu:** Let me put on record that as an organization, we have always had a fruitful working relationship with the government. On 8 June 2020, together with other stakeholders, we presented a petition to the president, H. E. Nana Addo Danquah Akuffo Addo, to intervene and help end saiko. We stated in our petition that unless urgent measures are taken to address saiko, the livelihoods of some 2.7 mn Ghanaians dependent on the fishery value chain were at risk and inaction would increase poverty and malnutrition in

**... unless urgent measures are taken to address saiko, the livelihoods of some 2.7 mn Ghanaians dependent on the fishery value chain were at risk...**

at least 200 vulnerable coastal fishing communities. We also highlighted the fact that engagement with over 2,000 fishers across the four coastal regions shows a significant decline in the small pelagic fish stock popularly called the “people’s fish”, as it is the main source of protein for poor households.

**Adjei:** You mentioned that ending saiko is all about enforcement of the Fisheries Act (Act 625) and the enforcement agencies have not been able to enforce the applicable laws on IUU. Tell us, how differently do you expect the President to address your concerns?

**Abaka-Edu:** We are taking advantage of two key factors. First, the president is the co-chair of the SDG (Sustainable Development Goals) Advocates Group and I quote one of his



DOMINIC CHAVEZ / WORLD BANK



A fisher works on his boat in Accra, Ghana. GNCFC contends that while there are no more than 1,500 saiko operatives, over 140,000 fishers and nearly 3 million traders depend on the small-scale fisheries sector

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statements on poverty as follows: “This is a time of great hope for the world. If we work smartly together and stay on course, we can raise millions out of poverty and significantly expand basic social services for many more by the 2030 end date of the SDG.” Secondly, the president, through the 2020 budget statement, declared: “The Ministry (MoFAD) will intensify the implementation of the Fisheries Act, 2002 (Act 625) to ensure that domestic, regional, and international laws that prohibit IUU fishing are strictly enforced through the following: ... all domestic and international fleet that are involved in saiko fishing (i.e., transshipment at sea) shall be banned from fishing in Ghanaian waters.”

**Adjei:** In your opinion, what would it take to end saiko in Ghanaian fishing waters?

**Abaka-Edu:** Saiko is thriving because of weak enforcement of the laws on IUU fishing. The laws must be applied without fear or favour. The regulatory agencies, particularly the Fisheries Commission and related security agencies, including the marine police, must be adequately equipped

and expanded as must the use of appropriate surveillance technology and well-trained field personnel. The SSF Guidelines stress the need for consultations and dialogue among those in the SSF sector and other stakeholders, including regulatory agencies and NGOs, in addressing some of these issues. Such dialogues have been the missing link. 3

#### For more

##### Ghana National Canoe Fishermen Council (GNCFC)

<https://twitter.com/ghanacanoe>

##### Legal Analysis on Trans-shipment of Fish at Sea from Industrial Trawlers to Canoes in Ghana

<https://ejfoundation.org/reports/legal-analysis-on-the-trans-shipment-of-fish-at-sea-from-industrial-trawlers-to-canoes-in-ghana>

##### Rich Rewards of Doing it Right

[https://www.icsf.net/images/samudra/pdf/english/issue\\_84/4494\\_art\\_Sam\\_84\\_art13\\_Ghana\\_Peter\\_Linford\\_Adjei.pdf](https://www.icsf.net/images/samudra/pdf/english/issue_84/4494_art_Sam_84_art13_Ghana_Peter_Linford_Adjei.pdf)

# Rendering Visibility

The lived experiences of women fisherfolk in the Philippines during the COVID-19 pandemic reveal how invisible they remain in policies and programmes

**D**espite the significant size of the fishing industry in the Philippines and the fact that fish is a huge part of Filipino diets, fisherfolk remain among the poorest in the country. This is particularly so for small-scale fisherfolk and those concentrated in municipal waters. In a newly released survey by the Philippine Statistical Authority (PSA) measuring the incidence of poverty among 10 of the 14 basic sectors in 2018, fisherfolk were second only to farmers. (The Philippines Social Reform and Poverty Alleviation Act defines 'basic sectors' as disadvantaged or marginalized groups, including farmers, fisherfolk, women, children, persons with disabilities, self-employed and unpaid family workers, and individuals residing in rural and urban areas.) Poverty incidence among farmers is at 31.4 per cent, while for fisherfolk it is 26.2; these sectors also posted the highest poverty incidence in 2015, at 40.8 (farmers), and 36.9 (fisherfolk) per cent. Fisherfolk and coastal communities are faced with a number of social and economic challenges as a result of poverty and the unsustainable development of the fisheries sector.

## Women fisherfolk: Invisible, under-valued, under-represented

In a sector that is already considered poor, women fisherfolk are among the poorest—largely because of roles and contributions that are not recognized or are undervalued; the lack of access to modes of production and resources; and their multiple burdens, at home, in the community and also as small-scale fisherfolk.

As fishing has been largely a male occupation, the prevalent notion is that only men go fishing in their boats and women are not involved in fishing. In practice, however, women go out to sea

to fish and are involved in shellfish and fry gathering/gleaning, spear fishing in rivers, and reef fishing using scoop nets, traps and fish baskets. Women participate in activities before, during and after the fish capture. They are part of small-scale fisheries in municipal waters, and some are also employed in commercial fishing vessels, mostly in post-harvest processing. However, participation of women before and after fish capture has been given little importance, leading to the near invisibility of women as important contributors to this sector.

**Women participate in activities before, during and after the fish capture.**

The under-representation of women fishworkers in data and policy is attributed to this gendered division of labour predominant in fishing communities. Women's contributions are often seen as extensions of their care work, usually done in private, and consequently, undervalued. This leads to a vicious cycle where lack of data gives rise to gender-blind decision making, which, in turn, translates into inadequate policies and programmes. Starved of resources, women's work is undervalued, and therefore likely to be further discounted.

## Social protection

Women fisherfolk in the Philippines continue to be disenfranchised in terms of access to benefits, social protection and participation in policymaking. (These issues were raised in a training programme of gender focal points, sponsored by the Commission on

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Women fishworkers in Calintaan, Matnog municipality in Sorsogon province. COVID-19 poses several challenges to women fishworkers' livelihoods, due to supply chain disruptions and the closure of processing operations and markets

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Human Rights, in February 2020.) Many women are poor and resort to migration for better opportunities. They also face various forms of gender-based violence, including incest, statutory rape, trafficking and prostitution, and discrimination in access to resources and services on a daily basis.

This marginalization of Filipino women fisherfolk is rooted in various factors. These include the prioritization of commercial fishing and coastal reclamation projects over the protection of small-scale fisherfolk; the problematic implementation of the Fisheries Code; climate change and degradation of the environment; the absence of a gender lens in fisheries policies and programmes; and the persistent 'machismo' in the sector.

### **Women fisherfolk under the Magna Carta of Women**

In the Philippines, efforts have been undertaken to recognize and value the role of women fisherfolk. Under the Magna Carta of Women (RA 9710), fisherfolk are included in the list of marginalized sectors. The law defines fisherfolk as those:

“directly or indirectly engaged in taking, culturing, or processing fishery or aquatic resources. These include, but are not limited to, women engaged in fishing in municipal waters, coastal and marine areas, women workers in commercial fishing and aquaculture, vendors and processors of fish and coastal products, and subsistence producers such as shell-gatherers, managers, and producers of mangrove resources, and other related produce.”

The definition provided by the Magna Carta of Women (MCW) is important as it covers women's various roles in fishing, including pre- and post-harvest work. It sought to address the invisibility of women in the sector. The law further enumerated the rights of women fisherfolk, particularly in relation to equal access to productive resources (Section 20).

### **Marginalization**

However, despite the provisions of the MCW, many issues remain. Accounts of continuing marginalization persist; there are still accounts of limited access to resources as well as cases of gender-based violence. Much remains to be

done to fulfill the promise of the MCW, more so in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.

### **COVID-19 and women fisherfolk**

Like many of the marginalized sectors, women fisherfolk are among the worst hit by the economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. With a substantial number of fisherfolk already below the poverty line, suffering from reduced catch, and constrained by restrictive government policies and the absence of support, the economic havoc brought about by the pandemic has increased the vulnerability of the community, especially women.

Globally, it has been reported that small fishing boats, fish markets, and women workers are among those worst affected by the pandemic's economic impact on fisheries. As commercial fishing reportedly fell by 6.5 per cent in 2020, small boats were mostly restricted to port, with their markets uncertain. This has largely affected women who make up at least half of the labour force in fisheries and fish farms. Challenges included restricted market access, due to supply chain disruptions, and the closure of processing operations and markets, where many women are engaged.

In the Philippines, small-scale food producers like farmers and fisherfolk have been severely affected by the pandemic. In a webinar organized by Greenpeace Philippines and others in May 2020, fisherfolk described the difficulties they faced during the lockdown, including food insecurity, and loss of income and productivity brought about by limited mobility, closure of markets, prohibition on fishing, closure of ice plants and long checkpoint queues resulting in fish spoilage. In continuing to leave their home to fish, to find markets or areas to barter their catch, women fisherfolk run the risk not only of infection but also of arrest. One woman from Pangisda in Bataan reported how a fisherfolk member was arrested by the *Bantay Dagat* (marine and coastal patrol) for going out to fish during the 'enhanced community quarantine' (ECQ) and how her money, meant for food, was spent on bail.

These are but initial stories. With the pandemic control measures stretching into the year, there are many other stories from the ground on the impact on fisherfolk, especially women.

### **Gathering stories on the ground**

To gather more stories, the Commission on Human Rights of the Philippines, through its Gender Equality and Women's Human Rights Center and 16 regional offices, conducted sectoral monitoring of women fisherfolk. The Commission's regional offices undertook key informant interviews and/or focus group discussions aimed at highlighting issues faced by women, namely, the roles they play in the sector, their participation and access to resources, their experiences of gender-based violence, and the impact of the pandemic.

The initial results reveal that traditional gender roles in fishing communities persist. While there are exceptional cases where women go out to fish alone, husbands usually insist that women stay at home and

**Women continue to be relegated to reproductive or care work; their contributions to the sector are mainly focused on post-harvest activities...**

take care of the children, or they privilege men's capability as fisherfolk. Women continue to be relegated to reproductive or care work; their contributions to the sector are mainly focused on post-harvest activities, including sorting of catch, allocating for household consumption, fish processing, marketing and sale.

### **Domain of men**

On recognition of their work, women's responses reveal that despite recognition under the Magna Carta of Women, the term 'fisherfolk' remains associated with 'capture fishing' and the domain of men. In one region, for instance, 53 per cent of women interviewed by the Commission do not consider themselves as fisherfolk, and 83 per cent are not on the list of



COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS OF THE PHILIPPINES



A focus group discussion with women fisherfolk in Talisay, Cebu province. While there are women fisherfolk organizations, these are few and far between, compared to male dominated organizations

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the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) of the Department of Agriculture. While there are women fisherfolk organizations, these are few and far between, compared to male-dominated organizations. Women who were interviewed also revealed that some of them participate in meetings of these organizations, but mostly to represent their husbands, with very limited decision-making powers. Women are thus marginalized not only by government agencies, but also within fisherfolk organizations.

The monitoring also provided insight into the women's level of awareness of their rights under the Magna Carta of Women and other laws, and of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on them. Responses from the women reveal that many of them were not familiar with the provisions of the MCW. There were women who did not consider themselves as fisherfolk despite clearly falling within the definition under the MCW. Many also admitted to being unaware of government programmes targeting fisherfolk during the pandemic. This highlights persistent gaps in the

implementation of the MCW and the need to ramp up information campaigns and service delivery in fishing communities.

On the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, the responses of women highlight the adverse effects, such as food insecurity, loss of income, multiple burdens and heightened anxiety. Women shared how the lockdown resulted in reduced incomes and difficulties in accessing markets. One senior-citizen fish vendor from Talisay, Cebu, said, "I cannot easily sell my product. Most of our previous customers do not have money." This was echoed by women in another region, who complained that their income was affected by the strict community quarantine. They were unable to eat regularly.

