No. 85 | May 2021

ISSN 0973–1121

SAMUDRA REPORT

THE TRIANNUAL JOURNAL OF THE INTERNATIONAL COLLECTIVE IN SUPPORT OF FISHWORKERS

Destructive Fishing

COVID-19

Blue Economy

Fisheries Governance

Apartheid Relic

SSF Guidelines Implementation

Fisheries, Communities, Livelihoods

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**.

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 Chennai, India.

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

All issues of ***SAMUDRA*** *Report* can be accessed at **www.icsf.net**

CoopeSoliDar R.L. / Small-scale fishers in Cabuya, Costa Rica

SAMUDRA REPORT

THE TRIANNUAL JOURNAL OF THE INTERNATIONAL COLLECTIVE IN SUPPORT OF FISHWORKERS

NO.85 | MAY 2021

VISHAKHA GUPTA / ICSF

FRONT COVER

Tides, St. Ives harbour, England
by Chris Butters
Email:chris@butters.no
Website: https://butters.no/about-me/

PUBLISHED BY
International Collective in Support of Fishworkers (ICSF) Trust
No: 22, First Floor
Venkatrathinam Nagar
Adyar
Chennai - 600 020
Tamil Nadu
India
PHONE: (91) 44–24451216 / 24451217
FAX: (91) 44–24450216
EMAIL: icsf@icsf.net
WEBSITE: www.icsf.net

EDITED BY
KG Kumar

COPY EDITOR
Sopan Joshi

DESIGNED BY
MS Vasanth Christopher

ILLUSTRATIONS BY
Sandesh

FOR LIMITED CIRCULATION ONLY

SAMUDRA News Alerts

SAMUDRA News Alerts is a free service designed to deliver news reports and analysis on fisheries, aquaculture and related issues, on a daily or weekly digest basis, in plain text or html format.

The service often features exclusive, original stories on small-scale and artisanal fisheries, particularly in the regions of the South, as well as issues that deal with women in fisheries and safety at sea. Apart from news and stories on fisheries, the service also focuses on environmental and oceans issues. Please visit http://www. icsf.net to subscribe to SAMUDRA News Alerts.

BACK COVER

Fresh fish market, Koh Kong province, Cambodia / Kyoko Kusakabe
Email: kyoko.kusa@gmail.com

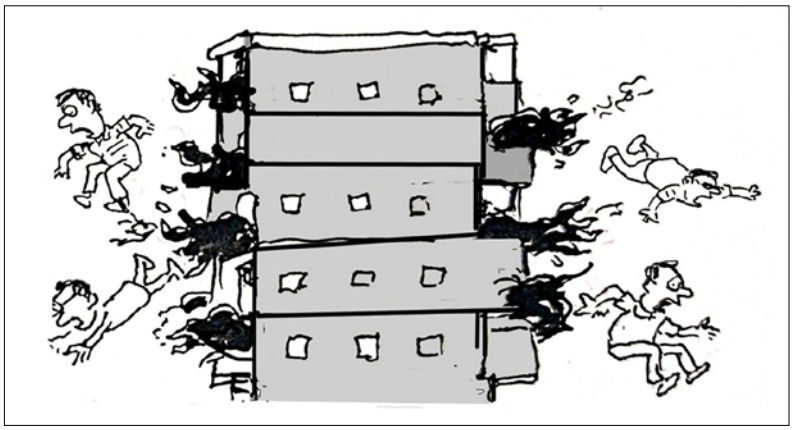
SANGEETHA.S/ICSF

Fishing craft arrival, Pulicat lake, Tamil Nadu, India

Flawed Floors

The COVID-19 pandemic has exposed the global inadequacy of social-protection floors in safeguarding marginalized communities, in the process exacerbating poverty and vulnerability

The social-development case studies in this issue of SAMUDRA Report (pp 63-93) clearly demonstrate how the small-scale fishing communities in Asia, the Caribbean and Central America took a major hit during the COVID-19 pandemic. The articles show how they slipped unprecedently below the poverty line not only due to poor access to fishing grounds, landing sites and markets, lack of income and alternative livelihoods, but also due to lack of social-development infrastructure and access, and gross inadequacy of social-protection measures. The COVID-19 social-distancing protocols also prevented the fishing subsector from acting as an employer of last resort, as had been the case during economic slowdowns and droughts in the past.



COVID-19 response exposes the huge inadequacy of social-protection floors across the world to protect marginalized communities, in the process exacerbating poverty and vulnerability. The dire situation, more than ever, highlights the urgent need to invest in social-protection systems and floors, and to provide basic social-protection guarantees to reduce and prevent poverty and vulnerability throughout the life cycle, especially to benefit children, women and older persons.

How can social-protection floors for fishing communities be developed and implemented? First, these floors should, at the outset, provide children in fishing communities with access to nutrition and education, as well as older persons with basic income security. Second, these floors should provide essential health care to all members of fishing communities, including maternal care. Third, they should provide basic income security for fishers and fishworkers who are unable to earn sufficient income in cases of sickness, unemployment, maternity and disability. If the social-protection needs of fishing communities – among the most marginalized of the population – are met, one can well assume that the social-protection needs of all others in society at large also met.

Under social-protection systems, a combination of contributory social-insurance schemes (for example, for formal sector fishers and fishworkers) and non-contributory social-assistance schemes (for example, for informal sector fishers and fishworkers) may be considered, depending on employment, income and the organizational profile of fishers and fishworkers.

Migrant fishers are often excluded from social-protection schemes designed only for citizens of a receiving State. This lacuna should be addressed by designing, creating and implementing social-protection assistance for migrants by the United Nations and its specialized agencies in collaboration with the sending and receiving States.

The International Labour Organization flagship report – the World Social Protection Report 2017-19 – draws attention to social protection as a human right that upholds the right to security in the event of lack of livelihood. While the 2014 SSF Guidelines seek social-security protection and social development, the 2020 FAO Declaration for Sustainable Fisheries and Aquaculture urges accelerating access to social-protection programmes for fishers and their communities. Further, the SDG Target 1.3 advocates nationally appropriate social-protection systems and floors by 2030, especially to benefit the poor and vulnerable, while Target 10.4 highlights how adopting social-protection policies can progressively achieve greater equality in society.

While every effort must be made at the national level to beef up investment in social development and social protection, the fisheries administration, at the most effective level, must be vigilant to ensure that fishers, fishworkers and their families, in all types of formal and informal arrangements, are able to benefit from social-protection schemes, and that they also have sufficient awareness about these schemes. Fisheries authorities should, on behalf of these communities, speedily liaise with social-protection authorities for maximum coverage, focusing progressively on the adequacy of benefit. Not to do so would be unjust and disheartening for marginalized communities grappling with poverty and vulnerability.

What is Destructive Fishing?

Drawing on the sectors of fisheries management, small-scale fisheries, seafood corporates, academia and civil society, an ongoing project attempts to define 'destructive fishing'

The language of fisheries, conservation and sustainable development can be fraught with jargon. Of course, aquatic ecosystems are inherently dynamic and fluid; it's easy to see why technical language like 'maximum sustainable yield' and 'adaptive co-management' is needed to rationalize and describe their management and use. Sometimes, the words we use every day in these disciplines can have very different meanings according to the varied cultures, value systems and statuses of the individuals or groups using them. What is 'sustainable'? What is 'unsustainable'? Or, as is the focus of a new two-year project launched in early 2021, what is 'destructive fishing'?

Only a very small number of fishing gears or fishing methods are recognized as inherently 'destructive' wherever and however they are used, the primary examples being explosives and synthetic toxins.

Obviously, applying the term 'destructive' to an activity, a livelihood or a commercial practice can be politically and socially sensitive; the project is designed to identify common ground and constructively explore areas of divergence. It is led by Fauna & Flora International (FFI) and the wider Cambridge Conservation Initiative (CCI). Using a three-stage expert review process, the 'Defining Destructive Fishing' project will seek to explore the level of consensus around the term 'destructive fishing' across representative stakeholders from fisheries management, the small-scale fisheries sector, the corporate seafood sector, academia and civil society.

To this end, the project intends to use the established Delphi process method, a group opinion technique that aims to capture diverse individual knowledge in order to generate collective wisdom—without the domination of individual views. The method has been used in a variety of environmentally and socially focused consensus-building projects, from helping to identify barriers to effective solid waste management in a 2020 Taiwanese study to summarizing the ecosystem services associated with mangroves in a 2014 global study.

The impetus to undertake this project comes from the recognition that, while the drive towards the 'ecosystem approach to fisheries' is gaining momentum—over three-quarters of FAO Member States and several multilateral Regional Fisheries Bodies have reported that they are implementing it—this approach represents a solution without a clearly-defined problem. 'Destructive fishing' is characterized as the problem that ecosystem-based fisheries management is trying to solve; the hypothesis is that the solution can be tailored by better defining the problem and its scope.

Specific examples

Several international policy instruments use the term 'destructive fishing' or synonymic terms. It has been present in recent national policy instruments in various places including Indonesia, Romania, the Maldives and the European Union. The term is also consistently used by media publications—in various languages—to describe in-process, proposed or potential fishery policy changes (for example, in recent United Kingdom coverage of bottom-trawling policy or recent international coverage of Indonesian trawl and seine-net policy).

*This article is by **Dan Steadman** (daniel.steadman@fauna-flora.org), Fisheries & Biodiversity Technical Specialist, Fauna & Flora International, United Kingdom*

BIANCA ROBERTS/FFI

A middle-scale bottom-trawler in Cambodia's Koh Sdach archipelago. Applying the term 'destructive' to an activity, a livelihood or a commercial practice can be politically and socially sensitive; the project is designed to identify common ground and constructively explore areas of divergence

There is a range of specificity in these examples in terms of what is within the scope of 'destructive fishing'. From describing fishing gear types or methods that are 'destructive' in all circumstances, to specific spatial, temporal, behavioural or social contexts in which a given practice is described in this way. A prior expert review process in 2009 (conducted by CBD, FAO, UNEP and the IUCN Fisheries Expert Group) defined the term as referring "to the use of fishing gears in ways or in places such that one or more key components of an ecosystem are obliterated, devastated or cease to be able to provide essential ecosystem functions". This review also observed that "few, if any, fisheries are consistently 'destructive'. Only a very small number of fishing gears or fishing methods are recognized as inherently 'destructive' wherever and however they are used, the primary examples being explosives and synthetic toxins".

While the project is deliberately inclusive, consultative and designed to minimize reaching any premeditated conclusions, there are likely to be some areas of contention and debate. There is a fundamental question over whether 'destructive fishing' is analogous simply to the use of a specific group of fishing methods or the way a given method is deployed on the water (that is, a 'practice'). While for some the scope of FAO's current definition is sufficient, for others its delineation of only explosives and toxin fishing methods as "inherently destructive" may be too narrow, with the potential for other methods and practices to be considered in this category. (Early results of baseline analysis suggest that, for example, bottom-trawling, various fine-mesh-net methods and assisted spear fishing are often broadly referred to as destructive in numerous sources.)

Where the destructive properties of an activity may be characterized as being of multiple vectors—ecological, social and economic—does this compound its risk and, therefore, the urgency of political and corporate response? Finally, if there is a consensus around a practice or method as 'destructive', perhaps the key consideration will be its implications. Do such activities require something more drastic than improved fisheries management?

Calling *SAMUDRA* Report readers for expert input

During early 2021, members of the project team from the University of Cambridge's Zoology Department collated a baseline of the term 'destructive fishing' in academic literature, policy instruments and the media. This preliminary analysis has enabled us to design and launch the first-stage survey of our expert review process (launched in mid-April 2021), which will remain open until July 2021.

In parallel, other members of the project team from FFI, BirdLife International and UNEP-World Conservation Monitoring Centre have been identifying and reaching out to expert representatives of convening bodies across sectors. (For example, corporate seafood sector alliances, small-scale fishery global representative bodies, and Regional Fisheries Management Organizations, among others.) They seek contributions to the process and invite readers of SAMUDRA Report to express their interest in being added to this pool.

The definition of an expert, at this initial stage, is broad and inclusive, applying to anyone with over five years experience in a relevant field. A group of over 20 experts has already been assembled from every continent, mostly from the governmental fisheries management, marine conservation and academia sectors. In particular, they are keen to hear from those engaged in the small-scale fisheries sector itself.

If you would like to learn more about the project or be added to the expert pool, please visit www.destructivefishing.com or contact the author directly.

Project results

When its results are presented in 2022, the project will hopefully begin to resolve some of the areas of contention and catalyze action at many of the delayed or reorganized global gatherings from what was to be the 'Ocean Super Year', including the UN Oceans Conference and the FAO Committee on Fisheries. The long-term ambition for the expert review evidence is to support enhanced fisheries decision making at national and international levels, particularly around the need to go 'beyond sustainability'. Although a complex and contentious process, using evidence to consider the extent to which a fishery is destructive, rather than solely the extent to which its focal target species is maximally fished or overfished, will nonetheless help governments and corporate actors to prioritize the management of fisheries based on their ecological, social and climatic risk as much as the value and status of fish stocks.

…it will nonetheless help governments and corporate actors to prioritize the management of fisheries based on their ecological, social and climatic risk as much as the value and status of fish stocks.

For more

Defining and Measuring "Destructive Fishing" in Support of Achieving SDG14 – Life Below Water
https://www.cambridgeconservation.org/project/defining-and-measuring-destructive-fishing-in-support-of-achieving-sdg14-life-below-water/

Call for experts to define destructive fishing
https://www.cambridgeconservation.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/2021_CCI_destructive_fishing_call_for_experts.pdf

Blue Gold

A study illustrates the deep influences that guide the gilded ocean economy: just 100 companies generated 60 per cent of revenues from the largest ocean-based industries in 2018

The promise and potential of the ocean as an 'economic frontier' in the 21st century has attracted attention from governments, the private sector, philanthropies and civil society. Often, this is in pursuit of a 'blue economy' that is defined in different ways. This aspiration reflects, at least partially, a rapid 'blue acceleration' over the last two decades in economic activity linked to the oceans.

Consider: since 2000 almost 1 million km of submarine fiberoptic cables have been buried in the seabed to carry almost all international digital information; the annual volume of cargo transported by container shipping has quadrupled; the offshore wind energy capacity installed has increased 400 times over; the number of passengers carried on cruise tourism boats has almost tripled; most of the major discoveries of oil and gas deposits have been in the ocean; over 13,000 marine genetic sequences have been patented; and the area of the sea legally designated for protection has increased to roughly 30 million sq km.

This growth and industrialization of the ocean or blue economy is paralleled by an increased understanding of the vulnerabilities and disproportionate impacts of environmental harms on coastal communities. This entails the growing realization that, one, local actors may not be adequately represented in decision-making processes associated with marine resources; and/or, two, coastal communities may not obtain a fair share of the benefits from marine resources.

In this context, small-scale fisheries are increasingly squeezed between competing uses for space and resources, including by large-scale, industrial fishing fleets and aquaculture, or marine protected areas (that prohibit traditional access for fishing), pursuit of minerals and hydrocarbons in the seabed, and coastal development. These uses are likely driven by a few transnational corporations with large revenues, similar to many other parts of the global economy. This is certainly the case in the seafood industry, for example, that features the most highly traded food internationally. Together with a group of colleagues, we wanted to find out if this is the case for economic use of the oceans more broadly: are the core marine-based industries dominated by a small number of transnational corporations and, if so, which ones are they?

…small-scale fisheries are increasingly squeezed between competing uses for space and resources, including by large-scale, industrial fishing fleets and aquaculture, or marine protected areas.

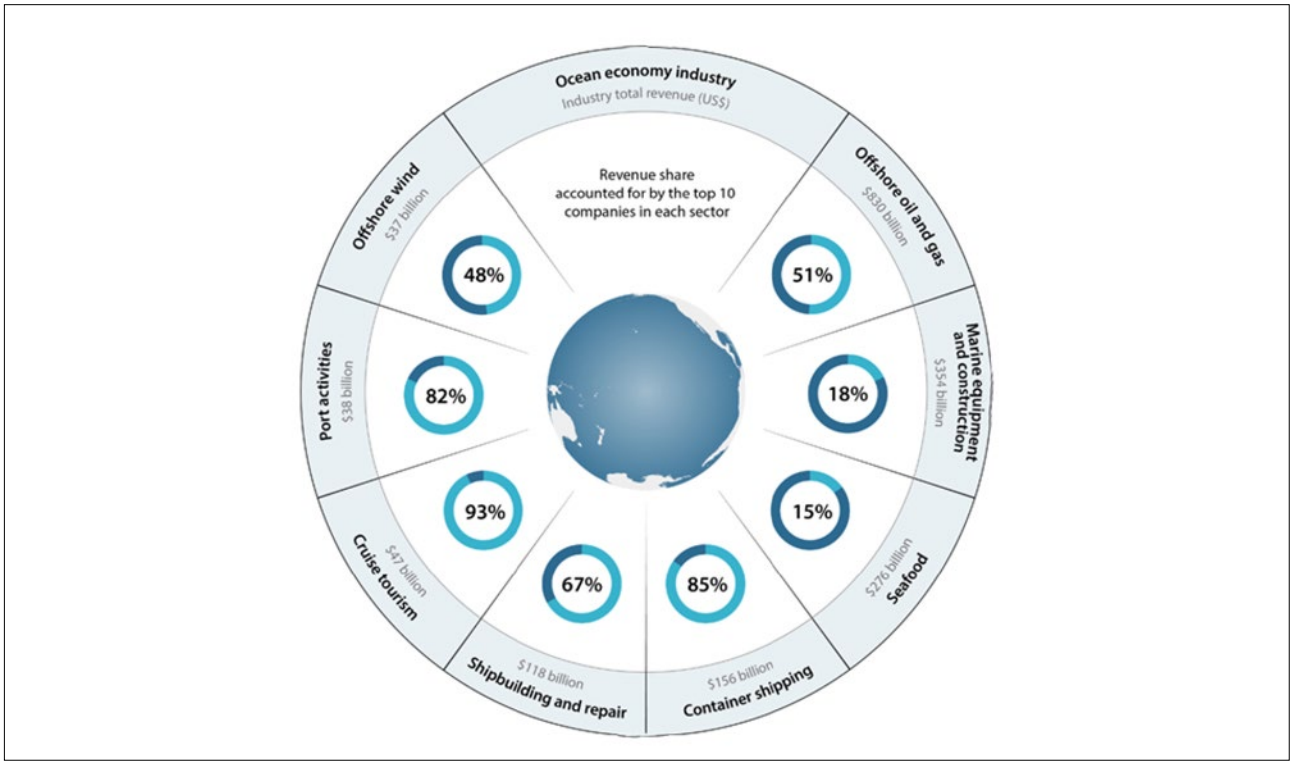
Largest companies

We looked across eight industries that the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) has defined as core to the ocean or blue economy: container shipping, cruise tourism, marine equipment and construction, offshore oil and gas, offshore wind, port activities, large-scale or industrial seafood, and shipbuilding and repair. Of note, we did not include small-scale fisheries in the review—neither does OECD—due to lack of data, with hopes that the upcoming Illuminating Hidden Harvest study led by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), WorldFish and Duke University will make such an analysis possible.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, we found that in each of these eight industries, on average, the 10 largest companies generated 45 per cent of all revenues in 2018. (Seafood was the least

*This article is by **John Virdin** (john.virdin@duke.edu), Duke University Nicholas Institute for Environmental Policy Solutions, Durham, North Carolina, United States and **Henrik Österblom** (henrik.osterblom@su.se), Stockholm Resilience Centre, Stockholm University, Stockholm, Sweden*

VIRDIN ET AL , 2021 THE OCEAN 100: TRANSNATIONAL CORPORATIONS IN THE OCEAN ECONOMY. *SCIENCE ADVANCES 7 : EABC8041*



Concentration in the Ocean Economy. More broadly, in terms of how governments make decisions and regulations for ocean use, this level of concentration can enable targeted lobbying and influence that further marginalize small-scale fisheries

concentrated, with the top 10 companies generating 15 per cent of all revenues). Aggregating across these industries, the top 100 companies—we call them 'the Ocean 100'—generated 60 per cent of all revenues from these ocean-based industries in 2018, with the offshore oil and gas industry by far the largest, accounting for almost two-thirds of the total revenues from these industries. In sum, the majority of the revenues in most of the ocean-based industries were generated by a relatively small number of large companies in 2018.

Also unsurprising was the fact that the biggest industry in the Ocean 100 group was offshore oil and gas (65 percent of the total revenues), followed by container shipping (12 percent), shipbuilding and repair (8 percent), maritime equipment and construction (5 percent), seafood production (4 percent), cruise tourism (3 percent) and port activities (2 percent). Recreating the Ocean 100 list without the offshore oil and gas companies showed a broader spread of industries, with the biggest being container shipping (30 percent), followed by shipbuilding and repair (23 percent), maritime equipment and construction (16 percent), seafood production (13 percent), cruise tourism and port activities (8 percent each) and offshore wind (2 percent).

Of note, the seafood companies in this second list are (from highest to lowest revenues in 2018): Maruha Nichiro Corporation, Nippon Suisan Kaisha, Dongwon Enterprise, Mowi, Thai Union Group, Mitsubishi Corporation, OUG Holdings, Austevoll Seafood, Trident Seafoods, Kyokuyo, Charoen Pokphand Foods, Red Chamber Group, Marubeni, Cooke, Chuo Gyorui, Pacific Seafood Group, SalMar, FCF Co, Parlevliet & Van der Plas, Bright Food Group, Maruichi Co, Nueva Pescanova, Daisui and Tohto Suisan.

Transnational scope

These large companies operating in the ocean are transnational in scope; the location of their headquarters, however, gives insight into where the revenues and benefits from ocean use are distributed. Some 12 percent of the revenues generated by this group were from Ocean 100 companies based in the US, followed by Saudi Arabia and China (8 percent each), Norway (7 percent), France (6 percent), the UK (5 percent) and South Korea, Brazil, Iran,

the Netherlands and Mexico (4 percent each). The industries also show distinct regional patterns of distribution. For example, with Saudi Arabia, Brazil, Iran, Mexico and the US, respectively, home to the largest offshore oil and gas companies, while China, South Korea and the US host the largest shipbuilding and repair companies, and South Korea, China and Italy are home to the largest maritime equipment and construction companies.

These findings suggest that in economic terms, capital in the ocean economy may be concentrated in the hands of a few companies headquartered in a handful of countries—largely in high- or middle-income countries—even as most of the labour is found in small-scale fisheries, the largest employer sector in the ocean. More broadly, in terms of how governments make decisions and regulations for ocean use, this level of concentration can enable targeted lobbying and influence that further marginalize the concerns and needs of small-scale fisheries and the communities that depend upon them. We are talking about 'ocean grab'.

That inequity is a systemic feature of humanity's current economic use of the oceans is certainly not news. Neither that the benefits are accumulated by a few, while many of the harms are borne by the most vulnerable. What we hope will be useful from this study is that we now know who the largest beneficiaries are, in terms of annual revenues from large, ocean-based industries. While this group of companies is highly diverse and likely has different motivations, we hope that identifying the biggest companies operating in the oceans can be a foundation for action, for increasing transparency and accountability.

The most powerful actors are obtaining a large proportion of the benefits. It can also be expected that they should then also take on a leadership role in advancing ocean stewardship. A healthy ocean is of benefit both to them and to the communities that they work with. Over the last few years, the Seafood Business for Ocean Stewardship (SeaBOS) has initiated such work, where the largest industry actors from seafood are working together with scientists, aiming to improve the prospects for a sustainable ocean and associated communities.

The initiative has, for instance, addressed questions associated with the labour practices of these companies. It has worked to ensure that they are reporting on their activities in a transparent way, in accordance with best practices. Further work in this coalition of companies is likely to focus on ocean equity, including issues associated with whether the companies are operating in ways that may conflict with small-scale fisheries, and if their operations are regulated in a manner consistent with the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication (SSF Guidelines).

These are just a few of the questions we would like to answer more broadly throughout the ocean economy, now that we know where to look. Beyond these efforts, if the majority of revenues generated from economic use of the oceans is in the hands of a relatively few companies, then perhaps we need to create mechanisms to help fund public goods in the ocean, and particularly to support small-scale fishing communities. This was proposed in a recent paper prepared for the 2020 High-Level Panel for a Sustainable Ocean Economy (a panel of 14 heads of state from around the world), suggesting the creation of a global tax on the profits of these ocean-linked industries. For example, a 0.1 percent global ocean tax on the revenues of the Ocean 100 companies (excluding their terrestrial operations) could generate US$1.1 billion annually to support shared or public goods in the ocean (for example, small-scale fisheries).

This idea is still nascent. The aim is to look for mechanisms that might reduce inequality from economic ocean use, contributing more towards public or common goods in the oceans. Essentially, it is just one application of the findings from the study. Most importantly, our hope is that this list of the Ocean 100 can serve as a resource for the associations and organizations representing many small-scale fishers and fishworkers, as a small starting point to push for greater transparency and accountability of large-scale ocean industries.

For more

Ocean grabbing
https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0308597X15000755

Securing a Just Space for Small-Scale Fisheries in the Blue Economy
https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fmars.2019.00171/full

Transnational corporations and the challenge of biosphere stewardship
https://www.nature.com/articles/s41559-019-0978-z

The blue acceleration: the trajectory of human expansion into the ocean
https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2590332219302751

Making sure the blue economy is green
https://www.nature.com/articles/s41559-016-0017

The Ocean Economy in 2030
https://www.oecd.org/environment/the-ocean-economy-in-2030-9789264251724-en.htm

Transnational corporations as 'keystone actors' in marine ecosystems
https://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0127533

Be Resilient, Not Vulnerable

The effects of the COVID-19 epidemic on small-scale fisheries in Istanbul, Turkey, bring out the need to address the structural inequalities and power asymmetries that bind the sector

There have been wide-ranging discussions on the difficulties caused by the COVID-19 pandemic for food production and access to food among small-scale fishing communities in Istanbul, Turkey. An unavoidable result of the pandemic was the temporary collapse of global agro-businesses dominated by long-distance trade. On the contrary, small-scale producers, including those in small-scale fisheries (SSF), have been more resilient with their local production, distribution and consumption chains, as well as their solidarity networks, even though they also suffered a lot from the pandemic.

...small-scale producers, have been more resilient with their local production, distribution and consumption chains, as well as their solidarity networks, even though they also suffered a lot from the pandemic.

Immediately after the outbreak of the pandemic, government support policies tended to often target big agro-businesses first, rather than respond to the diverse needs of small-scale producers who suffered as their activities were severely restricted by lockdowns and the deepening of existing structural inequalities. These difficulties were compounded by the fact that small-scale fishing communities are characterized by aging populations in many parts of the world. However, small-scale fishers also have the potential to support each other and neighboring coastal communities in such a crisis.

In Turkey, the initial months of the COVID-19 outbreak severely affected small-scale fishers. Since end-March 2020, the government imposed weekend lockdowns in the country on and off. These restrictions were also imposed on fisher people, who were not allowed to go fishing, while farmers were exempted from this restriction. The Association of Istanbul Fishing Co-operatives (Istanbul Birlik), with about 2,500 members across 36 fishing co-operatives in the Istanbul region, wrote official letters to the city governorship, urging for permits similar to those issued during the pandemic for workers considered essential, such as farmers, and sanitary and supermarket workers.

Their demands were rejected. Until June 2020, they were not allowed to go to sea to catch fish on the weekends. Most of them were not allowed to fish during the week, either, as there was a specific restriction targeting all citizens above 65 years of age. Additionally, most of the local vegetable and fish markets were closed in Istanbul for several months, as were all restaurants, including the ones that often buy fish from small-scale fishers from their neighborhood. The sales and cooking outlets of fishing co-operatives were also closed as part of the measures to fight the pandemic.

