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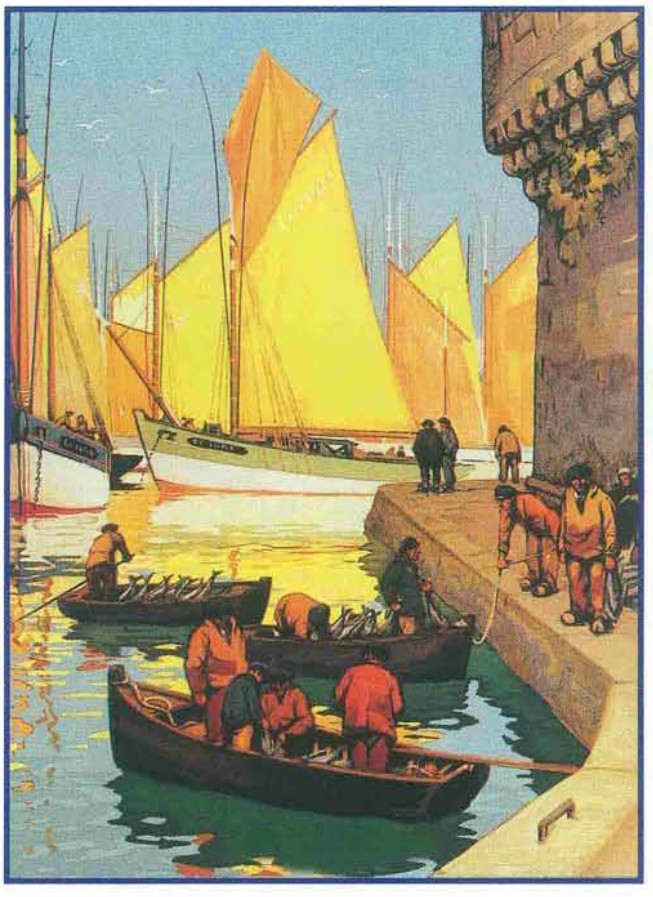
SAMUDRA REPORT

INTERNATIONAL COLLECTIVE IN SUPPORT OF FISHWORKERS



Contents

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Comment

Parking in the right place

The Vth World Parks Congress, held at Durban, South Africa from 8 to 17 September 2003, has called upon the international community to establish by 2012 "a global system of effectively managed, representative networks of marine and coastal protected areas" that includes within its scope the world's oceans and seas beyond national jurisdiction as well.

An important objective of the Congress' recommendations (see page 27) is to integrate marine protected areas (MPAs) with other ocean, coastal and land-governance policies to achieve sustainable fisheries, biodiversity conservation, species protection and integrated watershed, coastal, ocean, high-seas and polar management.

The Congress has proposed an increase in the marine and coastal area under MPAs, and further expects 20 to 30 per cent of each marine coastal habitat to be under "strictly protected reserves" to safeguard diverse marine habitats and ecosystem structures, biodiversity conservation, species protection and recovery of endangered species. It also highlights the importance of implementing an ecosystem-based approach to sustainable fisheries management and marine biodiversity conservation.

The Congress calls upon the world community to engage stakeholders, including local and traditional communities, in the design, planning and management, and sharing of benefits, of MPAs. It also recommends sustainable socioeconomic returns to local and traditional communities and industry, subject to the precautionary approach, which places the burden of proof for the marine environment not being harmed on those who commercially benefit from MPA resources.

We welcome the World Parks Congress' recommendations and hope national and provincial governments will establish MPAs in consultation with local communities and other stakeholders, and that they will refrain from current practices, especially in several Asian countries like the Philippines, Thailand, Indonesia and India, to establish MPAs by keeping out all fishers, including artisanal and small-scale fishers who use environmentally sustainable fishing gear and practices. Even in "strictly protected areas", we would argue for permitting artisanal and community-based fisheries to operate, as long as their fisheries are not a threat to the health of the marine ecosystem, as determined by science-based observations. We would further argue that an ecosystem-based approach to fisheries management should consider fishers as part of the ecosystem, and not as outsiders.

The most difficult challenge to establishing inclusive MPAs, however, would be the conflicting jurisdiction between the environment and fisheries agencies at the government level in most developing countries. In several Asian countries, the environment ministries are responsible for setting up MPAs. Unfortunately, they are notorious for their draconian, species-based protectionist approach and for a colonial perspective that views nature as a preserve to be protected from the human species. The responsibility to set up MPAs should ideally be taken away from the environment ministries and transferred to the fisheries departments, and it is high time that fisheries departments give greater emphasis to sustainable fisheries and healthy coastal, marine ecosystems.

A consultative, ecosystem-based approach, adopting precautionary principles to industrial and other forms of destructive fisheries and land-based sources of pollution, could be an effective management tool for sustaining fisheries and livelihoods. While setting priorities under an ambitious list of actions proposed by the World Parks Congress, national governments should attach the greatest priority to areas of immediate concern to coastal artisanal and small-scale fishing communities.

Sometimes my hands don't work

An account of the life of John, which captures the hardships of black artisanal fishers of South Africa

Artisanal fishing has a distinctive history in South Africa, shaped by the way in which race and class have woven an intricate net of social relations along the shores of the country. There are records of subsistence harvesting of marine resources by indigenous coastal inhabitants for many centuries, but it was in the 18th century that marine capture fisheries really began along the southern African coast. From the onset, the emerging industry was dominated by white merchant capital, which used a range of strategies to consolidate its control over the labour and production processes. The country quite quickly developed a relatively highly industrialized and capitalized fishing industry with a sophisticated management system that eclipsed the subsistence fishing activities of coastal dwellers.

In addition to the subsistence fishers living along the coast, a small-scale and artisanal fishing sector developed in the limited space around the competitive edge of the growing deep-sea sector and the inshore trawling sector in the Western and part of the Eastern Cape. This sector, comprising predominantly coloured fishers, was completely marginalized in the apartheid years following the Second World War, when the State and industry institutionalized a system of racial discrimination, differentiating between 'white', 'coloured' and 'African' fishers. Most of the labour in the white-owned industry was provided by coloured and African fishers. The Western Cape province was declared a 'coloured labour preference zone' and it was extremely difficult for African citizens to live and work in this province. The artisanal fisheries, therefore, comprised mainly coloured fishers who lived in the fishing villages along the Western Cape coast and who supplied the local markets. A few of them owned their own wooden rowing boats, but many worked as crew on white-owned boats on a share basis. The fishing management system that was introduced by the apartheid State ignored the existence of these subsistence and artisanal fishers and focused on regulating the growing commercial sector and, to a limited extent, the recreational sector. These small-scale fishers were considered illegal and were not accommodated by any legislative provisions.

Notwithstanding the strict, racially based influx control laws, poverty in the rural areas of the country forced African rural dwellers to seek work in the growing fishing industry of the Western Cape. Fish merchants and factory owners also actively recruited migrant workers from the impoverished African homelands, regarding these workers as a 'cheap' form of labour.

These workers were usually African males who came to the Cape without their families, and hence their employers did not have to pay them a family wage or provide family accommodation. They could also employ them just for the fishing season. Labour recruiters would travel to the rural areas, promising a better life in Cape Town and the prospect of cash earnings. Some of these fishworkers found their way into the artisanal fishing sector, particularly in the fishing villages close to the urban areas.

Fishers' rights

The election of the first democratic government in South Africa in 1994 and the introduction of a new fishing management policy in the country held promise for subsistence, small-scale and artisanal fishers who hoped that, for the

first time, their rights would be recognized. This hope has not been realized.

The new regime has consolidated the property regime first introduced with the quota system in the 1970s, and the individual quota system now determines access to nearly all marine resources. While limited measures have been adopted for a narrow category of 'subsistence' fishers, to date, the new dispensation has failed to accommodate artisanal fishers in any way, and this category of fishers is not recognized. These fishers now move in a very constrained space, rarely qualifying for the very competitive commercial rights, and remaining dependent on working on other right holders' boats where they can, or by catching fish illegally; they have failed to gain access to marine resources in their own right.

These travails are reflected in the story of John, an artisanal fisher, whose life captures the hardship that black artisanal fishers in South Africa have faced, and continue to face. John is a 49-year old Xhosa-speaking male. The Xhosa culture is one of the dominant African cultures in South Africa. John was born in 1954 but does not remember exactly when, in a small rural village in the Transkei. The Transkei was a rural homeland, designated a 'black area' by the apartheid planners who intended that 13 per cent of the country would be set aside for the black population, despite the fact that black citizens comprised 87 per cent of the population. As a result of the poverty and systematic underdevelopment of this area, life in the Transkei became unsustainable for many who were forced to seek work as migrant workers in the gold mines or other growing industries elsewhere, thereby becoming a cheap labour source for white capital interests.

When he was 21, John came to live in the Western Cape. He says he was forced to come and seek work, as there was no way of sustaining life in the Transkei. He came to the Cape as his brothers worked as contract workers there and told him about the work opportunities available. "The only way you could get work in the Cape if you were black was if you came as a contract worker; otherwise, one would be intimidated and harassed by the police, if you could not show your permit," he recalls.

Contract worker

Initially, John got work through his brothers as a contract worker offloading boats in the Cape Town harbour. He worked there for one year and then, in 1976, went to Saldanha Bay, 120 km north of Cape Town, where he was employed by a fishing company as a contract worker on their stockfish trawlers. He worked for this company for 12 years. During this time, he lived in the company hostel

where a large number of male workers lived together under difficult conditions.

The crew went to sea for approximately 10 days at a time, returned for two, before setting out to sea again. John earned approximately 300 rands per 10-day trip. He only travelled home to see his family once a year. He felt that he was not earning enough money and hence, in 1988, he left this work and moved back to Cape Town and began working for a small fishing company based in a fishing village on the outskirts of Cape Town, pole-fishing for tuna. There they worked on a share basis, the owner getting slightly more than half the share.

During this period, he lived with friends in the informal settlement in the area, now known as Imizama Yethu. They lived in a corrugated iron shack, surviving by supporting one another with their meager earnings. About six years ago, John moved to another fishing village near Cape Town, Kalk Bay, as he felt that the linefish and snoek fishing was a better proposition. In Kalk Bay, he has no fixed place of abode but usually sleeps in one of the boats moored on the harbour. He goes out to sea on one of the boats at 4 a.m. in the morning and returns at 1 p.m. He has worked on the same boat for some time now, but works within the 'pan-a-pan' system, which is a casual system where he can work on any boat that is available. The boats work on a 50:50 share system, whereby the crew can sell half of their catch and the owner takes the other half. They are not provided with any clothing or gear, which they have to purchase themselves, as well as food. They catch snoek, cob, yellowtail and hottentot.

John and the other crew listen on the boat radios to learn where the fish are heading and then decide where to go. He will regularly go to Ysterfontein, a small seaside village approximately 60 km out on the west coast, when the snoek are running. In order to get there from Cape Town, he catches a late train from Kalk Bay to the city centre, then a taxi to a petrol station on the outskirts of the city. He sleeps outside the petrol station overnight and then hitches a ride with a boatowner the following morning. He says that the boatowners know him now and give him a lift. He will stay in Ysterfontein, catching snoek for between seven to 10 days. There are normally about 10 men who work on the snoek boats. In Kalk Bay, there are about 16 men who work on the boat with him. John says, "It's a terrible life, but I can't help it as I am poor. It is better in Kalk Bay, there are different fish there, it's better money... geelbeck and Cape Salmon ...so the money is better. I move around when the snoek runs....I go to Imizama Yethu in Hout Bay if it's good, then back to Kalk Bay."

John has a partner and two young sons, aged four and two years, who live in Langa, one of the oldest African 'townships' in Cape Town. ('Township' is the term used to describe a residential area that was designated a 'black residential area' under the 'group areas' legislation of the apartheid era.)

Due to the transient nature of his work, John is forced to move from one fishing village to another; however, he returns to Langa to spend time with his partner and sons when he has the opportunity to do so and considers this 'home'. Langa was an area designated African during the apartheid years of group areas, when legislative restrictions limited certain racial groups to specific residential areas.

Although these restrictions have long been repealed, the legacy of apartheid planning remains and Langa is a very poor area with few community resources, and the standard of housing is generally poor. John and his partner live in a renovated hostel flat. They have one room and they share communal washing and toilet facilities with at least 12 other families. They pay relatively little for this flat, however, and the greatest expenditure is on his travel to and from the harbours.

Co-operative work

John explained that they work on the 'gazat' system whereby fishers from the township work co-operatively by jointly paying for a taxi to get from the township to the harbour in the hope of work. If they do not get work, then they cannot pay the taxi driver. When they finally get work, even if it's a few days later, they will have to pay the driver. The cost of transport is a huge problem for them.

There is no social security system for artisanal fishworkers in South Africa and because of their status as 'independent contractors', they are not protected by basic legal conditions of employment and other recently introduced labour legislation.

Years of fishing and working in very cold conditions have taken their toll on John's health. He says his body feels very tired and he has been experiencing problems with his fingers and hands as a result of working in wet conditions for so many years. He says, "In the morning, sometimes my hands don't work and my legs don't want to work as well." There are toilets at the harbour but there are no showers or other rest rooms for the fishers. There are no formal death benefits for fishers in Kalk Bay; however, John says that an informal system operates whereby the boatowners do have a policy of paying a death benefit of 3,000 rands in the event of the loss of a fisherman at sea. The fishing community will pass the hat around for all to contribute, if this happens. If, however, a fisher is injured or disabled, he has no disability cover.

John says that it is difficult to state what his income is per month or year as it varies from week to week, depending on the weather and season and fish catches. In the summer months, from October to February, the catch is good and they can earn up to 4,000 rands per month. During the offseason, however, they can earn as little as 30 rands per day and only be able to work eight days per month. On average, spread over a year, he estimates that he earns between 800 and 1,000 rands per month.

The new fishing rights allocation system introduced after the democratic elections aimed to redistribute rights within the industry by encouraging previously disadvantaged individuals and new black entrants to apply for quotas. In 2001, John and a group of nine other artisanal fishers were assisted by a boatowner to apply for a crayfish quota. In 2002, they were allocated a relatively small crayfish quota of 800 kg. In the first year, they were each paid out a portion of the quota, and John put aside some money towards a down payment on a boat, as it has been a long-cherished dream of his to have his own boat. The boatowner then brought five of his own friends and family members into the group and, in the second year, redistributed the gains amongst these individuals as well, even though they were not on the original application.

No money

When John complained, the boatowner refused to catch his full quota for him and, as a result only, 120 kg of the quota was caught, and John and his group have not received any money this year. John's experience in this regard is not unique. The new system has enabled those with

resources such as access to boats and ability to 'work the system' to use poor black fishers and apply for quotas in their names. A system of 'paper quotas' exists, with many of the bona fide fishers not receiving the benefits that they are entitled to.

John is very disillusioned about the current fishing rights allocation policy. He says that the fishing authority, Marine and Coastal Management (MCM), has not consulted the fishers and has ignored their demands. He was part of a protest to MCM several years ago and feels that this did not help. He says, "The new policy is terrible, it's worse than before, terrible for fishermen in the township, for the black fishermen."

He explained that a lot of the white and coloured boatowners have not received licences in the recent allocations and, as a result, there are many fishers out of work. (The fisheries authorities have recently introduced a licensing system in the snoek and handline sectors that has greatly restricted the number of small-boat owners able to put a crew out to sea. The rationale was the marine scientists claim that the resources are threatened. This has had a considerable impact on the livelihoods of artisanal fishers.)

