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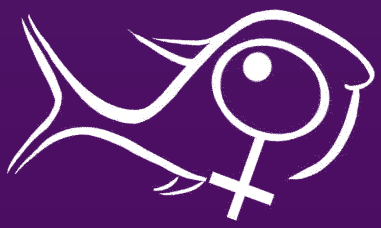
# Yemaya

ICSF'S NEWSLETTER ON GENDER AND FISHERIES





## From the Editor

As this issue of *Yemaya* goes to press, oil from the BP drill in the US Gulf of Mexico is still spilling out uncontrollably, destroying marine life and habitat at an unprecedented scale. The full environmental, social and economic implications of the oil spill are still to be fully grasped.

The spill is a grave reminder of the numerous threats facing fisheries and fishing communities today. The commercial exploitation of seas, the pressures of overfishing, technological changes in fisheries, competition over coastal spaces, pollution and the destruction of coastal habitats—fishing communities across the world are being affected by such developments. They strike right at the heart of communities and families, impacting livelihoods, power relations, the gender division of labour as well as food security and community wellbeing.

The workshop 'Recasting the net: Defining a gender agenda for sustaining life and livelihoods in fishing communities', being organized by ICSF from 7 to 10 July 2010 in Chennai, India, will seek to understand developments of concern to fishing communities, and their specific implications for women. It will also seek to share local agendas and strategies of women's organizations in fisheries, taking stock of achievements and obstacles, and try to define an agenda and strategy for sustaining life and livelihood in fisheries into the future. The workshop will bring together researchers, activists and fishworker leaders—both men and women.

The Chennai workshop will draw on the reports from a series of preparatory national/regional-level workshops and consultations that took place in India, Thailand, the Philippines, South Africa, Brazil, Europe and Canada (see articles in this issue as well as in *Yemaya* No.33).

It will also draw on a detailed background study being undertaken for the workshop, based on an extensive review of literature that explores the following themes from a gender perspective: 'work' and changes in the sexual division of labour within fishing communities; rights to coastal and fisheries resources; women and fisheries decisionmaking; fish trade; community livelihoods and food security; aquaculture; culture and identity; climate change and fisheries; and organizing women in fisheries.

The picture already emerging from the preparatory workshops and the background study is nuanced and complex. Yet, there are common threads that run through. These will provide the foundation for discussions at the workshop, and for participants to define a 'shared gender agenda' for sustaining life and livelihood in fisheries and fishing communities, valuing the roles and contributions of both men and women in producing food, income and social wellbeing from fisheries.

# Guardians of the Sea

**A meeting of women fishers from five provinces in Thailand led to the formation of a new women's network for defending the rights of fishing communities**

This article, by **Ravadee Prasertcharoensuk** (ravadee@sdfthai.org) of the Sustainable Development Foundation (SDF), Thailand, has been translated by **Jonathan Shott** (jonathan.shott@talk21.com)

The meeting was held under challenging circumstances. Women from Phuket and Nakorn Sri Thammarat were not able to raise money on time for their travel. Due to the security situation, women from the provinces of Satun and Pattani could not join. Many had family responsibilities that came in the way of leaving home for even a few days. And yet, despite the odds, 79 women fishers from 27 sub-districts in five provinces gathered in southern Thailand for a four-day meeting between the 17th and 20th of March 2010, called by the Southern Women Fisherfolk Network.

The meeting was a platform for women to share their collective experiences of living and working in small-scale fisheries. The meeting also aimed to address the possibility of setting up a more formal network for women fishers in southern Thailand. Another purpose was to select those who would represent the concerns of Thailand's women fishers at the forthcoming international meeting to be held in early July in Chennai, India.

We begin this report by briefly introducing, province by province, each participating group. The group of women from the province of Songkhla consisted of women from the Songkhla Lake region and the Gulf of Thailand coastline. The unique ecology of the Songkhla Lake, which supports abundant aquatic and wildlife resources, is threatened today by the construction of a dam at the mouth of the lake. The women fishers from the Songkhla Lake region are struggling to conserve the lake's resources. They are organized into village-level savings groups. The savings not only improve the household economy but also go into a special fund for lake conservation and group capacity building. The women have had some success with setting up community fish-landing co-operatives. The women fishers from the Gulf of Thailand coastline face problems arising from developmental activities in their region, including gas leaks from drilling operations and coastal erosion due to port-related dredging works.

RAVADEE PRASERTCHAROENSUK/SDF

Women shared their collective experiences of living and working in small-scale fisheries

Women fishers from Pattalung Province—southern Thailand's only province that has no marine coastline and is located along a different part of Songkhla Lake—face the same dam construction-related problems that women fishers from Songkhla Province do. In addition, there is the problem of overfishing by large numbers of fishers, both small-scale and commercial.

Another province represented at the meeting was the province of Surat Thani, well-known for its abundant wildlife and natural resources. Bandon Bay, in particular, is home to a wide variety of plant and animal species, and also has a large coral reef area. Commercial fishing operations, pollution and waste water from expanding townships, and the development of aquaculture for oyster and clam farming, are serious issues in this region. Large parts of the provincial coastline are privately owned, with aquaculture farms stretching for kilometres on end.

Women fishers from Surat Thani have only recently started getting organized. Their visible role in community affairs is a consequence of growing anxiety over the ongoing degradation of marine and coastal resources. Women understand well that the industrial development projects being planned by the government will irreversibly change the nature of the province's coastline. Worryingly, the government plans for the coastal area of the

region include the construction of a nuclear power plant.

Women fishers from Trang Province, along the Andaman Sea, have been affected by the growth of commercial fisheries and the use of destructive gear like push-nets and drag-nets, which damage seagrass beds and coral reefs. They also face problems due to marine protection initiatives that involve systems of zonation and fishing restrictions.

The women fishers from Trang Province came together after the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami when they found they were being left out of relief and rehabilitation measures. Later, they organized themselves into income-generation groups, to raise money through the sale of products like chilli and curry powder. While they have yet to diversify their activities, they are increasingly being able to participate in community affairs on a more equal footing with men.

Women fishers from the province of Prachuab Kirika along the Gulf of Thailand, not far from Bangkok, face growing difficulties as tourism pushes up fuel and other prices. Commercial fisheries, urbanization, industrialization and tourism have degraded the region's marine and coastal resources. Most small-scale fisherfolk from the province have had to turn to tourism or wage labour for a livelihood. Only a few remain in fisheries. The women of the province rely on community fish-landing co-operatives to get a better price for their fish, and on setting up their own stores for fishing gear and other necessities.

Throughout the meeting there was a conscious attempt to avoid turning it into a training programme. There were no formal presentations. Instead, women shared their experiences and exchanged ideas. Groups of women also worked together on specific issues, so that they could take back concrete experiences of collective learning. To encourage self-reflection, each day began with meditation practice, and, to enable participants to relax after a long day, it closed with games, cultural activities and entertainment.