Istanbul centre

In order to better understand the dynamics of small-scale fishers in Istanbul during the pandemic, we need to look closer at the organization of local seafood production, distribution and consumption. In Turkey, small-scale fishing boats—defined legally as vessels under 12 metres in length—comprise about 90 per cent of the fishing fleet. Their catch, however, constitutes about 10 percent of the total marine fish catches, while the rest is caught by the over-capitalized industrial fishing sector.

Both industrial and small-scale fishers operate around Istanbul; on the long coastline along the northern part of the Sea of Marmara; on the ecologically important Bosphorus Strait; and on the

*This article is by **Irmak Ertör** (irmakertor@gmail.com), The Ataturk Institute for Modern Turkish History, Bogazici University, Turkey and **Pinar Ertör-Akyazi** (pinar.ertor@boun.edu.tr), Institute of Environmental Sciences, Bogazici University, Turkey*

ÜSKÜDAR FISHERIES CO-OPERATIVE / ISTANBUL

Bosphorus Strait with many boats in the harbour, Turkey. In many regions there is the challenge of declining and/or fluctuating stocks, with some traditionally important fish species—both ecologically as well as economically—going extinct

southern Black Sea. There is tremendous competition for marine space and commercial fish species between small-scale and industrial fishers in the seas. Istanbul Birlik is the main actor representing small-scale fishers and their interests. Especially over the last decade, Istanbul Birlik has been politically active in raising the voice of SSF communities via its members' co-operatives.

As a result, the needs and demands of small-scale fishing co-operatives have become relatively more visible recently. Firstly, for the General Directorate of Fisheries and Aquaculture, responsible for all fisheries policies in Turkey. And, secondly, for the civil society through the alliances of Istanbul Birlik with universities, local and international non-governmental organizations working on fisheries, and international organizations working for fishers and small-scale food-producers, as also food-justice organizations such as the World Forum of Fisher People (WFFP), URGENCI and Nyéléni ECA, among others.

Intermediaries

Given the structure of fisheries in Turkey, there are important challenges that SSF communities and their co-operatives face. One, in many regions there is the challenge of declining and/or fluctuating stocks, with some traditionally important fish species—both ecologically as well as economically—going extinct. Two, small-scale fishers have been strongly undermined in the last decades, mostly as a result of the strong market power intermediaries in the supply chain who dominate the market, set prices and hinder the marketing possibilities of the fishing co-operatives.

Small-scale fishers have been strongly undermined in the last decades, mostly as a result of the strong market power intermediaries in the supply chain...

According to the Turkish Statistical Institute, about 60 percent of all fish caught in the seas surrounding Turkey has been marketed by intermediaries, while only 2 percent was sold by fishing co-operatives in 2013. Intermediaries also serve as informal lenders to fishers,

PINAR ERTOR AKYAZI

Small-scale fishers in Üsküdar Fisheries Co-operative, Istanbul, Turkey. Most fishing co-operatives in Istanbul cannot directly sell the fish that their members catch to consumers

creating an ever-lasting debt cycle that fishers are not able to break in the absence of financial support and credit from government institutions.

Most fishing co-operatives in Istanbul cannot directly sell the fish that their members catch to consumers through their own outlets due to the lack of permissions from the municipalities, as there is some ambiguity in the law that municipalities tend to interpret against the interests of the fishing co-operatives. Even in the Istanbul Wholesale Fish Market in Gürpinar, there is no sales space belonging to fishing co-operatives; the wholesale market is also dominated by commission agents and intermediaries. After the last local elections in 2019, officers from the Istanbul Wholesale Fish Market began to acknowledge awareness of this situation and promised to work to ensure a sales space for Istanbul Birlik and its member co-operatives. However, no positive steps have been taken yet.

Direct access to local markets would improve the livelihoods of small-scale fishers by providing them a decent income for their efforts.

According to Erdoğan Kartal, the head of Istanbul Birlik, at the beginning of the pandemic the initial contact with government authorities on legal and financial support was quite weak. After several attempts, Kartal could get an appointment with the vice-governor of the city. Istanbul Birlik also got in touch with the General Directorate of Fisheries and Aquaculture in the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry to request for some support for small-scale fishers.

In order to help its member co-operatives financially, Istanbul Birlik suggested that rental payments of fishing harbours (run by local fishing co-operatives in each neighborhood) be cancelled for the period March-May 2020, during which fishing harbours were closed due to the pandemic. That request was accepted only partially: the payments for these three months were rescheduled to 2021, even though the law would—if interpreted correctly and in a manner supportive of fishing co-operatives—hold the co-operatives not responsible for payment at all, as the fishing harbours were closed and were unable to generate any income at all in this period.

Istanbul Birlik and the intermediaries in the Istanbul Wholesale Fishing Market then turned to the Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality as another potential source of support. In response, the municipality lowered the fee it charges in the market. Yet, according to Kartal, that only benefits the intermediaries because there are no direct fisher sales there. The municipality continued to organize meetings to listen to the needs of small-scale fisher people afterwards. One positive outcome of these meetings is that the municipality will now support small-scale fishers in the costs of maintaining their boats via their co-operatives.

To counter the severe effects of COVID-19 on their fisher members, Istanbul Birlik undertook measures to ensure internal support and solidarity among—and within—member co-operatives. Birlik was able to raise funding to provide about 50 needy fisher families with food and financial support. These fisher families were the ones most in need as the majority of their members

were above 65 years of age and thus had to comply with the restrictions during the weekdays; morever, they had no source of income apart from fishing. In a situation where local and national authorities were not able to detect those who were most in need, this self-organization and support among the fisher people was a very important step for vulnerable small-scale fishing communities.

Responding to the question of whether COVID-19 affected SSF communities and industrial fishers in different ways, Kartal said that industrial fishers have not been affected as severely because the prices of economically valuable species that they catch rose significantly during the pandemic. Moreover, the industrial fishing season was already about to finish on the 15th of April 2020, two weeks after the lockdown began last year. Hence, the losses of industrial fishers were not that significant.

Although the period in which industrial fishers could not go out to the sea was relatively short, Kartal said this had a positive impact on reducing the fishing pressure in Istanbul. Scientific studies confirm such a short-term positive effect on fast-growing species. The experiences of small-scale fishers also provide some hands-on evidence that for some species, stocks improved in the months after the lockdown in the seas surrounding Istanbul. For instance, small-scale fishers discovered, with pleasure, that juveniles of *lüfer* (bluefish) were much more abundant in January 2021. That effect, however, will probably not be long-lasting as extractive industrial fishing activities resumed.

Even before the COVID-19 pandemic, Istanbul Birlik had already been struggling for a range of direct sales mechanisms—like co-operative shops in all districts of Istanbul—and engaging with Community-Supported Fisheries (CSF) projects. These efforts aim at establishing economic and social justice for small-scale fishers as well as ensuring the sustainability of fish stocks.

Istanbul Birlik is aware of the need for direct sales spaces, where fishers and their families, including women and young members, would themselves sell, process, cook and serve the fish they catch. Such direct access to local markets would improve the livelihoods of small-scale fishers by providing them a decent income for their efforts. Their plans also include adding a cultural space to these co-operative shops, to increase the awareness of the public about fish species, fishing activity and small-scale fishers in Istanbul. This would also help strengthen the ties and solidarity between already existing (agro-ecological) consumer groups and co-operatives in Istanbul, raise the value of the efforts of small-scale fisher people, preventing the debt cycle created by the intermediaries in the market.

The current crisis is a reminder of the need for prioritizing local food systems that focus on small-scale food providers and access to nutritious food for local people...

If these objectives could have been achieved prior to the COVID-19 crisis, small-scale fishers in Istanbul would have been more resilient than they are now. Additionally, the structural inequalities and power asymmetries with regard to intermediaries and other industrial actors could also be overcome. For this purpose, the right to fish and access to local markets need to be supported with government policies.

As the WFFP representatives highlighted, the current crisis is a reminder of the need for prioritizing local food systems that focus on small-scale food providers and access to nutritious food for local people, communities and consumers. In such critical periods, the inequalities become more visible; the failure to incorporate a human rights approach to food production and consumption becomes more obvious. Therefore, improving the working conditions of fisher people, the sustainability of fish stocks and, finally, empowering democratic and participative structures such as fishing co-operatives, and their access to local markets, consumers, and civil society will be crucial in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic.

For more

Turkish fishermen struggle ahead against climate change, overfishing, COVID-19 pandemic
http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2021-03/12/c_139806203.htm

Formal versus informal institutions: Extraction and earnings in framed field experiments with small-scale fishing communities in Turkey
https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0308597X19301691

Has the pandemic (COVID-19) affected the fishery sector in regional scale? A case study on the fishery sector in Hatay province from Turkey
https://dergipark.org.tr/en/download/article-file/1174918

Agroecology and Food Sovereignty: The Role of Small-Scale Fishing Co-operatives in the Istanbul Region
https://longreads.tni.org/es/agroecology-and-food-sovereignty-in-istanbul-2

Contesting growth in marine capture fisheries: the case of small-scale fishing co-operatives in Istanbul
https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s11625-019-00748-y

A Fishing Crisis in Turkey
https://atmos.earth/fishing-crisis-turkey-covid/

Too Big to Ignore

Powerful messages emerged from the pilot event of the Regional Small-Scale Fisheries Governance Training Course for Africa

The quote below is a sobering reflection. "…821 million people across the world—one in nine—still go to bed on an empty stomach each night. Even more—one in three—suffer from some form of malnutrition. Eradicating hunger and malnutrition is one of the great challenges of our time." - UN World Food Programme

They epitomize one of the key motivations in the development and implementation of the FAO Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication (SSF Guidelines). One that envisions healthy and thriving small-scale fisher communities, in place of the vulnerable and challenging conditions they currently face. The SSF Guidelines are embedded within the human rights-based approach that guide its principles toward equitable, socially just, economically viable and environmentally sustainable reform of small-scale fisheries.

Several countries have begun to develop and implement new and participatory approaches, policies and instruments.

What has governance got to do with it?

Small-scale fisheries have been the pillar of coastal communities in Africa for thousands of years. Today, in a continent that experiences widespread economic strife, small-scale fishing activities offer a lifeline to food security and socioeconomic development of its people. Yet, estimates indicate that poor fisheries governance in Africa can cause economic losses of up to US$100 billion every year.

Exacerbating the challenges for fisheries governance in Africa are its diverse political, social and institutional landscapes—complicated by political instability, civil war, inequality, poverty and hierarchical top-down approaches to governance. Yet, the past two decades have seen immense and commendable strides toward an increased recognition in advancing approaches to human rights, sustainable development, and a move toward participatory modes of governance for small-scale fisheries. Several countries have begun to develop and implement new and participatory approaches, policies and instruments.

It is in recognition of these challenges that the Regional Small-Scale Fisheries Governance Training Course for Africa was developed by the International Ocean Institute - Southern Africa (IOI-SA). Designed to improve the understanding of good governance approaches and encouraging the implementation of these approaches in policy and practice, the course aimed to address the unique challenges of the small-scale fisheries sector in Africa. This would, in turn, contribute to creating an enabling environment for the implementation of the SSF Guidelines.

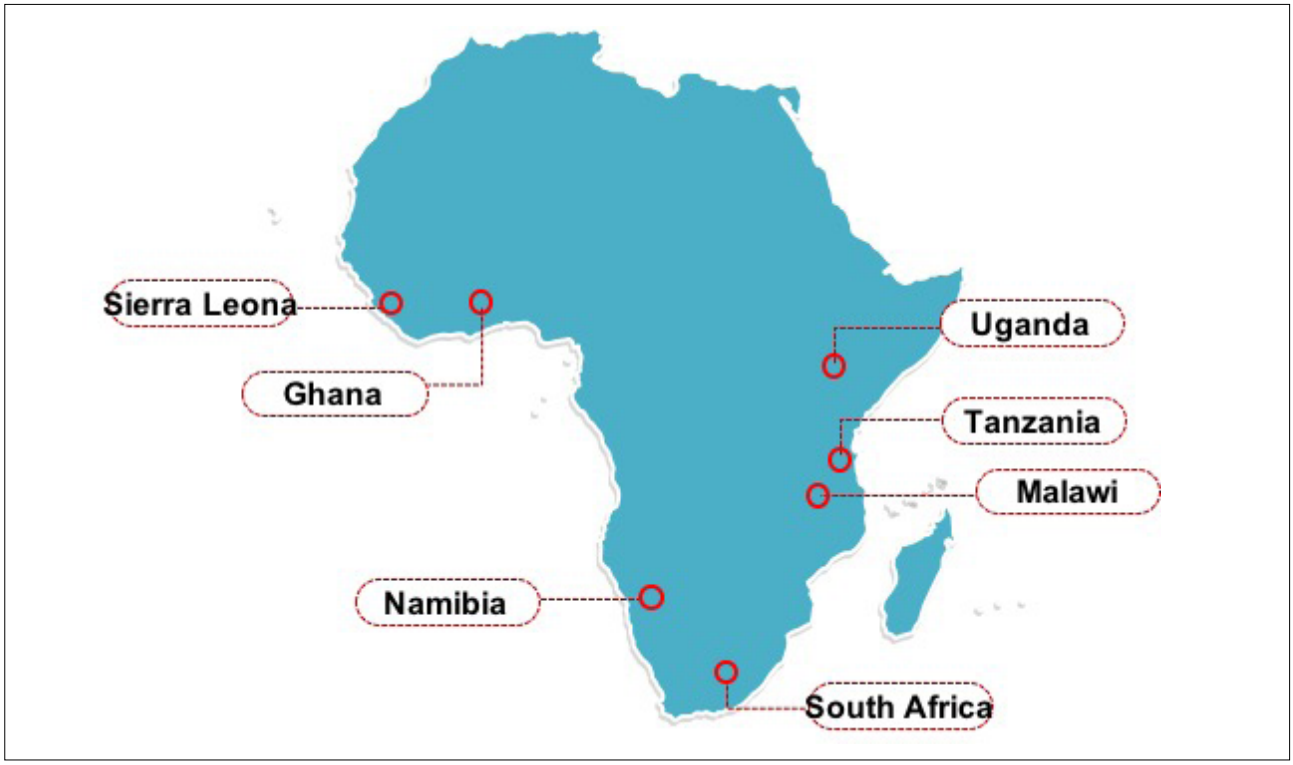
SSF Guidelines in Africa

As the COVID-19 pandemic continues to necessitate the prioritization of our safety and those of others, in February 2021, a collaboration between the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the IOI-SA brought together seven African countries to participate in a week-long virtual pilot training course.

The participants included small-scale fisheries government officials and

*This article is by **Kashiefa Parker** (kashiefaparker@gmail.com), International Ocean Institute - African Region, Newlands, Cape Town, South Africa*

INTERNATIONAL OCEAN INSTITUTE / SOUTH AFRICA



The participants included small-scale fisheries government officials, regional office consultants from participating countries, regional fisher representatives, regional bodies and non-governmental organizations from Western, Eastern and Southern Africa

FAO regional office consultants from Ghana, Malawi, Namibia, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Tanzania and Uganda. These countries were nominated because they are already working with FAO on small-scale fisheries projects toward implementation of the SSF Guidelines in their national contexts. In addition, regional fisher representatives, regional bodies and non-governmental organizations from Western, Eastern and Southern Africa were also invited.

Adapting to the virtual world

While the IOI-SA had originally developed an in-contact training event to be held in Cape Town, South Africa, the pandemic necessitated a switch to a virtual event. The virtual environment poses unique challenges, but also unique opportunities, one of which was hosting expert speakers from the continent and abroad. In continuing to adapt to the new norms, the 21 training participants embarked on a virtual journey together over the period of five full days. The packed training schedule saw them discussing a number of issues pertinent to small-scale fisheries governance in Africa. Content was presented by experts whose regional experiences and commitment to enhancing small-scale fisheries in Africa were displayed through their dynamic talks and sessions.

Each day of the training event focused on a specific training module.

The virtual environment poses unique challenges, but also unique opportunities, one of which was hosting expert speakers from the continent and abroad.

Day 1 was about getting to know the participants and setting the African scene with regard to the SSF Guidelines. This was done through introductory talks by the FAO, the World Fisher Forum (WFF) and the participants themselves, who gave an interesting snapshot of their national SSF profile. A dynamic talk on SSF as complex socio-ecological systems by the University of Cape Town introduced many of the participants, for the first time, to the term of 'wicked problems'. This certainly became one of the buzzwords for the rest of the

training! Once it is understood, it really encapsulates the complex challenges of small-scale fisheries.

Day 2 kicked off with the Module 2 on Governance. The organizers were honoured to have AUDA-NEPAD as a guest speaker on the international and regional frameworks. This backdrop set the scene for framing SSF governance and the various instruments that guide and complement the development of the SSF Guidelines.

However, it was the session on Responsible Governance of Tenure, by the Legal Resources Centre of South Africa, that had participants glued to their screens. Wilmien Wicomb delved into the legal status of small-scale fishers, their human rights, tenure rights and legal rights. This session forced participants to critically reflect on their national constitutions, to analyze the extent to which they reflect human rights, and which policies they should look toward or develop in protecting the rights of fishers. The theme of fisher rights as human rights came through strongly in each module.

In the afternoon, speakers from the University of Cape Town and the University of the Western Cape took the participants deeper into Module 3: Concepts, principles and approaches for small-scale fisheries governance. It focused on participatory approaches and understanding legal pluralism or multiple levels of governance that involve state and customary systems.

The participants spoke about how they felt motivated and empowered to effect change that could improve the lives of vulnerable people and marginalized groups.

Governance in action—and armchair travel

Midway through the training event on Day 3, the participants donned their sunhats and sunscreen as they were (virtually!) whisked off to a virtual field trip to the Southern and Western Cape of South Africa by the Abalobi ICT4Fisheries team. The Abalobi programme encapsulates many of the best practices set down in the SSF Guidelines. Through the use of ICT, it addresses issues from the incorporation of local knowledge, empowerment in the value chain, gender equity, disaster risk and climate change, and social development. This brought us to Module 4: Understanding small-scale fisheries as complex socio-ecological systems.

The virtual field trip was novel to Abalobi and IOI-SA. The participants were not sure og what to expect. They did their best to replicate an on-location field trip by having interactive sessions, photos and videos. Is there any virtual setting that can take the place of actually being in the field, meeting the fishers, immersed in the activities and the fresh air? Probably not, but everybody was making the best of the difficult circumstances.

Day 3 also encompassed dedicated sessions on two of the key thematic areas of the SSF Guidelines: gender and social development. The talks were delivered by the University of Cape Town and the International Collective in Support of Fishworkers (ICSF).

Towards implementing SSF Guidelines in Africa

In the final days of the training, attention shifted toward Modules 5-6, which consider the various institutions and role players involved in implementation of the SSF Guidelines. It is important in understanding which agencies (and their capacities) play a role in the implementation of the SSF Guidelines. What is the specific role of States or fisher organizations in the implementation process? The modules also aimed to reflect on the barriers and opportunities to implementing the SSF Guidelines in the national context—with a view to the way forward.

A session was presented by the FAO and Duke University on the importance of data and information on SSF—specifically highlighting the Hidden Harvest study—and the important role this type of information can play in informing the implementation of the SSF Guidelines. With the AU-IBAR and the University of the Western Cape, the module also discussed Blue Economic Strategies at length. The focus here was in relation to social justice and the concept of Blue Justice. This was another session that forced participants to

ABALOBI

Virtual field trip. In continuing to adapt to the new norms, the 21 training participants embarked on a virtual journey together over five full days to the Southern and Western Cape of South Africa, in a trip organized by the Abalobi ICT4Fisheries team

critically evaluate the role of small-scale fisheries in policies and instruments.

The training event concluded with a focus on tools and processes for the implementation of the SSF Guidelines. Participants were involved in the development of a group exercise centred on the draft NPOA-SSF toolkit developed by the FAO. The toolkit aims to assist countries in implementing the SSF Guidelines in the national context by providing a template for a comprehensive implementation plan. The objective of the exercise was to familiarize participants with the process of developing a NPOA-SSF toolkit.

Champions of change

Though the training was intense, the participants rose to the occasion. They showed great commitment and appreciation of the content. They were enthusiastic, engaged and motivated. One of the highlights came towards the end of the training event. Participants were discussing the challenges and opportunities in implementing the SSF Guidelines in their respective countries. The challenges were coming thick and fast! There was a range of very real issues such as lack of political will, lack of funding, lack of awareness, lack policy harmonization, the need to capacitate fisher organizations, and the need for institutional collaboration and communication.

Too big to ignore

Yet, when participants spoke of the opportunities, the possibilities that the implementation of the SSF Guidelines presented were so overwhelmingly empowering that all the challenges seemed to disappear! The participants spoke about achieving gender equity, about the empowerment of women, access to markets and what this would mean, equality, recognition, food security and nutrition. The participants spoke about how they felt motivated and empowered to effect change that could improve the lives of vulnerable people and marginalized groups. This was the training's takeaway message:

They have fed the world. They have come from a place where they have been ignored. And now, for the first time, the world is looking in their direction. They are too big to ignore... Small-scale fishers' lives matter!

For more

International Ocean Institute – Southern Africa (IOI-SA).
http://ioisa.org/

UN World Food Programme
https://www.wfp.org/

Complex History, Hopeful Future

The Community Fisheries organizations in Cambodia form a vital framework for collective, rights-based fisheries management that persists and thrives in inland and coastal settings to this day

Flanked by two of the world's largest marine fishing nations—Thailand to the west and Vietnam to the southeast—Cambodia's relatively modest 435-km coastline has not historically been renowned for marine fisheries. However, despite the long-standing dominance of freshwater fisheries across the Cambodian portion of the Mekong River system, marine fisheries have grown considerably, their production increasing from 75,000 tonnes in 2009 to over 212,000 tonnes in 2018, a 180 percent growth in a decade.

This emerging sector reveals a fascinating picture of the social, ecological and political challenges faced by a rapidly developing ocean economy. Very little is known about the social or cultural history of coastal fisheries in Cambodia prior to the 20th century, predominantly due to limited record-keeping during the colonial rule by France that ended in 1953. Up until the 1950s, Cambodia's coastal fisheries were predominantly small-scale, with minimal exports to its immediate neighbours. This is in contrast to other Southeast Asian countries such as Thailand and the Philippines, both of which relied on support from Japan in rapidly industrializing their demersal and pelagic fleets in this period. Mechanized fisheries in Cambodia, in fact, seem to have been tentatively introduced from Thailand in the 1960s as the expansion of their diesel-powered bottom-trawl fleet radiated out across neighbouring waters.

...since 2000, there has been a conscious government-driven policy dedicated to the 'Small-scale-isation' of the fishery through the creation of Community Fisheries organizations.

The civil and political disruption of the 1970s stopped much of this early development in its tracks, with all fishing banned during the Khmer Rouge era (1975-1979). The turmoil of this period saw both urban and rural communities violently displaced and relocated, seemingly eradicating the oral histories and traditions of coastal fishers and communities. In addition to halting the socioeconomic development potential of coastal fisheries—with rice agriculture and peasant farming the principal focus of the regime—this mass upheaval also created a serious 'trust deficit' between and within communities, inhibiting the social cohesion needed to adequately manage common resources.

The end of the Khmer Rouge regime ushered in a 20-year period characterized by a dramatic shift towards community-based management of both freshwater and marine fisheries. This culminated in the radical fishery reform of 2000, when Prime Minister Hun Sen overturned the private ownership or the 'lot' system that previously governed freshwater fisheries.

Vital framework

While this ambitious policy change did not directly affect marine fisheries governance—no coastal areas were under private ownership—it provided the basis for the Community Fisheries organizations, a vital framework for collective, rights-based fisheries management that persists and thrives in

*This article is by **Sour Kim** (Kim.Sour@fauna-flora.org), Senior Research Co-ordinator, Fauna & Flora International, Cambodia; **Dan Steadman** (daniel.steadman@fauna-flora.org), Fisheries & Biodiversity Technical Specialist, Fauna & Flora International, United Kingdom; and **Henry Duffy** (henry.duffy@fauna-flora.org), Marine Technical Specialist Asia-Pacific, Fauna & Flora International, United Kingdom*

JEREMY HOLDEN/FFI

Small-scale fishing boats in Koh Rong archipelago, Cambodia. The combination of highspeed fishery industrialization and government-driven promotion of small-scale fisheries has left the country's marine resources in a challenging state

inland and coastal settings to this day. As John Kurien notably observed in a 2017 review of these institutions: "Cambodia is the only country in Asia where, since 2000, there has been a conscious government-driven policy dedicated to the 'small-scale-isation' of the fishery through the creation of Community Fisheries organizations." In parallel to this concerted national recognition of the small-scale sector, Cambodia's industrial marine fisheries also evolved considerably between the 1980s and the early 2000s, particularly the demersal fleet. The Cambodian bottom-trawling fleet more than trebled between the early 1990s and the early 2000s to a high point of nearly 1,600 vessels in 2002, reducing slightly to around 1,450 vessels over the ensuing two decades. (It should be noted that the absence of a functional vessel register or licensing system mean these are estimates.)

A majority of this fleet development was driven by relatively small (or 'baby') trawlers, with 72 per cent of the current trawl fleet under 12 metres in length and none larger than 24 metres. This expansive middle-scale section—it is not quite artisanal but not industrial—of the fleet has posed significant difficulties for sustainable fisheries management in Cambodia. It conflicted with Community Fisheries organizations, thereby slowing the implementation of rights-based marine fishery governance, and posing a management challenge for the design and implementation of a national marine protected area (MPA) network.

The last 30 years have seen not only the rapid exploitation and decline of coastal fisheries in Cambodia, but also the emergence of a socially positive movement to protect the rights of small-scale fishers.

The combination of high-speed fishery industrialization and government-driven promotion of small-scale fisheries has left the country's marine resources in a

challenging state. Several authors have noted likely drastic declines in demersal and pelagic resources across the Gulf of Thailand, although it has also been noted that insufficient catch monitoring may hinder drawing any concrete conclusions at the national level. While Cambodian fisheries law laudably promotes good governance and small-scale fishery inclusivity, it should be noted that 'open access' marine fisheries rights for all Cambodians have left little scope to control expansion, tackle overcapacity or limit environmental degradation.

This disconnect between fishery policy and the reality of resource decline is nowhere more evident than in the 'middle-scale' demersal trawl fisheries. While there are a small number of large trawlers under beneficial foreign ownership, 'middle-scale' vessels are owned by elite Cambodians, who each own between three and five vessels that switch between trawling and swimming crab gillnetting, according to season. Although still categorized as 'small-scale' in the eyes of the government, these vessels are increasing their fishing power, marginalizing the truly local operators and even taking advantage of the associated benefits of this miscategorization (for example, avoiding paying tax due to being considered 'small-scale').

There are multiple accounts of trawlers destroying small-scale fishing gear and physically assaulting small-scale fishers.

As in many Southeast Asian nations like Malaysia and Myanmar, Cambodia has attempted to separate trawling from coastal fishing through an inshore restriction, with trawling nominally banned in waters shallower than 20 metres. However, this seems to have had the principal effect of criminalizing trawl effort and exposing the lack of fisheries enforcement capacity needed to make the restriction effective in practice. The 20-metre depth restriction may also be impractical for fishers to comply with, since many Cambodian vessels lack digital navigation or depth sounding equipment.