John feels that the MCM is unfair to withhold licences from the small boatowners, while still allowing the large trawlers to operate big quotas, as they are the ones affecting the sustainability of the resource. One of the other problems, he says, is that "there is still a lot of racism amongst the fishers. The coloured boatowners often have meetings with the coloured fishers but do not invite the African fishers to these meetings."

John would very much like to buy his own boat and work with his own crew. He is trying to do a skippers course and a safety course. These courses are run in Cape Town over two weeks and cost approximately 1,000 rands. John has to pay for the course fees and also for transport to the course. He is concerned as he will not be able to work for this period and hence this makes the feasibility of doing a course limited. John recognizes, however, that, given the current policy that prioritizes commercial enterprises and those with existing resources, the only way he will ever succeed is if he tries to compete in this already highly competitive market.

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Traditional fisheries

Along the Konkan coast

The *rampani* fishermen of the Konkan coast of India have convenient and environmentally sustainable fishing practices

The shore or beach seine operated along the Malabar and Konkan coasts of India is locally known as *rampani*. The *rampani* fishery is a seasonal one, lasting for about six months from August to January. The main fish species caught are Indian mackerel, Indian oil sardine and ribbonfish.

In the Konkan coast, the gear is concentrated in Sindhudurg district, an important centre for traditional fisheries. The south Konkan coast is characterized by long sandy beaches, shallow waters, a wide continental shelf and mild currents, all conditions that have helped the fisheries to develop in a sustainable manner.

The traditional *rampani* is around 800-1,000 m long, made by joining together pieces of netting. Both ends of the net are narrower and feature a larger mess size. Towards the centre, the height of the net increases, while its mesh size decreases. Generally, the net is divided into three parts: *karal* (around 16 pieces), *modan* (around 8 pieces) and *ghol* (around 8 pieces). The *karal* and *modan* are at the ends of the net, while the *ghol* is the central portion.

The *rampani* net is collectively owned by 30 to 40 fishermen, who become owners according to their contributions in the form of pieces of net or monetary input. These fishermen become permanent members of the collective. Some temporary members may be included on a daily pay basis. The *rampani* group of fishermen is called *rampani sangh* and each village has two or three *sangh*s, depending on its population. The functioning of the *rampani sangh* is controlled by a headman called *mukadam*. He is responsible for storing all assets of the *rampani sangh*, inclusion of temporary members, decisions about the operation of the net, and so on. He also forms teams comprising eight to 10 fishermen from among the *sangh* members, allocating turns to those who will go out to sea to pay the net on a rotation basis, such that each team gets its turn after a gap of three or four days. The financial affairs of the *sangh* are looked upon by another person, a treasurer called *hundiwala,* who can be changed by the *sangh*. He is responsible for paying wages to temporary members, keeping records of earnings, showing the account to members, and distributing the earnings to them during meetings held every two or three months in a shed located near the shore.

The *rampani* net is generally operated near the shore, at about 4 fathoms depth. At the start of the operation, a person is sent out in a small boat to look for, and signal, the arrival of fish shoals. He locates the shoal based on the colour of the water. Immediately on sighting a shoal, he shouts out a signal, on hearing which net-laden craft called *hoda* set out to pay the net in a semi-circular fashion, encircling the shoal. One end of the net is handed over to a group of fishermen on the shore and the other end of the rope is brought to another point on the shore. The net is then dragged in by both the groups of fishermen.

Rotation system

Rotation is a characteristic feature of this fishery. If there are several *rampani sangh*s operating on the same stretch of shore during the season, each of them gets a turn to fish. This rotation system is based on mutual understanding and is strictly binding on all *rampani sangh*s. Each *sangh* wait for its turn by keeping the net-laden craft anchored near the shore, adjacent to the *sangh* that is already fishing. When their turn comes, the fishermen again go

out in a dinghy to the craft, bring it back, and hand one end of the rope to fishermen on the shore to lay the net.

After landing, the catch is sorted. Some proportion of it is set aside for self-consumption and the rest is auctioned at the beach. If there are no middlemen present at the time, the catch is equally distributed among the members. The members either consume the catch themselves, give it to other people or sell it. If there is a huge amount of catch and it is late in the evening or night, the net is not hauled in entirely but only up to the edge of the shore, and both ends of the rope are brought together and tied to the boat or any other fixed object. The net is then hauled in in the morning, when the catch is auctioned.

A fixed amount of money from the auction is kept aside as working capital and for maintenance costs. The rest is distributed equally among the members, except for the head of the *sangh*, who gets 50 per cent more than the ordinary members.

Over time, the fishermen operating the *rampani* shore seine in Sindhudurg have developed effective ways of resource management that are environmentally sustainable and convenient.

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Report

ICSF **training**

Empowerment through information

ICSF's recent training programme sought to empower fishworker organizations through information and related resources

A total of 26 participants from six countries participated in *Empowerment through Information: ICSFs Training Programme for Fishworker Organizations and Non-governmental Organizations* (NGOs), held in Chennai and Trivandrum, India, between 18 and 28 August 2003. Twenty-four participants came from six countries in Asia, namely, Philippines, India, Cambodia, Indonesia, Sri Lanka, and Thailand, while two were from South Africa. Participants included representatives of artisanal fishworker organizations and NGOs working with, and providing support to, artisanal fishing communities in their countries.

The programme sought to explore the potential relevance of international legal instruments and processes to field-level experiences and developments. The methodology used was to start off with a presentation by resource person/s for each session, to be followed by presentations by participants.

The following themes were discussed at the sessions: property rights and fisheries resources management; international legal instruments relevant to fisheries; rights and responsibilities of fishworkers in managing small-scale fisheries; coastal area management; labour; trade, environment and subsidies; women in fisheries; and information resources on fisheries, a hands-on session that exposed the participants to the basics of locating and accessing online resources as well as a tour of the ICSF Documentation Centre and its resources.

Two panel discussions dealt with international instruments for the management of small-scale fisheries and those relevant for coastal area management. A group discussion followed on the relevance of these instruments to ground realities and the extent to which they were integrated into legislation at the national level.

At one post-dinner session, the film *Under the Sun: The Transient Fisherfolk of Jambudwip*, produced by ICSF and directed by Rita Banerji, was screened. The film documents the work and life of small-scale fishworkers using the island of Jambudwip in the Sunderbans mangrove forest in West Bengal, India, for drying fish. These fishworkers are now being threatened with eviction in the name of forest conservation. Another post-dinner session focused on fisheries trade and food security.

In general, the emphasis in all the sessions was to ensure that expertise available with participants was shared with the rest of the group. The methodology used was also a function of the diversity among participants. Several participants had difficulty following the English language. Use of audio-visual aids was encouraged, especially as it facilitated better understanding among participants who had some difficulty with English.

Preparatory material

Given that a major focus of the five-day training programme was on international legal instruments and processes of relevance to artisanal and small-scale fishworkers, as part of the preparatory material for the training programme, the ICSF Documentation Centre had compiled information on international instruments and institutions of relevance to fishworkers. A user-friendly interactive CD-ROM titled *International Instruments and Institutions Related to Fisheries* and a booklet titled *Handbook on International Legal Instruments Related to Fisheries* was prepared as a ready reckoner on these instruments and processes. A Flash

presentation based on the *UN Treaty Handbook* and included in the CD-ROM, was shown to participants.

The five-day training programme was followed by a four-day field visit to Trivandrum in Kerala. The visit was anchored by the South Indian Federation of Fishermen Societies (SIFFS) and included visits to village-level societies, boatbuilding yards, outboard motor repair units, ice factories and other activities of SIFFS. It also included a visit to the office of the Kerala Independent Fishworkers Federation, the National Fishworkers Forum (NFF) and the World Forum of Fisher Peoples (WFFP).

At the close of the training programme and field visit, a questionnaire was circulated to all participants, seeking their feedback. The feedback, in general, was positive. Several participants requested regular follow-up of the programme, and similar programmes to be organized at the national level. They also requested a revision of the handbook to include illustrations, as this would make it easier for fishworker organizations to use in their work. Several other suggestions were made. Some participants proposed that for future programmes, participants with comparable levels of experience should be invited, and that selection criteria should be clearly stated in the invitation. Some participants also felt that the programme was too dense. Another suggestion was to circulate the programme and background information beforehand, so that participants could come prepared for the programme. For the field visit, several participants said that they would have liked to spend more time interacting with fishermen and fishing communities.

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Aquaculture

From farm to plate

International trade in aquaculture products has a human development dimension of special interest to the Asia-Pacific region

The Network of Aquaculture Centres in Asia-Pacific (NACA) is an intergovernmental organization promoting co-operation in development of responsible aquaculture, and improving aquatic resources management in Asia. There are 15 full member governments, and a further six participate actively in the work of the organization. With aquaculture products becoming significant in international seafood trade, there is an increasing trade dimension to NACA's work.

Aquaculture and small-scale fisheries are an important component of the livelihoods of many millions of people in Asia, including some of the poorest, and the need to better understand the implications of the seafood trade for human development, and to develop strategies to address priority concerns, is becoming urgent.

A regional consultation *Aquamarkets 2003: Market Access for Aquaculture Products*, organized by NACA and the Government of the Philippines in June 2003, assisted by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the World Trade Organization (WTO), helped identify some of the key points to be addressed. This paper highlights some of the outcomes from the consultation, and issues emerging from other NACA work, concerning international trade in aquaculture products.

As readers of *SAMUDRA Report* know well, small-scale and subsistence fisheries, and aquaculture, play important roles in the livelihoods of many rural people throughout the region, although the significance is often 'hidden' in national, regional and international statistics, and even rural development projects. In the lower Mekong basin, for example, the livelihoods of as many as 40 mn people, out of the 60 mn people living in the basin, are in some way connected or dependent on the Mekong rivers aquatic resources (directly in fishing, or 'foraging' for a wide range of aquatic resources from lakes, rice fields, swamps and floodplains, but also indirectly in marketing, processing and other activities). While these people are not all involved in trade of fishery products, the point is that in analyzing the relations between aquatic resources and trade, and particularly when considering the human development dimensions of this trade, the diversity of linkages between fisheries and aquaculture and the livelihoods of rural people must be recognized and understood.

Another example from Vietnam indicates that 80 per cent of the communities in coastal Vietnam are in some way involved in fishing—this goes way beyond the traditional statistics on numbers of 'fishermen' or 'fishers'. The catfish farming industry in the Mekong delta of Vietnam is another example, with an astonishing array of stakeholders involved, including some very poor people, participating in feed collection and preparation, supply of raw ingredients, fish seed and marketing, processing of catfish for exports, and recycling of off-cuts, often by women, many of whom have been affected by the recent United States (US) 'anti-dumping' decision.

Better understanding

With the fishery sector as an important area for human development in Asia, an understanding of the array of stakeholders involved, and indeed ensuring their better participation in policy-setting processes and trade discussions, is necessary to bring a more

human development-oriented dimension to trade policy.

Asia is the major producer of aquaculture products. In production volume and value, developing countries in Asia have huge development stakes in the seafood trade for both aquaculture and capture-fishery products. Asia is the biggest producer of aquaculture products, contributing 90 per cent to global production. Aquaculture is the world's fastest growing food sector, and one in four fish now comes from aquaculture. The sector will continue to grow. Asia is already facing increasing trade-related constraints with aquaculture products, which are likely to substantially increase as the sector grows.

In such situations, understanding of links between trade and human development, awareness-raising and actions to address key issues are essential. Aquaculture itself has not been without its critics in both developing and developed countries, and particularly important are concerns about social and environmental impacts of some highly traded products such as shrimp. While such discussions will certainly continue, they are increasingly influencing trade and marketing of aquaculture products in some major importers, and will need to be addressed through better management as the sector grows. Asian governments and seafood businesses are moving towards strengthening implementation of sanitary and phytosanitary standards (SPS) in aquaculture production, to address food safety and aquatic animal health requirements of trade.

Traceability of product will become essential for products to enter major importing markets. Application of hazard analysis critical control points (HACCP) is now moving back down the production chain from the processing plants to the producers, and eventually will include all inputs to aquaculture, such as feed and seed. As many participants in *Aquamarkets 2003* emphasized, such requirements may be particularly difficult for small-scale producers, raising concerns that the costs of compliance to adopt international SPS may be substantially beyond the capacity of small-scale producers, and small-scale trading / supply networks.

Active engagement

It is increasingly clear that developing countries need to engage more actively and effectively in the standard-setting processes for aquaculture products, such such as the FAO / World Health Organization Codex and OIE (Office International des Epizooties or the World Organization for Animal Health). The fishery sector in Asia, for example, and thanks to a joint FAO-NACA-OIE initiative, has only recently started to engage in OIE's aquatic animal health standard setting, traditionally the domain of livestock

veterinarians. The Manila consultation has also emphasized the importance of developing 'common positions' through co-operation among Asian countries, and putting forward these positions more effectively to international standard-setting bodies.

Awareness-raising of the importance of international standards in trade of aquatic products, and capacity-building among governments and the private sector is also important. Many fishery agencies in the region are simply not aware of the issues and their implications, but small-scale producers will be hit hard by the trade standards, when applied. The implications of SPS measures are likely to be particularly significant for the small-scale sector and need to be better understood. Producers will increasingly bear the costs of applying new standards for food safety and animal health, and are probably least well-equipped to do this. Measures need to be explored and put in place if these small producers are not going to be squeezed out of the seafood trading system.

Certification of aquaculture products and ecolabelling is becoming an increasingly important issue for Asia. Both the US and the European Union (EU) will require traceability of aquaculture products in some form in the near future, and international certification and ecolabelling of aquaculture products are imminent. Some schemes already exist, such as the organic certified shrimp products from Vietnam, but, overall, product volumes are small. The potential for labelling to become a further non-tariff barrier is a concern expressed by developing countries in Asia during the Manila consultations, and the implications for small-scale aquaculture producers again may be particularly significant. Certification related to better management of aquaculture, if implemented in a fair and practical way, sensitive to the needs of small-scale producers in developing countries, may provide opportunities to support responsible and sustainable development of aquaculture, addressing some of the environmental and social concerns about some forms of aquaculture. However, the active participation of Asia in the process of development of certification principles and systems that really take account of the special circumstances of aquaculture development in Asia will be essential if such goals are to be achieved. The issues at stake here are very significant, in terms of the number of small-scale producers (and input suppliers, traders, etc.) and financial sums involved. At the same time, the possibility of increased confusion in seafood markets, and additional cost burdens among producers and producing countries, exists from multiple certification schemes. As some form of certification and ecolabelling of aquaculture products is inevitable, the time is right to actively engage producers and producing countries of Asia in the process of developing fair and, as far as possible, harmonized approaches to certification.

With increasing attention to food safety, labelling and traceability, market chains are becoming more vertically integrated, according to the 'farm-to-plate' philosophy. Thailand is planning a massive campaign in 2004 by declaring it 'Food Safety Year' to improve awareness and farming systems for safe aquaculture production, and to link 'safe' food producers to processors and market access. Capacity-building and technical assistance will be essential to ensure small-scale producers can participate, and hopefully, benefit from such trends. The implications of traceability for the small-scale services and input suppliers surrounding some aquaculture systems, with very fragmented input supply and trading systems (for example, the catfish industry), remain to be seen.

At the same time, vertically integrated market chains may provide producers with more stable markets, and even perhaps opportunities for funding from 'higher' up the chain to support costs of transition to better practices. Consider shrimp farming which generates globally around US$6-7 bn at the farm gate.