### Welfare schemes

Women's registration as fisherfolk with the BFAR determines their access to available government relief and welfare schemes. Those who were not registered or were not members of any fisherfolk organizations said that they were unable to access government

support. In some instances, there was confusion about which programmes they could access and which were accessible only through their husbands, who were often registered.

While very few women shared accounts of gender-based violence during the pandemic, many described different forms of violence—including intimate partner violence, trafficking and rape—in their communities in the past. Some of these continued during the pandemic. These accounts reveal that the violence is not only rooted in gender inequality and male dominance, but also in poverty and food insecurity. One woman in Cebu said, “One time when my husband came home from fishing, he asked me for food. We did not have a good dinner because we had no money. I showed him the bowl of vegetable soup and he asked me to heat it. When it was done, he poured the boiling soup on my face. It was painful and I got burns.” In another instance, one respondent said that some women in her community had to resort to sex work to buy food. In another account, a husband was reported to have beaten his wife because he had no income to feed his children. These anecdotes from the women affirm the continuing threat of violence against women, before and during the pandemic.

### From policy to practice

The monitoring conducted by the Commission provides snapshots of experiences, instead of a comprehensive research overview. They come from the 100-130 women fisherfolk who agreed to be interviewed in the 16 regional offices of the Commission. They cannot speak for all women fisherfolk in the country, but the lived experiences provide us an insight into the often invisible situation of women in fishing communities. It is clear for us in the Commission that we need to do more to fulfill the promise of non-discrimination under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), and under the Magna Carta of Women. There is a need to move from policies—the *de jure* protection and entitlements under the law—to actual changes felt in the everyday

lives of women fisherfolk, their *de facto* enjoyment of rights.

Some of the key recommendations forwarded by women fisherfolk themselves include the following: Recognize and render visible women fisherfolk in all fishing communities. This means ensuring women’s meaningful participation in fisherfolk organizations, their recognition as fisherfolk distinct from their husbands and sons in government databases, and developing organizations dedicated to supporting women in the sector.

Support for women fisherfolk—in the form of financial and livelihood assistance, low-interest loans and gender-sensitive fishing equipment—was also recommended.

Women also require enhanced mechanisms for protection against violence, such as strengthening the capacity of women, their organizations and of the Barangay Violence Against Women (VAW) desks in fishing communities.

### Recognizing rights

Lastly, the COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the importance of women’s access to information on risk prevention, support services, medical services and to remedies in cases of violence. It is crucial to ensure availability and accessibility of life-saving information for marginalized communities, including women fisherfolk. If we are to address the long-term impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, we have to focus on the most marginalized and work towards recognizing their needs and the fulfillment of their rights.

#### For more



##### **Towards gender-equitable small-scale fisheries governance and development - A handbook**

<https://www.fao.org/documents/card/en/c/fee037d6-944f-4d65-89ba-b438c7d41834/>

##### **A Roadmap for Recovery**

[https://www.icsf.net/images/samudra/pdf/english/issue\\_85/4526\\_art\\_Sam\\_85\\_art21\\_Philippines\\_DinnaL.Umengan.pdf](https://www.icsf.net/images/samudra/pdf/english/issue_85/4526_art_Sam_85_art21_Philippines_DinnaL.Umengan.pdf)

##### **Women in Fisheries in Asia: 1978–2016**

[https://www.icsf.net/images/yemaya/pdf/english/issue\\_51/2216\\_art\\_yem51\\_e\\_art07a.pdf](https://www.icsf.net/images/yemaya/pdf/english/issue_51/2216_art_yem51_e_art07a.pdf)

# Eat More Fish

**For better nutrition outcomes, national fisheries and food policies in Kenya should include aquaculture in developing positive attitudes towards consumption of value-added fish products**

**F**ish has become an important component of food systems in the global agenda for nutrition and food security, with the fisheries and aquaculture sector providing essential protein to vulnerable populations across the globe. However, for this to continue, large-scale and small-scale fish producers, governments and other stakeholders must work together to create a significant impact in improving

of 10 surveyed women and young children were consuming fish. This implies that women, children and their family members are not meeting their recommended nutrient requirements, which places them at a high risk of malnutrition. One of the major contributing factors to this trend is the decline in the capture fisheries and struggling aquaculture sector, even as consumption demand surges.

The freshwater capture fisheries sector, which supplies 80 per cent of the fish produced in Kenya, is dominated by silver cyprinid (*Rastrineobola argentea*), Nile perch (*Lates niloticus*), Nile tilapia (*Oreochromis niloticus*) and African catfish (*Clarias gariepinus*). The marine sector is mainly exploited by foreign fleets, which ship out fish to foreign countries. Marine fish production by domestic fleets is mainly at an artisanal scale and does not contribute significantly to markets outside the coastal region.

The Kenyan aquaculture sector is growing fast, but only produces tilapia and catfish in restricted regions in the country. In Kenyan capture fisheries and aquaculture, the distribution of value-chain actors by gender shows that men dominate production chains, that is, fishing, pond operations, cage farming, boat assembling, hatchery operations and tourism activities, while women dominate post-harvest activities in the trading, processing, feed manufacturing and seaweed sector.

## National diet

Over the past four decades, fish has been a delicacy among riparian communities in the Lake Victoria region. However, today, fish is part of the national diet and consumed by a majority of Kenyan communities, thanks to government

**The Kenyan aquaculture sector is growing fast, but only produces tilapia and catfish in restricted regions in the country.**

livelihoods, diversifying diets and maximizing the contribution of fish to human nutrition.

In Kenya fish is a vital source of essential macro- and micro-nutrients that can play an important role in reducing the high prevalence of undernutrition. The total annual fish production in the country is estimated at 180,000 tonnes, against much higher annual demand. With the increasing national demand for quality fish protein and expanding regional markets, fish farmers and fishermen often prefer selling fish than consuming them. This has contributed to stagnating fish consumption per capita, estimated at a paltry 4.5 kg/person/year, compared to the global average of 20kg/person/year.

A recent study conducted by the authors and supported by the Kenya Climate Smart Aquaculture Project (KCSAP) in three counties in western Kenya reported that small-scale fish farmers do not have enough fish in their own diets, as only three out

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Fish farmers at a tilapia pond in Kenya. It is encouraging that fish farmers in western Kenya have positive attitudes towards fish consumption and are interested in incorporating value-added fish products into their daily diets

efforts to promote fish eating through numerous campaigns and fish-farming projects.

Nonetheless, fish eating is still not popular among pastoral communities, who depend largely on livestock as a staple source of protein. Besides, the climatic conditions in some parts of Kenya do not favour fish farming. Other reasons, such as socio-cultural restrictions, have also been cited as impediments to fish eating in some communities. Among the fishing communities, a notable barrier to consumption of fish by small-scale farmers is the unavailability of value-added fish products, knowledge of the existence of these products, skills in the preparation and cooking of fish, and other socioeconomic factors.

In many rural communities, fish consumption by frequency and portion sizes has greatly increased from the time farmers began culturing fish. Hence, nutrition-sensitive fish-food systems can markedly improve Kenyan household diets which are dominated by carbohydrate-rich staples. A game changer solution is to empower women and youth from low-income households

through nutrition education, social behavior change communication strategies, and participatory cooking trainings. This is expected to improve nutrition and health outcomes of women and young children as consumption of poor-quality diets and lack of access to diverse foods are the main drivers of malnutrition in Kenya. It is encouraging to note in our research that fish farmers in western Kenya have positive attitudes towards fish consumption and are interested in incorporating value-added fish products into their daily diets.

#### Little value addition

Previous studies have shown that over half of the Kenyan households (58 per cent) consume fish more than once a week because they can readily access and acquire fish through market purchases. However, 40 per cent of households consume fish in its natural form with little value-addition to improve acceptability and consumption. Nile tilapia is the most frequently consumed fish in Kenya. The supply of Nile Perch has decreased significantly from Lake Victoria due to

K. OBIERO



Fishers harvest broodstock for culture. Nutrition-sensitive fish-food systems can markedly improve Kenyan household diets, which are dominated by carbohydrate-rich staples

ecological challenges. However, the little quantities are highly priced and mainly processed for the export market. Consequently, the Silver Cyprinid, locally known as *dagaa*, is increasingly becoming an important alternative source of nutrition for low-income consumers, who make up the majority of the population. Indeed, *dagaa* has become the smallest fish with the biggest socioeconomic impact to the riparian communities and beyond.

This small fish has a huge potential to improve the nutritional quality of complementary foods and to assist in mitigating the nutritional deficiencies of zinc, iron and calcium. A strong emphasis should be placed on the nutrition education of mothers or care givers of young children to ensure the timely incorporation of animal foods into diets, so as to avoid health problems such as pain, diarrhea, intolerance, allergy, malabsorption, and constipation reported in surveys.

African catfish is mainly produced in aquaculture but is not as widely consumed due to socio-cultural reasons. In rural areas, fresh fish is preferred due to the lack of knowledge on fish value-addition techniques. In major towns and cities, value-added fish products, such as fish samosas, fish fingers, fish balls and fish fillets, are available. Frozen tilapia from China is the major imported species.

With increasing recognition of the benefits of fish as a vital source of essential macro- and micro-nutrients, government policies and nutrition education programmes, such as the 'Eat More Fish' campaign, are now devoted to teaching non-fish-eating tribes the benefits of eating fish. This will be supported by the implementation of the National Guidelines for Healthy Diets and Physical Activity.

Given the positive projections for the contribution of fish to animal protein intake in Kenya, food-security and nutritional programmes should recognize and build on the potential of fish to improve dietary quality, micronutrient intake, nutrient status, and overall health. More robust models are needed to better understand fish demand and supply projections beyond 2030 since Kenya's population is expected to double by 2050.

The enabling policy environment—including the Aquaculture Business Development Programme led by the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and the Kenya Climate Smart Aquaculture Project—has attracted substantial public funding for aquaculture development in the country. In order to ensure better nutrition outcomes, national fisheries and food policies should include aquaculture, in the context of coherent linkages between production, supply, and consumer demand and access. 3

#### For more

##### Assessment of the integration of fisheries and aquaculture in policy development. Framework and application in Africa

<https://www.fao.org/policy-support/tools-and-publications/resources-details/en/c/1306989/>

##### Maximizing nutrition in the fisheries and aquaculture sector in Kenya

<https://www.fao.org/documents/card/en/c/CB5604EN/>

##### Fish as food

[https://www.icsf.net/images/samudra/pdf/english/issue\\_83/4430\\_art\\_Sam\\_83\\_art09\\_Analysis\\_Molly.pdf](https://www.icsf.net/images/samudra/pdf/english/issue_83/4430_art_Sam_83_art09_Analysis_Molly.pdf)

##### The Voluntary Guidelines to Support the Progressive Realization of the Right to Adequate Food in the Context of National Food Security

<http://www.fao.org/3/a-y7937e.pdf>



# Shifting Sands

The COVID-19 pandemic poses an additional challenge for the social-ecological resilience of the fisheries of Pulicat, India's second largest lagoon

**P**ulicat, India's second largest lagoon, which straddles the states of Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu on the Coromandel Coast of south India, covers a maximum area of 750 sq km and has an average depth of 1 m. The depth at the mouth (opening into the Bay of Bengal) is almost 10 m. When full, the lagoon spans up to 60 km in length and 18 km in width. About one-third of the lagoon lies in the Thiruvallur district of Tamil Nadu and the rest in the Nellore district of Andhra Pradesh.

The lagoon harbours three islands—Venadu and Irukkam, almost in the middle of the lagoon, and Sriharikota acting as the barrier island between the Bay of Bengal and Pulicat. In addition to other smaller streams, the lagoon derives its freshwater source from three major rivers: the Arani, the Swarnamukhi and the Kalangi. Seawater enters the lagoon through the northern end near Sriharikota Island (Tupilipalem) and flows back into the Bay of Bengal through the southern end (Pulicat). This interaction of fresh- and sea-water in the lagoon acts as a breeding ground for many species of fish and prawn, including commercially important white prawn (*Penaeus indicus*) and tiger prawn (*Penaeus monodon*), which supports the lives and livelihoods of fishing communities residing in and around the villages.

The outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic has had an unprecedented adverse effect on public health, as well as on livelihoods, around the world, leading to precautionary and preventive measures such as nationwide lockdowns, social distancing and temporary closures of industries. The resultant economic downturn and job losses as a result of these measures have only worsened the situation. The pandemic control measures have also

threatened—or have the potential to threaten—the social-ecological resilience of the fishing communities situated within the Pulicat Lagoon.

Based on the experiences of one fishing village located on an island in Pulicat, we explore how (a) resource-governance institutions function on the island; (b) social-ecological resilience was impacted during the first wave of the pandemic; and (c) a larger set of environmental, social, and political factors that impact the day-to-day life of the islanders. Of the three islands, our study focused on the people of Irukkam, particularly fishing communities, and their relationship with the lagoon. This

**This interaction of fresh- and sea-water in the lagoon acts as a breeding ground for many species of fish and prawn.**

walnut-shaped island, located south of Venadu, spans over 2,636 ha and has a total population of 1,820 individuals and 513 households.

## Focus-group discussions

With the consent of the fishing community, we conducted the study in Irukkam from January to March 2020, employing detailed, semi-structured interviews with 25 households in the village. Two focus-group discussions were also conducted, including one with women who commute to the mainland to work in factories for processing fish, and manufacturing shoes and pharmaceuticals. During the COVID-19 pandemic, four telephonic interviews were conducted with participants in July and August 2020, to understand the impacts of the lockdown and other restrictions on their daily life.

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The only means of transportation between Irukkam and the mainland is by boat. Anyone who wishes to leave the village and relocate to the mainland has to pay the Jamaat, a traditional, self-organized village committee, a sum of INR40,000 (USD532)

The island of Irukkam has two settlements, Irukkam and Kuppam, which are geographically separated by grasslands and sand dunes, and are situated in the north and south of the island, respectively. Human settlements on Irukkam are segregated on the basis of caste. The people of Irukkam, who constitute the non-fishing, agriculture community, are considered higher in the caste hierarchy, whereas the people of Kuppam, belonging to the fishing community (Pattinavar) are considered lower in the hierarchy.

There is a third category of 100-150 households of Irula people (a Scheduled Tribe) who work as labour on the agricultural lands owned by the upper castes in Irukkam. Most inhabitants are Hindu, though there are also a few Christian households. Although the island falls within Andhra Pradesh, most inhabitants speak Tamil with the exception of a few bilingual Tamil-Telugu speakers.

The only means of transportation between Irukkam and the mainland is by boat. Boat services operate twice a day, with separate jetties and boat operators for the two dominant castes

of Irukkam and Kuppam. Fishers, students and workers commute daily to the mainland, to industrial centres such as Tada, Sri City, Sullurpeta and Chennai, which are also important fish-marketing and processing hubs.

The people of Kuppam have institutions of their own to govern the social, economic and environmental interactions in their lives. One such institution is the Jamaat, a traditional, self-organized village committee whose members (usually males) represent their respective households. It has the power to take decisions in all socioeconomic, environmental and political affairs in Kuppam, and is led by the village head (elected by the members of the Jamaat).

### **Economic activity**

All economic activity has to go through the committee, be it the management of the lagoon fisheries, the allocation of boat contracts or the sale of goods from the mainland. The committee also controls social organization, imposing rules on marriage, the resolution of conflicts and the celebration of festivals. Transgressions are usually punished

through a cash penalty: For instance, inter-caste marriages are strictly forbidden and are fined INR20,000 (USD266). Anyone who wishes to leave the village and relocate to the mainland has to pay the committee a sum of INR40,000 (USD532). These sums are significant, relative to the average income in the area, and serve as strong disincentives against certain forms of behaviour.

Most households depend on the lagoon for their livelihood; many own their own fishing craft, usually purchased with the help of a loan. The Jamaat allocates fishing grounds—most of which are located near Sriharikota to the north—on a rotational basis to individual households. Fishers depart for their fishing grounds at night, setting their stake nets near the shores of Sriharikota. They collect their catch in the morning. The major portion of the Kuppam fishers' income comes from prawn, most of which is sold for INR300-400 (USD4-5) per kg to processing factories in Sullurpeta, Sri City and Arambakkam.

Most women are engaged in repairing nets and selling fish, in addition to household work. In Kuppam, traditional gender roles usually have women engaged in fisheries pre- and post-harvest activities and in household work, while the men go fishing. However, with the perceived reduction in the productivity of the lagoon in the past two years, women have begun working in other sectors on the mainland. Most men, on the other hand, continue with their precarious fishing livelihood.

The money that the Jamaat collects from the leasing of economic activities and other sources is used to conduct festivals, construct village-owned infrastructure and for the welfare of the community. The Jamaat is also the guardian of the coastal and marine common-property resources, and has traditionally played a greater role in fisheries management than the State. The committee regulates the allocation of fishing grounds and decides on days when fishing is banned (locally called '*thalavu*'). The practice of *thalavu* is a community-evolved mechanism for sustainably managing fish stocks in

the lagoon during the breeding season (mid-April to mid-June). Additionally, the Jamaat declares one day every month when fishing is banned. All members of the fishing community are answerable to the Jamaat and there were no instances of people operating outside its influence. Therefore, any changes in the practice of *thalavu* can affect the resilience of the ecosystem as a whole.

Social resilience in this context is seen as the ability of groups or communities to cope with external stresses and disturbances as a result of social, political and environmental change. In the case of fisheries, social and ecological resilience are linked because the lives and livelihoods in the community directly depend on common-property resources managed by traditional institutions such as the Jamaat. Disturbances or changes could threaten the resilience of the whole social-ecological system. As the example of Irukkam shows, COVID-19 is one such major disturbance that can have ramifications at the level of both the individual and the system in small-scale fisheries.

**Most households depend on the lagoon for their livelihood; many own their own fishing craft, usually purchased with the help of a loan.**

The catch from Irukkam is either sold locally, or sold directly to wholesalers on contract. Fishermen from the island usually sell most of their catch at the nearest market town of Arambakkam (8 km away) or to factories located along the national highway nearby. However, almost throughout the first wave of the pandemic (March-May 2020), Arambakkam was declared a 'Red Zone,' in which very few activities were permitted. No vehicular movement of any kind was allowed.

### **Devastating effect**

This total lockdown during the first wave of the pandemic had a devastating effect on Irukkam's fishery. The men were unable to return to their fishing grounds even after

the fishing ban period. Despite the community's demands to the Jamaat, the thalavu remained in force. The Jamaat themselves were powerless due to pressure from the police and administration, and for all practical purposes, the thalavu had been extended due to the pandemic control measures.

Individual households were thus presented with a dilemma—whether to disobey the thalavu or to comply with the community rules, thereby increasing their economic hardships. The Jamaat generates its revenue by levying duties and fines on households, whose incomes are mostly from the fisheries. Naturally, the resources flowing to the Jamaat have greatly reduced or stagnated. In these circumstances, there are chances that this pandemic could test the strengths of the traditional thalavu system and the Jamaat, which, in turn, can considerably affect the management of the lagoon fisheries. The resilience of the community, its institutions and the ecosystem are thus inextricably linked.

While the COVID-19 pandemic poses several challenges to the community and to the lagoon, there are also other factors that destabilise their resilience. These factors have played out over larger temporal and spatial scales than the pandemic. As discussed earlier, three rivers drain into Pulicat: Arani, Swarnamukhi and Kalangi. During the monsoon, Arani and Kalangi bring in sewage, agricultural chemicals and industrial effluents into the lagoon. In recent times, the flow and balance of freshwater in the lagoon has been impeded by siltation. The average depth has reduced over time and its mouth is almost entirely closed by a sand bar. This has affected both the productivity of the fisheries and the ability of fishing vessels to enter the sea. (Several fishers from Pulicat also fish in the sea.) Proposed solutions by scientific institutions, such as building training walls on either side of the bar mouth, could themselves have long-term ecological consequences and have been kept in abeyance for the time being. In addition to these threats, the lagoon is also impacted by industrial activity in and around nearby Chennai,

such as a petrochemical factory, a thermal power plant and a port project. Together, these developments have severely polluted local rivers, cleared thousands of acres of land and encroached on coastal commons.

The impacts of these interconnected factors make it imperative to be aware of the complex historical, social and environmental factors that underpin the relationship of the community and the lagoon. The future of the Jamaat in Irukkam rests on governing the fish and prawn fishery in Pulicat. Eventually, the sustainability of the livelihoods from the fishery, the effective enforcement of the thalavu system and the maintenance of equitable trade with the mainland all rest on the ecology of the lagoon.

### Vital questions

With the productivity of the fishery under threat due to siltation and the pollution in the region, the Jamaat is stuck between a rock and an even harder place. These local and regional stressors have coalesced with the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, such as market disruption, reduced access to fishing grounds and the out-migration of people from Irukkam, thus raising vital questions about the importance of maintaining social-ecological resilience. 3

### For more

**Study of territorial use rights in small-scale fisheries: Traditional systems of fisheries management in Pulicat lake, Tamil Nadu, India.**

<https://indianfisheries.icsf.net/images/Indian%20Fisheries%20Site/Resources%20others/Study%20of%20territorial%20use%20rights%20in%20small-scale%20fisheries.pdf>

**The Chilika Lagoon Social-Ecological System: An Historical Analysis**

<https://www.ecologyandsociety.org/vol19/iss1/art1/>

**Reaffirming Rights**

[https://www.icsf.net/images/samudra/pdf/english/issue\\_75/4246\\_art\\_Sam75\\_e\\_art07.pdf](https://www.icsf.net/images/samudra/pdf/english/issue_75/4246_art_Sam75_e_art07.pdf)



# Hotter, Wetter, Saltier

The unique geography of Bangladesh makes it extremely vulnerable to climate change and warrants appropriate tools and strategies to combat and mitigate negative impacts

**B**angladesh has been one of the countries most affected by climate change in the last 15 years. It is the seventh most vulnerable country on the Climate Risk Index 2020, according to a recent Germanwatch report.

Bangladesh is geographically unique and is home to one of the world's largest deltas formed by the Ganges-Brahmaputra-Meghna (GBM) river system. The GBM basin and the coast of the Bay of Bengal is characterized as a semi-enclosed tropical basin. Most of Bangladesh is less than 10 m above sea level. This makes the country extremely vulnerable to climate change, especially around the coastal areas, which are susceptible to cyclones, floods and other extreme weather events. This vulnerability is not only due to biophysical and geographical factors, but also due to the socioeconomic standing of Bangladesh in terms of its dependency on agriculture and fisheries, and its high population density. Poverty further exacerbates the situation.

An analysis in 2009 identified Bangladesh as one of top four Asian countries which is climate-vulnerable (besides Cambodia, Pakistan and Yemen), especially due to the importance of fisheries to the nation's economy and diet, and because Bangladesh has limited capacity to face the potential impacts of climate change. As of 2018, the total fish production of Bangladesh was 4.3 mn tonnes. The sector contributed to 3.57 per cent of the country's gross domestic product (GDP) and accounts for 60 per cent of the total animal protein intake of the country.

Bangladesh's vulnerability to the effects of climate change mainly comes from the country's dependence on agriculture. The rise in sea level is leading to the intrusion of saltwater

into the land. This increases soil salinity and creates poor conditions for crop cultivation, apart from decreasing the availability of natural freshwater for consumption and production. Climate-change effects such as floods, riverbank erosion, cyclones and storm surges, continue to cause losses of life, livelihoods and essential infrastructure; if this trend continues, fishers in Bangladesh may have to halt their practices. With sea-level rise and increased salinity of freshwater bodies, aquaculture, fish species distribution and biodiversity in the coastal areas

**... vulnerability is not only due to biophysical and geographical factors, but also due to the socioeconomic standing of Bangladesh...**

continue to be under threat. Saltwater intrusion has caused many fish farmers to end their usual practices, pushing them to adapt to the changes. Many are now using saline-tolerant species such as tilapia (*Oreochromis niloticus* and other genetically improved strains) and *parsa*. The case of hilsa (*Tenualosa ilisha*), which accounts for 13-14 per cent of the total fish production of Bangladesh, provides a good insight into the challenges faced by the country's fisheries.