While the demersal trawl fishery nominally targets penaeid shrimps, it is likely that widespread declines in these species have driven a less-selective 'trash fish' catch, mostly destined for fishmeal and fish oil factories. A 1999 study of small-scale fisher perceptions of shrimp catch changes in the northernmost Koh Kong province found perceived catch per unit effort reduced by up to 90 percent since the 1960s. These declines have, in turn, led to the collapse of several Cambodian joint shrimp processing ventures as well as caused Cambodia to be outcompeted by the entrenched shrimp export sectors of Vietnam and Thailand.

On a wider, ecosystem level, the minimal regulation of the trawl fleet has had dire consequences. The decline of rich, inshore habitats along the Cambodian coastline has been repeatedly linked to excessive bottom-trawling effort, damaging sensitive seagrass beds in the provinces of Kep and Kampot and even degrading precious coral reef habitats. An interview-based study in 2012 identified bycatch in bottom trawling gear as the principal cause of decline in green and hawksbill sea turtles, considered Endangered and Critically Endangered, respectively. Cambodian seas have historically supported up to five sea turtle species, but only green and hawksbill have been recently sighted; no nesting by any turtle species has been recorded in almost a decade. Declines in globally significant seahorse populations in Cambodian waters, including within MPAs, have also been linked to the trawl fishery.

Destructive trawlers

The resource and ecosystem declines associated with this mid-sized trawl fleet have also had the social consequence of squeezing out truly 'small-scale' marine fisheries, and constantly impeding coastal Community Fisheries institutions. There are multiple accounts of trawlers destroying small-scale fishing gear and physically assaulting small-scale Cambodian fishers. In a 2010 study, conflicts witnessed by two Community Fisheries in Koh Kong province were repeatedly linked to "outsider fishermen using trawl nets" who "never landed the

A new fisheries law

Major revisions are currently underway in the legal framework governing the use of aquatic resources in Cambodia: the country's Fisheries Law, last revised in 2006. The most substantial changes are the requirement for consistent and coherent registration of fishing vessels as well as the inclusion of entirely new provisions relating to monitoring, control and surveillance. While the law will retain the national spatial system of restricting trawling in 'coastal fishing areas', this will now be delimited by a distance from shore measure, as opposed to a depth contour restriction.

fish that they caught in the area to avoid any public criticism".

In a 2020 interview, Chhang, a community fisher in Koh Sdach Archipelago, explained that "the key challenges are [that] illegal fishing is still the same as during the previous time, trawling in the conservation area is still in place [and] fisheries resources are decreasing". Fishery inequity extends further offshore, where the licensing of Vietnamese and Thai trawlers to operate in Cambodian waters (and the minimal catch reporting and potential illegalities associated with these licences) means further value loss for the Community Fisheries sector.

Despite these challenges, the Cambodian government is beginning to develop the partnerships, resources and tools needed to better manage its coastal waters. A sweeping revision of the outdated Fisheries Law of 2006 is underway. The country has recently ratified two important international fisheries treaties: the Port States Measures Agreement (aimed at reducing illegal fishing through better collaboration between nations) and the Straddling Stocks Agreement (aimed at enhancing co-operative management of highly migratory fish species such as tuna).

Funding of US$124 million between 2019 and 2023, through the European Union's CAPFISH programme, has enabled extensive financial and technical support to Cambodia's main fishery regulator, the Fisheries Administration (FiA). In addition to a thorough policy review, these funds will support development of new systems to gather the vital data needed to inform management. For example, the country's first full vessel census concluded in 2020, and plans are in motion to develop a robust catch documentation scheme that encompasses all fisheries sectors. The Spatial Monitoring and Reporting Tool (SMART)—successfully applied in MPA management in the Koh Rong Archipelago by FiA, supported by Fauna & Flora International (FFI)—will be extended to support co-managed marine enforcement across the whole coastline.

Site-based marine conservation approaches are also being scaled up through new investment by the Blue Action Fund and Arcadia, a charitable fund of Lisbet Rausing and Peter Baldwin, with FFI and a partner consortium implementing a national MPA network across Koh Kong, Preah Sihanouk, Kep and Kampot provinces. Finally, under the structure of a soon-to-be-completed National Plan of Control and Inspection, the FiA will receive desperately needed increases in human resources and marine enforcement assets to put these new policies and data to effective use.

Tenure protection

The last 30 years have seen not only the rapid exploitation and decline of coastal fisheries in Cambodia, but also the emergence of a socially positive movement to protect the rights of small-scale fishers. Through harmonizing major changes in the national fishing sector with the emerging MPA network and established small-scale tenure protection, future decades will hopefully see significant progress towards equitably governed Cambodian small-scale fisheries and gradual signs of a recovering marine environment.

For more

Fishing disarmed
https://www.icsf.net/images/samudra/pdf/english/issue_31/328_art02.pdf

From Individual Rights to Community Commons
https://www.icsf.net/images/samudra/pdf/english/issue_80/4367_art_Sam_80_Cambodial_FisheryRights_John_Kurien.pdf

Banding Together
https://www.icsf.net/images/samudra/pdf/english/issue_78/4336_art_Samudra%20Report%20No%2078%20Banding%20Together%20by%20Nick%20Beresford.pdf

Fauna & Flora International
https://www.fauna-flora.org/

The Relic of Apartheid

A research report uncovers the historical injustice meted out to Indian-origin subsistence fishers in South Africa who have to deal with the restrictions brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic

In March 2020, the South African government declared COVID-19 a national disaster under the Disaster Management Act No. 57 of 2002. This introduced, overnight, regulations that prescribed the activities regarded as 'essential' to society. These lockdown regulations set in motion a series of administrative reactions that have revealed the deep-seated and stubborn inequalities in South Africa and the underbelly of the post-apartheid state. The impacts of these regulations were devastating for a specific groups of subsistence fishers from Durban in the province of KwaZulu Natal (KZN), along the eastern seaboard.

Numerous policy processes have failed to accommodate the diversity of fishers and fishing communities that exists under the umbrella term 'small-scale fisheries'.

These fishers include subsistence fishers of Indian origin, joined by the non-racial community of poor, subsistence line fishers, forming the KZN Subsistence Fisher's Forum (KZNSFF). They find themselves caught in a net of regulatory distortions. Under the lockdown, they were told by the Deputy Director General of Fisheries that 'subsistence fishers' was no longer a legitimate category in South Africa. It transpired that they should have applied for recognition as 'small-scale fishers' in previous policy processes, if they had hoped to be legally recognized as 'essential services'.

Given their illegal status under the new regulations, these fishers were unable to turn to their natural commons to feed their families, nor were they eligible for state food parcels. Their situation reflects the plight of many poor South Africans, worsened by the regulations brought in to curb the pandemic. The regulations enacted as a response to the pandemic, however, placed a spotlight on the history of Indian subsistence fishers in this region of South Africa; it revealed the way in which fisheries legislative and policy reforms in South Africa excluded them.

Numerous policy processes have failed to accommodate the diversity of fishers and fishing communities that exists under the umbrella term 'small-scale fisheries'. In addition, the desire for neat policy categories of fishers denies the dynamic and messy lived reality of fishers; they live in a seascape without clear-cut categories of work and employment. A research report titled 'Cast Out: The systematic exclusion of the KwaZulu Natal subsistence fishers from the fishing rights regime in South Africa' was commissioned in 2020 by the South Durban Community Environmental Alliance (SDCEA). The report highlights the history of these fishers. It unpacks the way that they have historically crafted freedom and cultural identity through their subsistence strategies—as also the policy and administrative failure to accommodate them.

A unique contribution

The earliest record of shore-based subsistence line fishing in KZN is that of indentured Indian labourers of the 1860s who fished on the shores of the city of Durban. These bonded workers came from India to the Colony of Natal to work on the sugar plantations, bringing with them both their fishing skills and their close relationships with the ocean. Some of the indentured labourers were brought specifically for their seafaring, boat-building and

*This article is by **Kira Erwin** (kirae@dut.ac.za), Senior Researcher, Urban Futures Centre, Durban University of Technology and **Jackie Sunde** (jackiesunde25@gmail.com), Researcher, One Ocean Hub Global Project, University of Cape Town, South Africa*

SDCEA

KwaZulu Natal subsistence fishers protest their exclusion in Durban, South Africa. The impacts of new regulations were devastating for a specific groups of subsistence fishers from Durban along the eastern seaboard

fishing skills to assist the Port Captain and to provide fish rations for the workers on the sugar plantations.

So began the proudly cherished cultural tradition of the rod-and-reel subsistence line fisher along the harbour and beachfront of Durban. More than just a pastime, this practice represented a means for these labourers to express their independence from the bondage of their contracted indenture, whilst also ensuring adequate food for their families. Fishing assisted in creating a livelihood in this liminal zone on the edges of indentured labour. These early fishers used fishing and the social relations around it to craft a cultural response to the harsh environment of indenture and colonial racism. Once freed from their indentured labour contracts, many of these workers and their families settled around Durban harbour at the mouth of the Umgeni River. It was in these mud marshes and mangroves on the edge of the sea that many Indian families established their livelihoods.

For many families rod-and-reel fishing became a means of subsistence; for others seine-net fishing steadily developed into a flourishing enterprise. In addition, these fishers harvested a range of other marine resources, both for food and for medicine. Both men and women engaged in this activity, usually held day jobs and worked this trade by night to supplement low incomes.

These state administrative processes linked to policy implementation were shaped by the prior, systemic racism inherent in the provincial approach to subsistence fishers.

The Indian migrants had a significant impact on the culture of colonial Natal. They built beautiful local temples and established schools in their midst, fish markets sprung up, and a distinctive seafood culture, flavoured with Indian spices, developed. These Indian cultural influences are still tangible in Durban today, a part of what makes the city unique in South Africa.

Food security

Despite the importance of their contribution to food security, culture

SDCEA

Fishers inspect the nets during the sardine run on the KZN coast, South Africa. The authorities took the view that subsistence fishing should be an occupation of last resort, and that these fishers must be shifted into alternative livelihoods rather than supported to flourish

and development, these early fishers experienced increasing racism and class-based prejudice. As white residents of Durban began using the harbour area and surrounding beaches and waters for recreation, they started complaining about the Indian fishers in the area. Drawing on racist stereotypes, such complaints began as early as 1877, growing steadily in the subsequent two decades.

The archival evidence of these early expressions of racism towards Indian fishers and subsequent policy responses aimed at restricting these fishers suggests that just over a decade after they arrived in the Natal Colony, they were subjected to intense discrimination and material exclusion. Over time, these exclusions only grew worse. Half a century later, the nationalist apartheid government legislated racial segregation and discrimination. Using the notorious Group Areas Act of 1950, Indian families were forcibly removed from the coastal locations to designated 'Indian' townships inland. This legislation robbed people of their dignity and access to their traditional fishing spots.

During colonialism and apartheid, subsistence fishers were not legally recognized. The governance of fisheries up until this time was firmly orientated towards the white-owned commercial, industrial sector which received considerable support from the state. Only commercial and recreational fishers were recognized. This despite thousands of fishers who subsisted on marine resources—either seasonally or on an ad hoc basis or as a safety net or on an ongoing basis throughout the year.

Avoiding detection

Despite their removal to areas over 20 km away from the sea, many of the descendants of this early community of Indian fishers continued to rely on fishing for their food and livelihood. Fishing was also the material basis of their cultural identity in South Africa, a source of local knowledge and intergenerational pride. These fishers shared fishing spots with the growing recreational fishing sector. As subsistence fishing was not legally recognized in South Africa prior to 1998, these fishers blended into this

recreational sector to avoid detection and punitive measures from the authorities.

The lines between recreational fishing and subsistence fishing have always been blurred.

Subsistence fisheries steadily grew in and around the industrializing centre of Durban during the colonial and early apartheid period, drawing in not only Indian but also coloured, black and poor white fishers who turned to the marine commons as a means of survival. Rural-based African subsistence fishers in Natal, predominantly of isiZulu and Thonga culture, also experienced

exclusions and forced evictions during these colonial and apartheid periods. In the decades immediately before the advent of democracy, thousands of subsistence fishers in rural Natal were harassed and arrested for fishing illegally, and treated as poachers.

Post-apartheid legal reforms and their impact

After apartheid was abolished, legal reforms included the development of a new statute to guide the governance of marine living resources. The Marine Living Resources Act of 1998 added the category of 'subsistence' fisheries to those of commercial and recreational fishing. A subsistence fisher was defined as one who fished for own consumption and was only permitted local sale of fish. Notwithstanding this legal recognition, the institutional arrangements for the implementation of this provision in this province, unlike in the other coastal provinces, rested in the hands of the 'KZN Ezemvelo Wildlife', the provincial conservation authority contracted to manage fisheries. Strongly influenced by the perspectives of marine scientists and ecologists working in the province, this authority took the view that, ideally, subsistence fishing should be an occupation of last resort, and that these fishers must be shifted into alternative livelihoods rather than supported to flourish.

This narrow approach to the recognition of subsistence fishers meant that in the period between 1998 and 2013, just over 2,000 subsistence fishers were legally recognized. The rest of the subsistence fishers in the province, estimated at over 18,000, were forced to either purchase recreational permits or risk getting caught and prosecuted. Recreational permits, easily purchased at the local post office, are relatively inexpensive, and there are no means tests or limits on the number of recreational fishers, making this an open-access fishery. The distinguishing feature of this form of fishing is that these fishers may not sell their catch.

Elsewhere in the country small-scale, artisanal fishers protested the failure of the reforms to recognize their fisheries, arguing that the subsistence definition failed to accommodate small-scale fishers whose livelihoods included the modest sale of fish on a commercial basis. Following extensive advocacy action, the Equality Court finally ordered the then Minister of Fisheries to develop a new policy through a participatory process, one that would recognize the social and economic rights of traditional, small-scale fishers.

Fishing assisted in creating a livelihood in this liminal zone on the edges of indentured labour.

Slipping through the net

The Policy for Small-Scale Fisheries was finally gazetted in 2012. It included a definition of small-scale fishing that aimed to include a continuum of fishing, from those who fished on a subsistence basis to those who fished on an artisanal and small-scale commercial basis. The formal amendment of the statute to include this new definition of small-scale was followed by the promulgation of a set of Regulations for Small-Scale Fisheries in 2016. Shortly after this, the Department of Fisheries embarked on a nationwide process of rights application and verification. These state administrative processes linked to policy implementation were shaped by the prior, systemic racism inherent in the provincial approach to subsistence fishers. Instead of engaging widely with

SDCEA

The KwaZulu subsistence fishers finally get access to their traditional fishing spots as users of the port. Policymakers will need to become far more comfortable with the dynamic and messy lived reality of fishers in a country where clear-cut categories of work and employment no longer exist

the range of subsistence fishers in the province, including those Indian fishers who held recreational permits despite the subsistence nature of their fishing, the department consulted narrowly. It ignored pleas to come and explain the policy for small-scale fisheries to the Durban-based KZNSFF.

The majority of these fishers noted that the policy and regulations were based on a community-based approach to fisheries that demanded the establishment of formal co-operatives. This system, they argued, made no allowances for their individual rod-and-reel subsistence practices. Nor did the system recognize the history of forced removals where Indian communities had been removed far from their traditional fishing areas and their coastal fishing communities had been fragmented and dispersed. Others were deemed not eligible for small-scale fishing rights due to the very narrow interpretation of dependence on marine resources applied by the officials managing the process. If an applicant was not completely dependent on fishing for their livelihood then they were rejected.

As a result of this overly bureaucratic, technical approach to rights allocation and recognition, only 11,500 fishers in the entire country have been recognized as bone fide small-scale fishers deserving of rights. Despite the fact that the policy is closely aligned to principles inherent in the Guidelines on Small-Scale Fisheries, agreed upon by the international community and confirmed by the South African government in 2014, the implementation of the policy for small-scale fisheries has failed to create the conditions that would enable subsistence fishers to be recognized and supported. It was this mix of different subsistence fishers—together with those rural-based small-scale fishers who were left out of the policy process—who found their subsistence fishing and livelihoods described as

'non-essential' when the COVID-19 lockdown regulations were introduced. Overnight their means of feeding their families and selling a small amount of fish locally for basic necessities was outlawed.

Subsistence in the neoliberal Blue Economy

The Indian-origin fishers of Durban have led the resistance to the exclusion of so-called 'recreational' and real subsistence fishers by the COVID-19 lockdown regulations, arguing that the right to subsistence is linked to their right to human dignity. They have argued that the way in which the policy for small-scale fisheries is being administered and regulated, forcing groups of fishers to form business co-operatives and navigate considerable red tape to enjoy their historical rights, is unfair and exclusionary. They summon the history of their ancestors, the early Indian indentured workers, who proudly subsisted due to fishing, thereby asserting their independence and freedom.

The weight and power of the word 'subsistence', and the resistance to being classified as 'small-scale' in the current national policy among a segment of the traditional fishers in KZN, have their roots in this specific socio-cultural history of Indian fishers in the province since 1860. Holding on to the category of 'subsistence' is an assertion of human dignity and a direct response to the racist, ethnic and class-based prejudice suffered over the last 150 years. Stories of ancestors who experienced forced removals three times in their lifetimes are not forgotten in many fisher families.

Given this historical and intergenerational struggle for rights, it is not surprising that the descendants of these fishers in Durban continue to demand recognition as subsistence fishers. Nor is it surprising that these fishers view contemporary regulations and enforcement that deny them fishing access to public beaches, the Durban Port, and marine protected areas in the South Coast, as a continuation of their marginalization and exclusion in society. Contemporary forms of exclusion through neoliberal capitalism and its Blue Economy, and the persistence of racism, are entangled with the distinctive oppressive practices of the apartheid past.

The research report calls for a serious engagement with these fishers by the relevant ministry, an engagement that recognizes the complex entanglements among culture, heritage and economic livelihoods. The current Small-Scale Fisheries Policy does hold promise for their inclusion as resource users and active members in South African fisheries management. However, to make the current policy inclusive, a more nuanced approach to the implementation of small-scale fisheries governance and management is required. Policymakers and management officials will have to understand the historical processes that shape some fishing practices. They will need to become far more comfortable with the dynamic and messy lived reality of fishers in a country where clear-cut categories of work and employment no longer exist.

There is substantive precedent for this in South Africa, where local and national government decisionmakers have recognized the precarious nature of work and how informal practices support livelihoods. There is also growing recognition internationally that urban fishers utilize multiple livelihood strategies to support families in cities, of which fishing is an important part. The current economic context of work and informality must be acknowledged and engaged with in a policy review. Similarly, the powerful continuities of culture across these dispersed communities, and their deep historical relationship with the ocean and coast, must be recognized.

For more

Caught in a Net
https://www.icsf.net/images/samudra/pdf/english/issue_74/4214_art_Sam74_e_Art07.pdf

Living Off the Land
https://www.icsf.net/images/samudra/pdf/english/issue_62/3742_art_Sam62_eng-art01.pdf

A Weighty Responsibility
https://www.icsf.net/images/samudra/pdf/english/issue_64/3849_art_Sam64_e-art04.pdf

Cast out: The systematic exclusion of the KwaZulu Natal Subsistence Fishers from the fishing rights regime in South Africa
https://static.pmg.org.za/201027Cast_Out-_Policy_Document-2020.pdf

Social relations and dynamics shaping the implementation of the voluntary guidelines on small-scale fisheries (SSF guidelines) in South Africa
https://www.icsf.net/images/monographs/pdf/english/issue_150/150_SSF_Guidelines_SAfrica_Jackie_29_MAR_2016.pdf

High & Dry. KwaZulu Natal Fishers Fight for their Rights
https://www.fishingindustrynewssa.com/2020/11/02/high-dry-kwazulu-natal-fishers-fight-for-their-rights/

Disaster Management Act 57 of 2002
https://www.gov.za/sites/default/files/gcis_document/201409/a57-020.pdf

Baffling Shades of Blue

The much touted Blue Economy can easily become a new label to justify old injustices – or a means of addressing the concerns of small-scale fisheries

There is so much talk of 'Blue Economy' and 'Blue Growth', much of which is confusing and contradictory, especially in terms of its impact on small-scale fishers. That is why the International Collective in Support of Fishworkers (ICSF) is preparing a regional diagnostic programme to enquire how the Blue Economy, in discourse and practice, plays out in 10 Latin American countries, from the perspective of artisanal and small-scale fishworkers. The countries are: Brazil, Chile, Peru, Ecuador, Colombia, Panama, Costa Rica, Nicaragua, Honduras and Guatemala. The programme resonates with calls by fishworker organizations (FWOs) worldwide for a profound rethink of 'blue' agendas and investment.

The study aims to support the development of inclusive and sustainable ocean agendas and advocacy strategies by FWOs to address the challenges and opportunities arising from Blue Economy agendas in Latin America.

A team of 18 Latin American researchers and extensionists working with artisanal fishers has drafted the report. Its summary version will now undergo scrutiny by study informants and their FWOs in the upcoming months. The authors are undertaking an assessment of policy, legislation and investment, and also evaluating competing definitions of the Blue Economy in the region. It aims to support the development of inclusive and sustainable ocean agendas and advocacy strategies by FWOs to address the challenges and opportunities arising from Blue Economy agendas in Latin America. The report advocates for ecosystem- and human-rights-based approaches to be adopted in sustainable use and management of coastal and marine resources and biodiversity in Latin America.

The complexity and urgency to face the haunted legacies of the ocean economy towards small-scale fisheries (SSF) is outlined through a literature-based overview of the intersection between the Blue Economy and justice/equity in the SSF context; and a synthesis of major concerns and opportunities that have been voiced out internationally, thereby providing a context for regional analysis. The assessment's methodology included key informant interviews and review of science-policy documents, and amalgamation of finance and conflict/injustice reports from various online data sets to critically assess information on international and national coastal-ocean (blue) economy narratives and finance, governance frameworks—marine protected areas, coastal zone management, environmental licensing and marine spatial planning—and reported conflicts and injustices towards SSFs. Based on the later assessment, the authors finally shortlisted what they considered the main challenges and opportunities for SSFs in the context of 'blue' agendas in each country. So let's briefly navigate the range of findings to be elicited by this regional diagnostic.

Online databases

To start taking stock of the impacts of the coastal-ocean economy on SSFs, the study analyzed information from four online social-environmental justice databases. They are: Environmental Justice Atlas (by University of Barcelona); Information System on Small-Scale Fisheries (by TBTI); Map of conflicts involving environmental injustice and health in Brazil (by Fiocruz); and Map of conflicts involving artisanal fisheries in Brazil (by Conselho Pastoral dos Pescadores).

These online platforms offer strong evidence of injustices ensuing from the Blue Economy sectors or drivers:

This article is by ***Leopoldo Cavaleri Gerhardinger*** *(leocavaleri@gmail.com), PhD in environment and society, and Member, ICSF. It is based on a report edited by Gerhardinger and its co-authors are:* ***Adrián Ribaric; Bianca Gabani Gimenez; Carlos Hidalgo Garrido; Deborah Santos Prado; Érica Silva Mendonça; Francisco Araos; Géssica Trevizan Pera; Gina Noriega Narváez; Isabela Figueroa; Jeremy Anbleyth-Evans; Lina M Saavedra-Díaz; Naetê Barbosa Lima Reis; Marcelo Aranda Stortti; Lucas Milani Rodrigues; Maciej John Wojciechowski; Paula Satizábal; Ricardo Alvarez Abel; Rogério Pereira de Campos;*** *and* ***Yulibeth Velásquez-Mendoza***

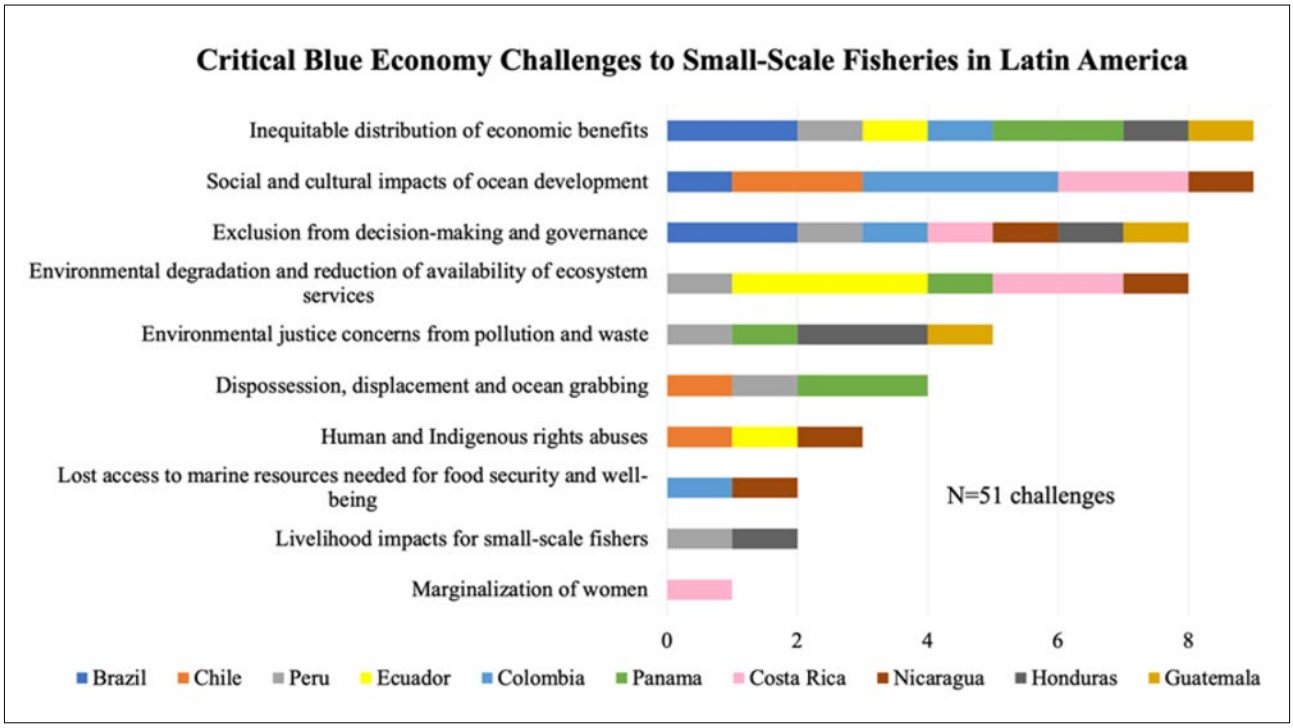


Figure 1: Geographic distribution of 51 critical Blue Economy challenges to small-scale fisheries in Latin America

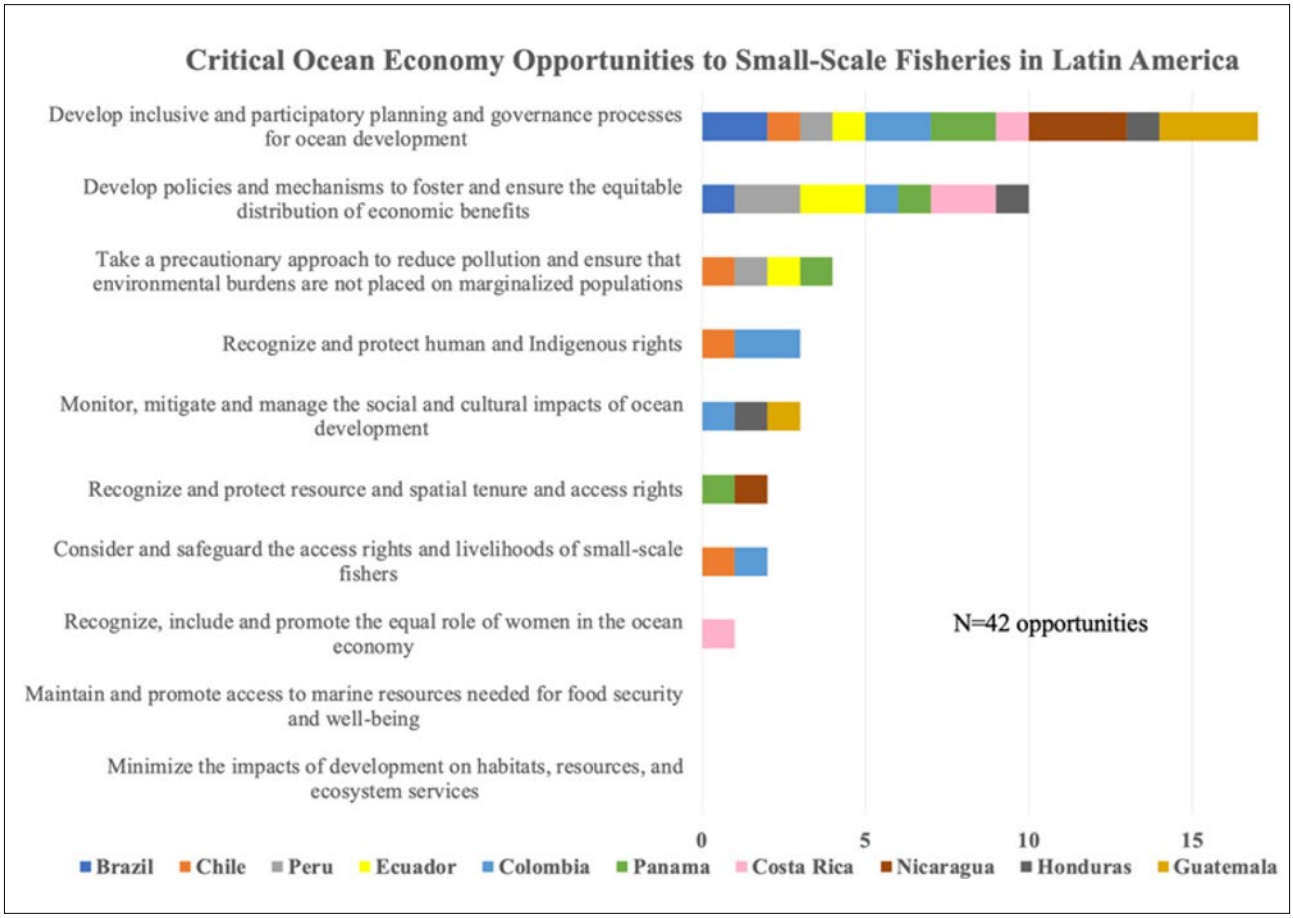


Figure 2: Geographic distribution of 42 critical ocean economy opportunities for small-scale fisheries in Latin America

fisheries and aquaculture; mining; the energy matrix; agriculture and livestock; environmental resource management and conservation; tourism; coastal state development and territorial use/occupation; transport, infrastructure and logistics; other industries; and, public sector and public policies.