Safety requirements

At the consumer plate, the product is worth US$40 bn or more. The strict food safety requirements and SPS measures being required are increasingly being put on the producer at the bottom of the chain, adding an additional cost to small-scale

producers at a time when commodity prices for major aquaculture products are, at best, stable, and are likely to go down. There must be ways to bring some of the value at the consumer plate to assist producers develop, and adapt to, the modern market chains and consumer demand.

Traditional fisheries and aquaculture institutions are not yet well equipped to address issues surrounding trade and aquaculture products. With major shifts occurring in trading patterns and market chains, the right sort of institutional support will be necessary for small-scale aquaculture producers (and fishers) and the network of support services and associated small-scale industries, to adapt to the changing international fishery trading system. The social implications are highly significant. There are considerable positive human development impacts that can occur through responsible development of aquaculture and international trade in aquaculture products. Nevertheless, institutional and policy changes may be necessary also, such as more emphasis on empowering farmers and farming groups to organize at the base of the chain. The opportunities for 'self-help groups'—formal or informal organizations of small-scale farmers—as a way of bringing small-scale producers together, and a foundation for better market access are promising, but remain to be fully explored. The issues need to be clearly understood, and trading positions and capacity-building, national policies and institutions put in place to provide the necessary support.

As many Asian nations face common issues affecting the aquaculture sector, there is a considerable opportunity and need to improve national, regional and international co-operation to share information on markets and trade in aquaculture products, and to ensure that relevant information on fisheries and aquaculture are provided to those engaged in trade negotiations, and to enhance co-operation between the private and public sectors. *Aquamarkets 2003* emphasized that nations in the Asia-Pacific region should develop common stances on issues of interest to the aquaculture sector, such as in harmonizing standards and technical regulations, regionally as well as internationally. Apart from SPS standards, there are a number of other trading issues and agreements being discussed in the 'Doha Development Round', even after the problems at Cancun, including multilateral environment agreements, subsidies, services and others, which will have an influence on international trade of aquaculture products. Better understanding of the issues, and participation of developing countries in the discussions, will be essential.

This paper by Michael Phillips (Michael.Phillips@enaca.org), Pedro Bueno, Graham Haylor and Arun Padiyar of the Network of Aquaculture Centres in Asia-Pacific (www.enaca.org), Bangkok, Thailand, is a development of a statement made to the Regional Consultation on Trade, Human Development, Agriculture, Fisheries and Geographical Indications, 16-17 June 2003, Hanoi, Vietnam (see www.asiatradeinitiative.org)

Fisheries subsidies

Fishing for subsidies

This is a listing of proposals of country Members of the World Trade Organization on fisheries subsidies

The Doha Round of the World Trade Organization (WTO), in November 2001, called for negotiations "to clarify and improve WTO disciplines on fisheries subsidies, taking into account the importance of this sector to developing countries". It also took note of specific subsidies in "achieving legitimate development goals" and the demand from developing countries to treat their technology research and development funding, production diversification and development, and implementation of environmentally sound methods of production, as non-actionable subsidies.

Following, in chronological order, are the submissions of WTO Members on fisheries subsidies, individually and collectively, to the Negotiating Group on Rules after the Doha Round.

Friends of Fish

Australia, Chile, Ecuador, Iceland, New Zealand, Peru, the Philippines and the United States—a group of eight countries called the 'Friends of Fish'—argues for a separate sectoral negotiation on fisheries subsidies since the fisheries sector is governed by dynamics that are different from those of other business sectors. They further argue that subsidies and countervailing measures (SCM) rules primarily address market distortions arising from subsidization and that these rules "do not adequately address other negative trade, environment and development impacts of fisheries subsidies, particularly the distinctive production distortions subsidies can cause in the fisheries sector". They further contend that the heterogeneous nature of fisheries products and the diffused nature of support to the sector make it harder to demonstrate the existence of market distortions of the kind envisaged by existing SCM disciplines in fisheries. They also argue that, unlike in other sectors, subsidized fisheries production in one country could have a trade-distorting effect on another country in the form of changes to the relative competitive positions at market of producers in the respective countries. Moreover, subsidies could also distort access to shared fish stocks, limiting productive access by other participants by depleting an exhaustible resource. They argue, therefore, for improved WTO disciplines on fisheries subsidies.

China

China would like to see better recognition of diversity of subsidies in fisheries and aquaculture and where such subsidies are granted—whether they are granted in coastal waters, the exclusive economic zone (EEZ) or the high seas. It highlights the importance of recognizing the differential impact of subsidies on trade, environment and sustainable development, and argues for an early determination on the scope of fisheries subsidies to be negotiated. It emphasizes the importance of according special and differential (S&D) treatment to developing countries, particularly least developed countries (LDCs), while clarifying and improving the disciplines on fisheries subsidies. It defends subsidies that contribute to the protection of the environment and sustainable development of fisheries resources, such as those on infrastructure, disease control, scientific research and training, and alternative employment of fishers.

Japan

Japan, which gives high levels of subsidies to its fishing industry, however, argues that no special disciplines are required for fisheries subsidies. The existing SCM discipline should be seen only within the

framework of trade distortions and not as addressing distortions in access to productive resources arising from subsidies. It believes in establishing trade rules that contribute to sustainable fisheries by controlling overfishing that ignores the resource status, or fishing activities ignoring conservation and management rules.

It further argues that all factors that hamper sustainable use of resources, including fisheries subsidies, are to be examined in terms of resource conservation. It is, therefore, not for improved WTO disciplines on subsidies but for a greater role for regional fisheries management bodies and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO).

Rather than a special and separate treatment of fisheries subsidies, Japan insists on discussing fisheries subsidies from the viewpoint of trade distortion, as part of the overall clarification and improvement of the SCM Agreement.

New Zealand

New Zealand, however, argues that it is difficult to demonstrate trade-distorting effects of subsidies on market share or price due to the heterogeneous nature of fisheries products, and demonstrates the practical difficulty in applying the current SCM rules in the fisheries sector. It reiterates the submission of Friends of Fish for specific measures to improve WTO disciplines on fisheries subsidies.

Korea

Korea fears that a sectoral treatment of fisheries subsidies, as demanded by Friends of Fish, would lead to the fragmentation of the SCM regime, and that the peculiarities of the fisheries subsidies are not of such a nature as to justify the sectoral treatment of fisheries subsidies at the risk of the fragmentation of the SCM regime. Citing a study by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), Korea challenges the subsidies figures used by the Friends of Fish and argues that the actual level of subsidies of OECD countries is only less than half of the OECD members' subsidies as cited in the submission of Friends of Fish. Further citing a study by the Asia-Pacific Economic Co-operation (APEC), Korea argues that the bulk of fisheries subsidies are not, in fact, provided by OECD members, but by developing countries. Korea argues that it is premature to base WTO discussions on the assumption that subsidies, rather than inadequate management of fisheries resources, is responsible for the depletion of fish stocks.

United States

While agreeing that ineffective fisheries management regimes in many cases has contributed to the levelling off of marine capture fisheries production as well as

trade in fish and fish products, the US believes that global levels of subsidies have played a significant role in the decline of certain fish stocks. According to the US, the OECD and the APEC studies, quoted by Korea, had limitations that underestimated the magnitude of subsidies. Even a conservative estimate of global level of subsidies at a level of US$10-15 bn—somewhere between 15 and 20 per cent of aggregate dockside revenues of US$70-80 bn—is three to four times higher, the US argues, than the five per cent threshold for presuming 'serious prejudice' under the now lapsed Article 6.1 of the SCM Agreement.

Since subsidies appreciably reduce costs and/or increase revenues, it inevitably encourages more fishing effort and investment in overfished and depleted fisheries, especially in developed countries. There is also export of excess fishing capacity from developed to developing countries, which curtails the potential of these countries to develop their own fisheries. Finally, the US argues that subsidies make management matters even more difficult by exacerbating the problem of resource overexploitation and overcapitalization.

Group of Six Members

The Group of Six Members, namely, Argentina, Chile, Iceland, New Zealand, Norway and Peru—also members of Friends of Fish—observes, in its submission, that different positions on subsidies in the fisheries sector have now been well aired and that it is time to start looking in more detail at the actual subsidies. It further observes that it is important to have a breakdown of subsidy programmes by type as a basis for future work on clarification and improvement of WTO disciplines affecting the fisheries sector. Its proposal supports categorization of fisheries subsidies instead of addressing all 'fisheries subsidies' in an undifferentiated manner. In this context, it surveys the APEC, OECD, US, FAO, and United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) proposals for classification of fisheries subsidies.

Korea

Korea suspects the submission by the above Group of Six Members and suggests that the Negotiating Group on Rules should embark on its own categorization of fisheries subsidies. After reiterating its earlier reservation on discussions on fisheries subsidies in the Rules Group, and the need for special and separate treatment for fisheries subsidies, Korea questions the submission of the Group of Six Members and argues that the Group has not provided sufficient reasoning why such a categorization is necessary. If at all any categorization is necessary to assess the trade effects of various subsidies, Korea insists on the 'traffic light' categories of prohibited, actionable and non-actionable subsidies as provided in the SCM Agreement. If a categorization of fisheries subsidies is necessary, then FAO or OECD would be the right place to do so, argues Korea, since they have far longer and deeper institutional experiences in the study of fisheries subsidies issues, in comparison with the Rules Negotiation Group.

United States

In a yet another submission, the US demonstrates more flexibility in its position on fisheries subsidies, and recognizes that, while some government programmes promote overcapacity and overfishing, others might help to reduce, and contribute to, fisheries sustainability. The latter is not the focus of the negotiations in the Rules Group, says the US, nor is it artisanal fisheries in developing countries. The government programmes that promote overcapacity and overfishing, or have other trade-distorting effects, are subsidies that have harmful effects by reducing the costs of inputs (money, goods or services) below what would otherwise be the case under normal market conditions, or enhancing revenues and income beyond what would otherwise be earned.

Towards clarifying and improving WTO disciplines on fisheries subsidies, the US proposes expanding the prohibited, or 'red light' category subsidies, to include subsidies that directly promote overcapacity and overfishing, or that have other direct trade-distorting effects. The US also proposes a new 'dark amber' category of subsidies, which is modelled after the now-expired paragraph 1 of Article 6 that reverses the burden of proof. These subsidies would be presumed to be

harmful unless the subsidizing country could unequivocally demonstrate that no overcapacity / overfishing or other adverse trade effects have resulted from the subsidies.

Towards better assessment and categorization of subsidies, the US highlights the need to improve the quality of fisheries subsidies notifications under the SCM Agreement, as well as the need to provide fishery-specific information such as management regimes. It also talks of making notifications of fisheries subsidies under SCM Agreement more complementary of existing fishery-related notifications in other forums, for example, on fishing capacity at the FAO. The US also calls upon other Members to consider making the fisheries subsidies notification requirement more effective.

European Communities

The European Communities (EC) observes that the emphasis of the debate on fisheries subsidies is more on highlighting the specific areas of concern on fisheries and the position of most members in relation to these concerns, and less on specific solutions to the problems that are identified. In its submission to take forward the process in the Rules Group, the EC is for creating conditions for environmentally, economically and socially sound fisheries and aquaculture activities and for the sustainability of the fisheries and aquaculture sector. It believes in matching capacity to the available fish stocks, thus contributing to sustainable exploitation of fishery resources.

The EC talks about policy adjustments in its fisheries to withdraw capacity by scrapping of fishing vessels and by phasing out of subsidies for fleet renewal by 2004. It informs that its support measures for the equipment and modernization of fishing vessels are currently limited to improve safety, product quality or working conditions or switch to more selective fishing techniques.

The EC believes that subsidies that encourage investment in fishing fleets not only work against the objective of achieving and maintaining fisheries resources at sustainable levels, but also produce negative economic effects in the fishing industry, and promote oversupply of capital by artificially reducing the costs and risks of investment. It is for considering capacity-enhancing subsidies, like those for fleet renewal, and for the permanent transfer of fishing capacity to third countries, including under joint venture regimes, as prohibited subsidies. It recognizes that a short transitional period is required to allow the fishing industry to adapt to the new situation. It, however, defends as permitted subsidies—meaning non-actionable—those subsidies for retraining

of fishers, earlier retirement schemes and diversification, improving safety, product quality or working conditions or to switch to more selective fishing techniques, for stopping fishing activities due to natural calamities, for scrapping of vessels and for withdrawal of fishing capacity.

The EC supports S&D treatment for developing countries to achieve legitimate development goals and to draw up rules that take into account the distinct needs of developing countries in fisheries. It also highlights the importance of greater transparency in the notification of fisheries subsidies so that there could be better analysis of the magnitude and the impacts of subsidies. The EC would like to see improved transparency as one of the main objectives and outcomes of the negotiations on subsidies. It proposes that subsidy programmes meeting the terms of the 'permitted' subsidies would have to be notified to the WTO Committee on SCM to fully qualify for this category. It also proposes that the WTO Secretariat should keep a 'scoreboard', accessible to the public, of notifications per Member and per type of programmes.

Japan

Responding to the submissions of the US and the Group of Six Members, Japan would like to know if there is indeed consensus, as suggested by the US submission in the Negotiating Group on Rules, on subsidy reforms to achieve capacity reduction and sustainable fisheries. It also seeks to clarify the meaning of 'artisanal' in the US submission—whether or not it means small-scale coastal fisheries, and, if that were the case, if subsidies to the medium- and large-scale fisheries in developing countries would be subject to discussion or not. Japan is not sure why the Group of Six Members would like to proceed with categorization of fishing subsidies, although there is no consensus in the Negotiating Group on Rules on how to view various types of government programmes in the fisheries sector.

China

China welcomes the US submission proposing a 'traffic lights' approach and it believes it provides the conceptual solution for the negotiations on fisheries subsidies and the ways to classify fisheries subsidies. China would, however, like WTO members to intensely discuss an acceptable method of classifying various existing fisheries subsidies and, in this context, it proposes that the Negotiating Group on Rules should also discuss the classification methods on fisheries subsidies of OECD and FAO. While appreciating the role of such an approach in improving disciplines on government programmes that promote overcapacity and overfishing, China seems to consider the management of fisheries subsidies only to be a national/regional responsibility.

China further seeks mechanisms to strengthen the notification procedure on fisheries subsidies so that Members notify their fisheries subsidies in an efficient and comprehensive manner.

China considers the protection and development of aquaculture of importance, considering the poor status of marine capture fisheries resources and it believes that "full consideration should be given to the specificity of aquaculture, particularly the nature of agricultural products embodied in aquatic products".

Korea

In response to the US submission on 'traffic lights' approach to fisheries subsidies, Korea wonders if clarification and improvement of WTO rules on fisheries subsidies as mandated by the Doha ministerial indeed warrants "to provide better disciplines on government programmes that promote overcapacity and overfishing, or have other trade-distorting effects", as proposed by the US.

Korea considers it premature to introduce a 'traffic lights' system before there is agreement on whether or not fisheries subsidies cause resources depletion, whether it is difficult to address the trade-distorting effects of fisheries subsidies by the current SCM Agreement, and whether and why there is a need for special classification schemes only for fisheries subsidies. "Looking ahead without clearing these basic issues is as dangerous as building a structure on flawed foundation", argues Korea. Korea has reservations about a 'traffic lights'

system to address environmental effects in addition to trade effects since it believes that the WTO Agreements are "nothing but trade agreements". It is also of the view that the negotiations on fisheries subsidies lack proper principles and definitions, which are yet to be established.

Since resource depletion is an environmental aspect, Korea argues that it is outside the scope of the work of the Rules Group and concludes that "WTO is simply not the place to lay the groundwork for the environmental effect of subsidies, not can it responsibly create and enforce adequate disciplines on the subject."