## Threefold increase

Hilsa production from inland waters has declined by about 20 per cent over the last 20 years, whereas the marine catch increased threefold. The major hilsa catch has gradually shifted from inland to marine waters, revealing that the availability of the prized fish is gradually declining in the Padma and Meghna river catchment areas.

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Effects of climate change	Impact of climate change on aquaculture and fisheries
Flood and river bank erosion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High floods affect aquaculture—floods inundate and damage ponds, and release the fish, causing loss to fish farmers. Floods pollute pond waters and cause disease in fish. Siltation also occurs at the pond bottom due to silt being carried out by flood waters</li> <li>• River bed siltation by river bank erosion affects fish migration, breeding, production and the livelihoods of fishermen and women. Inland capture fisheries benefit from increased water</li> </ul>
Cyclone and storm surge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Loss of coastal fisher's lives and assets (homes, nets and boats)</li> <li>• Damage to fish markets and disruptions in the value chain</li> <li>• Damage to aquaculture infrastructure (embankments, sluice gates), hatcheries and nurseries, and loss of shrimp and fish</li> <li>• Loss of coastal aquaculture production and damage to aquaculture infrastructure, affecting farmers' incomes and livelihoods</li> <li>• Reduced employment opportunities and increased poverty</li> </ul>
Sea level rise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Salinity intrusion and increase of saline water area facilitates brackish water aquaculture</li> <li>• Increase of saline water area by inundation of low-lying coastal area will increase brackish water fish/shrimp production</li> <li>• Change in oceanographic parameters may affect marine fish stock, fish migration and biodiversity</li> </ul>
Salinity intrusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Decrease in inland open water area, affecting freshwater fish production and livelihoods</li> <li>• Positive impact on coastal shrimp culture</li> <li>• Changes in aquaculture and fishing technology</li> </ul>
Erratic rainfall	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Insufficient/irregular rainfall adversely affects the natural spawning of fish, and ultimately the production of fish and the livelihoods of fishers and fishworkers</li> </ul>
Temperature rise and variation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Affects breeding performance of fish and fish production in natural water bodies and fish/shrimp hatcheries</li> <li>• Changes in health of coral reefs and of aquatic biodiversity</li> </ul>

For the GBM basin in winter, an expected reduction in the area covered by water bodies may cause favorable fish habitats to dry out, especially in the open-water bodies situated in the basin. This increases the fish death rate, and challenges the survival of open-water fishes due to the loss of their natural habitats. The anticipated rise in rainfall due to climate change will also result in increased river runoff, which is expected to extend the breeding ground for freshwater fish with higher nutrient availability. On the contrary, increased water runoff may cause floods and destroy aquaculture infrastructure. In

the table, these climate-change effects and their impacts on aquaculture and fisheries are summarized, based on Bangladesh's Third National Communication to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

### Recommendations

To address the challenges posed by climate change to coastal and riparian fishing communities in Bangladesh, we have a number of recommendations, based on the key findings of our review of literature. First, more research is needed to accurately anticipate the



A fisher with his nets in Moheshkhali, Cox's Bazar. Hilsa, which accounts for 13-14 per cent of the total fish production of Bangladesh, has declined by about 20 per cent from inland waters, whereas the marine catch has increased threefold

impacts of climate change on fish populations, and to identify salinity-tolerant species in coastal areas, and freshwater species in inland areas. This knowledge should be disseminated through channels appropriate for coastal fishing and fish-farming communities. Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and civil society organizations (CSOs) can collect and disseminate a range of information on community mobilization, training, extension and credit disbursement so that the coastal community can adapt according to their needs.

Plans for long-term research on the impacts of climate change on marine and inland fishery resources in the Asia-Pacific region should be made a priority as the lack of continuous and updated data prevents effective policy and action. Geo-spatial mapping and planning should be improved by monitoring the formation of new shoreline areas and new mangrove areas. Additionally, early detection

methods for shifts in salinity should be identified and zones delineated to make appropriate adjustments to aquaculture practices.

Finally, the government can mobilize greater financial support and develop suitable projects for the sector. It should create a beneficial environment for climate-friendly investments (through taxing polluting industries and incentivizing 'green' production). It should enhance the business environment to attract more foreign investments to implement mitigation and adaptation processes that can benefit coastal areas and communities in Bangladesh.

### Conclusion

Regardless of its low contribution to the global greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, Bangladesh is extremely vulnerable to the adverse impacts of climate change. This vulnerability is amplified as the country's economy is dependent on the fisheries and aquaculture sector (12 per



UN WOMEN / MOHAMMAD RAKIBUL HASAN



Floods in Jamalpur, along the Brahmaputra in Bangladesh. An analysis in 2009 identified Bangladesh as one of top four Asian countries vulnerable to climate change (besides Cambodia, Pakistan and Yemen)

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cent of Bangladesh's population relies on the sector for their livelihoods), and in terms of foreign exchange earnings from exports. Climate change could cause food insecurity and elevate poverty. If adaptive measures are taken, it could create more opportunities for improved fish-production practices and greater economic development.

In this respect, the government of Bangladesh needs to prioritize the challenges posed by climate change and coastal development. This can be achieved through researching and developing tools and strategies to combat and mitigate negative impacts. A co-ordinated long-term research study should be conducted on the impact of climate change on marine resources in the Asia-Pacific region. Assistance from the international community -- both technical and financial -- could result in better planning and implementation of sound policy measures. If effective implementation of such policies can be ensured, Bangladesh can be proactive in combating climate change and

ensuring the sustainability of its aquatic ecosystems and the development of its fishing communities.

#### For more

##### **Climate Change and Fisheries: Perspectives from Small-scale Fishing Communities in India on Measures to Protect Life and Livelihood**

[http://www.icsf.net/images/monographs/pdf/english/issue\\_121/121\\_Climate\\_Change\\_17May12\\_3\\_53PM.pdf](http://www.icsf.net/images/monographs/pdf/english/issue_121/121_Climate_Change_17May12_3_53PM.pdf)

##### **Impacts of climate change on fisheries and aquaculture: Synthesis of current knowledge, adaptation and mitigation options**

<https://www.fao.org/3/I9705EN/i9705en.pdf>

##### **A Large Ocean State Seeks Change**

[https://www.icsf.net/images/samudra/pdf/english/issue\\_84/4484\\_art\\_Sam\\_84\\_art03\\_Kiribati\\_%20Aurlie\\_Delisle.pdf](https://www.icsf.net/images/samudra/pdf/english/issue_84/4484_art_Sam_84_art03_Kiribati_%20Aurlie_Delisle.pdf)

# Seeds that Can't Be Buried

**A counter-mobilization event in July 2021 united social movements, indigenous peoples and civil society organizations opposed to the UN Food Systems Summit**

**F**rom 2019 until 2020, according to the State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2021 report, the number of those suffering from hunger increased by 161 mn to total 811 mn people globally. While hunger has been on the rise since 2014, the COVID-19 pandemic is exacerbating pre-existing inequalities, pushing millions of people to the brink of survival and demonstrating the ongoing crisis of public systems.

Moreover, the multidimensional crisis that populations around the world are facing has exposed the longstanding tension between two alternative views of food and food systems. On the one hand, there is the increasing industrialization of agriculture and food production and distribution, which goes hand in hand with increasing corporate capture of our food systems.

This dominant model threatens the survival of all species, including our own, through existential threats, including the climate crisis, deforestation, loss of biodiversity, land degradation and water pollution, and countless human-rights violations. On the other hand, community-based, localized and diverse food systems have shown their resilience in the face of climate-crisis-induced extreme weather events, as well as during the COVID-19 pandemic.

These food systems are clearly the way forward for regaining people's control over the food they produce and consume.

It is in this context that the United Nations held the Food Systems Summit (UNFSS) on 23 September 2021. Organized alongside the UN General Assembly in New York, the Summit's goal was to maximize the benefits of a food-systems approach across the

entire 2030 agenda, to mitigate global hunger and climate change. However, the UNFSS does not intend to address the food crisis caused by COVID-19, nor the structural causes of unsustainable, unhealthy and unjust food systems. It does not seek to redress the underlying power imbalances in food production, distribution and consumption.

**... community-based, localized and diverse food systems have shown their resilience in the face of climate-crisis-induced extreme weather events...**

Since the Summit's announcement in December 2019, there has been a backlash from over 550 civil society organizations (CSOs) due to the close ties of the Summit's organizers with corporate actors, especially through the partnership of the UN with the World Economic Forum (WEF) and the appointment of the president of the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA) as its Special Envoy. This protest culminated in a mostly virtual counter-mobilization from 25 to 28 July 2021, when some 9,000 people gathered to oppose the UNFSS Pre-Summit.

## Corporate agenda

During the counter-mobilization, social movements, Indigenous Peoples and CSOs, through the People's Autonomous Response to the UNFSS—a platform of 330 organizations—denounced the corporate food-systems agenda promoted by the UNFSS, and defended the work accomplished over the past 70 years to build a multilateral, democratic and civic space for human

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Civil society in Germany protest against the UN Food Systems Summit. Policy discussions and decisions should be made in the Committee on World Food Security (CFS), which has established mechanisms for inclusivity and accountability

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rights within the UN. The alternative forum drew together a wide variety of attendees and was able to catalyze and amplify a counter-narrative to the official proceedings, while also showcasing its vision for genuine transformation of unsustainable food systems.

The “people’s counter-mobilization to transform corporate food systems” provided a space for dialogue about the threats posed by increasingly corporate-controlled and globalized food systems, and the already existing viable solutions to overcome them. An opening declaration summarizing the demands of the People’s Autonomous Response was officially released to contest the lopsided multi-stakeholder approach followed by the UNFSS. This approach is concerning in that it puts on equal footing governments, corporations, other private sector actors, philanthropies, scientists, CSOs and international non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Moreover, the declaration emphasizes, the Summit organizers aim to create an illusion of inclusiveness, while remaining unclear about who is in control of taking

decisions and by what procedures decisions are made, creating serious problems of accountability, legitimacy, and democratic decision making in the UN. It urges policy discussions and decisions to be made in the UN Committee on World Food Security (CFS), the only multilateral space with established mechanisms for inclusivity and accountability.

The counter-mobilization kicked off with an eight-hour-long global virtual rally. This event saw a large number of participants and featured messages, declarations, artistic performances and live mobilizations by hundreds of individuals and organizations from all continents, representing smallholder farmers, pastoralists, fisherfolk, Indigenous Peoples, agricultural and food workers, landless peoples, women, youth, consumers, the urban food insecure, NGOs and academics.

### **False solutions**

The second day of the global event included a series of round-table discussions aiming to unmask the false solutions proposed in the Summit and its attempts to open the doors for the



corporate capture of food governance and science. In particular, the Summit's so-called "game-changing solutions" were identified as not resulting from an inclusive and transparent deliberation process in the hands of UN Member States. Rather, the Summit exemplified the risks of multi-stakeholderism: The lack of transparency in the process and the disregard for existing power imbalances were highlighted as problematic aspects of the Summit.

Against these illegitimate mechanisms, the counter-mobilization continued building momentum with 15 virtual dialogues on its third day, on topics ranging from reclaiming Africa's seed sovereignty, feminist economies, building justice-based alternatives through agroecology, human rights and food sovereignty, and how democratization of food systems can prevent corporate control. The Summit focused on 'solutions' that are mainly technological, market-based and capital-intensive such as digitalization and high-input agriculture, exacerbating dependency on global value chains and transnational corporations and further promoting 'farming without farmers'. The counter-mobilization, on the other hand, celebrated people's visions for reclaiming power and radically transforming the industrial food systems.

The counter-mobilization ended with statements from indigenous leaders and representatives of social movements, as well as a Zapotec 'mystica' ceremony. "They wanted to bury us so that we would disappear, but they didn't know we were seeds," said Saúl Vicente of the International Indian Treaty Council (IITC) in his closing message of hope. This and other interventions during the ceremony highlighted that opposition to the Summit is not the whim of a couple of organizations, but a popular sentiment of proportions that cannot be ignored.