A total of 192 conflicts/injustices were identified and critically assessed, pointing to sub-national gaps in social-environmental justice mapping and representation in coastal states across the region. In summary, the range of conflict/injustice records comprises multiple associations to health and goods under dispute, providing a glimpse of the informational complexity involved in the assessment and representation of social struggle at the regional level.

The report also kicks off a collaborative process of critically appreciating the operation of 11 international organizations—international United Nations agencies, regional intergovernmental organizations and major banks, to name a few—in relation to Blue Economy strategies and finance in Latin America. Among these, the study conducted an independent scanning of the investment profile of five major donors in the region, namely, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP); The World Bank Group; the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB); the Global Environment Facility (GEF); and the Development Bank of Latin America (CAF).

A total of 192 conflicts/injustices were identified and critically assessed, pointing to sub-national gaps in social-environmental justice mapping and representation in coastal states across the region.

This assessment rendered over 7,000 national development investment projects in the region from 2012 to 2020. Of these, at least 494 can be classified as 'blue' investments predominantly in the coastal provinces of all assessed countries. Brazil is the largest recipient of such investments and Nicaragua received the smallest share. The fisheries and aquaculture sector ranked sixth behind environmental resource management and conservation (n=271), territorial development and use/occupation, energy, tourism and transport infrastructure and logistics; it was ahead of other industries, agriculture and livestock and mining sectors. A total of 47 global and regional blue investments—involving two or more countries—were also identified, predominantly in the area of environmental resource management and conservation (n=25) and particularly with direct implication to SSFs (n=15).

The implementation of these projects since 2012 has created an international 'blue advocacy arena' that worryingly lacks minimum or forefront participation of SSFs organizations. Furthermore, this report shows the troublesome lack of readily available information of the geographic distribution of impacts—positive or negative—of financial investments by major international banks and other donors; a major challenge in the way of fishworkers and supportive socio-environmental justice organizations to size up national and regional advocacy responses.

Underpinning the regional diagnostic of investments and conflicts reported above, the bulk of the report consists of a series of 10 nationally-based assessments aimed at starting to unveil how Blue Economy discourse and practice play out from the perspective of small-scale fisheries in each country. The study offers an overview of the context of small-scale fisheries integration—or lack thereof—within national coastal and ocean governance and economy-related policies; it identifies pressing challenges and opportunities for equitable developmental and governance dynamics in the face of the profile of reported conflicts and injustices in each country.

Inequitable distribution

The current assessment stage identified 51 critical challenges and 42 critical opportunities for SSFs, spanning all 10 key considerations to advance equity and human rights in 'blue' initiatives recorded in the broad literature on social injustice in an ocean context. The regional meta-analysis highlights the inequitable distribution of economic benefits; the widespread presence of social and cultural impacts of ocean

Fishworker and civil society organizations consulted for the regional assessment:

1. World Forum of Fish Harvesters & Fish Workers (International)
2. World Forum of Fisher People (International)
3. Future of Fish (Peru)
4. Artisanal Fishermen and Fisherwomen Movement (Brazil)
5. Brazilian Future Ocean Panel – Ocean Horizons program (Socio-environmental Justice Research-Action Team)
6. Bocatoreños Artisanal Fishermen Union (Panama)
7. National Federation of Artisanal Fishers of the Republic of Panama
8. Central American Confederation of Artisanal Fishing
9. National Confederation of Artisanal Fishermen of Chile
10. Nicaraguan Fisheries Federation
11. Association of Artisanal Fishermen of the Gulf of Fonseca Federation of Fishing Co-operatives of Ecuador
12. Magdalena University (Colombia)
13. CoopeSolidar R.L. (Costa Rica)
14. Costa Rica Federation of Small-Scale Artisanal Fishers
15. C-Codem (Network of Communities and Organizations Defending the Mangrove Ecosystem

International organizations with 'blue' agendas (coastal-ocean) across the 10 Latin American countries

1. United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD)
2. United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)
3. Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC-UNESCO)
4. Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)
5. The Andean Parliament
6. Central American Integration System
7. The World Bank Group
8. Inter-American Development Bank
9. Global Environment Facility (GEF)
10. Development Bank of Latin America

development; the exclusion of SSFs from decision-making and governance; and troubling environmental degradation and reduction of ecosystem services. These principal concerns underpin regional advocacy by FWOs. This scenario points to an urgent necessity for developing policies and mechanisms to foster and ensure the equitable distribution of economic benefits, and much more inclusive and participatory planning and governance processes for ocean development in Latin America.

While various differences and commonalities among countries have been outlined in the above analysis, further discussion between FWOs and supportive research, education and extension networks should now be taken to scrutinize the findings and bring the assessment gradually closer to the reality of fishers' social struggles. This understanding motivates the research team to remain committed to this collaborative assessment, suggesting a few reasonable next steps: One, supporting the development of a fisher-to-fisher marine learning network to advance collaborative mapping of conflicts/injustices to support evidence-based advocacy concerning the Blue Economy and small-scale fisheries interactions in Latin America; two, seeking formal review, refinement of this preliminary assessment by national and regional FWOs; and, three, publishing and disseminating the results.

In the meantime, ICSF will continue to support FWOs to expand understanding and reaction to the violations of small-scale fishers' human rights and the disruption of their livelihood and well-being. In the short term, this conversation can build upon other activities under preparation for the 2022 International Year of Artisanal Fisheries and Aquaculture and strengthen the primacy of fisherfolk voices in shaping a sustainable future in coastal and ocean territories across Latin America.

For more

Planning Blues
https://www.icsf.net/images/samudra/pdf/english/issue_78/4334_art_Samudra%20Report%20No%2078%20Planning%20Blues%20by%20Leopoldo%20Cavaleri.pdf

A Strong, Cohesive Voice
https://www.icsf.net/images/samudra/pdf/english/issue_76/4298_art_Sam76_e_art11.pdf

Blind spots in visions of a "blue economy"
https://bit.ly/3iO7OVA

Away from Blue Growth and towards the Blue Commons?
http://cape-cffa.squarespace.com/en-blog/2019/3/4/from-blue-growth-to-blue-commons

Woes Compounded

One year after an oil spill hit Brazil's Discovery Coast, the COVID-19 pandemic has worsened the lot of indigenous fishing communities

The biggest oil spill disaster in Brazil began in late September 2019. It extended along the coast, affecting 11 states, nine along the Northeast Atlantic and two along the Southeast Atlantic. About 3,000 km of the coastline was affected. The oil slick spread over beaches, mangroves and rivers, and reached also marine protected areas (MPAs) such as the Abrolhos National Park, one of the main coral banks and cradles of marine biodiversity in the South Atlantic.

There was no income for 60 per cent of the respondents during the period of the oil spill.

The Brazilian government was criticized for the delay in taking action to contain the arrival of oil on the coast, as also for showing low commitment towards affected communities. The federal government has the responsibility of co-ordinating the response to sea oil spill cases. The National Contingency Plan (Decree 8127/2013) is the instrument for oil pollution risk management, falling under national jurisdiction. It determines the responsibilities of public and private entities in the event of a spill. The plan is supposed to be executed by a council chaired by the ministry of the environment. In Brazil, councils that were not created by law, like this one, were extinguished by Decree 9.759 of 2019. Thus, its involvement was not properly triggered.

Despite the poor co-ordination of the federal government, more than 5,000 tonnes of crude oil residues have been removed from beaches, coral reefs and mangroves. Most of this removal was possible thanks to the action of civil society volunteers—fishers, local communities and non-governmental organizations—along with city halls and government environmental agencies, who, even without adequate equipment, did the necessary work. There were several local initiatives, without initial central co-ordination, which hampered the actions.

The negative impact caused by the oil spill goes beyond the lasting environmental contamination of water and mangroves, putting at risk the life of birds, fish and corals, apart from the people who were exposed to the oil during the removal. There is also the socioeconomic impact, for example, on the tourism and trade value chains that mainly are focused on the region's fishing resources. It goes from those who manufacture fishing gear to the restaurants that buy the fish, significantly reducing income up and down the chain, from the fishing communities to the ultimate consumer.

The oil spill hit the Bahia state's southern coast just before the beginning of the high season in the summer, when profits should be higher. However, the opposite occurred and fishers made little money in the season; they depend on the fish trade for income to buy other items of daily sustenance, among other demands.

Demand reduction

The arrival of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020 reduced the demand for fish drastically, aggravating the socioeconomic consequences of the oil spill. The requirements of social

*This article is by **Beatriz Mesquita** (mesquitabia@hotmail.com), ICSF Member and a SSF researcher in the Joaquim Nabuco Foundation, Recife-PE, Brazil and **Juliana Giusti** (juliana.vmelo@gmail.com), Fellow Research, Joaquim Nabuco Foundation, Brazil*

BEATRIZ MESQUITA

Oil on a beach in the Brazil Northeast, October 2019. Most of this removal was possible thanks to the action of civil society volunteers—fishers, local communities and non-governmental organizations—along with city halls and government environmental agencies

isolation hit the tourism sector that is intrinsically linked with beaches and seafood in this coastal region of the northeast. This further affected the income of families dependent on fisheries.

To gauge the impact of this disaster among the Bahia state fishing communities, a field survey was conducted a year later with fishers who encountered oil in 2019. A total of 40 fishers and shellfish gatherers were interviewed, half of them women, from three fishing communities in the municipalities of Porto Seguro and Prado, where the Corumbau Marine Extractive Reserve (Resex) is also located. Resex is a special Brazilian type of MPA that has territorial protection as an objective, besides conservation.

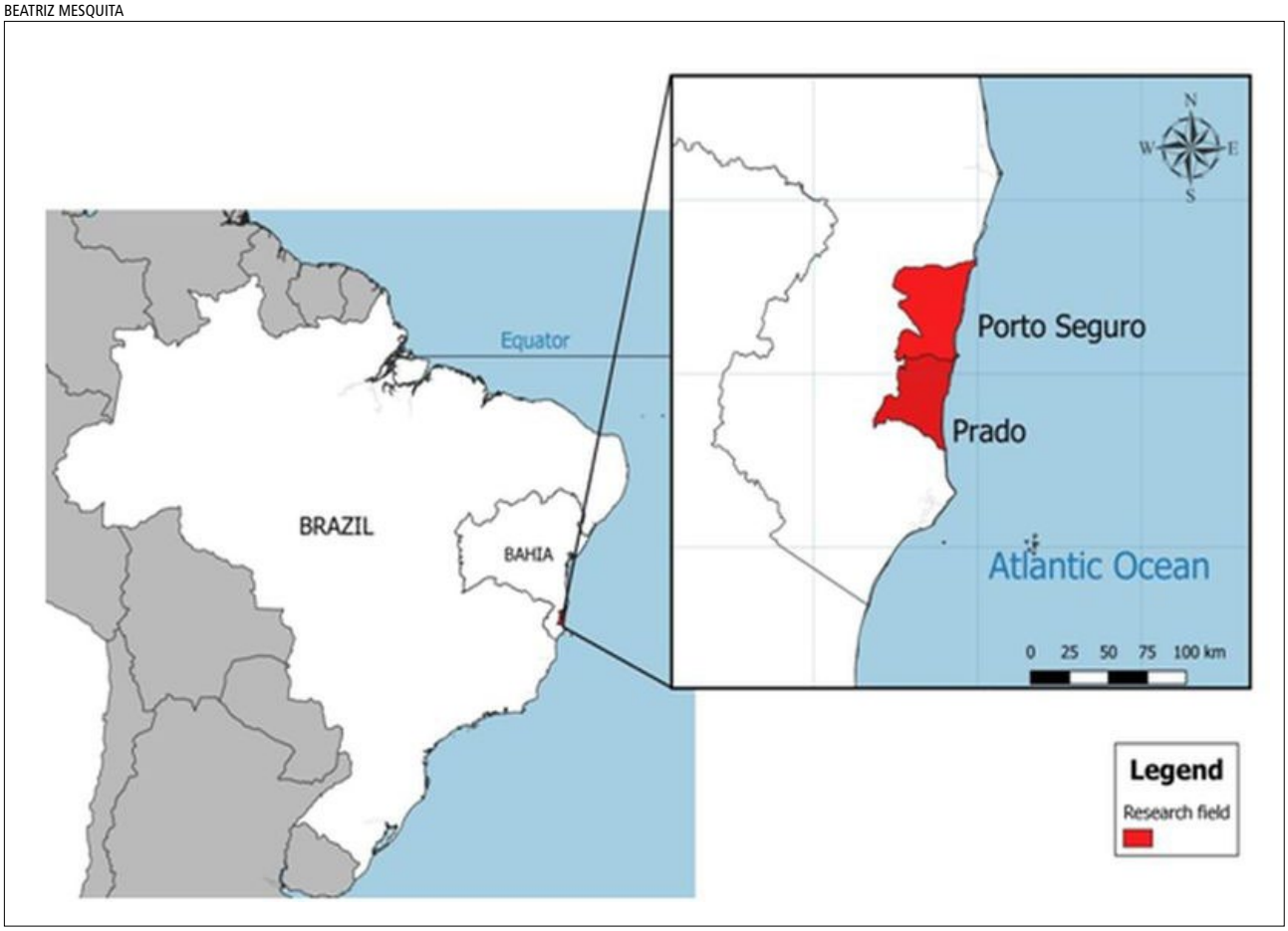
This region is called the Discovery Coast because the Portuguese arrived here first in the year 1500. It has indigenous communities that practice extractivism—fishing and hunting—at a subsistence level, though they also sell the surplus. In 1805, the *Pataxós* ethnic group began to concentrate in an area near Monte Pascoal. In 1861, they lived in a village called Barra Velha, along with other indigenous groups: *botocudos, maxacalis* and *camacãs*. Further, in 1960, when the Monte Pascoal National Park (a protected area) was created, laws prevented the Pataxós from cultivating land in the territory. Living in the surroundings made them vulnerable to colonization processes. This changed both their way of working the land and its relationship with the environment, leading to the development of cocoa crops for export, and cattle rearing—practices unfamiliar to the Pataxó. The traditional practices of subsistence agriculture and fishing are still around, however, surviving through oral traditions.

Can the oil spill be seen as another impact of capitalist colonization? Are these communities paying the heavy price of progress? Or is it the price of their 'backwardness'? This disaster has, no doubt, multiplied the injustices of the past: pollution, real estate speculation, monocultures and mass tourism, among others.

Oil spill damage

Of the survey respondents, 85 per cent said fishing is their main activity, in

BEATRIZ MESQUITA



Location of the municipalities of Porto Seguro and Prado in Bahia, Brazil. To gauge the impact of the 2019 oil spill among the state's fishing communities, a field survey of fishers in these municipalities was conducted a year later.

addition to tourism and handicrafts; 60 per cent were of Pataxó ethnicity; and 55 per cent had a government fishing register. As many as 95 per cent of the respondents said the oil spill damaged their fishing areas. A minority of respondents said the spill did not damage fishing areas, while 97.5 per cent said they stopped their regular fishing activities due to the oil spill.

A fisher who beach-trawled for seabob shrimp on the shore where the oil stains hit described the plight: "Our arms were in constant contact with the oil stain. Sometimes we would forget and touch our face with the hand, causing itching and irritation. There, at the mangrove forest, we removed the oil with our hands as we grabbed nets, handing it over to another person who put it in a bucket. The oil would cling to the mangrove roots, and the mud was full of oil and the crabs were all dead."

There was no income for 60 per cent of the respondents during the period of the oil spill. The remaining 40 per cent saw their income drop 50-70 per cent. Further aggravation ensued with the arrival of the COVID-19 pandemic, continuing to this day: Communication between fishers was reduced to zero since the meetings at the 'fishers associations' were cancelled. The pandemic brought disarticulation of the fishing community at a time when greater organization and unity was required to repair the damage.

Moreover, the Resex Council is the only governmental body where fishers have a representative and participate in decisionmaking related to their territory. It brings together all stakeholders from civil society and government for deliberation. The body has not met for more than a year due to a lack of access to an Internet connection or mobile devices for remote meetings.

Fishing activity

Last but not least, the locality was hosting tourists during the summer holiday months of Janurary-February 2021, the period of the study. Despite the pandemic, there were signs of fishing activity and the tourists were consuming fish. Not all visitors were following World Health Organization recommendations like using face masks. External visitors have been the main vectors of the coronavirus for traditional communities in Brazil.

In general, municipalities that specialize in fishing are small, score poorly on the human development index (HDI), have low-income concentrations, high illiteracy rates, foster people with a reduced education level, have high infant mortality rates, a high dependency ratio, and limited health infrastructure. Communities with active tourism do not reflect the reality of the fisher community because the HDI indicators get masked. The unreliability of the data became apparent when the fishers' association president said that the city halls underreported the weight of oil sludge collected by volunteers; this was aimed at not driving away the tourists because the oil spill occurred during the peak tourism season.

In the course of the study, 75 per cent of fishers and shellfish gatherers said their income from fishing had recovered to what it was before the oil spill. Nevertheless, the country resumed strong restrictions and went back to the lockdown in March 2021 due to increasing cases and deaths from COVID-19. This had again reduced fish trade and tourism activity. This oil spill case demonstrates the resilience of traditional peoples and the environment in which they live, but the real impacts on the environment and the fauna will be known clearly only after studies are carried out to understand the true consequences of the disaster. That will open the doors to compensation and, most importantly, the means to prevent future disasters.

The communities continue to demand meetings to monitor active projects, such as a project approved by the state government to obtain salvage equipment for receiving tourists on boats, as also the acquisition of beneficial equipment such as fishing nets, hooks and long lines. "After removing the oil, even the local fishers' associations got closed," said a fisher. "We had no more meetings, not even council meetings. This pandemic stopped everything. It has been like this for over a year now. Everything got slower. When we demand something, it takes a long time to get addressed."

This oil spill case demonstrates the resilience of traditional peoples and the environment in which they live...

The federal government suspended the investigation of the oil spill in March 2020, without any conclusions on how the disaster occurred. The fishers are frustrated by the lack of resolution of the tragedy. The causes remain unknown; lots of questions are begging for answers, including the matter of compensation for those affected. There is also the need to continuously monitor the environment and the health of the fish.

Digital inclusion

The affected communities need digital inclusion to make possible their communication and meetings. Only then will participatory decisionmaking and real democracy be possible for these communities.

For more

An Unsolved Case
https://www.icsf.net/images/samudra/pdf/english/issue_82/4408_art_Sam_82_art04_Brazil_Cristiano.pdf

A Many-sided Munificence
https://www.icsf.net/images/samudra/pdf/english/issue_84/4493_art_Sam_84_art12_Brazil_Ana_Paula_Rainho.pdf

Uniting for Change
https://www.icsf.net/images/samudra/pdf/english/issue_58/3571_art_sam58_art08.pdf

Staking Claims
https://www.icsf.net/images/samudra/pdf/english/issue_62/3743_art_Sam62_eng-art02.pdf

Buying into a Noble Idea

An early champion of the interests of small-scale fishers, the East African nation of Tanzania is among the trailblazers in plans to implement the SSF Guidelines

The United Republic of Tanzania is endowed with about 349,000 sq km of marine and freshwater bodies, comprising substantial fishery resources. This has made the fishing industry one of the major sectors of the country's economy. For the past six decades, the government has been struggling to develop the industry to secure benefits from the resource, especially in terms of increased employment, income, fish supply and generation of foreign currency from exports. There exists a large gap between the potential yield and actual harvest. The maximum sustainable yield (MSY) for both inland and inshore marine waters stands at about 2.14 mn tonnes per annum; the actual yearly production ranges between 370,000 tonnes and 470,000 tonnes.

Over 6,500 persons were effectively engaged in the consultative process on how best the country can implement the SSF Guidelines.

Since becoming independent 60 years ago, the government of Tanzania, in collaboration with the private sector, and local as well as international organizations and development partners, has executed several fisheries development programmes and projects aimed at developing small-scale fisheries (SSF) in the country. Although some progress has been made, a lot remains to be done, especially in devising a workable stategy for increasing production and engaging increased numbers of youth and women in gainful employment in fisheries.

For the past six decades, the government has been trying to find the root cause behind the low level of production. This generated multiple prescriptions, confusing the means that needs to be pursued. The list of suggestions has included the following issues: open access, poverty and profit motive, the tragedy of the commons, overcapacity, overfishing, illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing, environmental degradation, lack of capital, lack of credit facilities, low level of technology, marketing barriers, high cost of transport, numerous dispersed fishing grounds and landing sites, high post-harvest losses, women's exclusiveness, flaws in government policies and the lack of a culture of savings.

Dealing with these diverse prescriptions has been difficult, especially in optimizing the effective use of limited physical and financial resources. The search for effective SSF management was why Tanzania was among the first countries to buy the idea of developing an international instrument for providing guidelines on how to go about dealing with multiple SSF challenges. It participated in almost all consultative platforms that deliberated the development of the SSF Guidelines. This includes the global SSF Conference held in Bangkok, Thailand, the regional consultative workshop in Zanzibar as well as the technical workshops in Rome.

Implementation plan

Following the endorsement of the SSF Guidelines by the Committee on Fisheries (COFI) during its 31st session, the country began to plan for its implementation. With financial and technical support from the Food and

*This article is by **Yahya Mgawe** (ymgawe@yahoo.com), Chair, National Task Team (NTT), Tanzania and **Editrudith Lukanga** (elukanga@gmail.com), Member of NTT, Executive Director of EMEDO (www.emedo.org) and Secretary General of African Women Fish processors and Traders Network (AWFISHNET), Tanzania*

EMEDO

Processing of small pelagic fish in Bagamoyo, Tanzania. The maximum sustainable yield (MSY) for both inland and inshore marine waters stands at about 2.14 mn tonnes per annum; the actual yearly production ranges between 370,000 tonnes and 470,000 tonnes

Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), plans were put in motion to ensure the noble objectives in SSF Guidelines were put into practical effect.

The process began with the national awareness-raising workshops that deepened the relevant SSF actors' knowledge and understanding of the thematic areas and guiding principles of the SSF Guidelines. This was followed by the formation of a National Task Team (NTT) consisting of personnel from the central government, the local government authorities (LGAs), academia, research institutions, women's groups, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), beach management units (fishers' organizations), and the private sector represented by the National Association of Fish Processing Companies. The overarching Terms of Reference (ToR) for NTT were to engage stakeholders across the country—from marine and inland fisheries—in consultative

planning and development of a National Plan of Action (NPOA) for implementation of the SSF Guidelines.

Over 6,500 persons were effectively engaged in the consultative process of situation analysis, issues identification and in planning on how best the country can implement the SSF Guidelines. It is worth noting all the steps involved in developing the NPOA. The NTT strived towards ensuring the process was participatory and inclusive to ensure ownership, which is an important element of sustainable approaches.

The NTT strived towards ensuring the process was participatory and inclusive to ensure ownership, which is an important element of sustainable approaches.

The NTT managed to collect adequate data and information with regard to salient issues in SSF that need to be addressed. The data and information were collected based on the Participatory Research Assessment (PRA) approach used across the country. It included review of historical data and Semi-Structured Interviews (SSIs) in fishing communities and districts. Also, consultative platforms at community, district and national levels were organized for verification and validation of findings in the course of developing the draft NPoA.

Finally, the draft was endorsed by the Ministry of Livestock and Fisheries. The NPoA-SSF Guidelines present major issues identified; they outline challenges and mitigation measures based on the thematic areas of the SSF Guidelienes, namely, human rights; responsible fisheries; sustainable development; and ensuring an enabling environment and supporting implementation.

The human-rights dimension was initially misunderstood, since a great majority of stakeholders thought it was geared at protecting illegal fishers from being arrested, prosecuted and punished. However, the NTT managed to create awareness with regard to broader human-rights issues. The team repackaged the message around an institutioanl framework and the issue of proportional representation, legitimacy of fisheries regulations, and macro issues such as the negative impact of coastal urbanization, coupled with the development of beach-front tourist hotels and commercial port development activities. Likewise, the vivid side effects of unco-ordinated cage farming, which denies access rights to capture fishers, was highlighted to illustrate an urgent need for addressing human-rights issues in SSF.

Human rights

Furthermore, it was explained to the stakeholders that by preventing illegal fishing, a great majority of people can continue accessing food fish, and that this is not violation of human rights but rather a requirement for upholding human rights, provided the rules are legitimate. The approach proved to be a useful tool in building constituencies among stakeholders. Copies of the National Plan of Action-SSF Guideliens will soon be available online.