The women fishers' network from Pum Riang Village in Chaiya District of Surat Thani Province took charge of conducting the meeting. This took place in a Thai-style *sala* (pavilion) owned by the local administration—not in an expensive, formal setting. At night, participants slept in tents. The responsibility for each meal was taken up by the groups in turn, and this offered the opportunity of showcasing varieties of traditional local cuisine.

Participants at the meeting discussed issues at two levels. First, the specific issues of each province were discussed. Second, these issues were contextualized in a wider perspective, which took into account the Thai government's plans for the industrial development of coastal areas in accordance with its Southern Region Development Plan, as well as the impact of climate change on coastal livelihoods and ecosystems.

Several issues emerged from the sharing of experiences. One of the most serious related to the degradation of the coastal ecosystem, which has marginalized the small-scale fisheries and curtailed their access to marine and coastal resources. As a result, an enormous sense of livelihood insecurity grips coastal communities. Women are the ones most adversely affected

**Women fishers must work at different levels today to deal with the multiple challenges they face—not only within fishing communities but also with other communities and the wider small-scale fisheries movement.**

**What's New, Webby?**


## Recasting the Net

The new sub-site of ICSF provides information on the upcoming workshop titled "Recasting the net: Defining a gender agenda for sustaining life and livelihood in fishing communities"—the Chennai workshop—to be held from 7-10 July, in Chennai, India. http://wifworkshop.icsf.net

The website, in three languages —English, French and Spanish—details the objectives and rationale of the workshop. It also provides complete reports of regional/ national/ sub-national workshops and consultations held in the Philippines, South Africa, India, Thailand, Canada, Brazil and Europe, in preparation for the Chennai workshop. The various background studies undertaken are also made available online, under documents. Also available are the latest issues of *Yemaya* brought out specifically in preparation for the Chennai workshop. Watch out also for updates—the proceedings as well as the photographs from the workshop.

For those of you new to the Women in Fisheries website of ICSF, check out the bibliography section—it provides a vast range of references classified under different themes (wif.icsf.net).

## Milestones

### World People's Conference on Climate Change and Rights of Mother Earth

The World People's Conference on Climate Change and Rights of Mother Earth, convened by Bolivian President Evo Morales, was held in Cochabamba, Bolivia during 19-22 April, 2010. This conference, hailed as the alternate climate summit, was held in the aftermath of unsatisfactory negotiations in Copenhagen. It brought together over 30,000 participants including grassroots activists, social, indigenous, environmental and cultural organizations, NGOs, climate experts and scientists from more than 100 countries, including official representation of 48 countries. Many more people participated via the Internet and in campaign actions on the final day of the conference, 22 April, which coincided with the UN-designated Mother Earth Day.

The conference adopted "The 'People's Agreement". This questions the sustainability of the world's current capitalist system, which promotes climate change, while separating human beings from nature. It calls for a new system that restores harmony with nature and creates equity among human beings: "To face climate change, we must recognize Mother Earth as the source of life and forge a new system based on the principles of: harmony and balance among all and with all things; complementarity, solidarity, and equality; collective well-being and the satisfaction of the basic necessities of all; people in harmony with nature; recognition of human beings for what they are, not what they own; elimination of all forms of colonialism, imperialism and interventionism; and peace among the peoples and with Mother Earth."

The agreement calls upon States to recognize, respect and guarantee the effective implementation of international human rights standards and the rights of indigenous peoples, including the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples under ILO Convention 169, among other relevant instruments, in the negotiations, policies and measures used to meet the challenges posed by climate change.

The agreement also calls upon developed countries to acknowledge the Universal Declaration on the Rights of Mother Earth; to commit to ambitious short-term targets for reducing emissions as to avoid an increase in average world temperature of more than one degree Celsius; and to recognize their climate debt in all of its dimensions as the basis for finding a just, effective, and scientific solution to climate change.

because, apart from the fact that they make vital contributions to fishing and production processes, they are the main caregivers in small-scale fishing communities, responsible for both the food security and the general wellbeing of the household. Women's workloads have increased tremendously but they have few opportunities to participate in the processes and projects that are established to resolve the problems of small-scale fisherfolk.

Women are also expected to conform to traditional stereotypes, and not break out of the mould, for fear of inviting criticism. At the same time, women's work is disregarded and devalued. This causes women to become invisible both within communities and society at large. To establish an identity within the community is not easy, particularly because any sort of decision-making role regarding resource management, conservation and rehabilitation is seen as falling within the exclusive domain of men. Women are often told that the male fisherfolk are already taking care of these matters and so there is no reason for women to get involved. This lack of acceptance is a barrier to women's active participation in fisheries.

There was agreement that while change is necessary, it cannot happen overnight. It would take time and must involve the men of the community. However, for change to occur, the starting point must be self-awareness and a willingness to struggle. No organization, agency or any other external force will be able to bring about equality for women unless women themselves are willing to act.

Participants also attempted to contextualize the experiences that had been shared in discussions on global warming and aggressive industrialization. All women agreed that communities had been forced to change their fishing patterns significantly over the years, and that their traditional knowledge systems were losing relevance. Inexplicable changes were taking place, like the appearance of new species, coastal erosion and the formation of new coastal land masses. Could these be on account of global warming or were some other forces responsible? Even though fisherfolk are at a loss for explanations, climate change experts agree that the most intense impacts of global warming will occur in marine and coastal areas, acidifying the seas and altering weather patterns and ocean currents. Fishing communities must equip themselves to deal with such phenomena.

There was a detailed discussion on the Thai government's Southern Region Development Plan. Crafted in association with politicians and investors, it aims to heavily industrialize

the coastal areas of southern Thailand. Petrochemical industries, energy production, nuclear power plants, logistics and tourism—all except small-scale fishing communities—find a place in the plan. Small-scale fisheries will inevitably be affected in terms of displacement of communities; encroachment into important coastal ecosystems, such as mangrove forests; further degradation of already critically-depleted marine and coastal resources; pollution; and curbing of access and usage rights of small-scale fisherfolk. Significantly, the plan was drafted without a single consultation with small-scale fishing communities, whose lives it will disrupt.

There was consensus that small, piecemeal, single-issue-based efforts were no longer enough; rather, what was needed was a broad and holistic view of the overall context and the need to work for change in an integrated way. Women fishers must work at different levels to deal with the multiple challenges they face. They must work not only within fishing communities but also with other communities and the wider small-scale fisheries movement.