Chile

In the context of subsidized high-seas fleet operations of some countries for highly migratory fish stocks, Chile argues that the effect of such subsidies is to limit access to common fisheries resources for non-subsidizing fleets and countries and to highly migratory fisheries resources under national jurisdiction.

Limited access unquestionably constitutes a barrier to trade, contends Chile, for all non-subsidizing countries and diminishes their opportunities to participate in international fish trade on equal terms. Moreover, Chile is also concerned about the loss of share in the markets of subsidizing countries that are self-sufficient, thanks to the harvests made by their subsidized fleets. Since it is difficult to demonstrate the damaging trade effects of fisheries subsidies, in the context of the existing SCM Agreement, Chile believes it is important to improve SCM disciplines.

Chile also believes in a 'traffic lights' approach to fisheries subsidies and proposes prohibited, or 'red light', subsidies similar to those proposed by the US. They, *inter alia*, include (i) subsidies designed to transfer a country's fishing vessels for operation in the high seas or in the waters of a third country; (ii) subsidies that contribute to the purchase of fishing vessels, whether new or old; (iii) subsidies to help modernize an existing fleet; (iv) subsidies that contribute to reducing the costs of production factors; (v) subsidies that confer tax benefits to the fishery industry in the realms of production, processing and marketing; and (vi) subsidized credit. All other subsidies would be in the 'amber', or actionable, category, subject to compulsory notification requirement. Any country extending subsidies that are not notified should be asked to demonstrate that the subsidy in question does not cause trade injury to the Complaining Member.

Chile, however, observes that the onus to demonstrate trade injury is on the Complaining Member in the case of subsidies that may not affect a third country and may be necessary to conserve

fisheries resources, and social development of communities. Chile mentions two subsidies in this context: one, subsidies of a social nature, the final purpose of which is to resolve problems affecting small-scale fisheries, for the benefit of the coastal communities and with a view to improve the quality of life; and, two, subsidies relating to fisheries management, including research and administrative and other measures, the sole purpose of which is to ensure the sustainability of marine living resources and their environment.

With regard to notification of fisheries subsidies, Chile proposes notification of fisheries subsidies complementing existing notifications in other forums, especially the FAO. Notifications relating to fisheries subsidies should be mandatory, argues Chile, in particular the subsidies in the 'amber' category. Chile also endorses the EC proposal on keeping a 'scoreboard' of fisheries subsidy notifications of Members.

Group of Small Vulnerable Coastal States

The submission of Antigua and Barbuda, Belize, Fiji Islands, Guyana, the Maldives, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands and St Kitts and Nevis, a group of small vulnerable coastal States that has a relatively high dependence on both domestic and export fisheries, is to address the sustainable development concerns of small vulnerable coastal States and to seek operationalizing proposals with regard to S&D treatment in fisheries for developing coastal States in general, and small vulnerable coastal States in particular.

In this context, the Group endorses the Chinese proposal on S&D treatment in fisheries subsidies negotiations. It argues that fisheries management issues are not an appropriate subject matter for the WTO and that these issues should be discussed in more appropriate forums such as the FAO.

The submission of the Group gives an introduction to the fisheries activities of small vulnerable coastal States. These States (i) depend on revenue generation from access fees for distant-water fleets; (ii) have domestic and foreign industrial fishers operating for export in the EEZ and territorial waters to supply canneries, loining facilities and domestic processing facilities; and (iii) have artisanal fishers in the EEZ and territorial waters for the domestic and the export market.

The governments of these States have been attempting to localize the distant-water fisheries as well as develop linkages between inshore fishery in the territorial sea and other sectors of their economies, which include tourism, a substantial consumer of both domestic and imported marine products to coastal States.

The small vulnerable coastal States argue that significant government revenue has been generated from access fees from developing and developed-country distant-water fishing fleets in many LDCs in particular that have practiced prudent fisheries management policies, where there are stocks in excess of the existing sustainable catch capacity of the domestic fleets. The access fees provide invaluable development assistance, particularly to marine resource rich small vulnerable coastal States, and, therefore, if negotiations on fisheries subsidies follow the logic of the submission of the Friends of Fish, they are concerned it would result in disciplines on fisheries access fees.

Some of the small vulnerable coastal States, although they do not offer access to distant-water fishing nations, nevertheless have sought to develop domestic capacity to use their own marine resources for development purposes. Many of them have developed strategic alliance with distant-water nations to develop and land their catches from their own EEZs.

In order to attract local and foreign investment, many of them have offered incentives to both local and foreign fishers to supply domestic processing facilities. These incentives are vital if the small vulnerable coastal States are to develop their fisheries sectors and they warn that they would oppose any new disciplines that either directly or indirectly undermine their development efforts in the fisheries sector.

The artisanal fisheries sector remains central to the subsistence and 'monetized livelihood' of coastal populations in the developing world. The small vulnerable coastal States further argue that any new disciplines on fisheries subsidies should exempt government programmes to raise income levels of artisanal fishers.

Under S&D treatment, they propose clarification of Article 1 of the SCM Agreement to explicitly exclude (i) any development assistance granted to small vulnerable coastal States by developed or more advanced developing countries to facilitate sustainable fisheries management; (ii) incentives granted for the development and 'domestication' of their fisheries by small vulnerable coastal States; and (iii) measures undertaken by governments of small vulnerable coastal States to assist their artisanal fisheries sector.

This compilation of submissions of WTO Members on fisheries subsidies has been done by Sebastian Mathew, Programme Adviser, ICSF (icsf@vsnl.com)

Sea cucumbers

A resource in peril

Indiscriminate fishing of sea cucumbers in Indian seas has led to their overexploitation

Sea cucumbers or *Holothurians* are an interesting group of marine invertebrates under the phylum *Echinodermata.* They are worm-like animals with exuberant colour, inhabiting a variety of marine habitats like mud flats, sand flats, seagrass beds, coral reefs and abyssal plains. They are bestowed with the power of regeneration and are capable of growing into two separate individuals if cut into two equal halves. Ecologically, sea cucumbers are very important as 'bioturbators' reworking the grain size of the substratum and releasing nutrients from the substratum into the sea water. Sea cucumbers, by their repeated digging action, aerate the substratum.

Sea cucumbers are an important commercial fishery resource. They are boiled, dried or smoked to prepare a product known as *beche de mer.* In China and many Southeast Asian countries, *beche de mer* is a delicacy. In *beche de mer* production, only those species of sea cucumbers with thick body walls are used. Apart from its value as a delicacy, *beche de mer* also finds an important place in the traditional Chinese medicine. *Beche de mer* is a revenue-spinning product in many of the tropical countries around the globe.

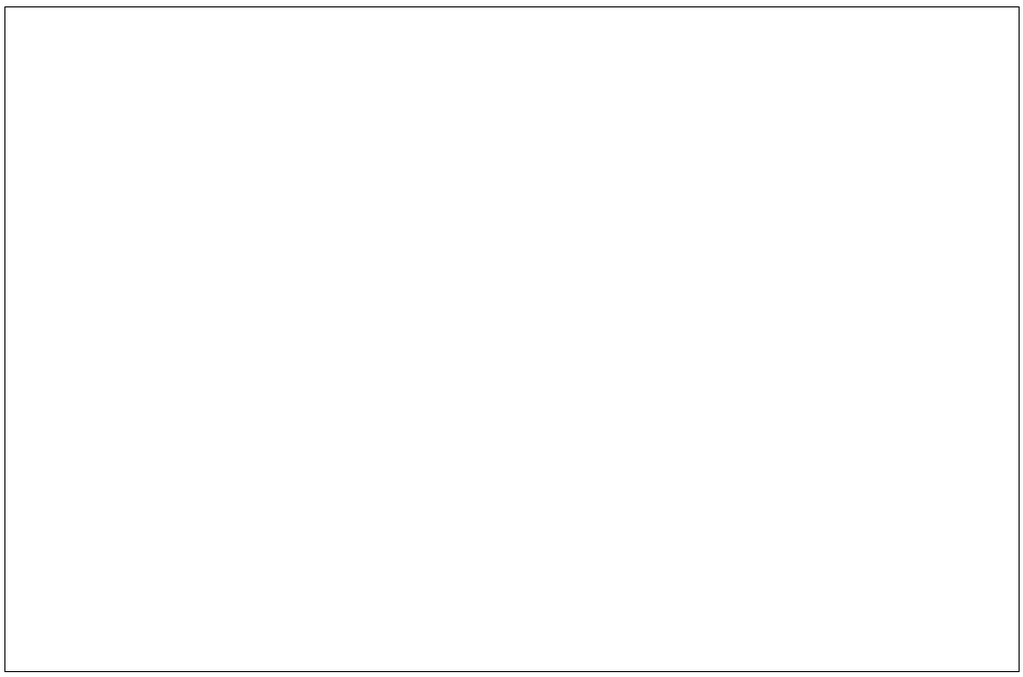
About 200 species of sea cucumbers can be found in the Indian seas, of which only a dozen species are harvested for preparing *beche de mer.* Andaman and Nicobar islands have the richest diversity of sea cucumbers in India, followed by Lakshwadweep islands, Gulf of Mannar, Palk Bay and Gulf of Kachchh. In the southeast coast of India, Palk Bay and Gulf of Mannar are known for *beche de mer* resources. The most commonly exploited species for the *beche de mer* trade in Palk Bay and Gulf of Mannar are *Holothuria scabra* (sandfish), *Holothuria spinifera*, *Holothuria atra* (lolly fish) and *Actinopyga echinites* (deep-water redfish). All these species are available upto 20-m depth and are intensively collected by skindivers.

Chinese visitors to India brought the technique of processing sea cucumbers for the *beche de mer* trade. The Indian *beche de mer* industry is more than 1,000 years old. Palk Bay and Gulf of Mannar, with their potential sea cucumber resources, supported the *beche de mer* industry in India. Palk Bay was the hot spot area for sea cucumber collection, processing and export. It remains famous for its oldest *beche de mer* industry in the country. The industry grew at a tremendous rate in Palk Bay and Gulf of Mannar due to the attractive price and increasing demand for *beche de mer* in the international market. More *beche de mer* processing units were established in Palk Bay than in any other region of the country. A *beche de mer* industry also existed in Andaman and Nicobar and Lakshadweep islands, but not as successful as in Palk Bay and Gulf of Mannar. In the 1980s and 1990s, the industry was generating considerable foreign exchange for the country. Various factors like overexploitation, conservation and increasing population subsequently led to a downturn in the industry in India.

Indiscriminate fishing of sea cucumbers in Palk Bay and Gulf of Mannar led to the overexploitation of resources. Higher concentration of skindivers engaged in sea cucumber collection and intensive trawling in Palk Bay and Gulf of Mannar have depleted the stocks to such a level that they need a long time for revival.

Selective harvest

Selective harvest depletes a particular species. For example, *Holothuria scabra,* which yields high-quality *beche de mer,* is



more intensively collected in Palk Bay and Gulf of Mannar than *Holothuria spinifera*, *Holothuria atra* and *Actinopyga echinites*. The population of *Holothuria scabra* is dwindling at an alarming rate. Fishing pressure increases with rising prices for *beche de mer* in the international market. The peak spawning season for *H. scabra* is July and October, which coincides with the peak fishing season, causing irreparable damage to the stock.

Use of drag-nets in the shallow seagrass beds damages the sea grasses and they are washed ashore. Sea grasses play a major role in the lifecycle of sea cucumbers. They serve as a substrate for the settlement of pentactulae larvae and also as a nursery ground for juveniles. Habitat destruction reduces the recruitment rate of sea cucumbers. Particularly in Thondi in the Palk Bay, severe destruction of sea grasses due to drag-net operation can be witnessed.

In 1982, the Government of India banned the export of *beche de mer* below 3 inches. Due to this ban, the *beche de mer* industry in Palk Bay and Gulf of Mannar suffered a severe setback. After a long gap, in 2001, the Ministry of Environment and Forests, Govternment of India brought all sea cucumbers under the Schedule I list of the Wild Life Protection Act, 1972 and strictly banned their collection. This was the ultimate step of conservation taken up by the Government of India to revive the damaged stock. Though it is felt that the ban had crushed the industry, illegal exploitation and processing of sea cucumbers in Palk Bay and Gulf of Mannar have provided a chance for the survival of the *beche de mer* industry. Sea cucumbers have been recommended for inclusion under Appendix II listing of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) to conserve their declining population.

The post-ban management of *beche de mer* resources in Palk Bay, Gulf of Mannar and other parts of India has been a Herculean task for the fisheries managers. The State forest department of Tamil Nadu has been assigned the task of monitoring the illegal fishing activities and many fishermen have been apprehended and prosecuted for illegal fishing of sea cucumbers. Law enforcements have to be strict for effective conservation and management of *beche de mer* resources in India.

Closed season

A huge fishing population's livelihood depends on the *beche de mer* resources of Palk Bay and Gulf of Mannar. The concentration of skindivers in Palk Bay is very high, compared to Gulf of Mannar. Though the recent government ban can revive stocks, from a fishermen's perspective, a closed fishing season would be more helpful than a total ban on the collection of sea cucumbers. In view of

this, a research team from Chennai recently conducted an *in situ* survey to assess the density of *beche de mer* resources in Palk Bay. The observed density was less than one individual per square metre. This suggests that the population of sea cucumbers is under intense illegal fishing pressure. The ban and resource management efforts have not been synergetic to prevent the depletion of stocks. In order to relieve the fishing pressure on sea cucumbers, the fishermen need an alternative source of livelihood for sustenance.

In view of these facts, the ban on sea cucumbers should be extended for a few more years to allow the damaged stocks to recuperate. Periodical surveys (*in situ* observations) have to be initiated for effective management. With the available culture technology for sea cucumber like *Holothuria scabra*, sea ranching of hatchery-grown seeds in the areas of low density, and periodic monitoring are recommended.

A strict ban should be imposed for trawling in shallow areas to prevent further damage to the stocks. There should be a ban on drag-nets in the seagrass zone to prevent habitat loss of larval and juvenile sea cucumbers. Fishing in the months when peak spawning takes place should be banned. If the ban on collecting sea cucumbers is lifted, there should be size regulations and a catch quota system for the sea cucumber fishing and trade. Projects should be initiated by co-ordinating national research laboratories to study the biology, ecology and population dynamics of commercially important sea cucumbers to collect baseline data for effective conservation and management.

Though the above recommendations have been suggested earlier, few steps have been taken to implement them effectively. Strengthening the patrolling manpower, creating awareness among the fishermen about the need for the conservation of sea cucumbers, and initiating research projects related to sea cucumbers are some of the areas where the Government of India should apply a sharper focus for effective conservation and management. Merely banning the collection of sea cucumbers will not revive the damaged stock. Only effective management through strict regulation, periodic monitoring and indepth scientific knowledge can save the sea cucumbers.

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Protecting coastal areas

The World Parks Congress Recommendations 22 and 23 deal with building a global system of marine and coastal protected area networks

The 17th IUCN—the World Conservation Union General Assembly (San Jose, Costa Rica, 1988) adopted Recommendation 17.38 (*Protection of the coastal and marine environment*), which called on international bodies and all nations to establish a global representative system of marine protected areas (MPAs) to provide for the protection, restoration, wise use, understanding and enjoyment of the marine heritage of the world in perpetuity. Also, delegates attending the IVth World Parks Congress (Caracas, 1992) adopted Recommendation 11 (*Marine Protected Areas*), which called for the establishment of a global network of marine protected areas.