For more

Fraught with Danger
https://www.icsf.net/images/samudra/pdf/english/issue_77/4309_art_Sam77_e_art08.pdf

Tackling a Dilemma
https://www.icsf.net/images/samudra/pdf/english/issue_75/4241_art_Sam75_e_art02.pdf

Lake Appeal
https://www.icsf.net/images/samudra/pdf/english/issue_75/4257_art_Sam75_e_art18.pdf

National Task Team (NTT)
https://www.nationallgbtitaskteam.co.za/

REVIEW

The Silences in *Seaspiracy*

A recent documentary on fisheries and its impacts on the marine environment has grabbed widespread global attention for not only what it says but also for what it does not address

The recently released Netflix documentary *Seaspiracy* (2021) has sparked a frenzy of discussion in various media outlets and on social media platforms, focusing not just on fisheries but on its impacts on the marine environment. The film provides a broad overview of the many ways that humans are using – and abusing – the oceans, from plastic pollution, to corruption in fisheries management, to the controversial whaling industry. While the film has been effective in introducing a broad public to the many social and environmental issues stemming from the exploitation of the oceans and large-scale industrial fishing, there is much more to fisheries that it completely neglects. Both positive and negative reviews of the film have flooded the Internet, with fans praising the film for shedding light on exploitative practices in the fishing industry, while critics have focused on debunking the myths the film propagates.

Many reviews have focused on refuting specific scientific facts that the film got wrong regarding global fish stock levels, bycatch and sustainability measurements. This review, however, focuses on three overarching issues on which the film is silent, namely, the contribution of fish to food and nutrition security; the diversity of fisheries and aquaculture; and the importance of fishers' knowledge.

Made by first-time British director Ali Tabrizi, the film tells the story of his own life-long interest in the ocean, stemming from a childhood fascination with whales, dolphins and nature documentaries. As an adult, he dabbles in plastic pollution activism by collecting trash on beaches and calling local restaurants to advocate against single-use plastics. He notes that his romantic vision of the ocean completely changed once he started digging into a side of the story he had not known before: just how big the human impact on the seas had become.

The film begins by highlighting the many evils of plastic pollution, including beached whales in the United Kingdom with stomachs full of trash, before quickly moving on to the Japanese whaling industry, and shark fisheries catering to the Chinese fin market. The focus then broadens to global fisheries, presenting a dizzying number of statistics on the decline in marine species populations, the contribution of fishing nets to plastic pollution, and slavery and human-rights abuses on industrial boats.

Silencing fishers' voices is unfortunately too often the norm, not only in films like Seaspiracy but also in fisheries governance and management processes globally.

Ali highlights several important issues including overfishing and the depletion of fish stocks; illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing; and the ecological impacts of destructive methods, such as trawling, on the seabed. It raises the question: how can you ensure fishing is sustainable around the world while there are so many industrial boats in the water? The film has also been praised for shedding light on brutal cases of slavery in fisheries, although many civil society and international organizations have been advocating against this practice for years. Consider, for example, the International Labour Organization's work on forced labour and human trafficking, the Ghost Fleet documentary, and the Environmental Justice Foundation's Seafood Slavery campaign.

This article is by ***Elyse Mills*** *(elyse.icsf@gmail.com), Programme Consultant, ICSF, The Netherlands*

NETFLIX

The film challenges powerful actors in the fisheries sector, governments and other decisionmakers, who appear to be willfully turning a blind eye to the destructive nature of large-scale industrial fisheries, urging them to step up and own responsibility for managing fisheries in a way that is more sustainable, accountable and transparent. While the film gets some things right, it misses out on some critical matters.

Irreplaceable food and nutrition

It concludes with a call for people to "stop eating fish" as a way to protect the world's oceans and the diverse species within them. Switching to a plant-based diet is presented as a win-win solution, allowing consumers to feel better about their health and their environmental footprint, while ignoring how plant-based alternatives contribute to further intensifying agricultural production and pressure on land use. The filmmakers—Europeans all—demonstrate a clear interest in promoting veganism and questioning sustainability in the food system. Its producer Kip Anderson also produced *Cowspiracy: The Sustainability Secret* (2014).

Telling consumers to simply stop eating fish is a surprisingly lazy, nearsighted conclusion, especially considering the film is aiming to challenge decisionmakers to make structural changes in the fishing industry. Not only does this conclusion fail to address structural imbalances or mitigate sectoral problems, but it also shifts the responsibility to "do better" away from governments and fishing companies and on to the consumers. While being a responsible consumer and making informed decisions about the type of seafood one buys is certainly important, the role of consumers is only one piece of the puzzle.

Governments, on the other hand, have the power to shape legislation and enforce rules to ensure fishing is carried out responsibly. It is also much too simplistic to suggest that anyone can easily stop eating fish. What about the billions of people around the world who do not have the luxury to make this choice and eat fish because it is the only source of protein they can access or afford? Fish is, after all, a critical contributor to global food and nutrition security, particularly in African and Asian countries. Fisheries provide employment and livelihood to more than 800 mn people around the world. Giving up fish consumption has a big impact on their ability to maintain a stable living.

Diverse worlds of fisheries and aquaculture

The film glosses over the diversity that exists within fisheries and aquaculture

in terms of scale, approaches, methods and gears used. It presents a broad-brush perspective of how fish is caught and produced, assuming that the only philosophy behind these activities is to make a profit at any cost—human or environmental. This is neither a fair nor accurate reflection of the sector's diversity across the world. Certainly, fisheries is a business and employs millions of people; it is also a vast industry that looks very different from country to country, as also within countries. For example, there is a big difference between the economic and environmental impacts of a 100-m industrial boat with a crew of 50 fishing for three months in the North Atlantic, and a 5-m canoe with a crew of four fishing for eight hours off the coast of southern India.

In small-scale fisheries alone, from Ecuador to Canada and South Africa to Thailand, there is a vast range of fishing methods and gears used; or boat sizes; or species caught. Yet, the only attention given to small-scale fisheries in the film is one brief example of the impacts of illegal fishing on coastal communities and food security in West Africa. Many small-scale fishers around the world would argue that they do, in fact, engage in sustainable practices that protect the environment and contribute to healthy aquatic ecosystems. These approaches are centred around upholding human rights in fisheries and coastal communities, and the guiding principles of the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication (SSF Guidelines).

Fishers: reserves of knowledge

Besides one brief interview with a whaler from the Faroe Islands, the voices of fishers are non-existent in the film. Interviews are conducted with fisheries scientists, biologists, environmentalists, academics, physicians, government officials, and representatives from environmental and conservation organizations. Not fishers. Being immersed in fishing daily, their knowledge and understanding of the sector contributes valuable insights into its complexities. Yet, the film leaves out these voices, including a wide range of perspectives on how fishing can be done responsibly, respecting the environment.

Some fishers would highlight how knowledge of the breeding and migratory patterns of certain species is used to protect stocks. Or how selective, low-impact gears are used to ensure untargeted species are not unintentionally caught and the seabed is not disturbed. Silencing fishers' voices is unfortunately too often the norm, not only in films like *Seaspiracy* but also in fisheries governance and management processes globally. This is a critical issue that many national and regional fishers' organizations and transnational movements, such as the World Forum of Fisher Peoples (WFFP) and the World Forum of Fish Harvesters and Fish Workers (WFF), have been speaking out about for decades.

…the only attention given to small-scale fisheries in the film is one brief example of the impacts of illegal fishing on coastal communities and food security in West Africa.

They argue that processes and decisions directly impacting fishers' lives and livelihoods should not be made without them. Fishers deserve a seat at the table when decisions are being made about the use and management of fisheries resources. As crucial contributors to the global food system, working directly with aquatic ecosystems, fishers' knowledge and experiences offer a wealth of information on how to ensure fishing can be both responsible and sustainable.

While *Seaspiracy* should be watched with a critical eye, its widespread popularity does present an opportunity to open up more public debate and expand discussions on fisheries, focusing on how to make the sector more sustainable, equitable, and how to uphold human rights. Like most other human activities, fishing does have negative impacts on oceans and inland waters. We need to keep working to find ways to address them and reduce their impacts, ensuring fisheries can continue to provide healthy food and livelihoods for generations to come.

For more

Seaspiracy
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1Q5CXN7soQg

Together against Pirates
https://www.icsf.net/images/samudra/pdf/english/issue_62/3746_art_Sam62_eng-art05.pdf

Pirates or Saviours of the Coast?
https://www.icsf.net/images/samudra/pdf/english/issue_52/3294_art_ART03.pdf

FILM FESTIVAL

To Memory, Poetry...and the Future

Although this year's edition of the much-lauded Pêcheurs du Monde film festival in Lorient, France, had to virtually reinvent itself, the outcome was a rich and intense experience of visual delight

The 12th edition of the Pêcheurs du Monde film festival, traditionally held in Lorient, France, could not take place in 2020. Despite the COVID-19 crisis, however, the festival took place in 2021 in another form—acquiring a greater influence since its audience grew from 3,000 spectators in theatres to more than 20,000 worldwide. Half the selected films were presented on a free distribution platform, Kub, supported by the Regional Council of Brittany. All the films in competition have been screened; the others will be screened in various communes of the Lorient agglomeration by the end of September. In this article two of the four members of the jury, representing the fishing world, talk about their experience.

In *'Tuna Boats in the Storm',* Alain Pichon of France makes us experience the storm that took so many lives, through precious testimonies and by bringing paintings to life.

This year we had the privilege of being selected to be part of the jury of the Pêcheurs du Monde Festival. Our modest curriculum vitaes led us to represent and express the voice of fishworkers during the deliberations with the other members of the Jury (Férid Boughédir, president of the jury, and Prune Engler) from the world of cinema. Among the other jury members, Férid Boughédir, a Tunisian, is considered his country's greatest director. He is a regular on the juries of major festivals such as Cannes, Berlin and Venice. He was also the director of the Pan-African Festival of Carthage. Prune Engler worked for the La Rochelle Film Festival for almost 40 years, directing it after 2001. The Pêcheurs du Monde Festival is one of the most important events in France.

This year was a bit special; the festival had to reinvent itself because of the COVID-19 pandemic. At first we were a bit disappointed not to live this cinematic experience physically. But the 'virtual' adventure was so rich and intense that we came out of it delighted and grown. The first part of the adventure consisted of watching the selected films—eight feature films and three short films—each on our own, with regular joint debriefings and without any ranking at this level. It is true that this part was a little frustrating at the beginning; we lived these viewings, alone in our living rooms, kitchens or offices, locked up with these works and the feelings they evoked in each of us.

In the end, it was more than interesting because we came to the debates and deliberations with our own totally objective and personal points of view, shorn of any external influence. This resulted in long, lively evenings of virtual debate and exchange, rich and extraordinary, which we all remember very fondly. We also got to know and appreciate one another through exchanges that in these difficult times proved priceless.

Different views

We realized we had analyzed these films with totally different views, influenced by our life experiences. With his experience as a man of the sea, Bruno is very sensitive to the marine atmosphere, to the technical transcriptions and to the living conditions of the men and women of the sea. Virginie is an activist committed to these same men

*This article is by **Bruno Claquin** (bruno.claquin@orange.fr), a retired fisherman from Douarnenez, former President of the local fisheries committee and now involved in the Sea Rescue Society, France and **Virginie Lagarde** (lagarde.vir2@gmail.com), Co-president of the Collectif Pêche et Développement, responsible for environmental issues at the Finistère fisheries committee, France*

DANI DRUMOND

A scene from *Carne e Casca* (Flesh and Pearl) by Daniel Drumond. In a city in Brazil, with polluted waters, a shellfish fisherman fights for the survival and future of his grandchildren

and women and to the defence of their environment. Prune and Ferid are film professionals, awake to the beauty of the images, to the contemplation, to the poetry, to the technical skill, and to the possible manipulation of the images in order to pass on a message. While the debates were lively and some points of view differed, we all shared a common sensitivity to the struggles of these men and women, to the stories that have touched our humanity. We were also all very attentive to the accuracy of the work, the technical skills and the way in which these stories were delivered to us by these films.

This led us to be unanimous in choosing the feature film for the World Fishermen's Festival Award, a film that tells the story of a dramatic and important event in our history and heritage. This film brings to life the drama of the sea with a certain accuracy and emotion. In '*Tuna Boats in the Storm*', Alain Pichon of France makes us experience the storm that took so many lives, not through the depiction of pictures but by relying on precious testimonies and by bringing paintings to life. It was, therefore, not difficult to reward the extraordinary work of this director who made us live through the events that cost the lives of so many very young sailors who embarked on the tuna boats of Southern Brittany.

Over 200 fishermen, often members of the same family, and many boys as young as 12, disappeared during this terrible storm in 1930. This was at a time when there were no means of communication, and the instruments for sailing were rudimentary. This is no longer the case today, although storms can still endanger the most powerful boats, especially when abandoned fishing gear gets caught in the propeller and the boat becomes unmanageable, as shown in a film that won an award at a previous festival ('*Men of Storms*' by Frédéric Brunnquell). In the countries of the Global South, in Africa or Asia, the lack of means of communication and access to weather forecasts often confronts fishermen with situations similar to those of European fishermen at the beginning of the 20th century.

Slavery at sea

We were all touched by the film that narrated the struggle of a Thai woman fighting against the little-known but very real scandal of slavery at sea where lives

are shamefully stolen and destroyed by unscrupulous men and a globalization that often forgets the fate of those who feed us. Fortunately, this woman is fighting bravely and has found the resources and a dedicated team to carry out her fight. With the help of former, often mutilated, slaves, she is looking for those who managed to escape and took refuge on forgotten islands in Indonesia and have made a life for themselves far from their original families in Burma. She is also fighting for compensation for disabled survivors. We can only hope that this courageous film will help raise awareness on the issue.

'*Chair and Pearl*' by Daniel Drumond, a film from Brazil/ France, was challenging enough to win the World Fishermen Film Festival Prize in the short film category.

We were particularly touched by this film because, at the moment, the detractors of our profession are fighting a wrongful battle, at a time when the scandal of these illegal practices deserves the mobilization of everyone. (For more than a year, fishermen in the Bay of Biscay have been under pressure from the environmental group Sea Shepherd because of the dolphins that get caught in fishing nets, particularly in winter. Sea Shepherd, with the support of other NGOs, is calling for a four-month halt to fishing, with the more distant goal of a total ban on fishing to protect the dolphins. Virginie Lagarde and Bruno Claquin are involved on a daily basis in the advocacy of fishermen and are working to find solutions to reconcile fishing and dolphin protection.) We are quite sure that Chandrika Sharma would have approved of the choice of award for this film (the Chandrika Sharma Award for '*Ghost Fleet*' by Shannon Service and Jeffrey Waldon of the US).

Among the short films, we were also unanimous on the deeply moving story of a man who fishes in difficult conditions, in the middle of the city, for a few precious kilos of mussels that allow him to survive with his family in a Brazilian shanty town, soon to be choked by the shells of those same mussels eaten in restaurants. '*Chair and Pearl*' by Daniel Drumond, a film from Brazil/ France, was challenging enough to win the World Fishermen Film Festival Prize in the short film category.

Finally, the Special Mentions spring from our common desire to reward the work of memory and the poetic images of Guiana (Guyana, located in the northeastern corner of South America) cut off from modern times and the perpetual changes of society ('*Eaux Noires*' by Stéphanie Régnier of France, which won a Special Mention in the feature film category). In the heart of the Amazonian forest, descendants of slaves live peacefully by raising zebu cattle. The women contribute to their subsistence by fishing. The winning film is a poetic testimony to a fragile but resilient society that survives thanks to its culture of respect for the exuberance of nature.

We also wanted to underline the courage of a woman who fights in a fishermen's slum in Lagos, Nigeria, so that women can exist and express themselves in a world where men remain all-powerful and where the feminist fight to be waged is just colossal ("*Mrs F* by Chris van der Vorm of The Netherlands, which won the Special Mention Chandrika Sharma Award). The Audience Award for '*La Saison des Tourteaux*' came later and we liked it because it completed our 'cast'

Rich experience

Being part of the jury for the 2021 Pêcheurs du Monde film festival has been an extremely rich experience, constructive and fascinating for both of us, children of the maritime world, who are sensitive not only to current struggles, but also to memory and poetry, and to the amazing discoveries that await future film lovers.

For more

Festival international de films - Lorient: Pêcheurs du Monde
https://www.pecheursdumonde.org/

Hope, Despair, Courage
https://www.icsf.net/images/samudra/pdf/english/issue_83/4436_art_Sam_83_art15_Review_Alain.pdf

The Many Lives of Fishers
https://www.icsf.net/images/samudra/pdf/english/issue_81/4387_art_Sam_81_art4_Lorient_Film_Festival_Alain_Le_Sann.pdf

A Beacon of Trust

As the COVID-19 pandemic ravaged the fisher economy of Sri Lanka, leaving households indebted and distressed, co-operatives emerged as a beacon for the small-scale fishing sector's well-being

Close to 350,000 kg of fish is brought everyday to the Peliyagoda Central Fish market, on the outskirts of Colombo, the capital of Sri Lanka Three thousand sellers sit, jostle and haggle in close proximity at the central hub for retailers to collect and disperse their produce to various parts of the country. This hub of market activity was hit with the worst crisis in its history when 19 cases of COVID-19 were discovered in its premises in October last year. The authorities shut down the market at once.

However, even before the industry had barely recovered from its first hit, Sri Lanka's second wave of the pandemic began. The second wave started with the emergence of a COVID cluster at a garment factory, followed by the Peliyagoda fish market cluster. The latter had the most calamitous impact on fisheries. Several major fishing harbours and a number of other fish markets and retail stalls in the country were subject to temporary closure.

Immediately, the rumours began to spread hard and fast: "The fish carried the coronavirus!" Fish consumption plummeted. Prices of fish stock followed suit and small-scale fishers were hit two-fold: negotiating between the risks to their health, and coping with desperation to sustain their livelihood.

In an attempt to control the damage of misinformation, Sri Lanka's health ministry almost immediately put out statements reaffirming that fish and related products were safe for consumption, provided that they were cooked in a hygienic manner. In what became a viral publicity stunt, Dilip Wedaarachchi, former fisheries minister, brought a raw fish to a press conference, to prove a point. "I am making an appeal to the people of this country to eat this fish. Don't be afraid. You will not get infected by the coronavirus," he said, before taking a bite out of the whole fish.

It wasn't just domestic consumption that suffered. In the first two months following the second wave, exports dropped from their 2019 levels by Sri Lankan Rupees (SLRs) 2,589 mn. Since the coronavirus landed in the island country, right up till the end of the first wave—that is, during March, April and May—the loss of foreign exchange was close to SLR7,279 mn.

To mitigate the losses due to lockdowns during the first wave of the pandemic, which caused a drop in fish production, the government was forced to import fish, mostly in the form of canned fish products. The second wave saw fish imports drop significantly, perhaps due to a realization that the only way to combat the virus was by adhering to health regulations. It was an opportunity for the industry to pick itself up, even as drastically shrinking incomes would take longer to get back to normal.

As food security dwindled, people resorted to their options included mortgage of jewellery, and borrowings from money lenders and co-operatives.

Knock-on effects

Close to 570,000 people find direct or indirect employment in Sri Lanka's fishing industry. The country's total fisheries-dependent population has been estimated at 2.7 mn. During the first wave of the pandemic, all links in the fish value chain were practically dismantled. Demand and supply suffered significantly in myriad ways. One of the early outcomes of the first round of curfews was the closure of retail outlets, because distribution came to a standstill. The flourishing e-commerce world showed little interest in fish, a perishable product;

*This article is by **Oscar Amarasinghe** (oamarasinghe@yahoo.com), Chancellor, Ocean University of Sri Lanka and President-Sri Lanka Forum for Small Scale Fisheries (SLFSSF), Sri Lanka*

OSCAR AMARASINGHE

Deserted landing site, Gandarawella, Sri Lanka. To mitigate the losses due to lockdowns, the government was forced to import fish, mostly in the form of canned fish products

online sales did not come to the rescue. Tourism is an integral part of the fish-consumption economy; its shuttering caused a roll-on impact, further diminishing the demand for fish.

About 1.9 mn Sri Lankans are self-employed daily wagers. Curfews destroyed their means of living. The effect was felt at landing sites where fishers complained of a lack of buyer interest due to restrictions on travel, and strict control on providing passes to merchants.

Low demand, in turn, meant fish prices dropped rapidly through the crises. Prices of products like crab dropped from SLR1,200 per kg to SLR500; those of seer fish went from SLR1,250 per kg to SLR400. Unsold catch could not be channelled to drying and preservation operations; the curfews led to the dry fish centres remaining closed. The Ceylon Fisheries Corporation (CFC), a government-owned marketing agency, had no capacity to deal with the unsold fish. The losses just kept piling up.

Fish production suffered, too, even though the authorities did not actually restrict fishing during the pandemic. Complex rules for obtaining passes, restrictions on beach seining, and fear of the virus hitting landing sites meant inland fishers largely kept away from their work. Fishers in the south of the country in places like Galle, Matara and Hambantota often migrated farther south, targeting lobster resources. The imposition of curfews and the need for social distancing meant fishers started avoiding migration and participating in beach-seine activities.

The human impact was direct: incomes dropped and people found it tough to make ends meet. In April, May and June of 2020, during the first wave of the pandemic, many small-scale fishing households accumulated sizeable debts. Most fishing households indicated they paid instalments on bank loans, house constructions loans, and loans taken from co-operatives, among others, in addition to monthly water and electricity bills.

On an average, our research identified 15 types of monthly loan repayments amounting to approximately SLR20,000; the amount includes interest payments and sometimes part of the principal. The official 'poverty line' in Sri Lanka was defined as a monthly income of SLR4,440 per month in 2018. During the first wave, incomes of poor fishers who do not own fishing craft were touching the official poverty line. It is

obvious that fishers were in no position to pay back their loans on time.

Accumulated debts

For the pandemic's first three months, each household accumulated an average debt of about SLR60,000. To address the situation, the government requested several institutions—lenders and the electricity and water utilities, for example—to provide borrowers a grace period of at least three months to pay back loan instalments and settle their bills. By the time the situation improved in June, households were under pressure to pay back accumulated debts, putting the fishing industry under heavy pressure. And just as things were getting back to normal, Peliyagoda happened, pushing down prices and incomes into a spiral.

Support from all quarters

Food security for low-income groups faced severe threats in the early days of the curfews and lockdowns. When compared to other self-employed and daily wage workers, however, the direct impact on fishers was limited, as they were able to go to sea and bring back some fish, at least sufficient for the household's daily curry. As food security dwindled, people resorted to a number of ways to meet their basic food needs; common options included mortgage of jewellery, and borrowings from money lenders and co-operatives. In turn, many accumulated severe debts, even as some of the earlier debts remained unsettled.

Political campaigning for the parliamentary elections provided relief to those in the hot zone, with candidates actively providing dry rations to boost their support base. In the months of April and May, the government made arrangements to import a large consignment of canned fish to be sold at a subsidized price of SLR100, nearly half the usual price for a can of fish. Legumes like red lentils, bought from India, were also imported in large quantities. Along with canned fish, they formed the two most preferred food items in the country, especially among low-income groups.

With markets and retail outlets remaining closed during the first wave, a new group of vegetable and fish sellers emerged. They sold their wares while commuting in vans and lorries, an appreciable feat, the only drawback being that their services remained limited to populous areas with motorable roads.

A presidential task force ensured island-wide distribution of fish, facilitating movement of vegetables and other essential foods, while also providing free food baskets to low-income families. District secretaries were allocated SLR 2 mn to buy and distribute fish, especially in remote areas. This method of marketing, however, did not work well with the fast-perishing fishing products; they need to be iced and sold in a short time to prevent decomposition.

Future proof

The aftermath of the pandemic—and the havoc it wreaked—revealed some valuable lessons for Sri Lanka. One was the industry's need and dependence on fishing co-operatives for survival. As the principal lenders in small-scale fishing communities, co-operatives refrained from charging interest on loans and principal payments from members/borrowers who were suffering from lowered (or no) income from fishing. Trust among co-operatives is at an all-time high. For policymakers and planners, this is a beacon.

Simple tweaks to an already existing community system will go a long way in protecting Sri Lanka's fishing industry from future shocks.

These co-operatives could, in the days ahead, play a major role in marketing, ensuring a fair price and income to fishers. However, to do so, they need assistance to build the necessary infrastructure and to break middlemen oligopsonies. One of the greatest shortcomings of Sri Lanka's fisheries co-operatives is their poor contribution towards resource management. For this to improve, the constitution of fisheries co-operatives requires the incorporation of resource-management concerns. Simple tweaks to an already existing community system will go a long way in protecting Sri Lanka's fishing industry from future shocks. It will also eradicate the need for comic stunts requiring the eating of raw fish at news conferences.

For more

Path to a Policy Upgrade
https://www.icsf.net/images/samudra/pdf/english/issue_84/4497_art_Sam_84_art16_Sri%20Lanka_Oscar%20Amarasinghe.pdf

Action Stations
https://www.icsf.net/images/samudra/pdf/english/issue_82/4407_art_Sam_82_art03_Sri%20Lanka_Oscar_Amarasinghe.pdf

Backs to the Wall

Through a mix of downplaying, intransparency and undertesting, the largest archipelago nation in the world paid little heed to its vulnerable fishers during the COVID-19 pandemic

Edy, a fisherman on Indonesia's Pari island said: "For almost three months we did not travel outside the island. Earlier, we got additional income from tourism during the holiday season. This time around, there was no supplementary income because our tourist attractions were closed. And then our income from fishing, too, dropped by 50-70 per cent."

It took the Indonesian government more than two long months last year to negotiate and categorize the COVID-19 pandemic a 'national disaster'. By then, the country had registered 4,557 cases of infection and 399 deaths due to the pandemic. Before establishing any health safety protocols and mitigation measures, the government established quarantine measures at three major entry and exit points of the country: ports, airports and national land border posts. Panic ensued almost immediately. Lockdowns, restrictions on movement and reduction in number of workers meant an economic slowdown like the rest of the world.

The income from catch decreased drastically due to many limiting activities like social distancing.

As the rate of infections kept rising, the country's president, Joko Widodo, announced a food deficit in a number of regions of the country. The fisheries sector, already reeling under restrictions on movement and lack of adequate planning for transport, was hit hard. To compound matters, the president made an additional, ill-advised statement on the lack of scientific evidence on fish improving immunity. For a country that had anyway shifted to eating instant food in the midst of the pandemic, such a statement only served to push under an already drowning industry.

Breach in income

The timing couldn't have been worse. The pandemic countermeasures were implemented in the country right at the start of the fishing season. Economic difficulties caused by the pandemic meant a lot of fishers chose to simply stop going to fish. "The price of fish has fallen to half of the normal price. It is very difficult to get a return on investment, even to meet daily needs," said a fisherman in East Lombok.

Simply put, fishermen did not have the capital to go to sea. In many cases they had only enough to buy fuel oil for the boats. The situation was unprecedented. Even during famines and cyclones, fishers had continued to find employment and go to sea, despite the dangers and the high risk of death. COVID-19 changed that. It became impossible to earn an income to meet their daily needs.

Uneven distribution

"The income from catch decreased drastically due to many limiting activities like social distancing," said Rustan, a fisherman from the island of Tarakan, in June last year. "Fish is only sold at local markets. In fact, catch commodities are usually sold as export commodities. Fish prices have fallen by almost 90 per cent from the normal prices. Fisherfolk have gone through this in the past three months, from March to May. In addition, the social assistance programmes planned by the government are not evenly distributed. Out of 1,000 people consisting of fishing labourers, fisherfolk, seaweed farmers and others, only 300 people got help."

In East Java, one way fishers chose to curtail the spread of the pandemic was to reduce the number of crew on each boat. It was also a way to reduce costs of operating at sea.