Recognizing this, the assembly formally established a network of groups of women fishers, which was named 'Women's Network for the Defence of Fisherfolk Rights'. This network would develop the role of women in protecting community rights in accessing, using and managing natural resources. It would put in place practices aimed at protecting, conserving and rehabilitating marine and coastal resources to protect the small-scale fisheries, and would increase the knowledge, skills and capacities of women fishers to enable intervention in matters of policy and legislation.

A co-ordinating committee was formed, which included three representatives from each of the provinces; funds were raised through a collection drive; and a working plan was drafted. Two network members—Supapron Pannaria (Network of Women Fisherfolk from Songkhla Lake) and Suphen Pantee (Surat Thani Small-scale Fisherfolk Network)—were selected as representatives to attend the upcoming international women fishers meeting in Chennai, India. The meeting ended with the unanimous view that the four days had been productive and well spent!

**REPORT** **BRAZIL**

# Equal Rights, Unequal Access

**A new fisheries law in Brazil recognizes, for the first time, fisherwomen as workers. But they need to come up to speed to take advantage of the associated work-related benefits**

By **Sueli Miranda** (cpp@cnbbn2.org.br) co-ordinator, Conselho Pastoral dos Pescadores (CPP) Northern Region, and **Maria Cristina Maneschy,** (cristina@ufpa.br) Professor of Sociology, Federal University of Pará

Pará is one of Brazil's main fish-producing States, where artisanal fisheries occupy a very significant economic, social and cultural position. Recently, a meeting organized in Belém, the capital of Pará, by a local organization, the Conselho Pastoral dos Pescadores (CPP), brought together 19 women of fishing communities from the Lower Amazon Region and from Marajó Island at the mouth of the Amazon.

A very encouraging development was that local *colônias* were represented by women—something that has rarely happened in the past. The three fishermen's *colônias* that participated were Abaetetuba, Mosqueiro and São Sebastião da Boa Vista. Several community organizations were also present. They included the Association of Artisanal Fishermen and Extractivists from Boa Vista, the Association of Women Fishworkers and Farmers from Baía do Sol (Mosqueiro), the Association of Fishermen and Farmers from Aricuru (Maracanã), and the Association of Domestic Women from Santarém.

The proceedings started with a review of the objectives of the meeting. An important aim was to elect delegates from Pará to participate at the next meeting of the National Articulation of Fisherwomen in Brazil (ANP), scheduled to take place in early May in Ceará State. The other important objective was to hold focused discussions on certain themes. These included: the concerns of women as fishworkers, and as members of communities and organizations; initiatives taken in relation to these concerns; existing fishery policies and their effectiveness; and finally, strategies to deal with these concerns.

At the first session, Sueli Miranda of the CPP explored the question of feminine identity in relation to culture and the way of life in fisheries. After reading from a text titled "Who are you?", she discussed the historical development of gender inequalities, which has

led to the contemporary situation of equal rights but unequal access for men and women.

Following this, Maria Cristina Maneschy made a presentation on the new Fisheries Law, in effect in Brazil since June 2009, which, by redefining artisanal fishing to include pre- and post-harvest tasks, opens up a window of professional recognition for women engaged in these activities. In the discussion that followed, some apprehensions were voiced about the scope for middlemen to take undue advantage because of the way the law was worded, but everyone agreed on its potential benefits for women.

The next session on labour and welfare rights attracted a good deal of audience attention. Ana Maria Santa Brígida, from the National Institute of Social Security, explained Brazil's social welfare system, focusing, in particular, on the schemes that applied to small-scale fisheries. Maternity leave, retirement schemes, pension, and sickness and accident indemnities were the main topics of interest. These welfare benefits have been in force for over 20 years but to avail of them requires the right connections within the bureaucracy in cities. There is also much paperwork involved in obtaining an individual worker number, an identification card, proof of fishing experience, and so on. For women, furnishing such proof is sometimes quite difficult. It was informed that purchase slips for fishing gear that mention the women's name, or a child's school enrollment certificate that mentions the parent's profession, may be used in the absence of direct identity proof.

Aladim Alfaia, longtime co-ordinator of the Brazilian National Fishermen Movement (MONAPE), talked about the unemployment insurance scheme for artisanal fishermen—an allowance that is provided to fishers in areas where the four-month fisheries ban is enforced every year. Although it had come into being as a result of a strong movement led by MONAPE, CPP and fishermen's unions and associations, the scheme had fallen prey to corrupt practices. Many outside the fisheries were trying to take advantage of the four-month allowance. The example of a municipality in Pará State was cited, whose fishermen population, according to the official demographic census, is 2,900; however, the *colônia* records almost twice these numbers—5,742—as fishermen. The very purpose of the policy is thus thwarted.

On the second day of the meeting the guest speaker was Cárita Rosa das Chagas, who grew up in a coastal fishing village and today works in the State Secretariat of Fisheries and Aquaculture. She also has a seat in the Women's Rights Council of Pará State. Cárita emphasized the many changes that had taken place in the lives of women who had clearly gained visibility as income earners and as participants in the political arena. Fisherwomen's movements have engaged the government in dialogue and have participated actively in national conferences on fisheries and aquaculture organized by the government. However, the policies in place are still far from adequate, and fisherwomen would have to mobilize in large numbers for better access to basic services such as healthcare.

Subsequently, the participants split up into smaller, region-based groups for focused discussions on the previously-agreed themes. The group from the Lower Amazon River presented the main points of their discussion in a most interesting manner, in the form of a radio interview. One of their chief concerns was the lack of medical attention and proper healthcare services in the region. This was a severe problem particularly because women were frequently reporting cases of skin, breast and uterine cancer. Another concern was the inability of women to prove their professional status as fishworkers and hence benefit from the fishing ban allowance. "A woman has to smell of fish to prove she is a fisherwoman. There is discrimination in the State offices. Women also discriminate against each other," the group said. The dumping of untreated pollutants into rivers was another major concern. Participants shared some of the interesting initiatives they have undertaken in recycling waste and monitoring the environment.

The group of women shrimp fishers from Marajó Island, who fish daily for both income and household consumption, said that their difficulties were related mainly to marketing shrimp. Living along rivers in rural areas far from the city, they were forced to depend on middlemen. They faced problems of transportation and theft of fish traps. When they go to the city markets, they take along shrimp as well as fruit from their gardens to sell. Some reported having regular customers who placed orders on the phone in cities like Belém. The women would then depend on workers they knew in the boat lines to deliver these orders. The group mentioned that an ice factory was coming up in their municipality, to be managed by a local association of fishers, and they hoped it would help them preserve their catches. The group

ended their report by stressing the need for women to fight for their rights.

The third group consisted of women from Mosqueiro Island, near the capital city Belém, and from the community of Aricuru, in Maracanã municipality. This group put up a parody which depicted the poor health infrastructure and the lack of organization in many fishermen *colônias*. The shortage of fish supplies was a critical concern for this group, which is now exploring possible avenues of alternative employment such as manufacturing fishing gear and sewing.