And, more recently, the 8th meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA) of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) noted in March 2003 that "...the data available indicate that regionally and globally, marine and coastal protected area networks are severely deficient, and probably protect a very small proportion of marine and coastal environments." The SBSTTAD also recommended that the goal for marine and coastal protected areas work under the CBD should be the "establishment and maintenance of marine and coastal protected areas that are effectively managed, ecologically based, and contribute to a permanent representative global network of marine and coastal protected areas, building upon national networks".

The Ramsar Convention on Wetlands has made a significant contribution to the establishment of marine and coastal protected areas. The Convention also has site criteria in relation to the fish habitat importance of wetland ecosystems, has developed guidelines for managing wetlands within integrated coastal zone management frameworks and has specific guidelines for identifying wetlands of international importance.

There are concerns that more than 60 per cent of the human population lives in coastal zones and they will increasingly put marine and coastal biodiversity under pressure and undermine the foundation for coastal economies. Thus, continuing loss of marine, estuarine and other aquatic habitats is one of the greatest long-term threats to biodiversity, dependent species and the viability of commercial and recreational fisheries. Urgent action is required to restore fisheries that have collapsed, avoid overfishing of stocks already fully utilized, minimize the ecological effects of by-catch to species and ecosystems, and limit habitat destruction.

MPAs have been shown to be an effective means to support biodiversity and species conservation as well as supporting ecologically and economically sustainable fisheries when managed in the context of human societies that are dependent on marine ecosystems. MPAs covering the full range of IUCN categories are widely recognized by coastal nations as flexible and valuable tools for science-based, integrated area management (including highly protected marine reserves and areas managed for multiple uses) supporting ecosystem-based management, because they can help conserve critical habitats, foster the recovery of overexploited and endangered species, maintain marine communities, and promote sustainable use.

Conventional management

There are further concerns that climate-related global threats cannot be

addressed by conventional management measures alone, and will require new and innovative approaches.

The 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) emphasized the need to maintain the productivity and biodiversity of important marine and coastal areas, and set target dates of: 2012 for the establishment of representative MPA networks based on scientific information and consistent with international law; 2015 for the restoration of depleted fish stocks; and 2010 for the application of the ecosystem approach to ocean and fisheries management.

Also, the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries emphasizes the integration of MPAs into the sustainable use of marine natural resources.

Therefore, PARTICIPANTS in the Marine Cross-Cutting Theme at the Vth World Parks Congress (WPC), in Durban, South Africa (8-17 September 2003):

CALL on the international community as a whole to:

1. Establish by 2012 a global system of effectively managed, representative networks of marine and coastal protected areas, consistent with international law and based on scientific information, that:

   a. greatly increases the marine and coastal area managed in marine protected areas by 2012; these networks should be extensive and include strictly protected areas that amount to at least 20-30 per cent of each habitat, and contribute to a global target for healthy and productive oceans;

   b. facilitates and incorporates understanding, support and collaboration at local, national and international levels to design and develop such networks through sharing of knowledge, skills and experience in conservation and the achievement of sustainable socioeconomic benefits;

   c. assists in the implementation of appropriate global and regional agreements, conventions and frameworks;

   d. is designed to be resilient, particularly in the face of large-scale threats linked to global change; this will require building flexibility and adaptation into their design and management;

   e. incorporates both new and strengthened existing MPA sites with varying purposes and management approaches;

   f. integrates MPAs with other ocean, coastal, and land-governance policies, as recommended by the Jakarta Mandate, to achieve sus-

tainable fisheries, biodiversity conservation, species protection, and integrated watershed, coastal, ocean and high-seas and polar management objectives;

g. contributes to *in situ* conservation of threatened and endangered species and their habitats;

h. includes strictly protected marine reserves that contribute to protection of diverse marine habitats and ecosystem structure, biodiversity conservation, species protection recovery of endangered species, public education, and sustainable fisheries management;

i. in the sustainable management of fisheries, is an integral component that can contribute significantly to the management of species with special management needs. This may include protection for critical life history stages, such as through protection of spawning grounds;

j. can provide a framework that can contribute significantly to the management of species, with special management needs, including highly migratory species, ecosystems and habitats;

k. engages stakeholders, including local and traditional communities, through participatory processes in the design, planning and management and sharing of benefits of marine protected areas;

l. protects and strengthens relatively intact marine and coastal areas for species and habitats that are not yet significantly degraded by direct or indirect human impacts and represent important biodiversity values;

m. implements best available, science-based measures reflecting international policy and practice and are consistent with international law as reflected in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) and other instruments;

n. uses management effectiveness assessments to promote adaptive management, taking into account the approaches, issues and concepts outlined in WPC Recommendation 5.18;

o. builds the best available science on connectivity into marine and coastal protected area network design, in order to create networks that are ecologically coherent;

p. provides appropriate incentives and support for the implementation of diverse portfolios of financing mechanisms and management approaches which, together with supportive local and national policies, provide for the long-term sustainability of MPA networks;

q. is embedded within wider integrated coastal and marine management frameworks that include collaboration among resource management bodies and ensure linkages among marine coastal and terrestrial protected areas to address potential threats beyond area boundaries; and

r. sets performance objectives for global, national and regional networks of MPAs to meet fisheries, biodiversity, habitat stabilization and societal needs.

2. Implement an ecosystem-based approach to sustainable fisheries management and marine biodiversity conservation:

a. through marine protected areas integrated with other marine and coastal governance and management actions, as appropriate, through the application of best available science and consistent with international law to:

i. provide sustainable socioeconomic returns to local and traditional communities and industry;

ii. protect important habitats and areas sensitive to particular gear impacts and minimize negative impacts on the food web;

iii. restore depleted fisheries; and

iv. build a biogeographic-based framework for maintaining ecosystem structure and function through MPA networks;

b. through multilateral consideration of appropriate criteria, frameworks and incentives for integrated networks of local, nation-

al and regional marine protected areas, including transboundary areas, and for effective compliance and enforcement to effectively address challenges within, and beyond, national boundaries, consistent with international law;

c. through recognition of MPA networks as an integral component in sustainable fisheries management which should complement and not be used as a substitute for normal fisheries management practice;.

d. through fostering an ongoing dialogue with all fisheries sectors to develop mutual understanding and the transfer of knowledge in both directions and to ensure the process and outcomes occur in a transparent and trusting environment. This may be enhanced by:

i. the ability of Regional Fisheries Management Organizations to become integral stakeholders in MPAS; and

ii. elaborating MPA theory and practice to facilitate dialogue with fishers and fishery management;

e. through the designation of marine protected areas, including those within Large Marine Ecosystems, as one of the strategies applied to the recovery of depleted fish stocks, reduction of coastal pollution and conservation and restoration of biodiversity;

f. consistent with the precautionary approach, and which ensures that the burden of proof that the environment is not harmed resides with those who commercially benefit from MPA resources; and

g. which sets performance objectives for global, national and regional networks of MPAS to meet the fisheries, biodiversity, ecosystem stabilization and societal needs.

WPC Recommendation 23 deals with protecting marine biodiversity and ecosystem processes through marine protected areas beyond national jurisdiction.

The past 30 years of ocean exploration have revealed an incredible diversity of life inhabiting our oceans, including deep ocean ecosystems and communities with a wealth of endemic species; however, much of the oceans biology and ecology remains poorly explored and understood. The common assumption that living marine resources are inexhaustible has been proven incorrect.

Recent technological advances and expanding human uses in the high seas are sequentially depleting fish stocks, destroying ocean biodiversity, productivity and ecosystem processes. The oceans are in a state of crisis and must be given an opportunity to recover. Therefore, urgent legally binding actions are necessary at international, regional and national levels to conserve this vital biodiversity.

Resolution 2.20 (*Conservation of Marine Biodiversity*) adopted at the 2nd World Conservation Congress (Amman, 2000) calls on IUCN, member governments and relevant organizations to explore an appropriate range of tools, including high seas marine protected areas (HSMPAS), to implement effective protection and sustainable use of biodiversity, species and ecosystem processes on the high seas and calls on national governments, international agencies and the nongovernmental community to better integrate established multilateral agencies and existing legal mechanisms to identify areas of the high seas suitable for collaborative management action.

The 2002 WSSD at Johannesburg highlighted the need to promote oceans conservation, including:

1. maintaining the productivity and biodiversity of important and vulnerable marine and coastal areas, including in areas within and beyond national jurisdiction;

2. encouraging the application of the ecosystem approach by 2010 to ocean and fisheries management; and

3. developing and facilitating the use of diverse approaches and tools, including the establishment of marine protected areas consistent with international law and based on scientific information, including representative networks by 2012.

The 8th meeting of the Subsidiary Body for Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (March 2003) of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) has forwarded a recommendation which will be considered at the 7th Conference of the Parties to Convention (February 2004) that specifically recognized "an urgent need to establish in areas beyond national jurisdiction further marine protected areas consistent with international law and based on scientific information, including in relation to areas of seamounts, hydrothermal vents, cold-water corals and open ocean" and requested the Secretariat, working in conjunction with other international and regional bodies "to identify appropriate mechanisms for their establishment and effective management".

In addition, the 4th Meeting of the United Nations Informal Consultative Process (UNICP, June 2003) has recommended to the United Nations General Assembly, that it, *inter alia*, reiterate its call for urgent consideration of ways to improve the management of risks to seamounts and cold-water coral reefs, and invite relevant international bodies at all levels to urgently consider how to better address, on a scientific and precautionary basis, threats and risks to vulnerable and threatened marine ecosystems and biodiversity beyond national jurisdiction, consistent with international law and the principles of integrated ecosystem-based management.

UNCLOS provides the global framework for ocean conservation and management of human activities. In areas beyond national jurisdiction, it obliges parties to protect and preserve the marine environment and to co-operate in conserving and managing marine living resources.

Heightened global co-operation is required to implement and build on the obligations in UNCLOS and other international legal agreements.

In light of the unique characteristics of deep-ocean and high-seas biodiversity, the growing urgency of the problems, and the nature of high-seas jurisdiction, global co-ordinated action is essential to adopt a precautionary and ecosystems-based approach to management that includes a representative system of high-seas marine protected area networks, and maintain thereby biodiversity, species, productivity and ecosystem processes for the generations to come.

Therefore, PARTICIPANTS in the Marine Cross-Cutting Theme at the Vth World Parks Congress, in Durban, South Africa (8-17 September 2003):

Strongly RECOMMEND the international community as a whole to:

1. ENDORSE and PROMOTE the WSSD Joint Plan of Implementation together with the goal of establishing a global system of effectively managed, representative networks of marine protected areas by 2012 that includes within its scope the world's oceans and seas beyond national jurisdiction, consistent with international law;

2. UTILIZE available mechanisms and authorities to establish and effectively manage by 2008 at least five ecologically significant and globally representative HSMPAs incorporating strictly protected areas consistent with international law and based on sound science to enhance the conservation of marine biodiversity, species, productivity and ecosystems;

3. DEVELOP and make available scientific, legal, socioeconomic, and policy research relevant to the development of a global representative system of HSMPA networks and the protection and sustainable use of biodiversity, species and ecosystem processes on the high seas;

4. ESTABLISH a global system of effectively managed, representative networks of marine protected areas by:

   a. taking immediate and urgent action to protect the biodiversity and productivity of seamounts, cold-water coral communities and other vulnerable high-seas features and ecosystems and especially to safeguard species and habitats at immediate risk of irrevocable damage or loss;

   b. taking immediate and urgent action to protect the biodiversity and productivity dependent on large-scale, persistent oceanographic features, such as currents and frontal systems, known to support marine life and contain critical habitat for species such as those listed in the IUCN Red List and the appendices of CITES, the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS) and related Agreements; and

   c. developing mechanisms to enable urgent and long-lasting protection of non-target species threatened by high-seas fishing activities, particularly by ensuring that measures to mitigate by-catch and incidental catch are developed for, and implemented in, all relevant fisheries;

5. INITIATE action to identify marine ecosystems, habitats, areas, processes and biodiversity hot spots for priority attention, develop agreed criteria and guidelines for the iden-

tification, establishment, management and enforcement of HSMPAs, develop guidance for a representative system of HSMPA networks, establish sustainable financing strategies and determine future research needs and priorities;

6. CO-OPERATE to develop and promote a global framework or approach, building on UNCLOS, the CBD, the UN Fish Stocks Agreement, CMS and other relevant agreements, to facilitate the creation of a global representative system of HSMPA networks, consistent with international law, to ensure its effective management and enforcement, and co-ordinate and harmonize applicable international agreements, mechanisms and authorities in accordance with modern principles of precautionary, ecosystem-based and integrated management and sound governance as defined in the UN principles;

7. NOTE that WCPA High Seas Working Group is developing a *Ten Year Strategy to Promote Development of a Global Representative System of High Seas Marine Protected Area Networks* (Ten-Year HSMPA Strategy) as introduced at the World Park Congress; and

8. JOIN TOGETHER through formal and informal networks to promote the development of a global representative system of HSMPA networks within their own governments and organizations and in broader international forums to achieve protection of the biological diversity, species, productivity and sustainable use of the high seas, with the global representative system of MPA networks being a principal tool, reporting back on progress at the International Marine Protected Area Congress, Australia 2005, as well as at other relevant forums.

More details of the World Parks Congress can be found at http://www.iucn.org/themes/wcpa/wpc2003/

Conversations

Joining in a bit late

A reading of *Conversations* prompts some reflections on organizations and external agents of change

On the one hand, it is quite late to join a conversation that had taken place four years ago, and was published as a book a year ago. On the other hand, however, while reading *Conversations*, I felt several times this absurd wish to intervene in that discussion, and have my say too.

One reason was this feeling that my point of view would have made the discussion more complete, not because of the 'wisdom' of my possible contribution, but because of the sort of person I am, and the way I would be looking at the discussed subjects. But, I was not there in Accra, back in 1999, hence my late and, thus, rather lame, contribution.

Conversations is a book published by the International Collective in Support of Fishworkers (ICSF), and authored by three remarkable people: Aliou Sall of Senegal, the late Michael Belliveau of Canada, and Nalini Nayak of India, all of them active supporters of inshore fisherfolk and their communities' struggles to survive and make a decent living. All three are intellectuals, who, for personal reasons, have chosen this sector as their battlefield for a better world and a more just society. Of the three of them, only Aliou Sall comes from a fishing community, leaving which at a relatively young age enabled him to go his own way to higher education. None of them, however, at any time in her / his life has made a living by fishing or other fish-related trade. Their experiences and opinions stem from taking active parts and leading roles in organizations of fishing people, and in social and political struggles in their respective home countries.

I feel that my point of view would add to the significance of the discussion in *Conversations* because my background and experience are so different from those of the actual participants in that conversation, that they present a sort of a reverse image of the original participants' perspectives.

I became a fisherman at the age of 22, after a spell as a stevedore on cargo barges at the Tel Aviv harbour, and another one with the Israeli Navy. Soon I became a skipper of a small trawler, which belonged to a whole community (*kibbutz*), not just to its fishing members. I was also a member of the fishermen's union and, at some stage, also of its executive body. We had our meetings timed with the weather, mainly on stormy days when the whole fleet was in harbours. I drifted out of commercial fishing, and, due to my interest and certain achievements in fishing technology, I was recruited to be a staff member of the Haifa fisheries research station.

In the early 1960s, I worked in Eritrea as a master fisherman and fishery adviser to the local government—which is what has set me on the path I have travelled for four decades as an 'intervener', or 'agent of change', but not among my own people, but among people of other nations, cultures, languages, and fishing habits, involved in what is called, often unjustifiably, fisheries development.