*This article is by **Marthin Hadiwinata** (hadiwinata.ahmad@gmail.com), Executive Director, The Marine and Ecology Institute, Indonesia*

MARTIN HADIWINATA / INDONESIA

Fishers in Batubara, North Sumatra, Indonesia selling clamshells in the market. Fisher families began pawning possessions to make ends meet and these practices were adopted only in times of famine earlier

Even as fishing continued in one way or another, fish prices plummeted. Fish that went for Indonesian Rupiah (IDR) 250 before the pandemic was barely fetching half that value in the market during the pandemic. Fishermen were salvaging what they could just to buy back fuel oil. Moreover, in certain areas like East Java, fisherfolk went to sea using loan capital from investors—the skippers. They sold their catch to the investor as a form of instalment or return on capital.

Fisher families began pawning possessions to make ends meet. These practices were adopted only in times of famine. The only difference was that in times of famine earlier, many fisherfolk sought, and often received, alternative employment as construction labourers or repair workers. The pandemic changed that, leaving them stuck at home, with nothing to do and no way out.

Domestic consumption wasn't the only segment affected. Many countries imposed strict regulations on the movement of goods to places outside during the pandemic; some of these had been destinations of exports or import for Indonesia. Export prices for fish dropped by 50 per cent. According to the Central Statistics Agency, Indonesia's exports in May 2020 were US$10.53 bn, a decrease of almost 29 per cent compared to the last year. Cumulatively, Indonesia's export value from January to May 2020 was at US$64.46 bn, a decrease of almost 6 per cent compared to the same period in 2019.

Quality improvement

Despite these dropping numbers, the Minister of Marine Affairs and Fisheries said that exports in the fisheries sector recorded an increase of 6.9 per cent in the first semester of 2020. Unfortunately, the news was tempered by the fact that the cost of fish processing and raw material standards rose, making it tougher on fishermen to operate in the ways of the past. The ministry asked fishers to improve the quality of produce to keep the demand up, but failed to provide them with solutions to counter the outflow of income due to higher standards being put in place regarding production itself.

Impact of government interventions

In a special effort to alleviate the impact of COVID-19 on the fisheries sector, the

government put forth an eight-point agenda. One of its first interventions was to purchase all fish catch without prejudice. The idea was to maintain prices during the pandemic through supportive purchase. Efforts were made to steward the various stakeholders of the sector—suppliers, retailers, fisheries associations—in the same direction.

Additionally, the government worked on curtailing the red tape for transport of fish cargo, and prepared cold storage units at ports to help aid the process. The preparation of cold storage units served as a way to ensure quality of fish for transport as well as to maintain stock in the off-season, especially during the months of Ramzan.

The government made some social interventions among fisher communities with a view to rehabilitate them. In most cases, however, the services never reached the people it was intended to benefit; in many cases, such efforts were undone by the social distancing norms that had already been put in place. "We recently received social assistance of 5 kg of rice and several other foodstuffs from the government," said a fisher in Medan. "We also stood in line for the collection system. Even though there's a pandemic going around, how come we were ordered to queue up?"

Civil society organizations as well as independent community interventions played a big part in rehabilitating fisherfolk during the pandemic.

Complaints also ranged around how the quality of assistance was not adequate. Enquiries revealed that fisherfolk felt they were insufficiently compensated for their daily needs. In Medan, for example, an average family has four to five members. The government provided each family with 5 kg of rice, 1 kg of sugar, eggs, and some packs of instant noodles. A rough estimation suggest the provisions would last them a maximum of two weeks.

Integrated social welfare data further showed that fisherfolk made up a mere 0.9 per cent of the total recipients of the social safety networks. According to the research by Zakariya Anwar and Wahyuni, about 90 per cent of fisherfolk in Indonesia—that is14.58 mn out of a total of 16.2 mn—live below the poverty line.

Civil society organizations as well as independent community interventions played a big part in rehabilitating fisherfolk during the pandemic. The Matahari Fisherfolk Network took fish directly from small-scale fisherfolk and fisheries to distribute for free to the wider community affected by the outbreak. The network also collaborated with religious institutions to raise donations and public assistance.

On Kodigareng island, the pandemic caused a drop of 50 per cent in fish prices. The area was struggling with catch even prior to the COVID-19 outbreak due to fishing grounds sustaining damage from sand mining. Fishermen's wives took the initiative to add on to their family income by shredding mackerel for sale in the area.

In Bintan island, wives of fishermen started planting hydroponic vegetables in existing yards to supplement the family income. They planted mustard, lettuce, soup leaves and other vegetable crops and ended up selling the produce online as well as in community stalls.

Tight regulations

Despite the varied aid responses to the crisis, it was clear that little was done to help fisherfolk get back to sea and recover their business. Although many businesses opened up, fish markets, restaurants and hotels remained tightly regulated. Fish consumption is yet to recover to pre-pandemic levels. The government is going about its business as usual, denying scientific and database-driven approaches for policy. Chaos has ensured greater suffering for the work force.

For more

Lack of Transparency
https://www.icsf.net/images/samudra/pdf/english/issue_83/4422_art_Sam_83_art01_%20Indonesia_Marthin.pdf

Reclaiming Rights
https://www.icsf.net/images/samudra/pdf/english/issue_79/4358_art_Sam_79_Reclaiming_Rights_Susan.pdf

Immediate impact of COVID-19 across tropical small-scale fishing communities
https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0964569120303926

Under Their Own Steam

Natural disasters like cyclones, more than the COVID-19 pandemic, coupled with lack of research on the conditions of the poor, threaten the well-being of small-time fishers in Mozambique

When the COVID-19 pandemic landed on Mozambique shores last year, it found a country in dire need of socioeconomic renewal and welfare reform. A series of natural disasters—cyclones, floods, drought—and ongoing military conflict had already reduced the most vulnerable communities of the country to fighting for scraps. Employment and income, already very low, were hit badly by the government's restrictions on movement, in response to the pandemic. Informal workers lost jobs or other means of income and often saw themselves forced to relocate to their places of origin, away from the cities where the infection rates were high.

While the government's strict prevention measures were necessary, several rural communities considered them unfair because their regions were not badly affected; they thought the measures had limited success in disease prevention but disrupted their business significantly. (Testing for COVID-19 was very limited in Mozambique's rural areas in the pandemic's initial phase.) Furthermore, some sectors like tourism felt the economic impact much harder than others, despite the rate of infection remaining comparatively low in rural areas where the businesses are located.

Joaquim Macassa, a fisheries technician from Inhambane Province, said the pandemic went on taking a terrible toll on fishers' income, till the government relaxed its prevention measures in September 2020. "The fishers had nowhere to sell their product because, for example, the local lodges were closed for business," he said. "On the other hand, the traditional fish buyers (who used to roam the beaches in small refrigerated cars, motorcycles, bicycles and cool boxes to buy fish) also disappeared, fearing the pandemic."

The slowdown in fisheries had disastrous socioeconomic impacts. Despite the fisheries sector's relatively low direct contribution to the gross domestic product (GDP) of 2 per cent in 2019, its social contribution is significant. The sector, especially the small-scale fisheries (SSF) sub-sector, generates about 400,000 direct jobs in the country, with women—despite few owning boats—strongly involved in many of them.

Small-scale fishing—including artisanal and subsistence fishing—is an integral part of Mozambique's economic and nutritional framework.

Small-scale fishing—including artisanal and subsistence fishing—provides food security to roughly 20 per cent of the country's total population.

It provides food security to about 850,000 households, or roughly 20 per cent of the country's total population. It doubles up as a source of income, a subsidiary livelihood strategy.

Key food component

Most fishing communities are small, isolated and poor. Fishing and marketing is usually part of a complex livelihood strategy often integrated with agriculture. Fish is a key component of the Mozambican food basket (accounting for 27 per cent of protein) and, according to a 2018 MIMAIP report, the per capita consumption of fish and fish products rose from 10.4 kg in 2012 to 16.8 kg in 2019, a level close to the 18 kg that the World Health Organization recommends. Government statistics

*This article is by **Simeao Lopes** (ntsamuele2013@gmail.com) and **Daniel Benigna Lopes** (daniel83lopes@gmail.com), Mozambique*

TALEA MILLER / PBS NEWS HOURS

Arrival of fishing craft at Maputo, Mozambique. The small-scale fisheries sub-sector generates about 400,000 direct jobs in the country, with women—despite few owning boats—strongly involved in many of them

from 2019 show that artisanal fishing accounts for over 90 per cent of the country's total fish production.

Despite the obvious growth, sustainable fishing faces several threats in the country. Decline in stocks, discrepancies in abundance, distribution and size of inshore species, combined with illegal fishing, have led to steep drops in produce. These scenarios have magnified due to the degradation of critical ecosystems and the impact of climate change. Studies also point to higher rates of unemployment, and a lack of alternative sources of income, with inadequate law-enforcement measures contributing to the problem.

"Here in Mabuluku we are in good health. We have no known cases of COVID-19 despite being close to the South African border," said Agostinho, president of Mabuluku's Community Fisheries Council (CCP), when asked about the impact of the pandemic on artisanal fishing communities. "But, between April and August last year, we faced difficulties in selling our produce at the Maputo city market because buyers stopped to show up out of fear of the pandemic." The solution, he said, was to sell the product within the community, albeit at a loss, because local buyers could not afford to pay real prices for shrimp and first-quality fish.

Conversations with several fishers across the country revealed that business was badly hit by the pandemic despite the low infection rate among the community. This was mainly due to government restrictions on movement, social distancing, self-quarantine and border closures.

Movement restrictions

In Tete province, the largest producer of freshwater fish in the inland provinces of the country, the impact was felt in the markets, with as many as five semi-industrial fishing companies shutting down for lack of business. A representative of the local fisheries administration revealed that an average of 25 workers were laid off due to the shutdowns. According to her, the slowdown occurred in part due to the movement restrictions along Mozambique's borders with Zimbabwe and Zambia.

Restrictions on circulation and containment of agglomerations

hampered the fish trade. On the other hand, the number of operations decreased due to the fear of contact between the fishers, and also due to government protocols that demanded halving of boat crews. Many fishermen, lacking adequate means of storage, were forced to sell their products at lower prices, reducing their average incomes significantly.

Even while actual fishing activities by themselves did not face an impact in the first six months of the government lockdowns, the trade took hard body blows, say most observers. Their observations are consistent with the FAO's COVID-19 response plan that said vulnerable fishing communities found it difficult to access markets. Research conducted by the International Collective in Support of Fishworkers (ICSF) in Mozambique did not, however, confirm the assumption in the same plan that "the pandemic may have exacerbated existing food insecurity and poverty among small-scale farmers, fishers and other vulnerable groups".

In the 10 months since the COVID-19 outbreak (March to December 2020), despite the impacts on fish trade and business, there remains little to indicate dietary patterns have shifted in fishing communities. Fishing and agriculture, the two main livelihood activities, continued uninterrupted, both along the coasts and in inland areas, despite the restrictions.

Farming crops

In the island of Inhaca, close to Maputo city, the first months of the pandemic saw fisher families investing in farming crops suitable for the local soil to help balance their incomes, while assuring themselves of food necessary for their family's needs.

Jorge Mapengo, a community leader in Montanhana, confirmed this. He insisted that everyone was mindful of the government's prevention measures and were adhering to them strictly. "But this does not prevent us from continuing our fishing and farming activities."

The more we looked the more it seemed that the challenges of nutrition, food security and livelihood had less to do with COVID-19 and more to do with the cyclones that have hampered the fishing structures. Fishing-community members insisted that the pandemic has not altered their ways of living drastically. No innovations worthy of record have come from within the community to battle the pandemic.

Government interventions

Sources indicate that the government has taken several fiscal and financial measures to ensure food security and supply during the pandemic. Visible examples include: a credit line (approximately costing US$700 mn) from the National Investment Bank, with support from the African Development Bank; two cash transfer programmes (totalling US$200 mn), supported by the World Bank; a single cash transfer (of US$25 per family) equivalent to three months of regular subsidies to beneficiaries of vulnerable families; and other unconditional cash transfers for six months to low-income families and informal workers in urban and peri-urban areas. According to a World Bank report, both programmes reached a total of 1.5 mn people.

Despite the rollout of various measures, it is hard to say how much impact they have had in helping fishing communities ride out these tough times.

In the fisheries sector, the government efforts were directed towards helping the artisanal sub-sector recover from the impact of cyclones and COVID-19. Support for several fishing communities included distribution of more than 1,700 units of fishing gear and 240 cool boxes of 100 litres and another with 30-litre capacity to be coupled to bicycles for fish storage; financing of more than 90 small projects with an investment of more than US$700,000 for the acquisition of boat engines, and promoting means of conservation and (motorized) transport of fish; and subsidized credit to the private sector for the implementation of aquaculture projects that integrate communities. Several fish markets with ice machines were built close to the main fishing sites to help with fish conservation and trade.

TALEA MILLER / PBS NEWS HOURS

Fish is very important for the community in Mozambique. Fishing and agriculture, the two main livelihood activities, continued uninterrupted, both along the coasts and in inland areas, despite the COVID-19 restrictions

Despite the rollout of various measures, it is hard to say how much impact they have had in helping fishing communities ride out these tough times. Many interviewees claimed to not know of the existence of the support packages, a clear indication that on-ground impact and communication has been inadequate.

Specific support

There seemed to be little in terms of support specifically oriented to the fishing communities from NGOs and civil society. One reason for this, many revealed, was the low rate of COVID-19 infections in coastal fishing communities. Another was the fact that many of these organizations felt government interventions were addressing the fishing community's needs adequately. Safe to say, very little remains known.

A lack of in-depth analysis on the artisanal fishing sub-sector, the numbers and types of vulnerable people and families in such communities, as well as the specific support they need means large gaps remain between what exists and what needs doing. For now, communities continue to navigate under their own steam, with the limited—though significant—help they receive.

For more

Welcoming and friendly
https://www.icsf.net/images/samudra/pdf/english/issue_39/871_art05.pdf

Mozambique Addressing the impacts of COVID-19 in food crises May 2020 – April 2021: Stemming an emergency to prevent a disaster
https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/CA9123EN.pdf

Economic Impact of the Covid-19 Crises in Mozambique & Measures to Support Private Sector Recovery, WB (2020)
https://blogs.worldbank.org/nasikiliza/covid-19-mozambique-team-effort-ease-economic-hardship-families

A Ripple Effect

The post-COVID-19 lockdowns did not just hit fishing operations and markets in Cambodia but also resulted in nutritional insecurity for the most vulnerable small-scale fishers

By April 2021 Cambodia had recorded more than 2,500 cases of COVID-19 and 16 deaths. The government closed schools, discouraged mass gatherings and restricted travel from severely affected countries. The lockdowns impaired two major sectors of the country's economy: the garment industry and tourism.

Ms Lo, a grocery shop owner, felt this first-hand. Her husband and sons are fishermen and boatmen for tourists; the family owns a fuel shop, too. The family's income decreased by 50 per cent during the pandemic. "Not many tourists coming to our village. We have adequate food, but it is not really a nutritious diet. We borrow money from microfinance institutions in order to support our livelihood and to continue fishing," she says.

Lo's story is not an exception. Tourism, garment manufacturing and construction contributed to more than 70 per cent of Cambodia's economic growth and was responsible for 38.5 per cent of total employment in 2019, says the World Bank's 2020 data. Research shows that the pandemic has pushed many Cambodians into poverty, with an estimated 390,000 Cambodians losing jobs this year alone. The Ministry of Tourism says the loss of revenue in the tourism sector was around US$3 bn in 2020, with a decline of about 50-70 per cent in foreign and local visitors. In Siem Reap, tourist arrivals contracted by 45.6 per cent in the month of April 2020.

The ripples of this downturn were felt, in turn, in the national economy. Before the pandemic, Ms Nang worked at a garment factory in Phnom Penh that has now shut down. With no options and no income, she travelled back to her husband's home town, Kampong Thom, to assist him: "He works on the family rice farm, supplementing his income with construction work and fishing."

The slowdown and restrictions took away the jobs of over 100,000 Cambodian workers in neighbouring Thailand. The returnees went from being earning members of their households to a liability, another mouth to feed at a time of privation.

Fisheries constitute a large part of Cambodia's economy, contributing between 8-12 per cent of the country's gross domestic product (GDP). Over 6 mn Cambodians—45.5 per cent of the population—work in fishing and related activities; more than half of these are women. It is ironical that they cannot find fishing work after relocating to their home communities.

The slowdown and restrictions took away the jobs of over 100,000 Cambodian workers in neighbouring Thailand.

The sector is divided into small-scale (or family) fisheries, middle-scale and large-scale (or commercial) fisheries, based on the type, number and size of fishing gear, as defined by government bodies. It is subject to specific regulations concerning gear, fishing grounds and timing.

Export decline

Almost 30 per cent of the country's population finds livelihood in small-scale fisheries. The country's fish exports have steadily declined over the years, partly due to an increase in domestic demand and partly due to a decline in fishing yields. The pandemic has hit the prices and demand for fish.

*This article is by **Kyoko Kusakabe** (kyokok@ait.asia), Asian Institute of Technology; **Sokmoly Uon** (uonsokmoly@gmail.com), Cambodian Institute for Research and Rural Development (CIRD) and **Sereyvath Prak** (praksereyvath@cird.org.kh), Cambodian Institute for Research and Rural Development, Cambodia*

KYOKO KUSAKABE

Focus group discussions with Cambodian women. Small fish traders, predominantly women, were unable to negotiate prices, and do not have access to electricity and enough water to store fish

There are no restrictions on fishing activities, markets, mobility of fishers and traders. Yet the sector is undergoing a major churn, as revealed in focus group discussions (FGDs) in the inland fisheries of Kampong Thom and Siem Reap provinces and in the coastal areas of the Koh Kong province.

The increasing prices hit sales, leading to fishers questioning their effort and input.

A fisherman in Siem Reap pointed out how the drop in fish prices was not uniform across all categories; some types did worse than others. "I observed changes in retail prices [at the local market]," he said. The price of fish like snakehead had halved, he said.

A woman in Koh Kong drew attention to a steep rise in prices of certain fish after the drastic drop during the pandemic. The increasing prices hit sales, leading to fishers questioning their effort and input. The more they fished, the higher the loss! "Our fish catch dropped by 50 per cent," said a fisherman during an FGD at Koh Kong village. What's driven down sales further is the rumour that the coronavirus lives in fish.

Consequences of government interventions

The Cambodian government launched a 'cash transfer programme' to help poor people, identified as IDPoor and holding an Equity Card. It covered about 560,000 families, with Rural IDPoor households received assistance equal to US$20 each. This first-of-its-kind social protection scheme rolled out in June-July 2020. The government has set aside US$125 mn for this.

Despite its quick implementation, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) noted that women were mostly unaware of the scheme. Furthermore, small fish traders, predominantly women, were highly vulnerable due to the downturn. Forced to absorb most of the loss due to a drop in the retail price, these traders were hit the hardest. Many are unable to negotiate prices, and do not have access

to electricity and enough water to store fish. Their consumers—low-income households—have been suffering themselves, reducing consumption.

The government banned fish exports in April 2020 for the sake of food security. This has contributed further to falling prices, with larger fishers forced to sell in the domestic market. Small-scale fishers now compete with larger fishers for the fish consumed by better-off families. When it comes to the cheaper fish consumed by low-income households, they have to compete with cheaper imported fish.

Yet this flux of demand and prices has not affected imports of cultured fish from Thailand and Vietnam. Import of seafood products from Vietnam increased from US$47.7 mn in 2019 to US$52.8 mn in 2020. A woman at an FGD in Kampon Thom said that these fish are sold at lower prices because they are not valued much in the Cambodian market. The demand for the cheaper fish has grown during the downturn. Farmed catfish from Vietnam is sold at US$0.78 per kg, while the domestic catfish fetches US$1.3 per kg. To counter this discrepancy, the government suspended imports of catfish from Vietnam in January 2021.

Market crises

The crises in the market for domestic fish do not extend to 'rice fish' (like catfish, caught in rice fields). Households pay extra for rice fish, which is valued highly in Cambodia for its flavour and health benefits. Men in Kampong Thom observed that rice fish prices increased more than 15 per cent during the pandemic.

What makes the situation worse for small-scale fishers is that they cannot compensate for declining margins by increasing volumes. Fish catch has been decreasing in Cambodia for the last few years due to overfishing, pollution, water shortage, climate change and a loss of fish spawning areas (because of coastal area development for non-fish purposes such as tourism and industry).

An FGD with fishermen in Koh Kong revealed that a large number of people left unemployed by the downturn due to pandemic are turning to fishing. "Before the COVID-19 crisis, we would get a catch of 30 kg a day on average," said a woman at the Siem Rep FGD. "During the crisis, this reduced to 20 kg a day." While the daily catch has reduced, the number of fishers and fishworkers has not.

At the same time, decreasing incomes have forced fishers into other jobs to make ends meet. Before the pandemic, Ms Heng, the wife of a soldier, used to run a small shop selling fish products. Her business suffered a 20-30 per cent reduction due to the pandemic. She started working as a waste picker in her coastal village to supplement her income and provide for her family. "Even though we earn less than before, my family still has enough to eat," she said.

When it comes to the cheaper fish consumed by low-income households, they have to compete with cheaper imported fish.

While food has remained available, it is worth asking: what is its nutritional value? Heng admitted that what they eat now doesn't really constitute a nutritious diet. While the price of fish has gone down, the price of vegetables and meat has risen, making it difficult for fishers to buy other foods by selling their own produce, fish. Fishers say that they are now eating whatever they can find in the community—fish they catch and vegetables they plant. Many say they eat fewer vegetables and more fish now, skewing the nutritional balance.

Catching a break

Fishing, a source of livelihood for a majority of Cambodians, has suffered in a big way during the pandemic. There is an increased pressure on fishing resources; the workforce is increasing; and the demand for their products is steadily decreasing. The decline in fish catch also threatens the food security of Cambodia's poor, who depend significantly on the product, not just for income but also for personal consumption. While the prices of most foods in the market have risen, fish prices have—for the most part—steadily declined.

SOKMOLY UON

Floating house on Tonle Sap Lake, Cambodia. What makes the situation worse for small-scale fishers is that they cannot compensate for declining margins by increasing volumes

Economic disparity

Although small-scale fishing has played an important role in meeting the nutritional needs of the poor, trends show that the pandemic has impacted the poor more severely than the better-off. It has hit women traders more than fishers themselves. And small-scale domestic fishers have been hit harder than fish importers. This is an economic disparity the country will have to counter quickly. If it does not, it will suffer the consequences for a long time.

...small-scale fishing has played an important role in meeting the nutritional needs of the poor, trends show that the pandemic has impacted the poor more severely...

For more

Fish Counts –Increasing the visibility of small-scale fisheries (SSFs) in Cambodia's national planning
https://pubs.iied.org/sites/default/files/pdfs/migrate/16671IIED.pdf

Socio-economic impact of Covid-19 on Cambodia
https://opendevelopmentcambodia.net/profiles/socio-economic-impact-of-covid-19-on-cambodia/

Covid-19 opens a can of worms for fisherwomen in Cambodia
https://www.unenvironment.org/news-and-stories/story/covid-19-opens-can-worms-fisherwomen-cambodia

Cambodia economic update: Cambodia in the time of Covid-19, May 2020
https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/33826

Springing Back into Shape

While tourism is the mainstay of the economy of the Caribbean islands of Antigua and Barbuda, fisheries reforms will give them resilience from developments like COVID-19

Human-rights principles in small-scale fisheries were officially established with the publication in 2015 by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) of the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication (SSF Guidelines). These are designed to encourage stakeholders to prioritize the physical and environmental security of small-scale fisheries for the benefit of those active within the fisher community and beyond. 'Fisher' is an all-encompassing term for those involved in any element of the fisheries value chain, from extraction to processing.

Antigua and Barbuda is a twin-island state in the Eastern Caribbean, renowned globally for its white sand beaches and tropical climate. The surrounding waters provide unique opportunities for fishing, hosting an array of species, including types of gastropoda and crustacea. However, these resources are not fully utilized due to a shift away from traditional industry. The tourism sector expanded exponentially in the 1980s and now accounts for over 90 per cent of total jobs. This transition has seen Antigua and Barbuda's gross domestic product (GDP) increase, with growth averaging 6.8 per cent and contributing to high levels of human and social development.

Nonetheless, this over-reliance on the travel and tourism industry leaves the island state highly vulnerable to exogenous economic shocks such as the COVID-19 pandemic, and environmental risks like hurricanes and earthquakes.

This article provides an overview of social development in the fisheries sector of Antigua and Barbuda, and a synopsis of existing policy, legislation and programmes that contribute towards achieving the goals outlined in the SSF Guidelines. It draws from secondary data analysis, a literature review, and interviews with key informants.

With the explosion of the tourism industry, fishers and society, in general, have witnessed an increased focus on social development, human rights and decent work standards. A consequence of this was the introduction of the Fisheries Regulations in 2013, drawing together social policy with the pre-requisite for fisher registration. There is extensive crossover between the SSF Guidelines and the Fisheries Regulations, most notably the focus on sustainable fisheries management and the utilization of the precautionary principle.

The 2013 regulations state that in order to be entered into the record as a licensed fisher, an individual is required to be registered under the Social Security Act of 1972 that affords insured parties and their dependent(s) access to a degree of financial security through the provision of assistance, including sickness benefit and old-age benefit.

Antigua and Barbuda's fishers are struggling to maintain their traditional access and user rights as they compete with coastal development.

Formalization

Another condition for registration is engagement with the Fisher Professionalization Programme. Modules are centred around the formalization of the fisheries sector. It includes elements of record-keeping, fisheries laws and engine preventative maintenance.

There are gaps in this coverage, however. Take, for example, vessel

This article is by ***Ian S. Horsford*** *(ihorsford@gmail.com), Fisheries and Environmental Consultant, Antigua and Barbuda. The summary is preparedby* ***Silke Moxon-Riedlin*** *(silke.m-r@hotmail.com),NHSEI Project Coordinator, London, United Kingdom*

insurance, something critical to the sustainability of the fisheries industry. Following Hurricane Irma in 2017, it emerged that only 5.9 per cent of fishing vessels were covered by vessel insurance. A number of reasons explain this, including high premiums and inadequate coverage. Whilst interventions are being explored, the majority of these are only at the pilot stage.

Prioritizing social development has led to the provision of universal free education for children aged five to 16 years, and a sharp decline in infant mortality. Investment has also been made in affordable public utilities and better access to adequate housing, which is critical in the islands exposed to extreme weather conditions.

There still exist gaps that need to be addressed to ensure fishers and small-scale fisheries can mitigate the insecurities of external shocks. Fishers are believed to have a great level of occupational mobility due to high rates of education—78 per cent of fishers have a secondary school education—but it is the small-scale fisheries themselves who need protection, especially as they are considered a 'safety net' for other economic activities.

Antigua and Barbuda's fishers are struggling to maintain their traditional access and user rights as they compete with coastal development. Much of this development is driven by the demands for tourism-related infrastructure. In addition, access to landing sites is becoming increasingly problematic in certain rural areas, with the development of resorts and gated communities.

It appears that instead of acting as a complement to the tourism sector, the two industries are beginning to clash with the interests of fishers. As demand grows for additional infrastructure, there may be increasingly reduced access to spaces fundamental to fishing. To mitigate this, fisher organizations need strengthening in the areas of leadership, management, policy advocacy and engagement.

