

## PERU: Organization of fishworkers

The artisan fishworkers of Peru have organized in FIUPAP, the *Federation of Integration and Unity of Artisan Fish workers of Peru*. The first national Congress was held in Caleta Chorrillos, Lima, from June 24 to 29, 1991, with 70 delegates from 25 local organizations throughout the country. Work was organized in 7 Commissions for the study of the main problems affecting fish-workers: marine resources, infrastructure, finance, fishing legislation, commercialization, social security and illness, specially cholera. In 1992, FIUPAP organized 2 National Assemblies, extending its network to nearly all of Peru's small ports and artisan fishing communities, including those of Lake Titicaca and the Amazon region.

The artisan fishworkers of Peru were associated with the federations of industrial fishworkers, who are integrated into the fishing industry, one of the largest in the world in terms of tonnage taken for fish meal production. Those federations are the FPP, Federation of Peruvian Fishworkers, and, subsequently, the FETCHAP, Federation of Crews for Fishing for Hu-

man Consumption. With the creation of their own organization, Peruvians may be more autonomous in their decisions and the acquisition of services, specially credit, consultations and social security, without being subject to political or governmental conditioning factors.

Hernan, member of ICSF, is one of their advisors and has helped with the legal and social configuration and development of the organization. Peruvian fisheries are passing through a severe crisis at this time, which affects all fishworkers. The Fujimori Government, which is strongly authoritarian, is privatizing the fishing industry and foreign enterprises are gaining control of the companies. However, the Government is lending strong support to artisan fishworkers by way of boats, port improvements, means of commercialization and technical advice. For this reason, Peruvian fishworkers will have to strengthen their organization in order to maintain their autonomy and the defense of their rights. ■

## MEXICO The network of costal fishworkers

Mexico has more than 10,000 kms of coastline on both oceans, the Atlantic and the Pacific. Some 330,000 fishworkers use a total of 73,000 boats to catch approximately 1.5 million tons, with a commercial value of around 1 billion dollars. In 1989, there were 94,000 persons organized in cooperatives, 25,000 artisan fishworkers organized in fishing unions or "ejidales", 5,000 workers in private fishing companies and 4,000, in semi-State companies. Most fishworkers live and work in the states of Veracruz, Sonora, Sinaloa, Tabasco, Baja California, Campeche, and Guerrero.

Since 1935, fishworker organizations have been dominated by the cooperatives, controlled by the vertical structures dominant in that country. However, those cooperatives benefited from the law which gave them exclusive rights to exploit numerous species, including prawns, oysters and the fish species with the highest commercial value.

A new organization emerged in 1993, generated by a coordinating instance for support organisms and a significant group of 58 cooperatives and associations in 9 states of the Republic. The constitutional meeting

for the *National Network of Coastal Fishworkers of Mexico* was held on January 30 - 31, 1993, in Lazaro Cardenas, Michoacan and in Petacalco, Guerrero, neighboring cities on the Pacific coast of Mexico. The organization bears the name of Jose Luis Valdovinos, a regional leader who promoted the organization and was assassinated by persons unknown in 1992

In their conclusions, the fishworkers denounce the arbitrary treatment of poor fishworkers handed out by functionaries and politicians and call for renewed defense of their rights, principally more speedy processing for the legal constitution of their organizations, greater control of the sources of contamination, access to social security services, the elimination of the interference of political parties in the internal life of their organizations, participation in the debate about laws and regulations related to fishing, and greater coordination with Universities and research and development centres:

The organization has a national coordinating committee, made up of representatives of the diverse states. Melecio Perez Chan, of the fishing cooperative of San