In the final session, the participants received detailed information regarding the meeting of the National Articulation of Fisherwomen in Brazil (ANP) scheduled for the first week of May 2010 in Ceará State. Four women were chosen as delegates to this meeting. Another important decision was to schedule the next meeting of fisherwomen from Pará State for September 2010.

In their feedback, participants felt that more time should have been devoted to questions from the audience and for discussion. A suggestion for the next meeting was to include a specific session on occupational diseases and injuries, which would help fisherwomen claim insurance benefits in a better-informed manner. The participants were full of praise for the good organizational arrangements that had been made for the meeting, and felt they were taking back a lot of positive messages to share with the other women of their communities.

**REPORT** BRAZIL

# Making their Voices Heard

**Fisherwomen in Brazil have organized themselves to demand recognition of their work and rights in the fisheries and, slowly, the government is being forced to listen**

By **Naina Pierri** (naina@cem.ufpr.br), a sociologist and professor at the Federal University of Parana, Brazil, and **Natália Tavares de Azevedo** (nataliatavares@ufpr.br), a sociology student working for a doctorate in environment and development at the Federal University of Parana

Women fishers in Brazil have come a long way. The turning point in their recent history was in 1985 when a fishermen's *colônia* elected a woman as its president. By 1994, another woman had been elected to head a State federation of *colônias*. A decade or so later, in 2006, in a move that marked the coming of age of women in the continental and coastal fisheries, a national-level network, the National Articulation of Fisherwomen in Brazil (ANP), was created.

The network recently held its second meeting, from 4 to 8 May 2010, in the town of Fortim, in Ceará State. The meeting was attended by about 60 fisherwomen from 12 of the 26 States in Brazil, as well as by researchers, advisers and supporters. Readers might remember that the first meeting of the network was held four years ago, in April 2006. It emerged from a process of campaigning for the formal recognition of women's contributions to fisheries and aquaculture.

In 2003, the First National Conference on Aquaculture and Fisheries, organized by the Brazilian government, had ignored the role of women. Reacting sharply to this, women fishers demanded that a meeting to address their specific issues be held. The government consented by convening the First National Meeting of Women Workers in Fisheries and Aquaculture in 2004. This provided the context for women's mobilization, and led to the formulation of a set of demands that challenged the basis for women's invisibility in the sector. This important document was approved in 2006, under pressure from women fishers, at the Second National Conference of Aquaculture and Fisheries.

The recent political mobilization of women fishers is also linked to the organizational revitalization of the artisanal fisheries sector in Brazil. When the government held its third National Conference on Aquaculture and Fisheries in September 2009, an important part of the organized artisanal sector chose to boycott the conference, and held a parallel meeting instead. This boycott was provoked by a loss of faith. Attending the national conference, it was felt, would provide legitimacy to the very government that was marginalizing the artisanal sector through its policies. This then was the overall context in which the second meeting of the ANP was held. The meeting had three major components.

NAINA PIERRI

60 fisherwomen from 12 of the 26 States in Brazil as well as researchers, advisers and supporters, met at the second meeting of ANP

The first consisted of providing information on certain general issues in order to enrich the discussion and contribute to the political development of the present leaders. The topics were: feminism; historical overview of women's struggles globally and in Brazil; occupational health of women in fishing; gender analysis of women's work in fishing; and the need for fishing closure periods, as a conservation strategy, specifically targeting the species captured by fisherwomen.

The second was a dialogue with representatives from the Ministry of Agrarian Development, the Ministry of Fisheries and Aquaculture, the Ministry of Social Security, and the Secretariat of Policies for Women, who answered questions about the various policies applicable to artisanal fishing. The issues discussed included the lack of recognition of work; labour rights and social security for women in the sector; difficulty of access to credit for fisheries; and lack of access guarantee and livelihood security for fishing communities.

The third and main part of the meeting focused on organizational issues of the ANP, its present situation and perspectives. Organizational problems were analyzed, and strategies at the State and national levels were debated. The meeting decided to enlarge the scope of national co-ordination, with representation from all the States present. Dates for subsequent State and national-level co-ordination meetings were decided.

The meeting acknowledged the progress made by fisherwomen since 2006 in gaining recognition for their work. A working paper on women not directly employed in fishing, but participating in activities along the fisheries production chain, had led to the legislation of the New General Law on Fisheries in 2009. This law, however, is not sufficient for the real and complete recognition of fisherwomen's rights.

The meeting reaffirmed the goals for struggle raised in 2006. These included: strengthening the identity of fisherwomen; struggling against discrimination and violence at work and other places; struggling for labour and social-security rights; demanding a public policy on health, education and housing; demanding the right of access to land and water; preserving natural resources; and, finally, struggling against environmentally and socially damaging projects, such as the uncontrolled spread of shrimp farming.

The meeting discussed the future goals for women in the fisheries. On labour rights and social security, the women reaffirmed the general need for respect and recognition and, specifically, the need for recognition of occupational diseases and access to health and disability insurance. The struggle for land and water was now redefined as a struggle to defend access to fishing territories and obtain formal property rights for land in fishing areas. A new goal set at the meeting was to enlarge the scope of fishing bans to include not only fish of high commercial value but also varieties of fish that women typically harvest and, therefore, need protection. This last is a particularly important goal because it means that, in certain cases, women could also be eligible for fishing ban insurance during periods of restricted fishing.

Analyzing strengths and future prospects, it was pointed out that a key strength of the ANP is its political and financial autonomy from the government. Other important strengths are its growing maturity and critical political comprehension, the centrality of grassroots-level mobilization and also its democratic form of functioning and decisionmaking. Finally, a commitment to life and to build solidarity is a crucial strength.

There is today an enlarged group of leadership from an important part of Brazil to take forward the struggle of fisherwomen. There is a need to build alliances with other social movements, including the women's movement and the peasants' movement. The challenge for this national organization is to continue participating in the struggle "without fear of being women", as reflected in their songs and practice!

**There is today an enlarged group of leadership from an important part of Brazil to take forward the struggle of fisherwomen. There is a need to build alliances with other social movements including the women's movement and the peasant movement.**

# Behind Every Boat, A Woman, A Family, A Community...!

**The European network of women's organizations in fisheries and aquaculture, AKTEA, challenges the unacceptable omission of women's contributions to fisheries in a crucial European Commission policy consultation paper**

Summary of AKTEA's Response to the Green Paper on 'Reform of the Common Fisheries Policy' (http://ec.europa.eu/fisheries/reform/docs/aktea_en.pdf)

By **Brian O' Riordan** (briano@scarlet.be), Brussels Office Secretary, ICSF; **Cornelie Quist** (cornelie.quist@gmail.com) AKTEA, and **Katia Frangoudes** (Katia.Frangoudes@univ-brest.fr), AKTEA

Should the Green Paper on Reform of the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP), brought out by the European Commission (EC), contain the word 'women'? Yes, it must, says AKTEA, the European network of women's organizations in fisheries and aquaculture.