Proactive resilience

Despite the impressive gains in development in Antigua and Barbuda, instances like Hurricane Irma highlight the fragility of these advancements and the need for proactive resilience planning. This has been acknowledged within the regionally endorsed 2018 Protocol on Climate Change Adaptation

IAN S. HORSFORD

Modern fishing units in Antigua and Barbuda. Despite the impressive gains in development, instances like Hurricane Irma highlight the fragility of these advancements and the need for proactive resilience planning

IAN S. HORSFORD

Northeast Marine Management Area, Antigua and Barbuda. Fishers are believed to have a great level of occupational mobility due to high rates of education, especially as they are considered a 'safety net' for other economic activities

and Disaster Risk Management in Fisheries and Aquaculture. But more needs to be done in terms of preparedness and diversification of the economy, especially as it is now overwhelmingly reliant on tourism.

Key recommendations

Keeping a focus on the social development of the wider community, the following recurring themes are pertinent to small-scale fisheries and the wider fishing community:

- Diversification of the national economy, potentially towards capture fisheries and aquaculture. This will also aid food security.
- Further investment in processing and European Union-certified landing sites, offering export potential.
- Priority and funding for resilience planning.
- Initiatives to reduce inequality of income and gender. Now, only 7 per cent of the fishers are women.
- Shift towards information and communication technology (ICT) to allow for online training modules, enhancing education and infrastructure for the development of transferable skills.

These recommendations are aligned with the goals of the SSF Guidelines. They help encourage sustainability within small-scale fisheries. They would assist Antigua and Barbuda in preparing the fishing industry for the future, all the while addressing tensions between fishing and tourism, its two major industries. This will ensure a strong foundation for future economic growth and development.

For more

Case Study: A Comparative Analysis of Different Approaches to Fisheries Co-management in Antigua and Barbuda
http://aquaticcommons.org/21433/1/GCFI_65-6.pdf

Linking Fisheries to Tourism-Related Markets: Antigua and Barbuda
https://unctad.org/system/files/non-official-document/ditc-ted-Belize-28112018-Agenda-CRFM-Document-2016-3.pdf

Increasingly Vulnerable

A study has come up with specific recommendations for the development and welfare of the fisheries sector and its small-scale fisher communities in Bangladesh, the 'Land of Rivers'

With 230 rivers coursing through the country, Bangladesh is called the 'Land of Rivers'. It also has the world's largest flooded wetland. Rivers and water resources have made Bangladesh one of the world's leading fish-producing countries with a total production of 4.27 mn metric tonnes (MT) in 2017-18. The fisheries sector contributes 3.57 per cent to the national gross domestic product (GDP), 25.30 per cent to the agricultural GDP, and provides a 60 per cent share of animal protein. About 18.5 mn people are directly involved in this sector, of whom about 10-12 per cent are women.

A study was recently carried out with the backing of the International Collective in Support of Fishworkers (ICSF). Titled 'Bangladesh: Social Development and Sustainable Fisheries', its objective was to discuss the overall fisheries sector of Bangladesh, bringing out some social-development issues of the country's fishers' communities, focusing on small-scale and marginalized fishers. The study identifies some evidence-based situations, analyses the data and offers some specific recommendations. It uses both primary and secondary data and information. To fathom the socioeconomic conditions of the coastal fishing communities of Bangladesh, a survey was carried out to gather data, while inteviews provided information from three coastal districts, namely, Bhola, Cox's Bazar and Bagerhat. The COAST Trust, a national-level non-governmental organization (NGO), supported the study.

The survey showed that about 90 per cent of the houses are made of bamboo, tin and wood.

Bangladesh has made significant progress in eradicating poverty. In this regard, there are a number of initiatives and projects, including extensive social safety-net programmes. It is, however, rare to have a separate scheme for fishers. Poverty remains a major challenge for Bangladesh fishers, despite the benefits from a number of poverty-eradication initiatives. According to this study, the country's fishing communities are still suffering from various forms of poverty.

Both the field data and secondary information show the unfortunate condition of the Bangladeshi fishermen in terms of almost all the indicators used in the study. The average annual income of the fishing communities was found to vary from US$235 to US$1,174, while the annual national income for Bangladesh is US$2,064. The difference is very obvious. The data shows that the fisheries sector has, on average, more landless and homeless people than in other sectors, and fewer with access to electricity. The number of people under extreme poverty is higher. Though data shows fishing families have more access to drinking water and sanitation, in several areas they have to travel far to collect water. The sanitation quality is not up to the mark.

The survey showed that about 90 per cent of the houses are made of bamboo, tin and wood. The houses are small and congested, being between one to 50 years old. The houses are not safe, especially in the coastal region, which is susceptible to storm surges.

*This article is by **Md.Mujibul Haque Munir** (munir.coastbd@gmail.com), Joint Director, COAST Trust, Bangladesh*

Creating jobs

Bangladesh has unique policies and initiatives in place to create jobs for all of its people. The government is introducing a number of measures to combat unemployment. There are special stimulus programmes for the manufacturing sector as well as for small and medium businesses and agriculture. The fisheries sector is given special attention. The Draft National Job Policy 2019 calls for assistance in the production of fish, because employment in this field comes under 'green jobs'. The policy also recognizes the importance of fisheries as one of the main rural industries.

Bangladesh has some specific policies and provisions in place to ensure that the labour sector as a whole has a decent working environment. But, in many cases, the reality lags behind the International Labour Organization (ILO) standard. The fisheries sector receives little attention in many cases. The study finds that small-scale fishers and fishworkers face a severe lack of decent working conditions.

The country's constitution gives the country an 'inclusive' character as it legally guarantees equal rights and opportunities for all. However, there are gaps and discriminations in several aspects of society, and in some cases there is a tendency to narrow the differences and to discriminate between sections of the population. The study did not find discrimination towards fisher groups for being fishers. In numerous cases, however, they face discrimination as disadvantaged and oppressed communities.

The State's policy is to ensure health services for all. It has a strong occupational health and safety policy. The public health programmes of the government are vast, reaching the village level with community hospitals. But the sector suffers from severe corruption and mismanagement. Though several sectors are trying to ensure occupational health and safety, the fisheries sector is yet to benefit much from such efforts. This study found that no support for occupational safety reached fishers during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Education is recognized as a fundamental right in the country's constitution under Article 15. Primary education is compulsory. Girls get special scholarships and free education until class 10. Fishing communities also benefit from these measures, but the study found that fishers lag behind in terms of education and literacy, compared to the national situation.

The citizen's right to shelter is guaranteed in the constitution and there are various housing programmes in the country. Though there is no special housing exclusively for fishers, they do benefit from projects and programmes for the poor and the marginalized. Coastal fishers get support as people vulnerable to climate vagaries.

Bangladesh has special policies and programmes on water, sanitation and energy. There are schemes for the poor that encompass fishers. The study found almost all the fishing communities have access to drinking water and sanitation. The source of water in many areas is a bit far to access, and the quality of the sanitation is yet to improve.

…women members of fishing families still lag in terms of empowerment and other socioeconomic indicators.

Bangladesh is a pioneer in creating a national strategic plan and policies and programmes to fight the negative impacts of climate change. Fishers of Bangladesh are among the most vulnerable communities in this regard. While government policies and programmes do benefit fishers, the study shows that the suffering of these communities is increasing and their vulnerabilities are getting more severe.

A range of policies and strong measures protects women in Bangladesh. The country has some remarkable accomplishments with respect to gender equality. But, according to the report, women members of fishing families still lag in terms of empowerment and other socioeconomic indicators.

Access to justice

Multiple policies and processes are in place to ensure access to justice

DRUVO DASH

Fisher's house, Pathrghata, Barguna, Bangladesh. The data shows that the fisheries sector has, on average, more landless and homeless people than in other sectors, and fewer with access to electricity

for the oppressed and marginalized. Yet, according to the study, fishers are unaware about government programmes and thus fail, in many cases, to obtain timely justice. Poverty and lack of information, networking and negotiating skills create barriers to the provision of proper facilities for fishers from various organizations.

The study has also come up with some specific recommendations for the development of the fisheries sector and for the welfare of the small-scale fisher communities. These include: legal recognition of small-scale fishers; special safety nets for the fishing communities; ensuring access to the open-water bodies, and protection of resources; access to credit and market for small-scale fish producers; measures to provide health services such as floating medical centres at sea; education facilities for children; and safety-at-sea measures. Gender-segregated data is a must to recognize the contribution of women. Also necessary are special income-generating activity (IGA) support for the women members of the fishing communities; initiatives to ensure the sustainability of water bodies; insurance for fishers; provision of decent work; and measures for occupational safety.

For more

A Voice for the Coast
https://www.icsf.net/images/samudra/pdf/english/issue_63/3798_art_Sam63_E_art05.pdf

Making women in fishing visible
https://www.icsf.net/images/yemaya/pdf/english/issue_62/2401_art_Yemaya_62_Art1_Bangladesh_Mujibul.pdf

80pc marine fishers don't have enough safety equipment
https://www.thedailystar.net/city/news/80pc-marine-fishers-dont-have-enough-safety-equipment-2074025

The Coastal Association for Social Transformation Trust
www.coastbd.org

Recovering Connections

Improving the lot of small-scale and artisanal fisheries in Costa Rica will lead to the betterment of indigenous peoples, Afro-descendants and other vulnerable groups

Located in Central America, Costa Rica is a country where only one-tenth of its territory is made up of land. Official data shows the territorial extension of Costa Rica to be 51,079 sq km continental and 530,903 sq km in the Pacific Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ). For its part, the Caribbean EEZ has not yet been defined, since it is still necessary to negotiate and precisely define the border with Panama.

As a result, fishing is very important for Costa Rica at several levels – tuna fishing for the national processing industry and for a productive economic sector, and for local economies and food security for communities. Although the country recognizes (through INCOPESCA, the government institution in Costa Rica that manages, regulates and promotes the development of the fishing and aquaculture sector with an ecosystem approach, under the principles of sustainability, social responsibility and competitiveness) that there are nearly 2,000 formal artisanal fishers, international studies indicate that more than 15,000 people are involved in artisanal fishing. This is because artisanal fishing is mostly in the informal sector. This has important socioeconomic consequences, since the vast majority of people engaged in this type of fishing do so in vulnerable conditions, many living below the poverty line.

This situation persists despite Costa Rica having a solid set of regulations for fishing, with public policies that recognize the importance of the fair and equitable distribution of the wealth produced by fishing activity. There exists an important institutional framework that provides support to artisanal fishers to operate according to the law. In this regard, the country's main challenge is to recognize and incorporate into the framework small-scale artisanal fishers who operate informally in these spaces, in order to protect their fundamental rights and ensure a good quality of life for the fishing population.

This article is based on a study conducted in 2020. A legal analysis allowed the construction of matrices that correlated international commitments, analyzed the regulations developed and the institutions created, and their contribution to the social development of the small-scale artisanal fishing sector in the country.

The study draws on interviews with the authorities of public institutions created for promoting social development; academic centres; national and international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) working on social development and human-rights issues in light of their impact on small-scale artisanal fisheries. Also analysed were interviews and focal group discussions directed at the main leaders—men, women and youth—who represent the small-scale fishing sector in the country.

Despite Costa Rica's Indigenous Law, there are no regulations that encourage indigenous populations to recover their connections with the seas and rivers.

The small-scale and artisanal fisheries sector in Costa Rica finds itself in a complex historical situation. The Costa Rican government does not have a fishing census that can accurately determine the number of people dependent on small-scale and artisanal fishing. It is thus difficult to propose comprehensive solutions for this population group.

*This article is by **Vivienne Solis Rivera** (vsolis@coopesolidar.org), Director, CoopeSolidar R.L., Costa Rica and Member, ICSF*

COOPESOLIDAR R.L.

Cabo Blanco marine management area, Costa Rica. Decisions and budgets aimed at supporting economic and psychosocial reactivation must consider the vulnerabilities of coastal communities

The social-development vision of public institutions and NGOs in this sector is not homogeneous. One view is focused on productive development linked to the generation of employment; this is often unrelated to fishing knowledge and culture. The other perspective is closer to a social-development vision, articulated with a human-rights approach, with a comprehensive view of the full and dignified development of the sector, including aspects of education, healthcare, decent work and culture.

Rural development efforts are often directed at the agricultural sector, leaving the small-scale artisanal sector invisible—women fishers even more so, as they are often not considered active participants in fishing. This significantly impacts their development, limiting their opportunities to attain benefits at the economic, social and cultural levels.

Interviews with women, men and young fishing leaders reveal that the social-development vision responds better to the needs of coastal marine communities. It was evident in all the consultations carried out that this vision of development is based on the opportunities that the context provides for nutrition, healthcare, education and organization. The resondents, from their position of leadership in fishing communities, identified the importance of their own actions in changing their living conditions. They consider organizational spaces a fundamental forum for influencing public policies linked to small-scale and artisanal fishing.

Young people display a positive feeling and attitude towards fishing despite weak public policy efforts. Attention is required through affirmative action to enhance the capacities of the young population in artisanal fishing to face the new technological and educational challenges of the changing times. Regarding the NGO sector, even when initiatives for financial support and human resources development do reach the community, they have often proven unsuitable. It has been difficult to promote the integrated development of these communities and measure the impact of social actions on the quality of life of the people.

Cultural adaptability

There is a need for greater inter-institutional articulation and more favourable visions of human rights and cultural adaptability in coastal marine areas. Costa Rica has made a commitment to cross-institutional co-ordination in order to provide a better response to the interests of communities in terms of well-being, work, violence prevention, and attention to diverse populations—Afro-descendants, indigenous peoples, migrants and refugees. Yet the country has not yet succeeded in implementing such policies from a truly intersectional approach that might result in clear actions to advance along these lines. The efforts articulated among public institutions and NGOs are very scarce; they require analysis so that they can be disseminated and multiplied in other areas.

This study reveals that artisanal fishing is not attuned to the cultural, environmental and social reference points required. The projects that reach the communities, especially for women and young people, are not linked with traditional knowledge, with participatory research, with the strengthening of governance to promote artisanal fishing as an activity linked to food security, or with the cultural and historical role of this work in the country. Land tenure continues to remain an unresolved problem. This directly hits the social development of coastal towns. The institutional framework has tried to generate jobs and enterprises that fail to respond to the cultural realities of women, youth and fishers in fishing communities.

The fisheries sector is very vulnerable to the effects of climate change. None of the measures communicated to the territories is sustainable or supportive of the communities facing climatic uncertainties. Decisions and budgets aimed at supporting economic and psychosocial reactivation must consider their vulnerabilities.

Despite Costa Rica's Indigenous Law, the ratification of the International Labour Organization's Convention 169 and consultation mechanisms, there are no regulations that encourage indigenous populations to recover their connections with the seas and rivers. There is nothing to nurture the knowledge and resources linked to terrestrial and marine biodiversity, and to enhance and protect them in the interest of sustainability. At the national level, there is an immediate need for public policies with an integral strategy oriented towards the small-scale and artisanal fishing sector.

The Ombudsmen Office must be urged to ensure progress on the recognition and formalization of the small-scale artisanal fishing sector, as an entity committed to the observance of compliance with human rights in this sector. An urgent call should be made to the country's National Emergency Commission (CNE) to consider a differentiated and specific budget for the coastal marine communities most affected by climate variability.

The institutional framework has tried to generate jobs and enterprises that fail to respond to the cultural realities of women, youth and fishers...

It is essential that the country promotes discussions and forums with respect to the social and environmental scopes and impacts of the Blue Economy in the lives of artisanal fishers, relying on the recognition of new visions based on social development, linked to the effective fulfillment of human rights and responding to the Voluntary Guidelines towards the Sustainability of Small-scale Fishing in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Reduction (SSF Guidelines).

A focus on intersectionality is still lacking. Women fishers, indigenous peoples and Afro-descendant populations need greater visibility. These concerns are currently not being addressed with the urgency required from a human-rights-based approach.

Active participation

Joint efforts of a public-private nature are recommended for effective compliance with these measures, including those designed to handle the COVID-19 pandemic, promoting the active participation of the artisanal fishing sector in economic and social reactivation within a framework of hunan rights, equality and equity.

For more

Eight Shells
https://www.icsf.net/images/samudra/pdf/english/issue_80/4375_art_Sam_80_WIF_Vivienne_Solis_Rivera.pdf

Our Oceans, Our Seas, Our Future
https://www.icsf.net/images/samudra/pdf/english/issue_76/4296_art_Sam76_e_art09.pdf

Sailing from a Good Port
https://www.icsf.net/images/samudra/pdf/english/issue_73/4194_art_Sam73_e_art02.pdf

Hand in Hand

Though Kerala and Tamil Nadu are top performers on the Human Development Index, their advances in sustainability and social development do not reach small-scale fishers

Social development of fishing communities can be made possible only through policies and services for poverty eradication, employment generation and social inclusion that address the specific needs of the community and ensure their well-being, through successful governance processes at different levels. Being socially and economically backward and lacking access to development opportunities makes the road to social empowerment difficult for fisherfolk.

Kerala and Tamil Nadu are two of India's highest performing states in human development. There are a number of schemes and policies in both the states for the social development of small-scale fisherfolk. And yet there is a long way to go. Both the states fail to pick up their fishing communities along the overall development journey. In many of the social-development indicators, fisherfolk are way lower compared to the general population, data shows. While the general population shows a relatively better state of development, it has not trickled down to the fisherfolk—economically, socially or politically. Though there exist promising policies and programmes, a big push is required in policies, schemes and welfare programmes for development to reach fisherfolk.

Analyzed data reveals that Tamil Nadu should focus more on improving the healthcare facilities accessible to fisherfolk...

More than half of the fisherfolk population in Kerala and Tamil Nadu live below the poverty line. This figure is substantially worse than the proportion of people below the poverty line among the general population. A string of poverty-alleviation policies and programmes do not seem to have created a sizeable improvement in their condition. Some economic, social and cultural attributes unique to fishing communities have prevented their members from reaching the degree of 'capabilities' other Kerala communities have reached. Frequent natural disasters also reverse the development process of the fisherfolk. In order to reduce poverty among fisherfolk, policies that focus on climate-change resilience have to be the first priority, be it in housing, employment or healthcare. Without this, the policies will remain unsustainable.

Culturally conditioned livelihoods lead to many disadvantages, including the least likelihood of mobility out of employment. This adds to the misery of fisherfolk. There are alternative employment opportunities for fisherfolk communities in both the states, including exclusive opportunities. Many of these are in the making, especially in Kerala. Policies and programmes in both the states seem to be less efficient in case of providing access to healthcare to the fisherfolk villages. Analyzed data reveals that Tamil Nadu should focus more on improving the healthcare facilities accessible to fisherfolk as the number of hospitals near fishing community villages is much lower than the average.

Uneducated proportion

Access to education creates inclusion in the development process. Analysis shows the existence of a much-higher-than-average proportion of uneducated people among fisherfolk.

*This article is by **A.S.Medha** (medha@cess.ac.in), Research Scholar, Centre for Economic and Social Studies (CESS), Hyderabad, Telangana*

The proportion of fisherfolk with higher education is also very small, which limits occupational mobility. The proportion of females who had no formal education at all is very high compared to the general population. Kerala seems to have exclusive policies to improve the education status of fisherfolk but unless access is assured through institutional inclusion, there will not be a drastic improvement in the educational status of fisherfolk. Housing is a major issue. Lack of access to land in fisherfolk villages adds to this problem. Both Kerala and Tamil Nadu seem to have exclusive policies for improving the housing conditions of fisherfolk.

Collective action has been the major strength of fisherfolk. A number of establishments dedicated towards the welfare of fisherfolk exist in Kerala and Tamil Nadu. Both the states have co-operatives that work towards the betterment of the community. Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have contributed vitally to the resilience of the fisherfolk in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Globally, concerns over resource sustainability have led to fishing prohibitions and withholding of fisheries subsidies. This is a tricky issue for fisherfolk. The bans and restrictions keep them away from their daily fish catch. Though both states offer compensations, the amount is very small. Then there is the disruption brought to the fishers' livelihoods by natural disasters. The uncertainties they face need a careful examination. In comparison to other fishing methods, the techniques employed by small-scale fisheries have fewer negative impacts on the ecosystem. The development of small-scale fisheries not only contributes to global food security, but it is also desirable for environmental sustainability.

The state governments must ensure land security by assuring tenure for fisherfolk. Policies and programmes need to consider the unique characteristics of small-scale fishers. They lack alternative livelihood opportunities, especially during the fishing ban period. This calls for urgent government action. The fisherfok need increased financial assistance during the duration of the fishing ban. Compensation for injuries and for the needs of the disabled needs to be more generous and widespread, given that fishing is one of the riskiest jobs in the world.

A large number of workers in activities allied to fisheries are women. Their work and lives are not protected adequately by social-security systems when compared to active fishers, who are mostly men. The provision of pensions for fishing-allied workers is needed, especially for women. Access to social development is directly related to access to education and healthcare. More public hospitals need to be built near fisherfolk villages. Community study centres need to be organized in fishing villages to make sure there are no dropouts, and that nobody is left out of school.

Some economic, social and cultural attributes unique to fishing communities have prevented their members from reaching the degree of 'capabilities' other Kerala communities have reached.

Complementary policies

The digital divide needs to be addressed by improving access to the Internet and information technology, critical for access to education as well as for the development of resilience. Sustainability and social development should go hand in hand because one is complementary to the other. Policies related to one must take the other into account.

For more

Nets for Social Safety - An Analysis of the Growth and Changing Composition of Social Security Programmes in the Fisheries Sector of Kerala State, India by John Kurien and Antonyto Paul, 2000
http://www.icsf.net/images/monographs/pdf/english/issue_33/33_all.pdf

The Beauty of the Small
https://www.icsf.net/images/samudra/pdf/english/issue_72/4184_art_Sam72_e_art09.pdf

The Sea arou**nd Us**
https://www.icsf.net/images/samudra/pdf/english/issue_67/3987_art_Sam67en_art08.pdf

Looking at the Long Term

A survey of fisherfolk in the Indian state of West Bengal shows that relief measures for natural disasters and the COVID-19 pandemic must take into account long-standing vulnerabilities

The two most important concepts to set the agenda for the Sustainable Development Goals 2030 (SDGs) are 'social development' and 'sustainable management'. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) has been the key player in raising awareness and providing guidance on sustainable aquaculture development and management, as stated in the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries, laid down in 1995. Almost two decades later, in 2015, FAO introduced the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication (SSF Guildelines).

Ensure the social development of fishing communities through basic amenities like education, access to drinking water, food, shelter and healthcare.

Partly in recognition of the SSF Guidelines, the Indian government brought out the National Policy on Marine Fisheries (NPMF, 2017), the Draft National Inland Fisheries and Aquaculture Policy (NIFAP) and the National Fisheries Policy (2020). They aimed to create a conducive environment for an integrated and holistic development and management of fisheries for the socioeconomic development of fishers and fish farmers, keeping in view the concerns of sustainability, biosecurity and the environment.

Despite the importance of fisheries to livelihoods, food security and economic development, fisherfolk are often poor and marginalized. This is especially true in West Bengal, which prompted the International Collective in Support of Fishworkers (ICSF) Trust to conduct a study on social development and sustainable fisheries in the state.

The study intended to examine the socioeconomic conditions of the fisherfolk in West Bengal, with special reference to the COVID-19 pandemic and cyclone Amphan that hit the state on 20 May 2020. It was an opportunity to study various aspects of fisheries and the means to improve the social conditions of the fishing community, especially the small-scale and traditional fishers of the state. It was also a search for viable solutions to 13 specific day-to-day challenges facing the fishing community. This was to happen within a rights-based framework, looking into several fisheries concerns: improved access of full-time, part-time, occasional and subsistence, informal and formal, migrant and resident, women and men fishers and fishworkers; health, education, housing, sanitation, potable water and energy, as well as social development, social security and standard of living.

The state has rich natural endowments and fishing occurs in various kinds of water bodies, a feature that makes India the country with the second-highest fish production in the world. The small-scale and traditional fisher community are the primary custodians of these natural water bodies. They strive to maintain, protect and conserve the water bodies and fish resources. The challenges they face are well documented: declining access to resources; weak processing units; lack of proper market and infrastructural facilities; poor economic status; non-implementation of existing laws; exposure to natural disasters, especially in the district of South 24 Parganas; marginalization of women fishworkers; and gender inequalities.

*This article is by **Shilpa Nandy** (shilpanandy@yahoo.co.in), Assistant Professor, Khudiram Bose Central College, Kolkata, India, and Advisor, Women's Wing, Dakshinbanga Matsyajibi Forum, West Bengal, India*

To stand up to these threats, fishers have been organizing themselves, and participating in movements at regional, national and international levels. Their usual hardships were multiplied in 2020 by the COVID-19 pandemic, which resulted in lockdowns. Then tragedy arrived with the gale winds of the tropical cyclone Amphan. Its devastation was wide-ranging, damaging fishing communities, in particular. The pandemic magnified the vulnerabilities of women in these communities—the single, the widowed, the old and the infirm. The study showed that government schemes, federal and provincial, offered social and occupational security through welfare measures that provided succour during the pandemic and in the aftermath of the cyclone. Significant relief efforts also came from fisherfolk organizations, voluntary associations, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), public trusts and individuals at all levels: regional, state, national and international.

The study allowed researchers to distill the most important demands and recommendations of the fishing community of West Bengal, which are summarized below:

- Ensure small and traditional fishing communities' control over resources like land, water, forests, fish resources, the commons and livelihoods, especially in preserving the fish and ecological resources of the Sunderban area.
- Provide preferential access to the small-scale fishers and implement—in letter and spirit—the West Bengal Marine Fisheries Regulation Act and FAO's SSF Guidelines.
- Cease illegal and unauthorized encroachment of fishing areas. The government should proactively confer community user rights over fishing grounds to the fishing communities.
- Recognize and establish the rights and entitlements of fishworkers by mobilizing the community with specific awareness programmes that enhance skills and capacities. These must be built on a mandatory interface of the fishing community and government representatives.

SHILPA NANDY

Kathi Nona Jol fishmarket, West Bengal, India. The government schemes, federal and provincial, offered social and occupational security through welfare measures that provided succour during the pandemic and in the aftermath of the cyclone

MILAN DAS,DMF

Impact of Amphan cyclone, south 24 Parganas, India. The devastation of cyclone Amphan was wide-ranging. Besides shattering the livelihoods of communities, the cyclone destroyed basic amenities like shelter, housing, food, healthcare and education

- Introduce effective efforts to form and sustain fishworkers' collectives at all levels: local government, block and district, and state government. Develop and strengthen fishworkers' co-operatives as a step towards democratization of society and the economy.
- Sensitize state and local government institutions to identify gender gaps and gender discrimination prevalent in the community. Policymakers must give prime importance in framing welfare laws that directly benefit and empower women in the fisher community, especially the most vulnerable among them—old, infirm, single, widowed—who are dependent on fishing activities.
- Create national and state commissions for people who depend mostly on natural resources like land, water and forests.
- Ensure the social development of fishing communities through basic amenities like education, access to drinking water, food, shelter and healthcare.

This study has provided an overview of the concerns and demands of small-scale fishers of West Bengal. The immediate priority, however, is access to basic amenities for fishing communities in the state, which has been rendered very difficult by the COVID-19 pandemic. Even as this is emerging as the vital concern of fisheries organizations across the world, efforts to provide basic relief from the COVID-19 pandemic's consequences must also incorporate a long-term perspective.