Outsider activists

Among other things, what I would like to do in this essay is to examine the question why fisherfolk join, support, act in, and quit their various organizations, and how they perceive and look at outsider activists. It is many years now since I last fished for a living, but fewer still since I helped others to make a living of fishing. Thus, I'm stepping into this 'conversations' exchange with my feet still in water, but a laptop computer at hand.

For reasons evidently important for its authors, *Conversations* starts with a serious and lengthy discourse, with many sages quoted, as to whether people like them should be called 'interveners' (Mike Belliveau), 'social activists' (Nalini, Belliveau), or 'supporters' (Aliou Sall).

All three of these terms seem right to me. Aren't people from outside the fishing community, who are coming to assist the fisherfolk in their daily or extraordinary struggles, 'supporters'? Are they 'social activists'? That too. 'Interveners'? Sure they do intervene in the fisherfolk's affairs.

My opinion on this subject is that it little matters how we, the outsiders, call ourselves, or how we are called by others. What really matters is what we actually do, and how others perceive what we do. People who come and work for, and with, fisherfolk, whether they are volunteers or are paid for their efforts, do not need to walk around with the feeling that they have to justify to themselves or to others for being there and doing what they do.

For example, the name of Gandhi was mentioned in *Conversations.* So who was the great Mahatma—an intervener, supporter or activist? What would be his answer to such a question? He would probably say that he is just a man trying to help his people.

Another question discussed was how an organization that wants to embrace all the people in fishing communities who draw their income from fishing should call its members: fishermen, harvesters, fishworkers, or what. In my opinion, it depends on the desired and actual membership character, or, in certain areas, on the public-relations value of the name. For example, once, in an Asian country, I helped to establish a fishermen's school. But, I was asked by my local counterpart, "Please, Mr. Ben-Yami, let's find some other name for the school. Fishing is not a very appreciated trade in my country." Of course, I left it up to my hosts to find a name of their preference. I wonder if they chose 'sea-harvesters' school'.

'Fishworkers' is a good term, but, in some cases, not sufficiently inclusive. Personally, for a truly encompassing grouping, I prefer the term 'fisherfolk', which is more inclusive than the others, covering all the fishing people, owners and crews, and their families, whether they participate or not in any post-harvest activities. It also implies more of a community organization, than an association of individuals.

Inshore fishery

There is also the problem of what is inshore / coastal / small-scale / artisanal fishery and what is not. No doubt, a small-scale, inshore fishery of one, especially, Northern country, would be

considered 'industrial', or medium-scale in some of the Southern ones.

What, however, should unite all fisherfolk is their common interest to protect against outside and foreign fleets at least their traditional fishing grounds and resources, and, desirably, any fishing grounds that they can feasibly access.

This is a common cause to small-scale fishermen in the European Union, Newfoundland, Iceland, West Africa, India, Chile, and where not, whatever 'small-scale' means in their countries.

When the discussion comes to what I would call the real issues, there is plenty of wisdom in *Conversations* as, for example, the criticism of fisheries science for its path of specialization, and hence losing the overall picture of the complex dynamics of systems in general, such as, for example, a fishery ecosystem, societal aspects of its management, and of the complexity of development, in particular.

The collapse of the Canadian Atlantic groundfish fisheries remains an intriguing subject, in spite of so many attempts to describe or explain it by various people. The share of environmental-climatic influence in that collapse is a part of the enigma, but faulty assessment and mismanagement are widely quoted as well.

Mike Belliveau throws an interesting light on the history of fishing quotas in Canada, and how they came to being, rather to assure and allocate fishing rights than to protect fish stocks from overfishing. The political-economic reality was already there, when the biological stock-management ideology moved in to ride it piggyback, and explain away the government's pro-companies allocation preference. Scientists on the government's payroll have provided a rationale based on mathematical models that do not, and cannot, wholly reflect the dynamics of the fishery ecosystem.

It is not only the question of the methodology of the State-associated fisheries research, but also that of what it is focusing on. In this respect, Aliou Sall gave an example of the tuna-centred Senegalese fishery research. No doubt, multi-species fisheries typical of the small-scale sectors are more difficult to study and assess, than large-scale single-species ones.

Simplistic models

The very conditions under which studies must be carried out are much less comfortable, systems to be studied are much more complex, and they do not lend themselves to simplistic bioeconomic models. Moreover, they deal with a resource of little interest to big business, and, thus, do not attract sufficient funding.

I would only like to emphasize that one should not generalize about fishery scientists. There are fishery biologists, oceanographers, and economists and other social scientists, who, for many years, have been warning and protesting in various ways, although, perhaps, not loudly enough, against the prevailing, mathematical-models-based fishery science, so favoured by privatization-oriented management. They have been calling the fishery science to return to the real biology and ecology studies at sea, and aboard fishing vessels, and to study and account for fish-habitat inter-relations, major and minor environmental fluctuations, and their effects on fish and other marine life. They have not been heeded, but with the many debacles of that management paradigm, their time may soon come.

I think that we would all agree that while it is trying to maintain, successfully or not, healthy resources, fishery management is willy-nilly mainly about the allocation / distribution of the benefits derived from fish resources among various interests. The management means that the authorities use determine to whom the benefits go, and they choose them according to whose side they are on. Aliou Sall's account of Senegalese legislation includes excellent examples: a government that gives access to its coastal waters to foreign fleets of large trawlers and purse-seiners, bans monofilament nets used by only the small-scale sector, or closes the octopus fishery for stock-management reasons only to artisanal fishery and not to the industrial sector.

Small-scale fisherfolk's struggles worldwide have been mainly against those governments that have been allocating in various manners their traditional resources and inshore and coastal fishing grounds, partly or fully, to industrial, outside and foreign fleets and interests. In some cases, they forced the authorities to call off, delay or diminish such blows to their existence, and all three authors of *Conversations* give ample examples from their countries.

In this respect, I must disagree with Michael Belliveau as to the uselessness of litigation to fishermen's organization. In fact, in some cases, litigation has helped to change or amend governments' policies and actions, as, for example, in the cases reported by Nalini Nayak.

Quotas and especially individual transferable quotas are good for capital-strong enterprises and corporations. As Michael Belliveau quotes a Canadian fisheries minister, a promoter of the ITQ system, the excuse is: "Better to have two fishermen do well than ten to starve." We had a fisheries director who used to say: "We better have fishermen in 30 boats making a modest living, than half of them growing rich in 15 boats." The difference: our fisheries director used to be a commercial fishermen, and I would bet that the Canadian minister was never one, nor would he have ever made a fishing trip at all.

Management by input (effort) control can better serve small-scale fishermen and help them to stay in business. Not once have I witnessed them not co-operating in identification and implementation of effort-control means; rather, they have even prompted and initiated some. The management of the lobster fishery described by Michael Belliveau is an excellent example.

The 'tragedy of the commons' is an often-cited excuse for the fishing rights privatization paradigm. In *Property Rights, Resource Management, and Governance: Crafting an Institutional Framework for Global Marine Fisheries*, published in 1998 by the Centre for Development Studies, Trivandrum, India, John Kurien demonstrated, in a brilliant intellectual exercise, that the term 'tragedy of the commons' was a misnomer. In fact, he says, that tragedy is one of open access, for commons does not have to be a free-for-all, open-access property regime.

Complex systems

The problem of open access is still prevailing in most Southern countries and in those Northern countries whose laws prevent limiting people's right to work of their choice. While the latter sidestep their own laws through complex systems of licensing and quotas, in other countries, including most of the Southern countries, at least in the inshore sector, access limits, if any, have been a matter of tribal, or

community-based, traditional management. In the inshore fisheries of those countries, Northern-type licensing and similar access limitations in the small-scale sector are, with a few exceptions, non-existent, under consideration or still in their embryonic state, and altogether do not carry too much promise in the near future.

Nalini Nayak's analysis of the social and political situation of the fishing peoples has led her to a very wide-reaching approach: many problems of inshore fisherfolk are one consequence of the expansion of capital-intensive fleets owned by powerful interests that, under an uncurbed free-market regime, are trying to privatize fishery resources. I may be wrong, but the conclusion Nalini Nayak seems to be drawing is that fisherfolk's organizations from all over should join forces on a common cause, extending beyond fisheries—a cause of all poor, exploited and oppressed people worldwide, endangered by "globalization and its destruction of human societies".

I had the feeling that Nalini Nayak is crying over spilt milk of a failed promise of a comprehensive *a*lternative to capitalism, and is frustrated by lack of a realistic alternative to globalization. But, it seems that such alternatives are either absent, or unfeasible in the foreseeable future. In my opinion, we ought to focus our efforts on a corrective to the prevailing uncurbed corporate capitalism and to globalization, which is biased towards the former. In the fisheries sector, we should support the small-scale entrepreneurs, their families, employees and communities, whether they are canoe fishermen in Senegal, *kattamaram* fishermen in India, or lobstermen in Canada.

This is because most fisherfolk do not employ the intellectual depth of analysis and breadth of approach of political-social thinkers, but rather prefer to worry about their living and survival today and tomorrow. A whole fishing season is a lot of time. Thus, while it would be quite difficult to mobilize fisherfolk to international or global struggles, they are not strangers to more restricted politics, for they, more than anybody else, understand that fishery management is predominantly a matter of access to resources, and of distribution of the benefits derived from those resources among sectors. Michael Belliveau gives examples of such perceptions and of fisherfolk's political responses.

He writes about a development dilemma, about how any development comes at the expense of somebody. Nowadays, this dilemma has become even more complex than that. Because of the many stocks that are either fully exploited or overfished, development has become, in the view of many, a manifestation of evil. In the eyes of such people, fisheries must be curtailed and reduced, and, in some cases, closed down altogether. The question to be asked is on whose expense such reductions should come. I have no problem with the development dilemma, when development helps small-scale fisherfolk to recover or improve their access to inshore and coastal waters resources, otherwise fished by fleets from outside their area, country or even continent.

In my contribution to India's national workshop on low-energy fishing in Kochi in 1991), set forth what I call the MB-Y's Allocation Principle:

i) all fish that can be caught by artisanal fishermen should be caught only by artisanal fishermen;

ii) all fish that cannot be caught by artisanal fishermen, but can be caught by small-scale commercial fishermen, should only be caught by small-scale commercial fishermen;

iii) all fish that cannot be caught by small-scale commercial fishermen, but can be caught by medium-scale commercial fishermen, should only be caught by medium-scale commercial fishermen;

iv) only such resources that are not accessible to any of the above fishery sectors, or which cannot be feasibly caught, handled and processed by them, should be allocated to industrial, large-scale fisheries.

I recognize, of course, that this sets a rather ideal standard, but it should do as a guiding principle.

I think that the gist of the discussion in *Conversations* is the the role of organizations and the issue of outsider organizers versus external factors such as governments, sponsors, antagonist interests and rival organizations, on the one hand, versus their actual and potential members, as well as the people at large, on the other. I found myself more interested in the latter subject, well illuminated by Aliou Sall, when he said that he doesn't remember being ever asked by fishermen to come and help them, which raises the question of activists who think that they're indispensable.

Here comes the eternal question—is it the calf that is hungry, or the cow that wants to feed it? It seems that in our case there are more cows coming in with their udders full than calves eager to suckle. And there are many historical and other reasons for this situation, a wrong sort of milk being only one of them.

Over 800 years ago, Maymonides, the great Jewish physician and philosopher, wrote an instruction to students of medicine. A doctor's first and foremost duty, he wrote, is not to cause harm to his patients. The same commandment should be reiterated to outsider organizers and activists: do not cause harm to fisherfolk. Erroneous development projects may cause fishing people to invest their scarce resources in wasteful equipment or unfeasible ventures, while adventurous and violent protests may cost them their lives. Those who suffer, economically and otherwise, are the fisherfolk. We, the outsiders, who have unintentionally misled them won't have to reduce food intake because of their failure, and our children won't have to go to school barefoot. These are our 'clients' who have to pay for our mistakes.

Several times have fisherfolk had to tell the outsiders to go away and not come back, sometimes before and sometimes after they had done damage to them, their cause or their community, willy-nilly, of course, and always wishing well. Quite recently, an anthropologist came to a fishing community, was well received and had very good intentions to be helpful with the fishermen's struggle against government's management methodology leading to their dislocation.

But the fisherfolk were very angry when they found out that the anthropologist had co-authored a study alleging that the fishermen's claim to traditional fishing rights, and to their right to maintain their traditional way of life, is questionable, because it needs more generations to create the 'tradition' that that fishery can historically claim—as if what is tradition depends on chronology rather than on people's own perceptions.

Sometimes, people get up spontaneously, as Nalini Nayak reports from India, and only then are joined by outsiders, who help them to organize into formal groupings. Spontaneous people's movements are, as a rule, motivated by actual, tangible needs perceived by the people, and hence carry a promise of wide and fast recruitment of members. Such real needs would also determine the membership composition and character, and the agenda and the reach of the organization.

Various models

Models of organizations that may be valid for fishing people vary: trade-union-type organizations, small-owner associations, credit schemes, co-operatives, marketing societies, mutual-insurance groups, and so on. The choice should depend upon the

existing social norms, traditions and culture. Various traditional groupings may successfully become frameworks that assume new agendas. In my view, the organizers' success depends not only upon the sort of organization they settle on, but also on how careful and intelligent was the identification of the respective client groups.

For example, most small-scale boatowners, themselves hard-working and low-income, are, in fact, employers with a capitalist outlook. Even if they struggle for, or receive, off-season dole, I believe that defining them as 'working class', meaning proletariat, is delusive and unproductive. Their employees, usually share-fishermen who are working-class indeed, may only partly have 'fishing proletariat' interests as against their employers' profit-making orientation, because, especially in the Southern world, some of them may be children or other relatives of the owner. They would rather stick to their employers than get organized in any group antagonizing them.

In many cases, to make a meaningful impact, organizers must concentrate on such small-scale employers. These people, who, in some Southern countries, may be themselves poor, especially by Western standards, want to keep their fishing businesses going, so as to make a living for themselves and their crew, however meagre.

Fishing people usually do not tend to maintain their organizations just for the sake of staying organized. Whether an organization's demise comes upon the conclusion of core issue, or it keeps existing and acting, depends on specific conditions of place, time and people. And, as Michael Belliveau wrote, an organization's failure may take a generation to recover. However attractive to outside leaders, association or identification with other groupings, organizations and institutions that have wider national or international or non-fishery agendas may be opposed by local leadership, as has happened in India, according to Nalini Nayak. And I am in agreement with Michael Belliveau that association with extraneous bodies that may enter in conflict of interest with fishing people, such as 'green' non-governmental organizations (NGOs) or any government-associated institutions may be repelling to some of its potential and actual members. So, for whoever comes to support fisherfolk, the first thing they should ask is what the fisherfolk themselves consider to be the most important issues, then arrange those into a working agenda, and just help them to tackle it.

Outsider activists must recognize that they are under continual scrutiny by the

fisherfolk. Some of them are misled by the external appearance and low educational levels of so many small-scale fishermen. But only if they realize that they have to deal with people who are, as a rule, brave, intelligent and wise, do they have a good chance of being accepted. Fishermen must be brave to go to sea, intelligent to find and catch their fish, and wise to stay alive and remain in business.

A reality that social scientists and activists, whether researchers or intervening 'agents of change', often meet in fishing communities, and which, to simplify their perceived and expressed feelings, they often 'don't like', is social and economic stratification among the fisherfolk. Nalini Nayak has talked about its development in India, following the introduction of modern technology, especially, fishing craft motorization. Michael Belliveau told about another reason for stratification: exclusive access to a rich snow-crab fishery by relatively few, but influential, boatowners.