The EC Treaty establishes that the principle of gender equality must inform every European policy. Its absence in the CFP Green Paper is, therefore, a glaring gap. Despite this, AKTEA's contribution to the public consultation on the CFP Reform process was a reminder of how rapidly women's organizations are gaining ground in the EU fisheries.

AKTEA notes that women are integral to the fisheries, and they participate in fisheries management at all levels. Women's groups and members of AKTEA have made their presence felt in Regional Advisory Councils (RACs). AKTEA itself plans to participate in the Advisory Committee on Fisheries and Aquaculture (ACFA). It strongly supports the right of a fisher's partner or spouse to participate in fishers' organizations at every level.

According to AKTEA, women understand the importance of protecting the environment and reducing pollution in rivers and coastal waters. They recognize the need to work with the wider fisher community for sound fisheries management. Women are increasingly engaging in active fishing at sea. Their presence in shore-based harvesting is significant in many European countries, particularly as *mariscadora*s (shellfish gatherers) in Spain and Portugal. According to statistics, women comprise around 26 per cent of the workforce in the seafood industry, representing 4.1 per cent of employment in the harvesting sector. However, there are no gender-differentiated fishery statistics available in the EU, which means that women's contributions remain under-represented, or invisible.

The CFP Green Paper contains references to small-scale fisheries, fishing communities and small- and medium-sized enterprises, yet it ignores the crucial part that women play in these. Indeed, family fishing enterprises would not survive without women but their contributions are rarely remunerated or reported. The "collaborative spouse" status, recognized in the EU directive 86/613, has been a major step forward in this regard, but is not uniformly applied throughout Europe.

Further, AKTEA is highly critical of the EC proposal in favour of a regime of individual transferable rights in the industrial fisheries. Such a move would run counter to the principles of economic and environmental sustainability. Stabilizing the economy of small-scale fisheries should be the key priority.

In a regime of individual transferable rights or quotas, speculative activities by big companies and interests outside the fishery sector would harm the small-scale fisheries, undermine small enterprises and discriminate against women. Even in its present form, the existing quota system is discriminatory to women, particularly in the event of divorce or widowhood, because neither is their contribution to the quota-based fishery recognized nor their claim to the quota. AKTEA, therefore, urges the EC to ensure legal co-ownership of (un)married couples of both quota and enterprise.

Finally, AKTEA calls on the EC to undertake a social impact analysis of the individual quota system and to define indicators for monitoring social changes within the communities caused by new fishery management regulations.

Women's roles and contributions are vital for sustaining fishery activities and enterprises, and in maintaining the social and cultural fabric that keeps small-scale fishing communities together. Their absence in the CFP Green Paper is simply not acceptable.

# Climate Trouble

**A meeting in the Philippines discussed the challenge of climate change and what women can do to deal with it**

This article is by **Soledad Natalia M. Dalisay** (sol.dalisay@yahoo.com), Associate Professor of the Department of Anthropology, University of the Philippines, and co-ordinator of the Office of Anti-Sexual Harassment, UP Diliman

How has climate change affected the livelihoods of fishing communities? How have women coped with the challenge? Have government initiatives helped? What can be done to counter the adverse effects of climate change?

A group of 35 women met earlier this year in the Philippines to discuss these important questions. The occasion was the National Workshop on Women in Fisheries and Climate Change, held from 9 to 11 March 2010 in Villa Alzhun Resort in Tagbilaran City, Bohol. It was a diverse group that met, representing the academic community, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), as well as the local administration. Grassroots women leaders, mainly fishers, representing people's movements from the three major islands of the country—Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao—also took part. The group included six participants from Thailand.

During the workshop, experiences were shared and presentations were made by invited resource persons. The presentations made it clear that climate change might trigger sea-level rise, tropical cyclones and typhoons, floods, droughts, storm surges, changes in rainfall patterns and rising temperatures. The last point was already a lived reality for most participants. Fishermen were cutting their fishing trips short on account of soaring temperatures. For women, this meant diminished catches and, therefore, the compulsion to look for other sources of income. This, in turn, led to the neglect of children as well as strained family relations. Heat exposure reactions, leading to hypertension, coughs and asthma attacks, were becoming common. Increased violence, both in the family and the community, were reported.

SOLEDAD NATALIA M. DALISAY

Participants of the workshop shared experiences and proposed strategies to deal with climate change

The presentations highlighted the gender-differentiated impact of disasters. It was pointed out that, according to statistics, more women than men drown in floods. Women, being responsible for the home, play a key role in disaster recovery but are rarely consulted when disaster risk reduction strategies are planned. Such strategies would be greatly enhanced if they took into account women's coping abilities as well as risk perception skills.

A few case studies were also presented. The case study of Cavite, for instance, revealed that flooding was occurring in areas that had never known flooding earlier, and increasingly, extreme weather events were being recorded. Two areas in Cavite—Naic and Ternate—were experiencing sea-level rise as well as coral bleaching. The usual weather calendar that fishers relied on could no longer be used because the weather had become so unpredictable. Cavite was experiencing non-seasonal rainfall. In Sorsogon, frequent typhoons, prolonged heavy rainfall, flooding and sea-level rise were being reported.

These phenomena translated into multiple problems: periods of food insecurity; increased levels of tension in the household and community; loss of property due to strong typhoons; and reduced income because of dwindling fish catches and economic and social displacement. As a result, people were being pushed further into the margins of poverty. Disease outbreaks were commonly reported, increasing the burden for women, the traditional caregivers within families.

Another case study focused on the region of Zambales, where a very strong typhoon in 2009,

and the floods that followed, destroyed most of the structures built along the seashore. Houses, roads and agricultural fields were inundated. Salt water had filled the wells that supplied the community with drinking water. This meant that women had to walk long distances to fetch potable water.

Such sharing of experiences was useful for communities to craft collective strategies for climate resilience. The Thai participants at the meeting realized that the Filipino experience had been very similar to their own and that common lessons could be learnt. Strategies for mitigating climate change impacts included community-based resource management initiatives such as mangrove conservation and reforestation, creating artificial coral reefs, livelihood enhancement opportunities for women, and educational interventions. A multi-sector approach involving local organizations in partnership with academic institutions and the media was considered to be ideal.

