



**25** Years in Support of  
Small-scale Fishworkers

# Yemaya

ICSF'S NEWSLETTER ON GENDER AND FISHERIES

## From the Editor

Delegates to the Tenth Conference of Parties (COP10) of the Convention on Biological Diversity entering the conference centre in Nagoya, Japan in October 2010, could not have missed seeing a group of men, women and children holding up banners and symbols made of wood, cloth, leaves and twigs. Their message was unequivocal: “No Nuclear Power Plant in Our Community! Iwaisima says No to Nuclear Power!” As part of the “Seven Generations March”, this group had walked for 45 days covering 800 km to be in Nagoya, to protest against the proposed Kaminoseki nuclear power plant to be built on a landfill in the Seto Inland Sea, hailed as Japan’s Galapagos. For three decades, local residents, fisherfolk, and environmental activists have opposed the plant.

Such opposition has been recorded in many countries. In India, fishing communities have led protests against nuclear power plants in coastal areas, resisting their proposed displacement and loss of access to fishing grounds. Their protests have highlighted the potential impact on fisheries resources and biodiversity due to the large numbers of juvenile fish sucked into inlet water systems and the higher temperature of waters discharged; the harmful impact of radiation from nuclear power plants; and above all, the frightening possibility of a nuclear accident.

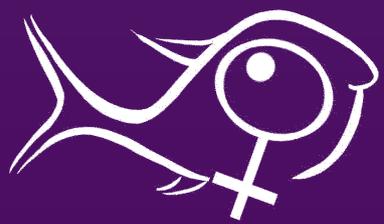
Across the world, governments and the scientific community have maintained that such problems can be “managed”. Nuclear energy has been touted as the energy of the future—clean, cheap, safe, reliable and ‘climate-friendly’. While each of these claims is disputable, the nuclear option has been powerfully challenged by the Fukushima Dai-Ichi nuclear power plant disaster in Japan—a country better prepared for such disasters than most—triggered by the massive earthquake and tsunami on 11 March.

The emergency response system in Fukushima seems to have failed despite improved safety standards laid out following the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami by the Japan Nuclear Energy Safety Organization (JNES) in collaboration with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), and despite the implementation of a system since 2010 for the protection of nuclear power plants against tsunamis and post-earthquake considerations in the external zone (TiPEEZ).

While countries take up “comprehensive safety reviews” of their nuclear plants, the topmost question is: “Can the chances of another nuclear accident due to any reason—natural or man-made, including human error—be completely eliminated?” If not, surely there is need to reassess hazards and costs that may affect not only our own generation but several generations to come. By what measure can costs to future generations be calculated?

There are other questions as well. Why should people who have no say in decisionmaking have to pay the price for ‘growth’ and ‘development’? How valid are existing cost calculations when the disposal of hazardous radioactive waste remains an unresolved problem with reports of illegal dumping in the world’s seas? Public health monitoring and impact analyses of radiation leaks are either not undertaken or not shared. Nuclear power remains dangerously shrouded in official secrecy. And people continue to be exposed to its risks without any form of informed consent.

Even as we salute the workers battling nuclear meltdown at tremendous personal risk in Fukushima, and mourn those killed, injured and rendered homeless by the disaster, it is time for us to heed the people of Iwaisima whose struggles recall the famous Native American proverb: “In our every deliberation we must consider the impact of our decisions on the next seven generations”. ❏



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