It is still unclear what the official outcome of the Summit will be, and by which process it will be achieved. No intergovernmental negotiation process seems to be foreseen in the final outcome document, seriously casting doubt over the Summit's capacity to

CIVIL SOCIETY AND INDIGENOUS PEOPLES' MECHANISM (CSM)



Demonstration in Rome, Italy, against the UN Food Systems Summit. The mobilization highlighted both, the threats from and solutions to corporate-controlled food systems

provide results that can be sufficiently legitimate as to be infused within the existing global food-governance mechanisms. It remains to be seen what implications the Summit and its follow-up process will have on international food governance and whether it will undermine existing legitimate intergovernmental institutions.

### Binding rules

The People's Autonomous Response will assess the outcomes of the UNFSS and monitor the process as it unfolds. However, it is already unequivocally clear that the Summit has not addressed fundamental issues, like binding rules to force agribusiness corporations to respect human rights and protect the environment, end pesticide use, and end the monopoly over the global seed market. These are just some of the issues that civil society and food producers' organizations have demanded be addressed with urgency.

### For more



#### Secretary-General's Chair Summary and Statement of Action on the UN Food Systems Summit

<https://www.un.org/en/food-systems-summit/news/making-food-systems-work-people-planet-and-prosperity>

#### CFS Voluntary Guidelines on Food Systems and Nutrition

<https://www.fao.org/cfs/vgfsn/en/>

#### Declaration of the Autonomous People's Response to the UN Food Systems Summit

<https://www.csm4cfs.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/Declaration-EN-2.pdf>

#### Interim report of the Special Rapporteur on the right to food, Michael Fakhri

<https://undocs.org/A/76/237>

# Setting the Table

**A 'counter mobilization' to transform corporate food systems included a Global Virtual Rally that highlighted the critical role fisheries play in food security and nutrition**

**F**rom 25 to 28 July 2021, civil society organizations (CSOs) from around the world participated in the Peoples' Counter Mobilization to Transform Corporate Food Systems. The Mobilization included an eight-hour Global Virtual Rally, with contributions from 100 organizations, three roundtable discussions, and 15 independent dialogues.

The Mobilization was organized in response to the United Nations Food Systems Summit (UNFSS), which took place on 23 September 2021, and its three-day July Pre-Summit. CSOs, including the Civil Society and Indigenous Peoples' Mechanism

nutrition; the many challenges fishing communities face in securing their rights to gender, livelihoods, and access to fisheries resources and territories; and solutions for these challenges.

Countrywise responses follow:

## **Costa Rica: The importance of small-scale fisheries for food security and cultural diversity**

Small-scale artisanal fisheries provide food security and employment for coastal communities throughout Costa Rica. These fisheries are also important for the cultural identity, vitality, inter-generational transfer of traditional knowledge about fisheries and marine resources, and collective action and well-being. This unique, integrated way of life that provides subsistence for small-scale fishermen and women must be protected.

Small-scale fishing communities face many challenges caused by climate change and a 'Blue Economy' paradigm that—rather than promoting a fair and equitable distribution of benefits—generates inequitable development on the coasts and in marine areas of the country. Despite these challenges, protecting the cultural identity and productive diversity in marine territories, ensuring secure tenure rights over land and marine fishery resources, and promoting decent work for fisherwomen, including those who collect mollusks and contribute to diverse fisheries value chains, are all fundamental elements to maintaining resilient small-scale fishing communities.

## **Local governance**

Costa Rica's network of marine responsible fishing areas and 'marine territories of life' are good examples of local governance. It also ensures the participation of fishers and mollusk

**This unique, integrated way of life that provides subsistence for small-scale fishermen and women must be protected.**

(CSM) and the International Planning Committee for Food Sovereignty (IPC), have been raising concerns about the Summit since it was announced in 2019, highlighting its lack of attention to addressing deep structural inequalities in food systems globally, and the failure of the Summit organizers to involve CSOs in its development. As three Special Rapporteurs on the Right to Food pointed out, CSOs were only invited to a table that had already been set.

The International Collective in Support of Fishworkers (ICSF), in collaboration with small-scale fishing communities around the world, participated in the Mobilization, and made contributions to the Global Virtual Rally. These contributions highlighted the critical role fisheries play in global food security and

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Women fishworkers in Thailand are especially vulnerable as small-scale coastal aquaculture, traditionally practised by fishing communities as an additional source of food and income, comes under threat from industrial aquaculture

collectors and the integration of their traditional knowledge in management. In the face of exclusionary conservation initiatives, the fishers are fighting for the formalization of their productive activities, to ensure that their work is not criminalized. These territories are fundamental, not only for the continued existence of the artisanal sector on both of the country's coasts (the Pacific Ocean and the Caribbean Sea), but also for the food security of thousands of Costa Ricans living in coastal areas.

### **Thailand: Strengthening evidence-based advocacy in small-scale fisheries and coastal aquaculture**

Marine ecosystems are a source of livelihoods, food security and nutrition for small-scale fishing communities across Thailand. These communities are being negatively impacted by the expansion of coastal 'development' projects, such as seaports, large-scale aquaculture, industrial zones, and offshore energy and tourism projects.

Small-scale coastal aquaculture, which has traditionally been practised by many small-scale fishers as an additional source of food and income, is being threatened by investment in industrial aquaculture. The government is leasing out commonly shared coastal areas to private entities, leading to food insecurity, insecure livelihoods, and loss of income for small-scale fishers.

Fisherwomen are especially vulnerable to these impacts, even as their work in mending nets, collecting mollusks, diving for fish and processing of catch has remained largely invisible. In the male-dominated fishing industry, women have been denied access to resources, have faced forced migration and have been excluded from participating in decision-making and governance processes. This has led to the marginalization of women in many fishing communities, with some forced to become daily wage labourers.

### **Holistic responses**

These challenges require a holistic set of responses and alternatives to the





A meeting on illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing in Ghana. The recent decision of the European Commission (EC) to notify Ghana with a 'yellow card' is an indication that not enough has been done in combating IUU fishing

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current macroeconomic development paradigm. To achieve this goal, the Thailand Association of the Federation of Fisherfolk envisions greater recognition of fishers' rights over the coastal commons, and advocates for a complete restructuring of fisheries-resource governance. This includes reversing the role of the State from owner to custodian, and bringing

**The lack of a plan also renders various fisheries-management measures, including the closed season, ineffective.**

about policy changes that protect and promote the traditional rights of coastal communities, under the guidance of international instruments, including the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) and the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication (the SSF Guidelines).

### **Ghana: Canoe and Fishing Gear Owners Association call for urgent action on IUU fishing**

Artisanal fishers in Ghana observed the closed fishing season from 1 to 31 July 2021 as a matter of responsibility. However, a closed season can only be effective if the illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing practices are stopped. As key stakeholders, the members of the Canoe and Fishing Gear Owners Association of Ghana (CaFGOAG) are greatly concerned about the dying state of small-scale fisheries and are ready to support measures aimed at halting and reversing the decline in Ghana's fisheries. They commend all artisanal fishers for accepting the period of hardship amidst the COVID-19 pandemic and emphasize that the absence of a comprehensive plan and strategy towards combating IUU fishing is not helpful in their efforts toward rebuilding their fisheries. The lack of a plan also renders various fisheries-management measures, including the closed season, ineffective.

The recent decision of the European Commission (EC) to notify Ghana with a 'yellow card' is an indication that not

enough has been done in combating IUU fishing, particularly in illegal transshipments. The time to act is now. The CaFGOAG calls for adequate consultation and engagement with canoe and gear owners to ensure that their inputs are collated and captured to help address these issues. At this year's UN Food Systems Summit, it is important for stakeholders to acknowledge the enormous contribution of small-scale fisheries to global food security, employment and poverty eradication, and the urgent need for governments to commit to addressing IUU, which is largely being carried out by industrial fishers. The CaFGOAG also calls for the speedy implementation of the SSF Guidelines, toward achieving SDG Goal 14; it also calls on the Ghanaian government to urgently develop a strategy to end widespread IUU fishing in the country and to protect small-scale fisheries.

### **Brazil: Artisanal fishers and food (in) security in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic**

Brazil has approximately 1 million professional artisanal fishers, half of them, women. The vast majority of these fishers are concentrated in the poorest regions, while most of the fish consumed in the country comes from artisanal fisheries. Despite the importance of this sector for national food security, livelihoods and food sovereignty, the sector does not receive adequate public-policy support. Many fishers lose their rights because they are not formally recognized as professionals, and fishing communities are being expelled from their territories because of the advance of other activities.

The COVID-19 pandemic, in combination with the lack of sufficient government support, has increased poverty and food insecurity. Men continued to fish during the pandemic, but sales became difficult due to lack of demand, and prices dropped. Most women had to stop fishing and stay at home to take care of children and elderly family members, consequently losing financial autonomy and becoming more exposed to domestic violence. Family incomes also decreased, making it more difficult to buy staple foods like



Fish processing in Territorio Marino de Vida Barra del Colorado, Costa Rica. The unique, integrated way of life of small-scale fishing communities must be protected

rice and beans. Faced with this reality, fishing communities mobilized to demand food from local governments and solidarity funds, which they used to plant collective gardens, breed small animals and establish communal kitchens.

Another form of collective action during this period was the setting up of the Observatory of the Impacts of Coronavirus on Fishing Communities, which uses the Internet to bring together fisher representatives, technicians and researchers from around the country. It has become a popular health surveillance tool that collects information on the pandemic in communities, and offers preventive solutions. Used mainly as an instrument that links actors defending collective interests, and as a forum for solidarity, it is a valuable example worth replicating.

ICSF will continue to support initiatives that highlight and elevate the resilience of local communities and indigenous peoples; the crucial contributions of small-scale fisheries to global food security and nutrition; and the important role fishers and fishworkers play in transforming food systems.

#### **For more**

##### **Sustainable fisheries and aquaculture for food security and nutrition**

<https://www.fao.org/3/i3844e/i3844e.pdf>

##### **Recovering Connections**

[https://www.icsf.net/images/samudra/pdf/english/issue\\_85/4523\\_art\\_Sam\\_85\\_art18\\_Costa%20Rica\\_VivienneSolisRivera.pdf](https://www.icsf.net/images/samudra/pdf/english/issue_85/4523_art_Sam_85_art18_Costa%20Rica_VivienneSolisRivera.pdf)

##### **Dialogues at Linha D'Água: 2022 - The International Year of Artisanal Fisheries and Aquaculture**

<https://youtu.be/X50CsIJAE4c>

##### **Filling The Gap Between Theory and Practice**

[https://www.icsf.net/images/samudra/pdf/english/issue\\_85/4530\\_art\\_Sam\\_85\\_art22\\_Thailand\\_Ravadee.pdf](https://www.icsf.net/images/samudra/pdf/english/issue_85/4530_art_Sam_85_art22_Thailand_Ravadee.pdf)

# The Power Game of Language

**If people in small-scale fisheries wish to make the Blue Economy work for them, they must take control of the language, to avoid a rhetoric that further marginalizes them**

**T**he risks and opportunities of small-scale fisheries in the 'Blue Economy' is a topic I have talked and written about for a while now—also in *SAMUDRA Reports* (Nos. 82 and 83, 2020). I have argued that if States do nothing to implement the

Guidelines in developing countries, which is great. But it is not possible to see any trace of the Guidelines in Norwegian domestic fisheries policies, which is a pity. The SSF Guidelines are also needed for small-scale fisheries in the Global North, Norway included. The guiding principles apply regardless of region.

A Norwegian fisher was quoted as telling a local fisheries journalist: "If coastal fishers had been a distinct marine species, they would have been on the red list for more than 40 years now." (*Fiskeribladet*, 15 May 2021) One should perhaps not expect that the SSF Guidelines would lead to immediate and drastic policy moves. But if we take in what this fisher is saying, we do not have much time. We cannot afford to be patient, or small-scale fisheries may soon be gone in my part of the world.

The SSF Guidelines are a landmark achievement. It is the first global instrument directly targeting the small-scale fisheries. I am happy to have been involved in the process of developing them, as a member of the Norwegian delegation during the Technical Consultations in 2013 and 2014. For me, it was an interesting experience in many ways, including as a process of language development. The SSF Guidelines are a text of sentences and words spread out in hundreds of paragraphs. Therefore, the negotiations that led to their final endorsement in June 2014 were about how sentences should be phrased, which words to use, and what they meant. There were strong disagreements about whether certain words and sentences should be used at all.