PROFILE

# Conchita S. Masin

**Mother Conching, as she is popularly known, received a national award in 2007 for her exemplary service to the women's movement**

By **Soledad Natalia M. Dalisay** (sol.dalisay@yahoo.com) Associate Professor of the Department of Anthropology, University of the Philippines and the co-ordinator of the Office of Anti-Sexual Harassment, UP Diliman

"*Coastal women, use your talents and wit to continue our cause! Women nowadays have heightened awareness about their plight. We are not stupid. Women are not only the light of their own households; they are the guiding light of their communities as well.*" - *Conchita S. Masin*

In 1997, when Conchita S. Masin and others from her family and community were evicted from their homes, they decided not to take it lying down. A group of Catholic nuns supported the displaced fisher people, giving them shelter and, most importantly, urging them to fight back and challenge their eviction. The incident marked a turning point in their lives. Conchita took the lead, organizing women along the coasts, gradually coming to the front ranks of the women's movement in the Philippines. Her deep involvement in the women's movement was formally recognized in 2007 when was given a national award for exemplary service. Yet another award, in the form of an honorific title, was given by the people and those who knew Conchita well. Mother Conching, they called her.

One of Mother Conching's most significant achievements to date has been the establishment of a Women Managed Area (WMA) within the fishing grounds in her community in Governor Generoso, Davao Oriental. Prior to the establishment of the WMA, women in her fishing community had always played supporting, background roles. They had never been involved in decision-making activities. Fishing tenure arrangements had always been framed by men, for men. The provision of priority use rights for the women in the community within a designated area for fishing was, therefore, a big step forward. This was a space of their own where they could engage freely in using and managing marine resources. The rehabilitation, reforestation and protection of the WMA were in women's hands. Mother Conching also became very active in fighting for the full implementation of the Fisheries Code. In the process, however, she acquired numerous enemies among commercial fishers.

The road Mother Conching has chosen to journey on has not been an easy one. As a member of the women fishers' association in her community, the *Agraryong Reporma Samahang kababaihan ng Pangisdaan*, she and the rest of the association members had to lobby for their rights. A big obstacle came in the form of conflicts with local government officials. But Mother Conching was vocal in her efforts. So much so that she came to the point of receiving death threats for her obstinacy and perseverance. Ignoring these, she continues to fight undeterred, for women's rights. She draws support and inspiration from people in the community. Mother Conching says she is happiest when she serves fellow women in her community. She attributes part of her success to the unwavering support she receives from her husband, whom she considers to be a "gift from God". It was not all smooth sailing, however, and their relationship went through rough times when she began her involvement in the women's movement. Eventually, things started to get better and today her husband is her most important ally.

Currently, the WMA that Mother Conching and the women in her community have laboured to build has become a model for coastal communities across the world. It conveys a simple yet powerful message. "Yes," it proclaims, "Women can!"

# Looking Back, Looking Forward

**A learning circle meeting in Canada discussed issues and options for women in the Canadian small-scale fisheries**

By **the Coastal Learning Communities Network** that unites communities on Canada's Atlantic, Arctic and Pacific coasts, and advocates for the adoption of indigenous stewardship models for natural resource management

On 30 March 2010, eight women from the Atlantic and Pacific coasts of Canada gathered in a learning circle to discuss the role of women in Canadian fisheries. The group consisted of both indigenous and non-indigenous women, each with organizational or research experience in the fisheries. Although separated by hundreds and thousands of kilometres, the women dialled into a toll-free telephone number and formed a figurative circle in which after a speaker finished, she passed a feather to the next person, to acknowledge her turn to speak.

The session started with a prayer:

> Let us look to the four directions and give thanks in all those directions. Let us give thanks to the four elements and to the landscapes, the mountains, and the rivers, and to all of the rocks, those grandfather rocks. And let us give thanks to the wind and the power and the skies and the stars. And let us think about all the plant people who came before us … all of the four-legged, the winged, and the finned. And to give thanks to all of our ancestors, to all the people on the earth…to all the lives, the lessons that they've learned and passed on so that we could be here together today. And to give thanks to all of our family and friends who also made it so that we could be here together. And to give thanks to each other for making the time today to be together so that we can be in this circle and that we can hear good things and speak good things and feel good things today.

ICSF

Ten years ago there was greater openness to the idea of women's participation in fishing organizations. Women were forming their own organizations as well

Women's work and the challenges women face in the fisheries in Canada was the first topic of discussion. Everyone agreed that women are able to look beyond fishing and think in terms of the welfare and stability of the community, food security, and the wellbeing of the family and children. However, a pressing issue is the loss of commercial licences that indigenous and non-indigenous people have suffered on account of the privatization of fishery resources. For example, on Vancouver Island on the Pacific Coast, community- and family-based shell fisheries, and, in particular, the clam fishery, have for long sustained the indigenous people. Men, women, children and elders work together. Women's work—gathering, drying, processing, and trading shellfish—is particularly intensive. Without commercial licences, however, women find that they can no longer legally sell the catch. As a result, their way of life is under threat.

The fishing people on the Atlantic Coast face similar problems. In 1999, the Supreme Court, in a landmark decision—the Marshall Decision—gave indigenous people the right to participate in the commercial fishery. However, this right is being diluted in the prevailing context of a market-driven fishery. Another Supreme Court ruling—the Sparrow Decision—confirmed the right of all indigenous people to engage in fishing for food and traditional purposes but disallowed the sale of traditionally-harvested fishery products. Fishing offers only limited benefits to the local indigenous economy, and the decline in catch may be related to the declining health of the people.

As a result of these problems, women are under stress. If their husbands have a licence, women must join the fishing trip because hiring crew is expensive. This adds to women's normal household tasks and fishery-related duties, such as bookkeeping. Some communities have no young women left since they have all left in search of work. One consequence of the mounting stress is an increase in domestic violence. Women, it was felt, must have access to

safe spaces where they can discuss the challenges they face.

Throughout the discussion, there were repeated references to the loss of licences due to privatization, a process that makes access to the fisheries market-driven and highly expensive. This loss of access is associated with privatized landing sites, wharves and clam beaches as well, one of many changes due to policies of globalization that privilege profits above social wellbeing.

The role of women in decisionmaking came up next on the agenda. It was felt that women have less of a voice in the fisheries today than they did even in the not-so-distant past. Ten years ago, there was greater openness to the idea of women's participation in fishing organizations. Women were forming their own organizations as well. Today, however, the situation is very different. It was suggested that since fishermen are experiencing a loss of control in the small-scale fisheries, they are unwilling to share what little organizational power they retain. At the level of the family, however, women continue to be consulted by their husbands. Thus, women may have a voice in the household but none at the organizational level, a trend visible in both indigenous and non-indigenous fishing communities. The situation poses a serious challenge for the political mobilization of women.

Another threat to the small-scale fisheries comes from industrial aquaculture. This export-oriented industry is displacing traditional fishers, and, as fishing policies are aligned closely to global markets, threatening their food security as well. The industrialization of the fisheries makes it difficult for communities to adapt the small-scale fisheries to meet the additional challenge posed by climate change. Local and traditional knowledge is discounted in fisheries management; there is greater use of intensive harvesting methods, and more pollution is being generated—all these factors make adaptation difficult.