Stratification represents a major difficulty for organizers, who must face intra-community conflicts of interests and the resulting deterioration of solidarity, and even hostility. Such stratification has frustrated many fishery and community development projects, as well as fisherfolk organizers everywhere. More often than not, the 'bigwigs' assume the role of speakers for, and leaders of, the whole community, and outsider-activists looking for in-community 'counterparts' fall easy prey.

Not less dangerous to innocent activists are internal frictions within, and between, fishing communities, stemming from frequently old, clan, tribe, or extended family conflicts. I have seen whole fishing villages burning for reasons that had nothing to do with the social, economic and political problems the organizing efforts or projects intended to solve, but as a result of inter-religious, inter-tribal or intra-community strifes.

I think that the discussion in *Conversations* about the role of women in fisheries could have been more fruitful, if not for the attempts to generalize. Here I fully agree with Aliou Sall, who opposed such generalization, insisting "that the participation of women in the process of social movement and organization, and their capacity to participate, depends on the role they actually play in the fishery", and on the "general social condition of women", which doesn't have to do with fisheries directly.

Take, for example, West Africa's fish processors and fishmongers, almost all females, the famous 'fish mammies'. Although, their standards of life and working conditions are, on the whole, much lower than those of the women in Canadian fishing communities, their relative status, compared to the mainly male fishermen is, in my opinion, stronger. As soon as the fishermen beach their canoes, the women carry away the fish for smoking in their homes. They not only smoke the fish and take care of firewood supply, but also carry the fish to sell in the market or to wholesalers. Women help to finance fishermen's gear and fuel, and, in general, fishermen are indebted to their own wives, sisters or other women, who thus 'buy' the right to take care of their catches. In short, the fish mammies are the ones who hold the purse strings.

From the social point of view, every one of them is—or tries to be—an independent entrepreneur, a small-scale working capitalist. Some of them succeed, becoming 'vertically integrated' enterprises, owning one or more canoes, or even larger fishing craft. When they deem it necessary, they organize into such groupings, as 'market-women associations', which, usually, have strong leadership, and concentrate on narrow, well-defined objectives.

Nalini Nayak reports from India about similar associations, and Aliou Sall wrote how women worried of supply of sardinella—a fish that is the mainstay of their processing-marketing activities—forced a general union to stand up against the Senegalese government's granting European Union fleet access to the sardinella resource.

Appalling conditions

Most of those women, however, work under appalling conditions while handling the open smoking kilns. The

whole operation carries the danger of fast-spreading fires—which have devoured many African huts, houses and whole villages—and health risks, such as frequent eye ailments (leading to eventual blindness) and lung diseases.

No one organization has done for the fish mammies more than the women of the Ghanaian village of Chorkor, who, back in the 1960s, introduced into wide practice a smoking kiln designed by Bentzion Kogan, a fish-processing expert from Israel, who worked for the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO).

This kiln, now well known all over the West African coast as the 'Chorkor' kiln, ingenious in its simplicity, has, to a large degree, eliminated the above troubles, and, additionally, has considerably reduced the firewood consumption per unit of smoked fish, and improved the product quality. Based on the simplest local technology, it did what a whole array of imported smoking kilns could not—improve the working conditions, health and income of its operators. It was very fast perceived by the users as 'appropriate technology' and became widely accepted. Credit schemes that would provide fish-smoking women with small loans to construct such kilns in their own yards, after well-executed demonstrations, would lead to many more takers. This could be an example for an organization for women for concrete, achievable goals. Joining a general organization with membership of both gender will not help the fish-processing women. Their needs are different from those of the male fishermen, and their interests often conflicting.

One example, also from Africa, is the establishment of fishermen's co-operatives, widely supported by both, international aid agencies and NGOs. But some of those co-operatives have taken over the marketing function from individual small-scale businesswomen and given them to the men who run those co-operatives. I found that at least in some cases, as on the shores of Lake Victoria, this had been a hidden agenda of the local (male) co-operative activists and managers.

We have to face the reality of the irreversible development of more and more efficient technology, based on unstoppable scientific and technical progress. We need a new strategy that, without ignoring, or attempting futile Luddite-type struggles, would enable the preservation of coastal communities and the well-being of inshore fisherfolk.

I will divide the problem into two: one is about the perfusion of modern technology throughout the artisanal and other small-scale sectors, and the other is about resources allocation.

There has been a lot of discussion during the second half of the past century about what is appropriate technology. While various agents of change, technologists, social scientists, development experts, consultants and political activists were having the time of their lives writing books and learned papers, arguing with one another, and attacking each one's approach, the fisherfolk were quick to make their choices. Their criteria appeared to be quite different from those of the outsiders—both those who tried to introduce new equipment and methods, and those who opposed modern technology.

Fisherfolk had quickly recognized and absorbed, in particular, outboard motors and nylon netting, because both boosted returns on their investments, and increased their incomes. Outboard motors, as Aliou Sall also writes, have revolutionized the artisanal fisheries in Southern countries, and "permitted the artisanal fishermen to extend their territories and compete with the industrial fishermen". Other examples of up-to-date technologies that are considered appropriate by many Southern world's artisanal and small-scale fishermen are echo-sounders and global positioning systems (GPS), not to speak of cellular phones. John Kurien in his essay published in *MAST*, 2003, writes on the spreading of GPS in India even across the *kattumaram* fleet.

Level of support

Those manufacturers who were able to supply reliable machines and reasonable or, at least, best-available level of support services, enjoyed the development of

extensive markets. The discussion whether outboard motors represent appropriate technology or not quickly lost its relevancy. The real problems have been how appropriate has been the manner in which these technologies have been introduced, maintained, financed and serviced, and how to minimize their negative social consequences.

I do not believe that there is any ideology and realistic strategy able to arrest this march of modernization—strongly supported by the younger and better-educated fishermen—into the small-scale fishery sectors. Fisherfolk's organizations and their outside supporters should, therefore, focus on two issues: how the improved technology should best be used for their benefit, and how to improve the financial and technical conditions of their acquisition and maintenance.

I have seen several ways how new technology spreads across artisanal and small-scale fisheries in Southern countries. In too many cases, fishermen must pay very high interest rates for the money they need to acquire the desired equipment. They sometimes return their debts by cash payments, but, most often, by delivering their catches to their respective moneylenders at prices below those they would be able to get on a 'free' market. Outsider-supporters may not like the 'march of technology' into fishing communities, but by leaving things as described above will not stop the technology, but will only maintain the tough conditions for its acquisition. Therefore, one way of supporting fishing people would be to help them organize financing at regular, official banking rates for their technical advancement, on the one hand, and to assist them in their competition over access to fishing grounds and resources against outside, large-scale fleets, on the other.

The process of globalization seems unstoppable. More and more countries are going to participate in it, and it is going to be more and more profound. Its character would most certainly keep changing, while the self-serving approach of the powers represented by the World Trade Organilzation and its neoliberal economics, kept at bay at the moment by Southern countries and in-house opposition, would eventually give way to more equitable strategies. Trying to stop globalization is like trying to stop technology—all the more difficult since they both interact successfully.

Free exchange

One of globalization's more important components, the Internet, enables world-reaching new personal, business and political bonds, and free exchange of information, knowledge and opinions. It is one of the mainstays of globalization, and, at the same time, bears the seeds of

constant change and further development. Is there a way in which various national and subnational organizations of fishermen / fishworkers / fisherfolk could go global, too?

As is well known, some attempts eventually failed, for reasons already described in past issues of *SAMUDRA Report*. My feeling is that that schism was due—apart from the South-North leadership argument—to excessive expectations as to the degree of unification, and agenda specifics. So, is such worldwide co-operation really needed, and if yes, what should be done?

No doubt, wherever issues involving fisherfolk's interests are dealt with on the global arena, a united, multinational body could assume an important position, as a supporter of their causes. Such a body can be, at least initially, a loose federation of national and international groups and organizations, centred on an agenda that is vague enough to enable the various groups to feel comfortable under its umbrella. It can have a co-ordinating secretariat composed of representatives of all member organizations, with a revolving chairmanship.

Such a structure would eliminate most potential points of friction, and enable all members to have an equal position, say and appearance, on the one hand, and maintain full independence, on the other. It even may survive and be active for many years.

This article is by Menakhem Ben-Yami (benyami@actcom.net.il), an independent fishery adviser based in Israel

Searching for that critical edge

A reading of *Conversations* inspires a South African activist to seek new ways of sharing insights and lessons with co-workers and comrades

As a participant in *Empowerment through Information*, the training programme for fishworkers and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) held in August 2003 at Chennai, India, by the International Collective in Support of Fishworkers (ICSF), I was introduced to *Conversations* as one of the many resources produced by ICSF to facilitate the sharing of lessons and strategies amongst activists, researchers and others working with fishworkers. I started reading *Conversations* in the evenings and in between workshop sessions, initially in Chennai and then on the train across the country to Trivandrum, where the group participated in a week-long field trip to the fishing villages and societies often referred to by Nalini Nayak, one of the co-authors of the book.

For me, this reading of *Conversations* began a parallel process of profound personal and professional reflection, and the acute feelings of relief and comfort that I had on my first reading of this remarkable text remain with me now, several months after the training programme. The fishing history and terrain that we traversed externally in those few days, through challenging and exciting exchanges amongst the representatives from the seven countries and the fishers who hosted us, is also mapped out within me, with specific sites of recognition through the pages of *Conversations.*

I have tried to understand this feeling of relief—and to convey it to colleagues. In part, I think it came from a sense of recognition of shared concerns, of relief from the loneliness of censored thoughts, unarticulated frustrations and deep doubts about the ethics and values of the current fishing context in which we are working, but with little or no space to share this concern with anyone. Most significantly, I think it comes from the way in which the conversation reminded me that the personal is political and my own politics does shape the way I work and who I am. The way the discussants reassert this old familiar notion but in a new way, infusing insights from their own activism, from socio-psychological theory, old political-economic theory and observations of the global context, brings a new understanding, albeit not necessarily stated as explicitly, to what is required of us if we want to challenge the subtle and insidious ways in which the current dominant world order is consuming us.

I think that the strength of this book lies in the space where the discussants' ideas meet, where common, shared issues in the fish sector resonate, initially amongst the three of the authors and then with the reader. For me, as a white, urban-based, middle-class South African woman, working in an NGO in the fishing sector, I was surprised at the extent to which they articulated concerns that I had imagined were limited to a particular post-apartheid political and social context. It was strangely comforting, while simultaneously unsettling, to realize that the conditions we are experiencing here in South Africa, along the coasts, within our organizations and nationally, are reflected in three other diverse contexts, and this, in itself, would seem to support one theme touched on in the book, namely, the way in which globalization is impacting in similar ways, raising the question of a need for shared responses.

Own motivations

The way in which the discussants raise the importance of recognizing that the personal is political is through their

reflections on their own motivations for doing what they do, their courage in naming the perhaps often unconscious aspects that drive us, the mythologies that we hold regarding the anthropology of fishing and the unconscious pulls that each of us is responding to in seeking to work in this sector.

What struck me was their ability to open up the contradictions in their own work, especially within the roles of 'interveners' and 'supporters'. Perhaps this struck me more forcefully coming from a context in South Africa where, following the election of the new democratic government, there has been enormous pressure to not criticize the new order, but rather, as a loyal 'comrade', to fall in line and support the African National Congress-led government. Increasingly, there is a fear of criticism.

Those organizations and individuals that do so have been accused of undermining the government—of being 'ultra-leftist'. There is now very little real reflection on values, strategy and tactics. We talk nostalgically of the old 'struggle' days when many of us sat up late into the night in reading groups, debating strategy and revolutionary theory. The references to Freireian methodology in *Conversations* and the way in which development workers sought new paradigms is familiar. However, since 1994, much of that critical reflection has disappeared and has been replaced by a technocratic pragmatism. The emphasis on the importance of process, and seeing this reflected in practice in India was most refreshing. We seem to have lost that critical edge in my organization. Reading the book and seeing the enormous value of this type of reflection got me thinking about how to create a reflective, mindful organization. What are, and were, the critical ingredients for that conversation and how can one promote that type of organizational space?

Very few of the new, university-educated development workers have been part of a political consciousness-raising process or were part of the anti-apartheid struggle. Training for transformation, and developing the skill and consciousness of political enquiry are needed now more than ever, and yet, despite shelves full of old texts on methodology and strategies, we seem to be failing to create these conditions through the organization.

The ICSF training programme schedule was so full that we seldom had time to touch on these aspects of organizational work in the fishing sector. However, in retrospect, I think it was an underlying, latent theme in the ongoing contested discussions about gender strategies and also whether or not to work with the State in implementing models of co-management.

What struck me was that a 'sufficient' level of trust appeared to be a prerequisite for the three discussants in *Conversations*. Inspired by Michael Belliveau's reference to Winnicott, but shaped by my own feminist psychology, the concept of 'good enough parenting' came to mind. How do we create the conditions within our organizations in which individuals feel secure enough to test out ideas, without fear of rejection? How do we equip workers with the skills, attitudes and values that help to develop a reflexive praxis? *Conversations* does not answer this question directly but it models a response through the posing of questions and the reflection that is ongoing throughout the book. It is also apparent that all the three individuals in *Conversations* are highly experienced and skilled, and, to an extent, had reached a point where they could reflect with a degree of compassionate detachment on their own work and that of the organizations that they had previously been so intimately involved with.

Little theory

The questions that *Conversations* raises about how we understand the site of struggle in the fishing context is most pertinent. In South Africa, to date, there has been relatively little theoretical work done on the way in which the industry developed around a particular constellation of race, class and gendered relations. Our analysis has tended to focus on the prior history of racial inequality and sees this as the focus of our work, however increasingly it is towards the class interests that we need to turn and to the role of monopoly and global capital in squeezing small-scale fishers. The discussion on the difficulty of defining

fishers as producers and independent contractors, and the distinctive process of the proletarianization of fishers, while unique in each context, points to some of the common difficulties and challenges of organizing in this sector. In the struggle for freedom and democracy in South Africa, the urban working class was regarded as the vanguard of the struggle, and the rural coastal areas were on the periphery of political resistance. This legacy remains, with relatively little political consciousness and few organized structures in these areas. The isolation of many small-scale fishers through the nature of the production process only compounds this marginalization.

What does this mean for organizations like Masifundise, an urban-based, black NGO that receives funding from international donors? How does Masifundise act as catalyst and supporter while allowing the fishers to determine which issues to act on, if at all to act? This question is raised by Aliou Sall in *Conversations* when he notes the contradiction that it is also difficult to know whether the fishworkers we work with are as concerned as the supporters about such things as the sustainability of the organization. In my experience, these issues have never been raised within the organization; they have come from outside or from ideological thinkers. One wonders whether sustainability is a priority for fishermen.

The use of the term 'transitional organization' is most helpful in beginning to conceptualize a strategy for organizing in the context in which Masifundise works in South Africa. Currently, there are very few community-based fisher organizations. The institutional arrangements promoted by the new fishing policy brought about a change in the identity of traditional fishers who do not have a lengthy history of organizing. This policy forces small-scale and artisanal fishers to form legal entities and submit business plans in order to apply for commercial fishing rights. I think that in the early days of implementation of this policy, Masifundise made the mistake of confusing economic organizations and political organizations among small-scale fishers. Eager to facilitate fishers getting access to these rights (which have to be accessed in the form of quotas), the organization set about building the capacity of fishing associations that, in many instances, were the legal bodies that had applied for a fishing quota. Their identify as a 'fisher organization' and the priorities of the members have thus been on the economic aspects of their organizations. As these associations battle to get access to rights and are marginalized by the fisheries management authority, the need for them to develop a political understanding of their positions becomes more apparent. Masifundise is now at this juncture, exploring what sort of organizational structure will best facilitate the emergence of such a fisher movement and what role Masifundise will have to play in this process.