**Both poverty eradication and food security are social-justice issues related to the human rights of small-scale fisheries people...**

Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries (the SSF Guidelines), the Blue Economy will come at a loss to small-scale fisheries. There is enough evidence to suggest that the risk is real, present, and that it must be taken seriously.

The full name of the SSF Guidelines includes the phrase "in the context of poverty eradication and food security." Both poverty eradication and food security are social-justice issues related to the human rights of small-scale fisheries people, their rights to food, wellbeing, equity and freedom. If the Blue Economy can deliver on these issues, threats may yet turn into opportunities. But only then.

In my own country, Norway, there is a lot of talk about the Blue Economy and its opportunities for marine industrial growth, but no mention of the SSF Guidelines themselves. Norway is supporting the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) financially to implement the SSF

*This article is by Svein Jentoft (svein.jentoft@uit.no), a professor emeritus at the Norwegian College of Fishery Science, UiT – The Arctic University of Norway, and a founding member of the Too Big To Ignore (TBTI): Global partnership for small-scale fisheries research*



CASSIANO PSOMAS / UNSPLASH



Beach seine in Pântano do Sul in Santa Catarina, Brazil. The true meaning of the Blue Economy is not to be found in glossy pamphlets about the ocean as a new frontier for economic growth, but in how the Blue Economy works in practice for small-scale fisheries communities

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### Delegates' suggestions

For instance, it did not take delegates long to take down the suggestion that the SSF Guidelines should have a definition of 'small-scale fisheries'. 'Governance' was a concept that proved controversial. Should the word 'redistribution' appear in the text? How about 'rights-based fishing'? The dispute around the term 'colonization' almost killed the SSF Guidelines. In the end, it was replaced with another word that changed the meaning of the article where it appeared.

The phrase "as appropriate" appears 18 times in the SSF Guidelines. For example, in article 5.8: "States should adopt measure to facilitate equitable access to fisheries resources for small-scale fishing communities, including, *as appropriate*, redistributive reform." (Italics mine). It was unclear to me whether delegates meant the same thing by using the phrase. Is the term a way to put at ease those who had reservations against a particular article, or is the idea that context matters

and that a pragmatic and flexible approach is needed? Clearly, the term satisfies both concerns, and it works to underscore the voluntary nature of the Guidelines. The problem is that States might easily find reasons why the SSF Guidelines, or particular articles in them, should not apply, especially when their implementation is painful in one way or the other.

The Blue Economy and Blue Growth concepts are not in the SSF Guidelines. These concepts are almost universal now. The pace in which concepts travel these days is amazing. Globalization is also about the proliferation of language. They are part of the way we talk about the future for small-scale fisheries. The opposite is rarely the case. There is hardly any mention of small-scale fisheries and the SSF Guidelines in the Blue Economy rhetoric.

### Language is power

We use language to understand what we see and do. What we see and do, hence, is dependent on language. We

use language to make other people see what we see and to explain and legitimize what we do. We use language strategically in an argument or dispute. By implication, the one who controls the language (to the degree that it is possible) controls the conversation, and the one who controls the conversation controls the action. Therefore, language is an instrument of power, intimately connected with any other form of power, like economic and political power. Power is also an issue in the SSF Guidelines, as in the preface: “Small-scale fishing communities also commonly suffer from unequal power relations.” The ‘marginalization’ of small-scale fisheries—a word that pops up 19 times in the SSF Guidelines—is also about language.

Consequently, if small-scale fisheries people want to make the Blue Economy work for them, they must

**Blue Justice is a composite and complex concept, but it is also intuitive and at the same level of abstraction as the Blue Economy.**

take control of the language, to avoid a rhetoric that further marginalizes them. With the SSF Guidelines, they are better equipped to speak for themselves about issues that are close to their heart, and they are likely to lose out in the Blue Economy if they do not. The question that concerns me here is how they should do that—which brings me into the age-old philosophical discourse on language, about how words get their meaning. Notably, this is not just an academic issue with no practical implication. Quite the contrary. Fisheries governance, including the implementation of the SSF Guidelines, is totally language-dependent. We cannot govern without language. We must be concerned with how language functions in governance settings. We, therefore, have all the reasons in the world to explore how language works to shape the Blue Economy as far as small-scale fisheries are concerned.

The German-Swiss novelist and 1946 Nobel Prize winner, Hermann Hesse, illustrates the point in a revealing way. I quote from his book, *Steppenwolf*:

“Just imagine a garden with hundreds of different trees, thousands of different flowers, hundreds of different fruits and herbs. Now, if the only botanical distinction the gardener knows is that between edible things and weeds, he will not know what to do with nine-tenths of his garden. He will uproot the most enchanting flowers, fell the finest trees, or at any rate detest and frown upon them.” (*Steppenwolf*, 1927, p. 68)

Clearly, the gardener would benefit from a richer language: He would see more of the biodiversity and appreciate the beauty in front of him. He would also be cautious about what he does with his garden. Instead, however, because of the paucity of his language, he will destroy what he is there to protect and nurture. The richness of small-scale fisheries and their enormous diversity globally, which made it difficult to find a definition that would suit all, illustrates the need for a similar language. We need more than a few words in a sentence or two to describe them.

### **Blue Justice**

Now that 2022 is going to be the International Year of Artisanal Fisheries and Aquaculture, how should we talk about them then? It is important that we must make sure that the implementation of the SSF Guidelines and the Blue Economy do not become separate discourses, with no link in between. But to create that link, we need a new language. The issue came up during the World Small-Scale Fisheries Congress in 2018 when Moenieba Isaacs from South Africa introduced us to the concept of ‘Blue Justice’. It has since become a key focus of the the Too Big To Ignore (TBTI) initiative. Rolf Willmann, the architect at FAO of the SSF Guidelines, suggested during the 2019 Mare conference that we should try to get the concept into Wikipedia, which we have done.

Blue Justice is a composite and complex concept, but it is also intuitive and at the same level of abstraction as the Blue Economy. We may, therefore, talk about Blue Justice as easily as we talk about the Blue Economy. Once brought into the Blue Economy ‘language game’—to use Ludwig Wittgenstein’s concept (*Philosophical Investigations*, 1952), it would require a response, just like in any other game. Games have rules, and it is essential that the rules of

the Blue Economy language game are not imposed on small-scale fisheries. It is not for States alone to decide which topics are relevant and can be raised, which arguments to make, which concepts to use, whose voices should be heard and how the conversation should evolve. In a democratic small-scale fisheries governance process, that is for all of us to determine.

Freedom of speech is a human right and thus also a matter for the SSF Guidelines. The Blue Justice concept carries a long tradition of philosophical argumentation. It also has a moral foundation that is difficult to reject. Notably, the Blue Justice concept, as TBTI defines it, is beyond the narrow, legal interpretation, which is used in connection with illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing and law enforcement, as in the 2018 Copenhagen Declaration. Blue Justice, in the broader meaning offered by TBTI, is relational, multi-dimensional, material as well as moral, and works at different scales. We think of it as a process of social struggle requiring mobilization of those whose lives and livelihoods are being interrupted in the Blue Economy. The SSF Guidelines are a treasure chest for those short of words to capture what Blue Justice means for small-scale fisheries people.

It is also important to stress that the Blue Justice concept requires a narrative founded in practical, lived experiences of those for whom injustice is part of their history and daily life.

Wittgenstein argued in his *Philosophical Investigations* that a word at the outset does not get its meaning from other words but from its actual use in a practice in its particular context. The same word may have different meanings in different contexts. The word fish, for example, can refer to what we have for dinner, but it can also be what a person is out on the sea for. In the first instance, it refers to food on the dinner table, in the second to the purpose for his fishing trip. In TBTI's interpretation, the Blue Justice concept is to be understood in the context of the Blue Economy, but it would also mean different things for small-scale fisheries people in different Blue Economies.

Wittgenstein inspired Jakob Meløe, my longtime colleague and mentor in the philosophy department of

my university, when he wrote: "Our concepts of the world come from our activities in the world." He added the example: "Without coastal fishing, or seafaring, in boats too large for the crews to draw them ashore, there is no place for the concept of harbour." The "original home" of our concepts is, according to Wittgenstein, in the activity in which they are used.

The true meaning of the Blue Economy is not to be found in glossy pamphlets, seductive language and political statements about the ocean as a new frontier for economic growth, but in how the Blue Economy works in practice, like for people in small-scale fisheries communities. Then we should not forget that justice also has emotional dimensions. When we see injustice,

**... the Blue Justice concept requires a narrative founded in practical, lived experiences of those for whom injustice is part of their history and daily life.**

we get morally upset, but are often also rendered speechless. However, the paucity of language does not make injustice less real in the Blue Economy. It just makes people defenseless.

Wittgenstein observed: "Concepts lead us to make investigations, are the expression of our interest, and direct our interest." Therefore, we need a concept like Blue Justice to bring attention to an issue of utmost importance to small-scale fisheries, which cannot simply be defined away and by that, ignored. You cannot insist that 'this' is not what the Blue Economy is about, if 'that' is what it does. You cannot say that marginalization is not what the Blue Economy means if that is what it does to small-scale fisheries. Without a concept like Blue Justice, the Blue Economy would do what Hesse's gardener does to his garden. Without the Blue Justice concept, there is a bigger risk that small-scale fisheries get overrun in the Blue Economy language game, a game they cannot afford to lose. 📖

#### For more



##### Blue Justice

[https://www.icsf.net/images/samudra/pdf/english/issue\\_82/4419\\_art\\_Sam\\_82\\_art15\\_Review\\_Fikret\\_Berkes.pdf](https://www.icsf.net/images/samudra/pdf/english/issue_82/4419_art_Sam_82_art15_Review_Fikret_Berkes.pdf)

##### Blue Gold

[https://www.icsf.net/images/samudra/pdf/english/issue\\_82/4419\\_art\\_Sam\\_82\\_art15\\_Review\\_Fikret\\_Berkes.pdf](https://www.icsf.net/images/samudra/pdf/english/issue_82/4419_art_Sam_82_art15_Review_Fikret_Berkes.pdf)

##### The Human Relationship with Our Ocean Planet

<https://oceanpanel.org/sites/default/files/2020-10/Human%20Relationship%20with%20the%20Ocean%20Full%20Paper.pdf>



# A Lifetime of Reflection

**Professor, scientist, fisheries engineer, researcher and Brazil's representative in international negotiations on fisheries management, Fábio Hissa Vieira Hazin succumbed to COVID-19 on 8 June 2021, World Oceans Day**

**F**abio Hazin was stricken with COVID-19 a week before the opening of vaccination for university professors in Recife, his hometown in Brazil. His health deteriorated rapidly. He was hospitalized for 11 days, eight on a ventilator. In the end he died of intracranial bleeding.

A workaholic by nature, Fabio was invariably committed to several projects, supported by a wide range of students and professionals. The son of an important fishing entrepreneur,

a post-doctoral degree in Migratory Pelagic Fishery Resource Stock Assessment, at the Southeast Fisheries Science Center/NMFS/NOAA, in Miami, US, and in 2010 he specialized in International Law of the Sea at the Rhodes Academy Center for Oceans Law and Policy/University of Virginia School of Law.

His principal commitment was to the University, where he advised more than 90 students, published over 250 papers and reports and co-ordinated 27 research and extension projects in 29 years. A large part of his production was dedicated to the study of fisheries biology—focusing on elasmobranchs and large pelagic fish such as tuna and sailfish. His studies were used as the basis for decision making in national and international management.

His first big challenge at the University, in 1995, was Program REVIZEE (Assessment of the Sustainable Yield of the Living Resources in the Brazilian Exclusive Economic Zone), the largest marine science programme ever developed in the country, for which he assumed the co-ordination of the northeast region. The Program was co-ordinated by the Secretariat of the Interministerial Commission for Sea Resources (SECIRM), executed by the Ministry of the Environment (MMA), and had financial support from the Science and Technology Ministry throughout its 10 years of activities, putting Fabio directly in contact with national policymakers. Program REVIZEE has generated an immense volume of data and scientific information about the Brazilian sea, which resulted in the publication of hundreds of academic reports and the training of a large number of professionals in the field of marine science.