Although the prospects for the sector look grim and there is a sense of despair, the participants all felt the need to continue holding such learning circles in order to come up with alternative strategies to revitalize women's participation in the contemporary context of the fisheries.

The learning circle concluded with the following prayer:

> Let us give thanks for participating in this learning circle today. Although there are lots of challenges and lots of things that make us feel downhearted, I do still think that there is hope and like someone said earlier, "there is still time." And I don't quite understand it but I think there is strength when women come together and try to make changes for the better and for the future. And I think that is tied to our responsibility for future generations. So I am very thankful to have been part of this.

LAKE VICTORIA AFRICA

# Risks and Uncertainties

**With the transformation of Lake Victoria's fisheries into a lucrative, export-oriented industry, the poor, especially women who process lower-value fish for domestic markets, are feeling the repercussions**

By **Modesta Medard** (modesta_medard@yahoo.co.uk; Modesta.Medard@wur.nl), currently undertaking PhD studies in Wageningen University, the Netherlands

Lake Victoria, whose waters are shared by three countries, namely, Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda, supports Africa's largest inland fishery. Its most valuable products are Nile perch, *dagaa* and tilapia. The Lake Victoria fishery has come under increasing pressure in the last two decades as fish stocks have declined steadily since production peaked in the early 1990s. However, the demand for Nile perch in Europe, America and Asia, and for *dagaa* in regional and domestic markets, continues to grow. As a result, the Lake Victoria fishery has undergone a complete transformation. From being a local-based subsistence fishery in the early 1980s, today it is a highly commercialized, export-oriented fishery of Nile perch.

The contribution of *dagaa* to the total annual catch has increased from negligible in 1968 to 60 per cent in 2007. At 0.79 mn metric tonnes, *dagaa* currently tops the Lake Victoria fishery in terms of total biomass. One of the reasons for this surge in production has been the increasing investment in the *dagaa* fishery after the Nile perch fishery became closely associated with theft and piracy. *Dagaa* is normally fished at night during the lunar cycle which lasts between 18 to 21 days. Boats, *dagaa* seine-nets and pressure lamps are used as fishing gear, with the light from the lamps used to attract the fish.

MODESTA MEDARD NTARA

Dried *dagaa* ready for packing and transporting to the market, Kome Island, Tanzania

*Dagaa* fishing is intensive, and social networks are exploited to maintain it. Boatowners—locally known as *tajiri*—are obliged to sell their catch to local buyers and regional exporters, who sometimes provide them financial and material support.

A key point is that virtually everyone involved in actually harvesting and marketing high-value fish are men. Women do the peripheral work, buying up the undersized Nile perch that are not absorbed by the filleting factories, offloading *dagaa* from fishing boats and drying them under the sun. Women are also the main buyers of *dagaa* and juvenile fish from illegal fishers and beach-seine operators, aimed at the low-income domestic market.

Globalization has changed the domestic demand for fish, in particular for *dagaa*. The poor, who form the majority of the population in the lake region, are left with low-value fish such as *dagaa* which does not compete favourably in the international market. In a study conducted by the author, it was found that most poor people in fishing and farming communities consume *dagaa*, their main source of fish protein. A large proportion of *dagaa* is consumed in Kenya and Tanzania, and some in Uganda. Given the increasing demand for *dagaa* in local and regional markets, quality and safety become important issues.

*Dagaa* is, however, associated with poor handling and processing practices, which lead to quantitative losses and lower its value both financially and nutritionally. Ice is never used. The fish is handled in an unhygienic manner throughout the chain, from source to consumer. The main processing method applied to the catch is sun drying. Usually, *dagaa* is dried on the sand. The sun catalyzes oxidative processes in the fish, thereby diminishing the nutritional values of protein, lipids and vitamins. Domestic animals and birds often walk over the drying fish and feed on it. During rainy season, rot may set in, resulting in huge losses. It is estimated that up to 60 percent of *dagaa* fish may be spoiled by moisture, and there is also high likelihood of contamination by rain and river-based pollutants.

What about the women who process *dagaa* for the local markets? What are the conditions under which they work and live? To find out, let us meet 30-year-old Pendo Mwanameka and 31-year-old Faidoo Kabika, who work as offloaders and processors of *dagaa* in Kome Island, Sengerema District, Mwanza.

According to these women, *dagaa* offloading and drying is "real business", not easy to get into. "To get the job, we have to secure what is called a 'number' by talking to the *mjeshi* in a *dagaa* boat. We buy the number by paying money to the *mjeshi* who then becomes the guarantor and the entry point for the job," says Faidoo Kabika. The word *mjeshi* denotes a crew member. It comes from the Kiswahili word, *jeshi,* which means 'army', denoting the tough nature of the job.

Since the crew migrates frequently, in some cases, women deal not with the *mjeshi* but with the boatowner. In the 1990s, a single boat generated work for four women but today, a single boat employs only one woman, while in larger fishing camps, two women might find work on a boat. On good days, when the catch is heavy, these women hire other women workers at a daily wage of T.Shs1,000 to 15,000 (US$0.7 to US$1) to divide and complete the work of offloading and drying the fish. These activities could take up to 12 hours.

The women report that while they might get some sleep at night during the start of the lunar fishing cycle, they get none at all towards the end. "It is a risky time because this is when drunkards, beach-seine pullers, domestic traders on bicycle and foot, are all moving about in search of fish from illegal operators," says Pendo Mwanameka.

Processing *dagaa* is hard work. It involves turning the fish around for more than eight hours under the hot sun, working in pouring rain and keeping a lookout for birds, dogs, goats and cows. Regardless of the tough conditions, the women admit that it is better than nothing, and that their experience allows them to find work on two or three boats at a time. "This work

is important to me. Thanks to it, I have been able to buy two plots and kept some capital aside for future business," says Pendo Mwanameka. There are other opportunities as well. "We get free *dagaa* for home use every day; sometimes we sell part of it to bait fishers (longliners) at up to T.Shs2,000 (US$1.4). We also use it to barter for tomatoes, onions, vegetables, potatoes, fruits, firewood and other fishes such as tilapia and *haplochromines* at our local markets," reveals Faidoo Kabika.

