

Atlantic Canada

## A gathering not to be missed

*Woman fishworkers from Atlantic Canada must be represented at the next meeting of the World Forum of Fish Harvesters and Fish Workers (WFF) to be held in October 2000*

by **Lucie Breau**

*A mother of five children, Lucie Breau is a crew member, alongside her husband, on their inshore vessel in New Brunswick, and a member of the Comité des femmes côtières du Nouveau-Brunswick. Lucie has been fishing for close to 10 years. She attended the first meeting of the WFF three years ago and is now in active communication with the committee organizing the next meeting in October 2000, as well as the women's workshop prior to this.*

In November 1997, over 120 men and women fishers and fishworkers representing fishworker organizations from 32 countries met in New Delhi, India, to establish the WFF. This organization is meant to be an international solidarity network for the protection of fisheries resources and the coastal communities that depend on them for their livelihood. One of the objectives stated in the WFF's preliminary charter is to "recognize, protect and enhance the role of women in the fishing economy and in the sustenance of the community."



Following this, in October 1999, the international coordinating committee approved two recommendations put forward by women's organizations:

- There should be a gender balance on the coordinating committee, based on parity between men and women;
- Each delegation to the WFF should respect this principle of parity, and women delegates should represent fishworkers' organizations or fisheries community organizations.

In response to this objective, women from the North and from the South are preparing a working document stating their concerns and demands to be presented to the Constituent Assembly of the WFF. Prior to the WFF meeting in Brittany, a full day will be devoted to women's concerns, and a political working document will be submitted for discussion.

The *Workshop on Gender, Globalization and Fisheries* in Newfoundland provided the opportunity for women fishworkers from the four provinces in Atlantic Canada to meet. In all these provinces, many women are involved in the fisheries as fish-plant workers or as fish harvesters. Along with researchers and community workers from the North and the South, we prepared a common statement.

We stressed that it was important for one woman delegate from each Atlantic province to attend the WFF women's workshop in Brittany and to participate in the WFF founding meeting as unofficial observers. This is an important gathering which, we feel, we should not be missing. It will also be an opportunity to share the concerns raised in the *Workshop on Gender, Globalization and Fisheries*.