**... his family company captured tuna and tuna-like species, which became the main theme of his research and work throughout his life.**

he grew up amidst lobster boats and fishermen, which led him to earn a degree in fisheries engineering. After graduating and having experienced the profession as an entrepreneur, he decided to enter academia. He went to Japan on a Mombusho scholarship and did his Masters and PhD in Marine Science and Technology/Fisheries Oceanography at Tokyo University of Marine Science and Technology. During his PhD, he was appointed as a professor at the Federal Rural University of Pernambuco in 1992.

At that time, his family company captured tuna and tuna-like species, which became the main theme of his research and work throughout his life. He continued to study and search for new knowledge as he became involved in broader issues such as international fisheries policy. In 2002 he completed

*This obituary is by Beatriz Mesquita Pedrosa Ferreira (mesquitabia@hotmail.com), researcher at the Joaquim Nabuco Foundation (Fundaj) in Recife-PE, Brazil, Member of ICSF and former student of Dr. Fabio Hazin*



Fabio Hazin at the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT). Fabio was an excellent communicator, perhaps because he had studied theater at the university and wrote plays and books

Fabio also assumed important international positions, such as the presidency of the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tuna (ICCAT) between 2007 and 2011, in which he also served as the Brazilian Scientific Representative between 1998 and 2015. He was always quick to defend Brazil's interests and fought for the country's quota increase in tuna and tuna-like fishing.

He was the Brazilian fisheries expert for the Food and Agriculture

Organization of the United Nations (FAO), becoming the chair of the FAO's Committee on Fisheries (COFI) from 2014 to 2016. For artisanal fisheries, he was an important mediator as chair for the development process of the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication (the SSF Guidelines), endorsed by COFI in 2014.

Fabio chaired technical consultations that led to the adoption of

EDITORA GRYPHUS



Fábio Hazin recently published *A arte de aprender a ser* (The Art of Learning to Be), a book on spirituality and freedom

the FAO Port State Measures Agreement (PSMA), the first binding international agreement designed to prevent and eliminate illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing. He chaired the Working Group on Marine Organisms Arising from International Waters (Introduction from the Sea), at the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Fauna and Flora (CITES) between 2010 and 2013. In 2015 he briefly assumed an important position in Brazil's Ministry of Fisheries.

In the late 1990s, he noticed an unusual increase in shark incidents in his hometown, Recife, transforming it into one of the cities with the most number of shark attacks in the world. (Brazil ranks fourth in the world ranking of shark attacks.) In the last 30 years, 61 incidents have been recorded. Fábio's research team emphasized the impacts of the construction of the biggest regional Port of Suape, and the environmental changes and degradation it caused. Other consequential causes were the intensification of maritime traffic and the existence of a deep channel parallel to the beach—which facilitates the approach of sharks, putting bathers and surfers in danger—associated with a marine current that predominantly moves from south to north.

As President of the Local Committee for monitoring the problem between 2004 and 2012, Fábio helped organize two important international seminars on the subject. Based on his group's research, surfing and bathing in the city's beaches was prohibited.

Fábio was an excellent communicator, perhaps because he had studied theater at the university and had written a play called *The Mangrove Battle*, which exposed the degradation of mangroves in the late 1990s. More recently, he turned spiritual and wrote a book titled *The Art of Learning to Be: The Story of A Spiritual Journey in Search of Freedom*, which was published in 2020. According to Graziela Castanhari, a colleague, "He always had a strong connection with spirituality. When he studied in Japan, he got to know some forms of Buddhism but realized that then was not the time to immerse himself in it.

He was busy pursuing his degrees at the time. After his divorce, he reconnected with spirituality, passing on knowledge to his students. He devised a special workshop—difficult to categorize since it dealt with various aspects of spirituality and their connection to science. In 2014, he organized such a workshops in Maragogi, a beach city in Pernambuco state, and called it 'Maragosangha'. 'Sangha' means 'community' in Sanskrit. Seven years and 30 workshops on, over 360 people have experienced Fábio's idea of liberation—reflection in order to free ourselves. He believed that through such liberation, we can see beyond our own ego and actually be happy. 3

#### For more

##### Tribute to Fábio Hazin

<https://www.fao.org/fishery/nems/41313/en>

##### Unusual Sense of Daring

<http://toobigtoignore.net/a-tribute-to-fabio-hazin/>

##### Making SSF Secure

[https://www.icsf.net/images/samudra/pdf/english/issue\\_74/4220\\_art\\_4220\\_art\\_Sam74\\_e\\_Art13.pdf](https://www.icsf.net/images/samudra/pdf/english/issue_74/4220_art_4220_art_Sam74_e_Art13.pdf)



# Fishing Communities

## World Fisheries Day is a time to reiterate the rights of small-scale fisherfolk and Indigenous Peoples to secure food sovereignty

**W**e, in the International Planning Committee for Food Sovereignty (IPC), represent small-scale fisher people including Indigenous Peoples from the four global movements, the World Forum of Fish Harvesters and Fish Workers (WFF), the World Forum of Fisher People (WFFP), the International Indian Treaty Council (IITC) and La Via Campesina (LVC). Our constituencies span the entire world and both from coastal and inland fishing communities.


Today we recall that World Fisheries Day carries our rich history and was first celebrated when we formed the global fisher movements (WFFP/WFF) in Delhi in 1997. Back then, we denounced industrial fishing and aquaculture because both sectors bring environmental destruction and expropriation of fishing communities, and we decided that this day of our birth, World Fisheries Day, would be a day to celebrate small-scale capture fisheries internationally. It is a day filled with the determination and endeavors of fisher people to be proud contributors to the world's food systems and a humane society at large.

Over the last several decades, aquaculture and blue economy development have resulted in territories being taken away from us, the pollution of rivers and the sea, and the loss of livelihoods that are not compensated for by the few jobs offered by the blue economy and aquaculture sector. The tendency we see is that fewer and bigger corporations control more and more of the aquaculture sector. At the 34th session of the Committee on Fisheries, we witnessed a strong commitment by the committee members and the FAO to increase aquaculture production further to feed the world's population. While

this reflects a global trend, our position remains that this market-driven blue economy is a false solution.

Macro-level policies that are driving elite developmental paradigms have failed to recognize the contribution of small-scale fishworkers to local livelihoods, the economy, their contribution to food security, and the customary rights of these fisher people and indigenous communities. We, therefore, call upon the international community to listen to our concern and support Small-Scale Fisher Peoples Rights as espoused in the SSF Guidelines.

We, small-scale fishers and fish workers worldwide, celebrate World Fisheries Day, stating Food Sovereignty as the true and only solution to food systems transformation and calling to recognize small-scale fishers and fishworkers' contribution to human well-being and healthy food systems.

As we enter the International Year of Artisanal Fisheries and Aquaculture (IYAFA) we call on governments across the world to incorporate the principles of the SSF Guidelines into national policy. Importantly, we see that on this World Fisheries Day, governments must monitor the progress in implementing the SSF Guidelines. We highlight the fundamentality of our participation in governance processes, particularly in these times, when we are struggling to get through the COVID-19 pandemic while also dealing with the effects of climate change on fishers livelihoods. 

*This statement was delivered by **Editrudith Lukanga** (elukanga@gmail.com), Vice Chair, IYAFA International Steering Committee, on behalf of the International Planning Committee for Food Sovereignty (IPC) - Working Group on Fisheries, during the official launch event of the IYAFA-2022 on 19 November, 2021.*

*Watch the launch event here: <https://www.fao.org/webcast/home/en/item/5716/icode/>*

## CLIMATE CHANGE

### Is this our last chance to act on the climate crisis?

In the Marshall Islands people are used to the vagaries of the ocean. But recently the monthly “king tide” has brought new perils to this small group of islands in the Pacific about halfway between Australia and Hawaii. Waves crash over the roads and airport runways, especially when the unusually high tide coincides with a storm surge, cutting off communication and making daily business dangerous or impossible.

The islanders’ lives are now full of inescapable reminders of climate breakdown, says Tina Stege, the climate envoy for the tiny nation of 60,000 people on 29 atolls. “We see stronger storms and storm surges. Droughts are more frequent and more intense and

longer. Growing up I remember just one very intense drought; now they’re happening maybe every three years. We recently had a dengue fever emergency, a problem we’re seeing now in the winter months as they get warmer.”

Stege is chair of the High Ambition Coalition, a grouping at the UN climate talks that brings together some of the world’s richest nations, including the EU, and some of the poorest and most vulnerable, to push for stronger climate action. Small island developing states are feeling the impact of climate change, but so, too, are far more populous countries, from low-lying Bangladesh to landlocked Rwanda, also members of the HAC, which represents more

than 1 billion people around the world.

“We are a small nation, but we have moral authority — our position on the frontline gives us that,” says Stege. “We need to raise our voice, as these changes will affect the whole world in time.”

Source: <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2021/oct/30/is-this-our-last-chance-to-act-on-the-climate-crisis>

## BIODIVERSITY

### UN Biodiversity Conference adopts Kunming Declaration

The High-Level Segment of the UN Biodiversity Conference (COP15) closed today (13 October) with the adoption of the Kunming Declaration, where Parties to

the Convention committed to develop, adopt and implement an effective post-2020 global biodiversity framework that would biodiversity put on a path to recovery by 2030 at the latest, towards the full realization of the 2050 Vision of “Living in Harmony with Nature.” Critically, the framework would also include provision of the necessary means of implementation, in line with the Convention and its two protocols, as well as appropriate mechanisms for monitoring, reporting and review.

The landmark post 2020 global biodiversity framework is due to be adopted at part two of the UN Biodiversity Conference in May 2022, following further formal negotiations in January 2022. The Declaration gives clear political direction for those negotiations.

Source: <https://www.cbd.int/doc/press/2021/pr-2021-10-13-cop15-hls-en.pdf>

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## ORGANIZATIONAL PROFILE

### Canoe and Fishing Gear Owners Association of Ghana (CaFGOAG)

Ghana has a coastline of about 550 km and a maritime domain, including the territorial sea and the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), of 228,000 sq km. The fisheries sector is the main source of food and livelihoods for coastal dwellers. Fish contributes significantly to nutrition and food security by providing for the bulk (over 60 per cent) of the country’s requirement for low-cost, but high-quality, protein, in addition to essential minerals, vitamins and fats.

The fisheries sector is categorized into three subsectors: industrial, semi industrial and artisanal. The artisanal sub-sector employs about 10 per cent of the population as fishers, processors, boat owners, The boat builders, and others in ancillary jobs. Direct workforce in the industry includes about 140,000 fishermen in the four coastal regions of Ghana. The sector comprises 14,275 motorized and non-motorized registered canoes which operate within the Inshore Exclusive Zone (waters between the coastline and the 30-m isobath

or the 6-nautical miles offshore limit, whichever is farther) and beyond.

Available data indicate a decline in fish catch from the mid-1990s, resulting in the rollout of several management measures, including closed fishing seasons in the artisanal sector. In spite of the enormous contributions of the artisanal



subsector, participation of artisanal fishers in Ghana’s fisheries governance has been limited and weak over the years. In artisanal fisheries, canoe and gear owners are the key stakeholders. They have the economic and social power to make decisions in the business of fishing, which drives the whole fisheries economy.

Such key identifiable actors and decisionmakers have to be mobilized and guided to play their role effectively. This is the fundamental reason for the

mobilization of the canoe and gear owners into an association, the Canoe and Fishing Gear Owners Association of Ghana (CaFGOAG), to ensure their meaningful participation in the fisheries-governance architecture.

Canoe owners have existed since the beginning of fishing in the 18th century, and will continue to exist as long as fishing is done. After several years of struggle to have a voice in fisheries governance and management, and several years without proper representation at policy dialogues, CaFGOAG formalized its association on 28 May 2021.

The mission of the Association is to represent canoe and gear owners and facilitate stakeholders’ engagements whilst promoting sustainable fishing and the welfare of artisanal fishers. The Association is structured under national, regional and local branches, across the four coastal regions of Ghana: Volta, Greater Accra, and the Central and Western regions.