Payment is based on a share of the total amount of dried catch. For 18 buckets of dried *dagaa*, the woman receives one bucket as payment for labour. However, there are costs she has to incur. She pays out T.Shs18,000 (US$12.1) to get her 'number' for a single lunar cycle. Out of this money, T.Shs10,000 (US$6.7) is distributed among the four crew members and T.Shs8,000 (US$5.4) is spent on expenditure for food at the camp. The woman might then sell her catch either at the market under the '*bora* system' or at the beach under the 'expenditure system'. Under the *bora* system, the boat owner pays all food costs, takes all the fish, including the woman's share for sale, and then pays the woman her share, usually at a rate that is half the market rate, while under the 'expenditure system', food costs are shared between the boat owner and the woman. All fish, including the woman's share, is sold at a higher price by the owner and the woman is paid half price of her share after deducting her food costs.

Getting a 'number' on the boat is becoming increasingly difficult because of the influx of women—young, divorced and widowed, as well as single mothers. As a result, the payment for obtaining a 'number' has increased from T.Shs4,000 to 5,000 (US$2.7 to 3.4) in the 2002-2004 period to T.Shs8,000 to 10,000 (US$5.4 to 6.7) in 2008-2009.

It is also impossible to get a 'number' without offering sexual favours. As Pendo Mwanameka put it, "*Lazima uombwe uroda*", which means one must be prepared to engage in sex. Mandevu, a beach management unit (BMU) Chairman from Ntama confirms that *dagaa* processors have multiple partners. "This is due to the nature of the job. They are tied to forcible sexual affairs wherever they go," he says.

Do the wives of *tajiris* and *mjeshi* work as processors? "Never!" exclaim Pendo Mwanameka and Faidoo Kabika. "Men know very well that other men will do to their wives what they do to us. As the Kiswahili saying goes '*muosha huoshwa*'—what you do to others will one day happen to you."

This system of sexual transaction means that older women get edged out of the work. To quote Pendo Mwanameka again: "I am aware that when I get old I will not be able to compete with young women. Not only that, but my energy and strength will be gone. I better work, starve and save for my future."

While most women in the *dagaa* fishery have multiple partners, a small percentage enters into longer-term partnerships with men, establishing what is known as a '*nyumba ndogo*' (a small home). For the most part, however, all relationships tend to be fragile and temporary. By '*giza ijayo*' or the end of the lunar cycle, bar maids, hotel- and guest-house attendants and stray loiterers arrive in large numbers for sex work, and payment for day or night sex can go up to T.Shs20,000 (US$13.5).

The women report that it is hard to raise children as single mothers. The children miss school often and usually end up in temporary, uncertain jobs. "You can't predict anything here," says Faidoo Kabika, "our lives are full of risks and uncertainties."

## Q&A

**Interview with Bondo Nagaratnam and Chokka Bhulokamma, at dry fish traders in the weekly night market in Nakkapalli, Andhra Pradesh, India**

By **Dharmesh Shah.** (deshah@gmail.com), Consultant, ICSF

**Why is it a night market?**
Since women have to travel great distances to get here, it is evening or even night by the time they reach and selling begins only after that.

**What improvement would you like to see in the market?**
The storage sheds for women processors are being used by the wholesale traders. We need storage for our stocks, especially during the rains.

**What major costs do you incur?**
Apart from processing costs, we incur costs of unloading (Rs 5 /US$ 0.1 ), market fees (Rs.25 per large sack / US$ 0.5), and transportation (Rs.40 to Rs.50 per basket /US$ 0.8-1.07), as well as weekly expenses for bamboo baskets (Rs.70 per piece/ US$ 1.5).

**How do you deal with issues of harassment if any?**
Most women travel in groups in a hired van from the village. The market is quite safe and we do not experience harassment.

## YEMAYA MAMA ... presents !!

DOCUMENT

# A Gender Perspective in CBCRM

**Integrating a gender perspective in CBCRM approaches: A review of experiences and best practices of Oxfam Novib partners in Southeast Asia and other efforts worldwide**

This report is by Cornelie Quist, Leonore Poloton-De la Cruz and International Collective in Support of Fishworkers (ICSF), December 2008

This report provides insights on integrating a gender perspective in the practice of community-based coastal resource management (CBCRM) in Southeast Asia, based on a review of literature and on experiences of selected organizations in the region. Providing an analysis of gender relations prevailing in coastal communities in the region and key gender issues in coastal resources management, it outlines successful strategies and experiences of gender integration in approaches and actions in coastal resources management.

The report highlights various threats facing fisheries and fishing communities in Southeast Asia, with implications for both the sustainability of fisheries resources and the livelihoods of fishing communities. These include: growing pressure on coastal resources and habitats; pressures of overfishing; and threats due to trade liberalization and export-oriented aquaculture. Coastal zones are also sites of extreme poverty due to inequitable access to resources, systematic negligence of small-scale fisheries by governments, and the absence of effective resources management and governance.

Against this backdrop, there is growing acknowledgement, including by governments, of the limitations of centralized management systems, and an appreciation of the potential of co-management and decentralization approaches, in particular CBCRM. CBCRM approaches, initiated first in the Philippines, have since been adopted in several other countries of the region, including Vietnam, Cambodia and Indonesia. The unique social, political and cultural context in these countries is influencing the way CBCRM approaches are unfolding there.

In general, there appears to be a commitment to co-management and decentralization processes, to a greater or lesser extent, by States across the region. Some States have taken steps to put in place an enabling legal and policy framework to support co-management and decentralization processes. However, while there are some concrete examples or success stories, these remain largely confined to donor-supported pilot projects. Co-management in the region is not yet anchored in national policy and most projects are supported by donor funding rather than from direct government funding.

The report highlights the need to promote genuine co-management and CBCRM processes, integrating a gender perspective. In this, there is much to learn from the efforts of organizations in the region and elsewhere in integrating gender issues in coastal resources management (CRM) programmes. Several 'best practices' and key lessons for mainstreaming gender at the organizational level, as well as at the programme level, are identified.

The review of organizational efforts has also brought to the fore some important issues for further analysis and reflection. These include: defining more clearly the value of women's contributions to fishing communities and the whole fishing industry, including through their work in social reproduction; sharpening what 'gender mainstreaming in CBCRM' means, so that both women's practical and strategic needs are addressed, particularly through participation in decisionmaking; ensuring their property/use rights to coastal and other resources; increasing women's direct economic gains and their access to economic and other resources; protecting women against violence and discrimination; transforming gender relations within government and other community institutions; and investing in individual and institutional learning.

This report can be downloaded at: http://wif.icsf.net (Biblography, under the theme Women and Resources Management).

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Writers and potential contributors to *YEMAYA*, please note that write-ups should be brief, about 500 words. They could deal with issues that are of direct relevance to women and men of fishing communities. They could also focus on recent research or on meetings and workshops that have raised gender issues in fisheries. Also welcome are life stories of women and men of fishing communities working towards a sustainable fishery or for a recognition of their work within the fishery. Please also include a one-line biographical note on the writer.

Please do send us comments and suggestions to make the newsletter more relevant. We look forward to hearing from you and to receiving regular write-ups for the newsletter.