People's movements

The delicacy of this issue was reflected by the *Conversations* discussants in their tackling of the role of funded organizations *vis-à-vis* people's movements. In the light of current developments within the World Forum of Fisher Peoples (WFFP) and in anticipation of the World Social Forum, it appears likely that the role of people's movements within the fishing sector and their relationships with other 'supporter' organizations will come under the spotlight. In *Conversations*, Michael Belliveau of the Maritime Fishermen's Union (MFU) highlights the dilemma of an

organization that has chosen to focus on a particular target group which, within the current social relations and division of labour, is male. He implies, however, that the issue of focusing on women is a strategic choice, justifying the MFU's focus by stating that the MFU is already biting off its portion of the global struggle simply by addressing the issues its members face.

This avoids the issue that the MFU and all aspects of the global struggle are gendered anyway and hence we cannot ignore the gendered relations that arise in every aspect of our work. Rather, if we feel that we cannot tackle all of the levels at which gender oppression occurs (within the household, within the labour process itself, and within the market and our organizations), then we need to select very strategically which aspect or site might maximize the benefits for women and have the most impact on gender relations within the context of the fishing industry more broadly.

In South Africa, the bulk of the processing and marketing of fish has been industrialized for many years, and women, even in the rural fishing villages, have been drawn into the labour market primarily as seasonal workers in the processing factories. Masifundise has focused its efforts on the small-scale and artisanal sector, which is dominated by men. While women perform the reproductive labour and undertake numerous tasks in support of men's fishwork, much of this remains hidden.

As an organization, we have not yet been successful in either highlighting the gendered nature of fishwork, raising awareness of women's roles or their right to assets, whether these be joint or independent title in land, boats, equipment and so on. An additional challenge facing coastal communities in South Africa is the extremely high levels of gender violence, often exacerbated by the consumption of alcohol and drugs in many fishing communities. The high rate of HIV/AIDS infection in this country places women who are survivors of sexual violence at additional risk. We have yet to find a way of supporting women in placing these hidden issues on the agenda within local fishworker organizations.

Perhaps one of the most important themes raised by the discussants and that runs throughout *Conversations* is the question of identity politics. Given the way in which the policy discourse has shaped notions of 'traditional', 'subsistence', and 'artisanal', is there any common ground left around which 'small-scale' fishers can organize?

In South Africa, an export-driven, individual transferable quota (ITQ) allocation policy, biased towards large-scale commercial companies, has created enormous fissure lines within traditional fishing communities, as individuals compete with former crew members and family to get access to the limited rights available. In many traditional fishing villages along the coast, fishers are being forced to seek work in the construction industry and move away from their traditional livelihoods. In the face of coastal tourist initiatives, Masifundise has to identify the most appropriate and strategic entry points in a rapidly shifting development discourse of 'economic growth'.

More importantly, the organization faces the challenge of assisting fishers and coastal dwellers in accessing and defending their rights to marine resources in the face of the increasing number of claims made on these resources. *Conversations* highlights the danger of doing this on the basis of false assumptions about the commonality of issues and identities within the fishing sector. Yet, despite exposing the fissures in the notion of a common cause as activists and workers in fisheries, *Conversations* inspires me to not only continue to work in this sector, but also to seek new ways of sharing insights and lessons with co-workers and comrades.

These reflections come from Jackie Sunde (jackie@tcoe.org.za) of Masifundise, Cape Town, South Africa

Be cautious about generalizations

This is a response to an article in *SAMUDRA Report* No. 34 on the management of North Atlantic cod stocks

We would like to refer to the article in *SAMUDRA Report* No. 34 of March 2003, entitled *Something has gone wrong*.

The article in itself is interesting, but it may also, at least at first glance, give the impression that the management of the cod stocks at large in the North Atlantic has failed. With respect to the most important cod stock in Norwegian waters, the Northeast Arctic cod, the situation is, in fact, very different. The spawning stock biomass of this stock is within safe biological limits, according to the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES).

We are concerned about generalizations when it comes to the status of fish stocks. We hasten to say that in your article you clearly mention the Common Fisheries Policy and the North Sea, so for the enlightened reader it would be clear that it is a specific area of the North Atlantic and a specific stock of cod that is being considered. However, many people will probably only notice the terms 'North Atlantic' and 'cod', without knowing the distinction to other cod stocks in other parts of the North Atlantic and under different management regimes.

As you yourself will know, there is an increased tendency to include species and stocks of fish and other (marine) organisms in lists indicating their endangered status. Certification of whether a fish stock or species is being harvested in a sustainable way is used in marketing, and affects consumer opinion.

A very important principle in fisheries management is that this should be based on the best scientific knowledge available. This, therefore, requires differentiation in approach according to the actual situation, including management on a stock-by-stock basis according to the characteristics of the stock. Thus, different stocks of the same species might be in completely different situations.

This response comes from Ann Kristin Westberg, Deputy Director General and Brit Fiskness, Senior Advisor, Det Kongelige, Fisheriedepartemen (postmottak@fid.dep.no), Government of Norway

News Round-up

Jailbirds freed

The Government of **Indonesia** has announced the repatriation of 34 Filipinos, 29 of them fishermen from Southern Mindanao, who were earlier arrested and jailed for illegal fishing.

The repatriation came after a series of bilateral negotiations following the signing of a memorandum of understanding between the Philippine and Indonesian governments in Davao City recently.

Local fishing groups, led by the Socsksargen Federation of Fishing Associations and Allied Industries, started negotiations with Indonesian trade officials last month to include a provision on handline fishermen in the bilateral fishing agreement forged by the Indonesian and Philippine governments.

The agreement covers the fishing grounds between Southern Mindanao and North Sulawesi. Filipino fishers have hailed the Indonesian government's fast repatriation of the jailed Mindanao fishermen, stressing that this move confirms the close fraternal relations being fostered between the two countries, which are the prime movers behind the reactivation of the East Asian Growth Area.

Shark ban

The **Australia**n Fisheries Management Authority (AFMA) has announced the closure of an area of the South Australian coastline to shark fishing, as it seeks a more effective method of protecting school sharks. AFMA is currently consulting with South Australian fishers holding Commonwealth shark fishing permits. The closure had been originally suggested by the commercial fishing industry.

Research shows that pregnant school sharks gather in the shallow waters of the Head of the Bight before they migrate to give birth in specific areas off the Tasmanian coast.

Levels of school sharks can take many years to recover from overfishing because they are a relatively slow breeding species, which is why it is so important to protect the pregnant females. Closure of the area where they aggregate off the South Australian coast (between Eyre Bluff and the Western Australian border) is expected to help promote recovery of the stock.

Out of USA*?*

As a result of strict **United States** aquaculture laws, the Norwegian salmon producing company, Fjord Seafood ASA, one of the largest in the world, has announced that it will be closing its farming centres in Maine after next year's farmed salmon harvest. Seven per cent of Fjord Seafood's production occurs in the US, where the company holds 15 licences allowing it to harvest 6,000 tonnes of salmon per year.

In Chile, however, Norwegian salmon companies have been extremely successful. As a result, Fjord Seafood has announced a 15 to 20 per cent increase in production for 2004 in Chile, where production and returns have been improving every quarter. The company has now been able to obtain new sales contracts guaranteeing higher prices for the next six months. Subsequent to the initial announcement, however, a Fjord Seafood spokesman denied that the company was pulling out of the US.

Closed sea

Fishers have been ordered to cease from fishing sardines, herrings and mackerels off the waters of Northern Iloilo in the Visayan sea of the **Philippines**. The closed season will be from 15 November to 15 March next year, which is the breeding season for these species. Violators shall pay a fine of 500 to 5,000 pesos or imprisonment from six months to four years, or both.

According to data from the Bureau of Agricultural Statistics, the western

Visaya's fisheries production from 1998 to 2002 grew by 45,070 tonnes. Last year's production was 353,916 tonnes.

Of the volume, municipal fisheries account for the bulk of production, with 131,44 tonnes, followed by aquaculture, with 104,678 tonnes, and commercial fisheries, with 117,797 tonnes.

The Visayan Sea, however, is now faced with problems of resource depletion, habitat degradation, unsustainable resource-use patterns and resource-use conflicts.

Sabah calling

Dalian Glory Technology Development Co Ltd of **China** is planning to invest in deep-sea fishing and aquaculture on the east coast of Sabah on the northern tip of the island of Borneo.

The company will bring in 60 trawlers from China for the deep-sea fishing project in Semporna, while the aquaculture project will be set up at Kuala Merotai in Tawau.

The two projects—estimated to be worth around 180 mn Malaysian ringitt altogether—will be undertaken as a joint venture with the Kuala Lumpur-based company, M-Square Sdn Bhd.

Taxed dry

A new tax on the import of dry fish, designed to boost the local fishing industry, has caused a public outcry in **Sri Lanka**. Dry fish, known as *karawala*, is a staple diet of the Sri Lankan working class.

The majority of the fish is imported from the Maldives, Pakistan, India and the Middle East, but now the government has ordered that foreign exporters of dry fish to Sri Lanka must pay a 10 per cent duty, a 20 per cent surcharge, 10 per cent VAT as well as a 1 per cent Ports Authority levy. Previously, foreign exporters paid only a 6.5 per cent defence levy and a 10 per cent stamp duty.

Critical study

A new report from Stanford University researchers has criticized the **United States**' fisheries management councils as ineffective for overseeing the country's vast seafood resources. The report, *Taking Stock of the Regional Fisheries Management Councils*, is the latest in a series of reports on US ocean health funded by the Pew Charitable Trusts. Eight management councils—the Western Pacific, North Pacific, Pacific, Gulf of Mexico, Caribbean, South Atlantic, Mid-Atlantic and New England—were created by the US Congress in 1976 under the Magnuson-Stevens Act to oversee fisheries along the US coastline.

The study surveyed members of what it deemed the four most important fishing regions (with around a 50 per cent response rate), conducted research on the council system and measured the councils against standards for 'good governance' under Congressional statues regulating State agencies.

The report concluded that the councils are unlikely to solve fisheries problems facing the US because of conflicts in their core mission (limiting the number of fish caught and allocating allowable catch among the industry), the "highly homogeneous" makeup of the councils, and potential personal conflicts of interest among council members.

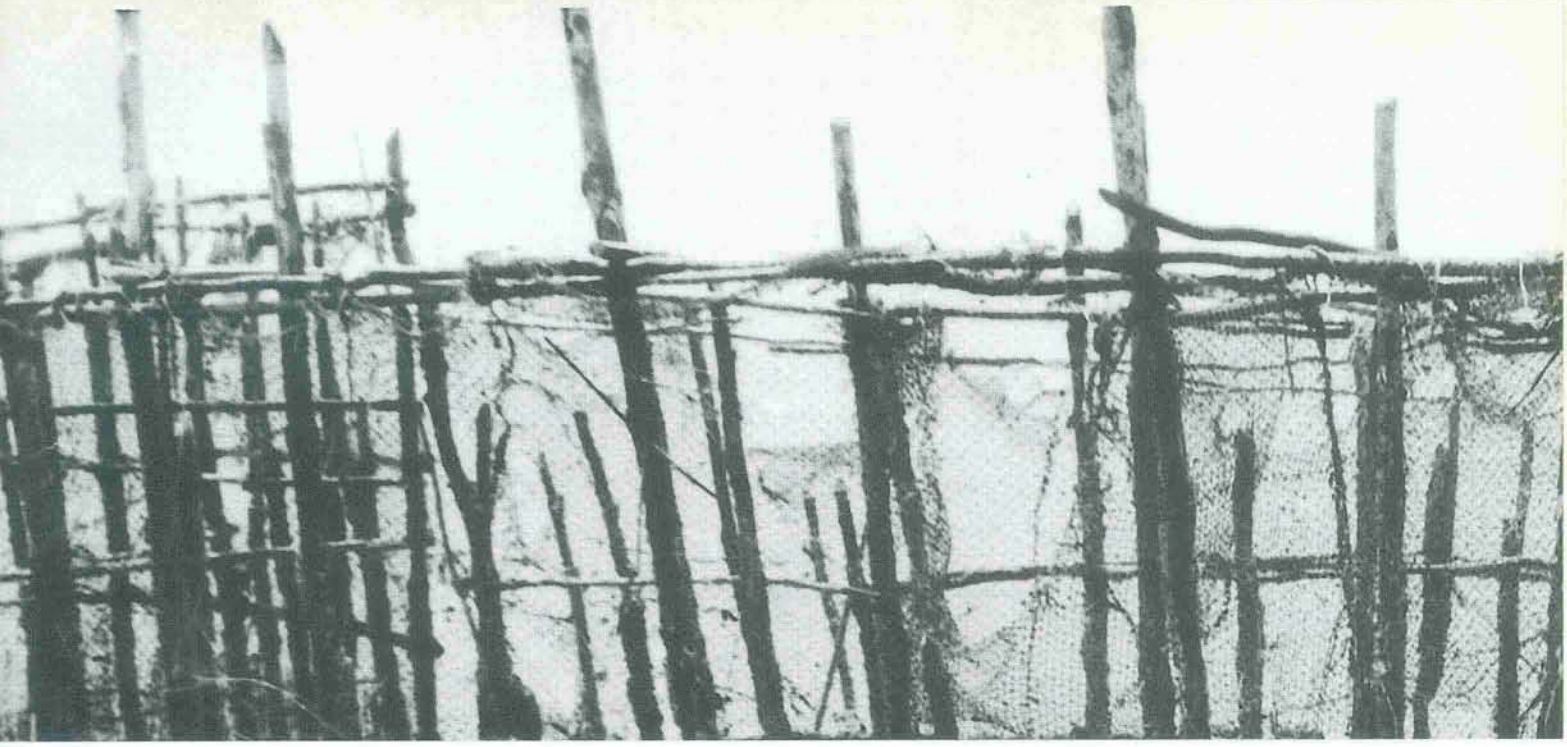
Child labour

Under the International Programme for the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC) of the International Labour Organization (ILO), **Indonesia** has committed itself to eliminating child labour on "jermal" fishing platforms by 2004. ILO-IPEC estimates that in 2000-2003, a total of 1,000 boys in Medan, North Sumatra were at risk of life-threatening accidents and drowning while working 12-20 hours per day 15-25 km out at sea. The young boys suffer three months of isolation and are also vulnerable to physical and sexual abuse. Indonesia, among the first countries in Southeast Asia to launch the child labour programme, has ratified ILO Conventions No. 138 on minimum age and No. 182 on the worst forms of child labour.

The sea bottom was rich with crawling and swimming and growing things. The brown algae waved in the gentle currents and the green eel grass swayed and little sea horses clung to its stems. Spotted botete, the poison fish, lay on the bottom in the eel-grass beds, and the bright-coloured swimming crabs scampered over them.

On the beach the hungry dogs and the hungry pigs of the town searched endlessly for any dead fish or sea bird that may have floated in on a rising tide.

—from *The Pearl* by John Steinbeck



ICSF

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. Registered in Geneva, ICSF has offices in Chennai, India and Brussels, Belgium. 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 the Chennai office.

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

SAMUDRA REPORT can now be accessed on ICSF's home page on the World Wide Web at http://www.icsf.net or http://www.icsf.org

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