CaFGOAG has been instrumental in the organization

of 2,021 fishing closed seasons, educating the fishers and sensitizing them on the negative impact of illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing. It does so while advocating for the protection and promotion of artisanal fisheries and the effective implementation of fisheries laws and management plans. This is done through meetings, radio and television discussions, and press releases and conferences. The Association also organizes events to mark International Days related to fisheries, and maintains a good relationship with Ghana’s Ministry of Fisheries and Aquaculture Development, the Fisheries Commission, civil society and non-governmental organizations, and fisheries associations and traditional authorities. CaFGOAG is always open for engagements and partnerships towards rebuilding Ghana’s fisheries.

Source: Nana Kweigyah,  
Chairman, CaFGOAG  
<https://twitter.com/canoegear?lang=en>

Email: [canoowners@gmail.com](mailto:canoowners@gmail.com)

## AQUACULTURE

# Opportunities and challenges for the promotion of decent work in the aquaculture sector

### Addressing decent work challenges in the aquaculture sector

Despite its growing contribution to employment, rural livelihoods, economic development, food security and nutrition in many countries, aquaculture faces significant decent work deficits alongside other important social and environmental challenges. As demonstrated in the sections below, decent work deficits that often characterize the sector, especially in many developing and emerging economies, include: the prevalence of informality and discrimination; the presence of child and forced labour, primarily in the informal economy; a lack of organization and social dialogue; low and insecure wages and incomes; low levels of skills; low productivity; poor working conditions and occupational safety and health (OSH) practices; limited social protection; and lack of stable and formal contracts. The seasonality in the production of certain aquaculture species affects livelihoods and jobs not only of those engaged in upstream activities, but also in processing. Employment in aquaculture may be dependent on domestic and international market demand, as has been demonstrated by the impact that the COVID-19 pandemic has had on the sector. Addressing these deficits will be key to ensuring the future sustainability of the sector and of the economies to which it contributes.

While there are a number of international labour standards that are of direct relevance to the sector, their application is often limited, as some workers may not be covered by labour legislation due to the nature of their work, absence of an employment relationship or their legal status in the country of employment, as is often the case with migrant workers. Furthermore, in rural economies of developing countries, law enforcement, labour inspection and compliance are often lacking or ineffective. Limited

organization and opportunities for voices to be heard among aquaculture workers prevent them from exercising their rights and influencing decision-making processes that affect their working and living conditions.

The following section provides an analysis of the salient employment and labour issues facing the sector. While in describing these issues examples refer to individual countries, these challenges are common across most developing countries engaged in aquaculture production.

### Promoting decent employment creation, skills and enterprise development

In many countries, the aquaculture sector is characterized by the increasing casualization of waged labour and outsourcing practices. Although most countries have relevant legislation regarding casual work, workers are often engaged long term on a casual basis with limited or no entitlement to annual, personal or paternity leave, notice of termination or redundancy pay. In some countries, women are disproportionately represented in casual and informal jobs in the sector. Low literacy and skill levels, limited knowledge about rights and responsibilities and low levels of local organization hinder improvements in skills, productivity and incomes.

In countries where, despite its potential, aquaculture is still in its infancy, the sector's development is often constrained by a lack of people with the technical skills in fish farming. Skills and workforce shortages are also among key concerns in countries where the sector is in advanced stages of development. In addition to the challenge of finding highly skilled talent with the necessary technical training and knowledge required in operations using advanced technologies, enterprises often struggle to attract and retain a general workforce due to the

declining population in rural areas, where most aquaculture activities take place, and the laborious nature of the work. For example, in Canada, the sector suffers tens of millions of lost sales annually due to labour shortages, which hamper the sector's expansion. In some countries, the demand for low-skilled workers is addressed through labour migration. Attracting young women and men into the sector is particularly challenging and will require targeted interventions, including through modernization of the sector, increased use of modern technology, better wages and raising its status as a source of decent jobs.

In many developing countries, the challenge is compounded by an inadequate enabling environment for the development of sustainable enterprises and limited access to financial services, modern technology and infrastructure. Creating conditions for sustainable enterprise development, which, inter alia, encourage investment, entrepreneurship, workers' rights and social dialogue; improving access to financial services, technical or entrepreneurship skill development opportunities, in particular for women and young people; and enhancing agriculture extension services will contribute to improved sector productivity, performance and growth.

### Improving social protection coverage and occupational safety and health in the aquaculture sector

A growing diversification in work arrangements is increasingly making social protection less accessible to agriculture workers, including those in the aquaculture sector. Informality and lack of infrastructure and services in rural areas have traditionally posed significant barriers to rural workers' access to social protection services, even when

they are legally mandated. In view of the prevalence of informal, casual and migrant workers in the sector, aquaculture workers' access to social protection remains a challenge in many countries.

In Chile, for example, due to the increased use of subcontracting and casual labour, a significant number of salmon farm workers are not adequately covered by national social security legislation. Studies on the working conditions of shrimp processing workers in Kerala, most of whom are women employed as daily wage workers through contractors, found that the majority of them were not provided with state-mandated social security benefits. For instance, only 15.71 per cent of surveyed workers had Employees' Provident Fund accounts. While migrant workers in Thailand have the same right to access social security, including healthcare and paid sick leave, as local workers in reality many, including those in the aquaculture sector, lack coverage as they are employed informally. In recent years, the Government has been tackling this challenge through the regularization of undocumented migrant workers.

Aquaculture production is labour intensive and, as most agricultural activities, by its nature physically demanding, and those engaged in it are exposed to multiple OSH hazards with short- and long-term consequences. Aquaculture-specific OSH data is sparse, as it is often considered within the broader agricultural sector. In most aquaculture-producing countries, the focus of policies and regulations has mainly been on product quality, food safety and environmental risks, but less on worker safety and health.

Source: *The future of work in aquaculture in the context of the rural economy*

[https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed\\_dialogue/---sector/documents/meetingdocument/wcms\\_818149.pdf](https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_dialogue/---sector/documents/meetingdocument/wcms_818149.pdf)



## INFOLOG: NEW RESOURCES AT ICSF

### Publications and Infographics

**Social Impact Monitoring and Vulnerability Assessment (SIMVA) 2018: Report on 2018 baseline survey of the Lower Mekong mainstream and floodplain areas 2021**

<https://www.mrcmekong.org/assets/Publications/SIMVA2018.pdf>  
Covering 2,800 households in 200 villages the 2018 survey shows that communities in the Mekong mainstream corridor were still dependent on the river resources for their livelihoods, income, and well-being.

### Global Gender Gap Report 2021

[https://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF\\_GGGR\\_2021.pdf](https://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_GGGR_2021.pdf)  
As the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic continues to be felt, closing the global gender gap has increased by a generation from 99.5 years to 135.6 years.

### Lockdown lessons from South Africa's fisheries: Building resilience in small-scale fishing communities

[https://www.cms.int/sites/default/files/publication/cms\\_report\\_migratory\\_species\\_and\\_plastic\\_pollution\\_31AUG2021.pdf](https://www.cms.int/sites/default/files/publication/cms_report_migratory_species_and_plastic_pollution_31AUG2021.pdf)

The Covid-19 pandemic and lockdown restrictions exacerbated and amplified many pre-existing vulnerabilities in small-scale fishing communities.

### Indigenous Peoples' food systems: Insights on sustainability and resilience in the front line of climate change

<http://www.fao.org/3/cb5131en/cb5131en.pdf>

This publication provides an overview of the common and unique sustainability elements of Indigenous Peoples' food systems, in terms of natural resource management, access to the market, diet diversity, indigenous peoples' governance systems, and links to traditional knowledge and indigenous languages.

### World Social Protection Report 2020-22: Social protection at the crossroads – in pursuit of a better future

[https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/---publ/documents/publication/wcms\\_817572.pdf](https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/---publ/documents/publication/wcms_817572.pdf)

This ILO flagship report provides a global overview of recent developments in social protection systems, including social protection floors, and covers the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

### Infographic Video on SSF Guidelines

This video gives a brief overview of the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication (the SSF Guidelines), adopted by member countries of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) in 2014.

Translated in French and Spanish

#### French

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rQgO6RmQaiA>

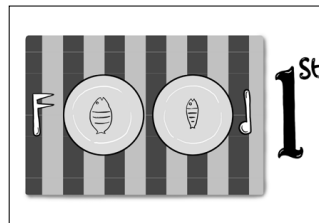
#### Spanish

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ItefaviIKa4>

## FLASHBACK

### Food First?

Fish is at one and the same time both a source of food and income. This is a quintessential characteristic which should be borne in mind while discussing the issue of food security. In fishing communities, on the one hand, there are large numbers who depend primarily on fishing for a livelihood. For them, it is the income from the sale of fish that lets them pay for the bare necessities of life. On the other hand, there are those who rely on farming, fishing or mere gathering from the bush, in order to exist.



From the point of view of consumers, in several developing countries there exist underprivileged classes like agricultural labourers, plantation and mine workers, who bank on fish as a source of cheap protein. This demand for fish is met mostly by domestic or regional trade. In contrast, there are fairly prosperous consumers in developed countries whose culture, habits and dietary preferences, more than anything else, determine the demand for fish. The requirements for this large market are satisfied mostly from imports.

Recent international efforts to address the issue of food security have gone only part of the way. Consider the Kyoto Declaration and Plan of Action on the Sustainable Contribution of Fisheries to Food Security that sprung from last year's International Conference on the Sustainable Contribution of Fisheries to Food Security, as well as the 31st Session of the FAO Committee on Food Security in February this year. They provide only fragmentary approaches on how to effectively address the issue of food security in the context of fisheries.

Furthermore, concentrating only on the supply side, without in any way restraining demand, could be ultimately counterproductive. This is because the market is the worst enemy of good resource management. The market mechanism invariably proves efficient enough to absorb large quantities of fish and can thus subvert any management measure, however worthwhile.

In countries of the South, different policy matrices can be constructed, depending on whose food security is on the agenda. Thus it is important to develop a judicious programme for fishing communities that spells out regional priorities, based on social and economic considerations. Simultaneously, such a programme should also address the consumption requirements of local consumers. The over-riding objective—necessarily double-headed and thus somewhat contradictory—should be the welfare of both fishworkers and underprivileged consumers. Clearly, this is a difficult goal. But it will never be reached if two vital aspects are forgotten: better management and allocation of fishery stocks, and greater protection of fish habitats.

— from SAMUDRA Report, No.14, March 1996

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### MEETINGS

**Twenty-fourth meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (Resumed), 12 - 28 January 2022, Geneva, Switzerland.**

<https://www.cbd.int/meetings/>

The resumed sessions of the 24th meeting of the SBSTTA 24 and the 3rd meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Implementation (SBI 3) of the CBD, as well as the third Meeting of the Open-ended Working Group on

the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework (WG2020-3) will take place in January 2022.

**Technical meeting on the future of work in aquaculture in the context of the rural economy, 13 - 17 December 2021, Geneva, Switzerland**

[https://www.ilo.org/sector/activities/sectoral-meetings/WCMS\\_815527/lang-en/index.htm](https://www.ilo.org/sector/activities/sectoral-meetings/WCMS_815527/lang-en/index.htm)

The meeting will discuss issues relating to the future of work and

the promotion of decent work in the aquaculture sector, with the aim of adopting conclusions, including recommendations for future action.

### WEBSITES

**ICSF Digital Library Online**

<http://www.icsfarchives.net>

A digitised version of ICSF library, with more than 2000 original documents and 12,000+ curated links, collected over the last 33 years.

### SSF Forum

<http://www.fao.org/gfcm/activities/fisheries/small-scale-fisheries/ssfforum>

SSF Forum is a place for small-scale fishers and fish workers from the Mediterranean and Black Sea region to come together, share knowledge and exchange best practices.

### Pamalakaya

<https://angpamalakaya.org/>

Pamalakaya is an alliance of activist fisherfolk groups in the Philippines with over 100,000 individual members.



## Endquote

*The sea, the great unifier, is man's only hope. Now, as never before, the old phrase has a literal meaning: we are all in the same boat.*

**– Jacques Yves Cousteau**