For more

A Heavy Price
https://www.icsf.net/images/samudra/pdf/english/issue_81/4397_art_Sam_81_art14_A_Heavy_Price_FANI_A_Senapati.pdf

Easy to watch and informative
https://www.icsf.net/images/samudra/pdf/english/issue_38/855_art11.pdf

Fish Vendors Struggle for their Rights!
https://www.icsf.net/images/yemaya/pdf/english/issue_35/1698_art08.pdf

A Roadmap for Recovery

The reforms needed by small-scale fishers in the Philippines pivot around the role of the municipal administration in handling fisheries development and the welfare of fisherfolk

Fishing in the Philippines is crucially dependent on small-scale fisheries as a sector that is anchored in local communities that have historic links to adjacent fishery resources, traditions and values. Fishing includes activities that range from capture fishing and processing to vending and mending nets, among others. The actors are fishers in municipal and inland capture fishing, fishworkers in both aquaculture production and as crew in commercial fishing vessels, and also women in fish processing.

Social-development policies in support of fishers have strong legal foundations, with defined institutional support at the national and local levels. However, much improvement is needed for their implementation and translation to concrete economic gains and social protection. Despite laws on social protection and poverty alleviation (specifically targeting the artisanal fisherfolk, among other groups), fisherfolk have the highest poverty incidence at 40 per cent, compared to the national average of 26.3 per cent. They lack adequate access to basic social services like health and education. Small-scale fishing is highly fragmented owing to the lack of organization. This also limits the capacity of small-scale fishers to access social-safety nets, formal financial services and investment opportunities to help their livelihoods grow. The fragmentation in production is also accompanied by use of less efficient production technology, resulting in lower income opportunities.

A broad range of laws, policies, rules and regulations, under the authority of various levels of government, control small-scale fishing in the Philippines. These have legal foundations in the 1987 Philippine Constitution through the express provisions on state policies, social justice and human rights. They have permeated the subsequent special laws on fisheries through the Fisheries Code (as amended by the 2014 Republic Act 10654). They have shifted the state policy from a production-focused orientation towards a policy direction geared at sustainable fisheries management, poverty alleviation and food security.

This legislation reflects the sectoral approach to fisheries management by categorizing fishing activity into municipal, commercial and aquaculture. It defines, among others, the access rights, privileges, and participation in policymaking of the three sectors mentioned above. The Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR), under the Department of Agriculture, is the lead agency for the implementation of the Fisheries Code and other fishery-related rules and regulations. The preferential rights to municipal fisherfolk for the use of municipal waters, granted by the law, however, are under the jurisdiction of the local government units (LGUs).

To improve the social-development policies for small-scale fishers requires medium- and long-term action from the government, besides the need to improve the implementation of existing policies.

The law does not deal with the rights of fishworkers and women, except for their representation both at the local and national level in the policymaking body, the Fisheries Aquatic Resources Management Council. Their rights and benefits in relation to social development are provided for in other special laws.

Environmental laws

Primarily being a resource-based occupation, the fisheries sector

*This article is by **Dinna L. Umengan** (dinnaumengan@yahoo.com), Executive Director, and **Mario Maderazo** (memaderazo2012@gmail.com), Policy and Legal Consultant, Tambuyog Development Center, Philippines*

JERICK DILLERA

Fishing village, Sagnay, Camarines Sur in Bicol Region, The Philippines. Small-scale fishing is highly fragmented owing to the lack of organization, which limits the capacity of fishers to access social-safety nets, and formal financial services

is also covered by a number of environment-related laws and policies on the protection, management and conservation of the fisheries and aquatic resources. Protection of these resources means the stability of source for food and livelihood of the small-scale fishers.

The autonomy given to LGUs under the Local Government Code of 1991 made the delivery of basic social services accessible to local communities and led to the decentralized enforcement of national environmental laws as well as local ordinances adopted by local legislative councils.

The Philippine government's commitment to the achievement of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is reflected in the Philippine Development Plan 2040, called 'Ambisyon 2040'. It envisions the transformation of the country into a middle-class society. Initial commitment in fisheries involves programmes dwelling on the management and sustainable use of fisheries and aquatic resources.

The national government responded to the economic and social disruption arising from the COVID-19 pandemic by enacting a law enabling it to undertake urgent steps, such as imposition of quarantine measures, taking over of private establishments as may be necessary, realignment of the approved national budget, and provision of financial support, health subsidies and loan packages, among others. Administrative and logistical challenges marred the timely and adequate delivery of the social and economic support to those who needed them, including small-scale fishers. Experts have called the imposition of restrictions militaristic, not based on science; it was even challenged for being discriminatory.

Despite the restrictions and preventive measures of the government to contain the pandemic, deaths and infections remain one of the highest in the Southeast Asian region. To improve the social-development policies for small-scale fishers requires medium- and long-term action from the government, besides the need to improve the implementation of existing policies. Integration of the human-rights-based approach to existing sustainable fisheries management should be the overarching framework to ensure that the state programmes and projects are inclusive, securing a dignified life for small-scale fishers—both men and women—even in times of crisis like the pandemic's socioeconomic disruption.

Poverty alleviation

The impact of the Community-Based Monitoring System (CBMS) on sector-

specific poverty-alleviation measures is yet to be realized, given the infancy of its implementation. CBMS is an evidence-based tool for programming, monitoring and evaluation of economic and social-protection measures to address the multifaceted dimension of poverty and sector-specific interventions. Its institutionalization should be matched with effective capacity building for LGUs, in terms of developing their comprehensive local development plans, and developing implementers from the national government with respect to prioritizing development plans for the poorest of the poor, including the Philippine government's commitment to the achievement of the 17 SDGs as reflected in its own plans.

The rights and remedies for small-scale fishers are spelled out by a number of national policies and specific laws to operationalize them. For instance, the 1987 Constitution grants subsistence fishermen preferential use of the state-owned communal marine and fishing resources, both inland and offshore, supported with appropriate technology and research, adequate financial, production, and marketing assistance, and other services.

The Fisheries Code of 1998 (as amended by Republic Act 10654) includes poverty alleviation in the fisheries sector among its aims; it grants municipal fisherfolk preferential access to municipal waters, accompanied by a number of support services to production, research, and participation in policymaking for the management and conservation of fisheries and aquatic resources.

The Local Government Code of 1991 grants preferential treatment to the organizations or co-operatives of marginal fisherfolk with respect to access and user rights to a number of fishery resources within the jurisdiction of the LGUs.

Under the 2019 Republic Act 11291, called 'Magna Carta for the Poor', small-scale fisheries is among the sectors given the right to demand poverty-alleviation schemes from the government. The state is committed to the progressive realization of the following five rights: right to food, right to decent work, right to housing, right to relevant education, and right to highest attainable standard of health.

These statutory rights have mediated ameliorative changes in the quality of life of small-scale fishers. The enjoyment of their rights and privileges with respect to access to fishery resources are also dependent on the conditions of fishery and aquatic resources and, ultimately, determines the quality of their life. This is not lost in the sector-specific intervention under the 1997 Social Reform and Poverty Alleviation Act (Republic Act No 8425), wherein the legislated programme for artisanal fisherfok is the management and conservation of fishery and aquatic resources.

This should be nuanced by resolving the conflict in the use of municipal waters and by securing the tenurial rights of municipal fisherfolk. Among other concerns, their access to municipal waters is constantly challenged by the intrusion of commercial fishers and the unmitigated impacts of aquaculture on municipal capture fishing. These have remained unresolved and have yet to be effectively mediated by the LGUs and the national government. Thus, effective monitoring of regulatory standards, law enforcement and active prosecution of violations also determine the enjoyment by fishers of their collective and individual rights over the fragile and finite fishery and aquatic resources.

The governance and institutional arrangement in the fisheries sector also affects the management and conservation of fishery and aquatic resources. The Department of Agriculture administers it, with BFAR as the policy and implementing agency on fisheries-related concerns. Under this set-up, the fisheries sector has to compete with the other sub-sectors in agriculture in terms of budgeting and policy implementation. Lumping fisheries with the agricultural sector tends to tie the management of fisheries to production-focused interventions.

Rights and remedies

The sector is composed of the municipal, commercial and aquaculture components. Though intended as a codification of all fisheries laws and policies, the Fisheries Code (as amended by Republic Act 10654) fails to cover the specific concerns of fishworkers and the women engaged in fisheries. For determining fishers'

rights and remedies, the process relies on an executive issuance DAO 156-16 (with respect to rights of fishworkers) and the 'Magna Carta of Women' (for a broad human-rights-based approach on the rights of women working in agriculture), among others.

Besides the usual problem of implementation of existing laws and policies, the sectoral approach in fisheries governance should integrate the human-rights-based approach in development planning. Framing sustainable fisheries management and governance based on human rights will provide an inclusive approach. It will make other groups within the fisheries sector visible subjects of development planning. It will also enable policymakers to target the nuances and specificity of the needs and problems of sub-groups within the sector, notably fishworkers and women. Sustainability of fisheries will move beyond increasing production and environmental management and protection of the fisheries; it can be geared towards investing in fishers—both women and men—so they can lead a dignified life even in times of crisis like the social and economic disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

…the sectoral approach in fisheries governance should integrate the human-rights-based approach in development planning.

Desired course of action

A list of recommendations to help fishers—and the fisheries sector as a whole—has emerged from the experiences and learnings of NGOs in partnership with fishing communities during the COVID-19 pandemic and from past natural disasters. This will facilitate a recovery from the social and economic impacts of the pandemic, strengthening the resilience of the sector through institutional reforms and sustainable development:

1. Strengthen local fish production systems by, (i), organizing and strengthening fisherfolk associations, savings clubs and co-operatives to serve as local consolidators; (ii), by assisting LGUs to establish and develop local new markets for fish products; and, (iii), by shortening the supply chain by directly linking producers with the market (for example, with local restaurants, food establishments, groceries, cafeterias and canteens of schools, hospitals and offices, and feeding programmes).
2. Establish a Department of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (DFAR) to upgrade the Agency's capacity and resources to ensure timely response to the needs of the industry and to develop and implement new ways of ensuring food security based on local fish-production systems.
3. Conduct a national assessment on the impact of COVID-19 on local fishers by BFAR, in collaboration with LGUs, partner NGOs and fisherfolk organizations (to quantify, for example, the loss in income and livelihood and the status of national and local fish stocks). Data from said assessment can be used to develop appropriate support and assistance to affected communities, enhancing existing conservation measures (for example, expansion of marine protected areas or MPAs, or regulation of fishing efforts to catch the 'right' fish sizes).
4. Establish a comprehensive Social Protection Package for Fisherfolk, consisting of: (i), health insurance; (ii), health support package (such as face masks, cleansing alcohol and vitamins); and (iii) subsidy.
5. Continued implementation of fisherfolk registration and updating of the registry of fishers, boats and gears to: (i), identify fishing vessels and gears to be allowed during quarantine lockdowns; (ii), reduce illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing by regulating fishers, boats and gears; and, (iii), help identify qualified beneficiaries for assistance and relief distribution.
6. Encourage LGUs (through their 20 per cent development funds) and the BFAR to establish fish-processing plants and community fish-landing centres with ice-making machines, cold storage facilities and freezers.
7. Absorb fishers displaced by, say, social-distancing requirements or gear and boat regulations, in the newly established community fish-

landing centres, ice plants and fish-processing plants.
8. Recruit fisherfolk communities in food-for-work programmes for coastal clean-ups and MPA maintenance and protection.
9. Strengthen fishery law enforcement through the installation and utilization of Vessel Monitoring Mechanisms (VMM) and Visible Infrared Imaging Radiometer Suites (VIIRS) for Bantay-Dagat volunteers, fish wardens and other fishery law enforcement units.
10. Enact House Bill No 5023, titled 'An Act Granting Benefits and Incentives to Accredited Bantay-Dagat and for other Purposes'. This will not only strengthen and ensure continued enforcement of fishery laws but also provide additional income for Bantay-Dagat volunteer fish wardens.

Making the Fisheries Code work

In relation to the implementation of the Fisheries Code and other social-protection measures needed by small-scale fishers, the following recommendations will strengthen government programmes and policies:

1. Support programme for CFLC: Section 153 of the Fisheries Code provides for infrastructure support for municipal fisherfolk, including the establishment of Community Fish Landing Centres (CFLCs). This will help improve the social and economic situation of the small-scale fishers. The FARMCs can be a platform for monitoring these centres. NGOs can assist in capacitybuilding on coastal resource management and social enterprise development. Municipal fishers should be given full recognition of their roles at all levels of CFLC implementation. Memorandums of Agreement should specify roles of beneficiaries in the implementation and operation of CFLCs.
2. Social insurance for municipal fishers: Development of social-protection programmes should go beyond addressing short-term needs. To make them transformative, they have to address the survival needs of fishing households by giving them access to sources of sustainable livelihood and steady incomes. Having sustainable livelihoods and incomes necessitates the access and control over productive resources by the small-scale fishers as well as their control in the management of the natural coastal resources. Numerous coastal municipalities are practicing Community-Based Management of MPAs and Community-Based Coastal Resource Management (CBCRM). Focusing on these prerequisites would contribute in poverty reduction in the long term, paving the way to address social inequality.
3. Implement guidelines on fisherfolk settlement area: Most of the fisherfolk families just settled are now occupying lands with little or no documentation to secure their residence. These are public lands and form part of the salvage or easement zones. The fishing families are not the only ones facing the threat of displacement and relocation. Those settling in coastal lands beyond the salvage or easement zones are also facing these threats. Many of these settlers had been residing in their communities for years—some for generations—without any guarantee of tenure. Some are even paying taxes for their land. There have been instances of private claimants securing title over public coastal lands, with some resorting to land grab.
4. Adopt the archipelagic principle: The delineation/delimitation of municipal waters for municipalities and cities with offshore islands is long overdue. For consistency and congruence to national and international legal frameworks, it is but logical that the archipelagic principle be used in defining municipal waters, particularly in municipalities with offshore islands. The National Mapping and Resource Information Authority recommended this also, and it is duly mandated by the Fisheries

Adopt the archipelagic principle: The delineation/ delimitation of municipal waters for municipalities and cities with offshore islands is long overdue.

Code. This will ensure LGUs are able to manage clearly defined areas of municipal waters, enact effective conservation and management measures, impose revenue measures and regulations, and exercise enforcement and control functions over resource-use activities within their respective municipal waters. This is more attuned to promote the local and fiscal autonomy of the LGUs.

5. Implementation of DOLE DO 156-16: Preventive measures against labour-related issues of fishworkers on board Commercial Fishing Vessels (CFVs) with Philippine registry are addressed by DO 156-16. It is aligned with ILO Convention C188 in protecting fishworkers. It provides the normative regulations and standards on employee-employer relations, compensation and benefits, occupational safety and maritime safety, grievance mechanism and post-employment benefits such as repatriation, among others.
6. Promote coastal resilience programmes: Systems to address socioeconomic and environmental risks in fisheries production are being developed and installed. However, climate change and natural disasters pose serious threats that undermine such efforts. Responding to these challenges means that the impacts of climate change and disasters on coastal and near-shore fishery resources are taken into account in coastal resource management to ensure the maintenance of coastal or marine biodiversity. It also requires recognizing the importance of coastal areas, since a large population of Filipinos live in coastal communities, depending on the coastal resources for their food and livelihood. So far, an assessment of the risks to the impacts of climate change and disasters specific to coastal areas and communities, together with the appropriate mitigating and adaptive measures, has yet to be made seriously in government policies and programmes.
7. Social protection and recovery from the pandemic's impact: The COVID-19 pandemic has subjected the fisheries industry to several challenges and difficulties that have greatly affected the productivity and well-being of its communities. The imposition of a nation-wide community quarantine, as a means of controlling the spread of contamination by the COVID-19 virus, effectively shut down the fishing industry, as the physical movement of people was limited. The shut down of other sectors and facilities upon which the fishing industry relies—transport, ice plants, wet markets, fish-landing centres, suppliers of fishing equipment—also greatly hampered fishing activities and productivity. There is a need for social-protection measures to prevent fishers and workers from experiencing the socioeconomic impacts of the pandemic.

The shut down of other sectors and facilities upon which the fishing industry relies also greatly hampered fishing activities and productivity.

For more

Fishy Tourism
https://www.icsf.net/images/samudra/pdf/english/issue_84/4488_art_Sam_84_art07_Philippines_Michael_Fabinyi.pdf

Being Worker-friendly
https://www.icsf.net/images/samudra/pdf/english/issue_84/4496_art_Sam_84_art15_The%20Philippines_Dinna%20L.%20Umengan.pdf

Clear and Present Danger
https://www.icsf.net/images/samudra/pdf/english/issue_78/4337_art_Samudra%20Report%20No%2078%20Clear%20and%20Present%20Danger%20by%20Dinna%20Lacsamana-Umengan.pdf

Life after Yolanda
https://www.icsf.net/images/samudra/pdf/english/issue_67/3982_art_Sam67en_art03.pdf

Pillars of Decent Work
https://www.icsf.net/images/samudra/pdf/english/issue_77/4313_art_Sam77_e_art12.pdf

Filling The Gap Between Theory and Practice

While Thailand has been proactive in implementing the SSF Guidelines, much work is required to join social development with sustainable fisheries

In 2015 all UN member states, including Thailand, adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It comprises 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that include: Ending poverty, improving healthcare and education, tackling climate change, reducing inequality, and stimulating economic growth. Thailand has committed to achieving these goals by 'leaving no-one behind', thus laying the groundwork to achieve social and economic equality and acting as an impetus to transition from an 'upper-middle income' country to 'high income' country, as outlined in Thailand's 20-year National Strategy (2018-2037).

SDG 14 is titled 'life below water'. It calls for the sustainable use and conservation of oceans, sea and marine resources, including small-scale fisheries. It acknowledges the critical importance of marine resources to poverty, employment, nutrition and food security, among other things. That said, years of over-exploitation has caused unprecedented damage. Though a natural check like the COVID-19 pandemic has relieved the pressure, this goal acknowledges more needs to be done.

Thailand is a Southeast Asian nation with a tropical climate and an abundance of diverse water resources. This makes Thailand one of the world's major exporters of shrimps, fish and fish products, generating roughly 20 percent of the total food product export. Moreover, an abundance of small-scale fisheries provide for local consumers. Recent growth in the fisheries sector has brought about severe challenges, like the degradation of marine fishery resources and ecosystems because of overfishing. The importance of SDG 14 to Thailand is obvious, as is the necessity of clear regulation and intervention. Thailand has adopted a number of international and national policies, including the FAO's Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication (SSF Guidelines). These focus on strengthening the capacity and resilience of small-scale fishing communities, including access to resources and markets.

Artisanal fishers, ethnic fishers and women fishers have historically been left out of decision-making processes of national and social development.

Research seeks to review legislation informing social development in Thailand, as also to ascertain how social development can help aid the conservation and sustainable use of marine, coastal, freshwater and brackish water diversity. While the study examines issues of poverty, inequality, employment, decent work, social inclusion, occupational health and safety, education, livelihoods, sanitation, water, clean energy, climate change, domestic violence and the family institution, this article highlights

*This article by **Ravadee Prasertcharoensuk** (ravadee.prasertcharoensuk@gmail.com), Director, Sustainable Development Foundation (SDF), Thailand and the summary is preparedby **Silke Moxon-Riedlin** (silke.m-r@hotmail.com),NHSEI Project Coordinator, London, United Kingdom*

SDF / THAILAND

Village health volunteers trying to reduce mosquito menace in a fishing village in Thailand. There has been an effort to specify social inclusion in policy statements, but in reality, there are still vast gaps that make this discussion purely theoretical

the key findings. Conclusions were drawn through document reviews and analysis, focus groups and national workshops.

What the research found

In 2019, the government's policy statement was ratified and features twelve major polices and twelve urgent policies that help the country meet the SDG goals. Importance is placed on social inclusion, community empowerment and developing public heath and social security systems that cover suitable education, healthcare and employment. Since ratification, progress has been made in the realms of social security and social development.

The findings suggest that the poverty rate has decreased from 9.85 per cent in 2018 to 6.24 per cent in 2019. The COVID-19 pandemic has caused widespread disruptions to economic growth, employment and poverty reduction. That said, further gains have been made with the development of the 'health security for all' programme that provides all citizens, including artisanal fishers, access to medical care. In addition, progress has been

made in terms of access to education (all children are guaranteed access until at least grade nine), public supply of utilities and sanitation.

Some progress is obvious. But more needs to be done to put theory into practice. Artisanal small-scale fishers, ethnic fishers and women fishworkers have historically been left out of national fisheries policies and decision-making processes. This has largely been attributed to gaps in government data sets, for example, on women's roles in the artisanal fisheries value chain. This shows that even though there has been an effort to specify social inclusion in policy statements, but in reality, there are still vast gaps that make this discussion purely theoretical. The consequences of this exclusion have led to a lack of knowledge and opportunity, especially with reference to the development of capacity building policy.

Further, the drive to achieve the targets outlined in the SDGs has led to the growth of development gaps and overlapping priorities. The government has indeed been promoting investment for economic growth based on marine and coastal resources (as outlined in the major policy five), such as the construction of sea ports, industrial estates and the tourism service industry, this growth concurrently removes access to the resources fishers rely on for a living, depriving them of their livelihoods. Further issues of access have arisen due to the promotion of aquaculture and mariculture as an enterprising opportunity.

The research that informs this article concludes that Thailand has comprehensive measures in place to achieve the goals set out in the SDGs, but in practice they lack coherent transition from theory to action.

Research recommendations

Considering the broader social and economic development, the following suggestions will enhance the position of small-scale fishers, both men and women:

- Developing a database system covering the whole population, ensuring it is updated and maintained regularly. It will provide an informed baseline for future policy and intervention.
- A review of the concept of development based on the principles of shared national benefits and balanced conservation and rehabilitation practices.
- Development of an area-based approach to management of fisheries and natural resources.
- Prioritisation of good governance within resource management.

Thailand has comprehensive measures in place to achieve the goals set out in the SDGs, but in practice they lack coherent transition from theory to action.

- Reevaluation of the policies on fisheries and natural resources and environmental management. They currently lack linkages to social development policies and implementation.

Adoption of these recommendations will lead to the development of policy which truly leaves nobody behind.

For more

Sustainable Development Foundation
http://sdfthai.org/

Marine Fisheries Management Plan of Thailand: A National Policy for Marine Fisheries Management
https://fisheries-refugia.org/regional-inception-workshop/inception-presentation/21-21-fr-inception-workshop-marine-fisheries-management-plan-thailand/file

The Right Form of Rights
https://www.icsf.net/images/samudra/pdf/english/issue_51/3236_art_ART-01.pdf

Guardians of the Sea
https://www.icsf.net/images/yemaya/pdf/english/issue_34/1649_art01.pdf

WOMEN IN FISHING

In Abidjan, women in the artisanal fishing sector offer work to young people

In Côte d'Ivoire, more than half of the population is under 20 years old. In artisanal fishing communities such as Abidjan, San Pedro and Grand-Bereby, many young people are desperate for work.

With the scarcity of fish, becoming a fisherman or a woman fish processor is almost mission impossible. With a very low school attendance - on average, only a third of young people in fishing communities have had access to education, half that of young people nationally - finding a job outside the artisanal fishing sector is even more difficult.

To give these young people a future in Côte d'Ivoire, the women of the Co-operative des Mareyeuses et Transformatrices des Produits Halieutiques d'Abidjan (CMATPHA) have reacted. They got together and decided to make room for them in the artisanal fish processing sector. "We are their mothers, we couldn't stand by and do nothing," explains Micheline Dion Somplehi, president of the co-operative. In a show of solidarity, the women agreed to share the benefits of their activities with the young people, entrusting them with various tasks, such as unloading the catches and preparing the fish for processing.

When the pirogues arrive, young men armed with basins go to meet them to unload the catches and take them to the sites where the women process the fish or to the refrigerators where the fish will be stored. Being a 'chargeur' (loader) is a full-time job during the high fishing season. It involves not only unloading the fish from the pirogues, but also putting the fish on ice, organising storage, cleaning the freezers. They are paid by the women processors they supply, 100 CFA francs per basin brought in. The fisherman whose catches they unload also offers them some fish for their consumption. At the end of the day, if they have unloaded several pirogues, they may have received enough fish to sell some, which enables them to improve their income...

https://www.cffacape.org/news-blog/in-abidjan-women-in-the-artisanal-fishing-sector-offer-work-to-young-people

BLOOD SALMON

An average diver dies per month in the Chilean salmon industry during 2021

On average, one diver died per month in the Chilean salmon industry during 2021. The new death of a diver in a salmon farming center from the mega company Aqua Chile, owned by the Agrosúper holding, marks the average of one worker death per month in this billionaire export industry during 2021. The diver-shellfish diver Andrés Alejandro Teigel Coliague (41), died while lifting the moorings of the rafts-cages of the Gala 2 culture center, located in the Aysén region.As is customary in the Chilean salmon industry, Teigel worked sub-contracted by the SGM Austral company.

In the Patagonian region of Aysen, there is an exponential territorial and productive increase in salmon monoculture which is being accompanied by a procession of successive deaths of divers. This is other consequence of the precarious working conditions in this industry that uses the "temporary subcontracting system" of workers, without the intervention of the regional authorities, the Directorate of Maritime Territory (Directemar), dependent on the Chilean Navy, the Labour Inspection, and state agencies.

For the mega company Aqua Chile, this is the second death of a subcontracted diver in its farming centers this year. On February 9, Héctor Lagos Peñailillo, (42), died due to the precarious diving protocols that exist in a farming center in the town of Melinka. The worker had been sub-hired by the Society for Aquaculture Projects and Submarine Services (Passub). Previously, on January 25, 2021, a 16-year-old adolescent diver died while doing underwater work in a salmon farm near Ipun Island, also in the Melinka area.

On 25 February 2021, the artisanal fisher diver Cristian Diaz (60) died in the Concheo 2 farming center, Aysen region, owned by the mega-company Salmones Blumar. Díaz had been sub-contracted by the company Servicios Prime SpA.

International markets and consumers are already identifying Chilean productions as the "blood salmon from the south of the world," Ecoceanos Centre said.

https://www.ecoceanos.cl/2021/04/salmones-de-sangre-muere-un-buzo-promedio-al-mes-en-la-industria-chilena-de-salmones-durante-el-2021/

CIVIL SOCIETY MECHANISM

International Planning Committee for Food Sovereignty (IPC)

The IPC's origin dates back to the World Food Summit organized in Rome in 1996 by the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), as a part of global civil society's reaction to ongoing global processes on food and agriculture, and as part of an attempt to engage actively with them. Today, the IPC is the world's largest alliance of small-scale food producers, including peasants, artisanal fisherfolk, pastoralists and herders, nomads, indigenous peoples and indigenous organizations, forest dwellers, landless people, urban producers and rural workers.

The IPC represents more than 6,000 national organizations and 300 mn small-scale food producers. Through this platform, we defend the interests of those who supply 70 per cent of global food production and who yet continue to suffer from food insecurity, malnutrition and the non-recognition of their fundamental role in feeding the planet. IPC is the open, informal space where the dialogue and debate among different stakeholders in the field of food security, food sovereignty and nutrition is facilitated, conveying the message from civil society to governments, international institutions and NGOs. The IPC is autonomous from political parties, institutions, governments and the private sector. Through its evolution as a global food sovereignty platform, the IPC has maintained a close relationship with FAO, facilitating the participation of thousands of small-scale food producers and other relevant constituencies. The IPC has enabled Members to channel their various competencies to FAO and other relevant forums and processes. The platform has organized these into five working groups: Agricultural Biodiversity; Agroecology; Fisheries; Indigenous Peoples; and Land, Forests, Water and Territory.

The IPC called for a profound reform of the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) to turn it into an authoritative, inclusive forum for ensuring policy coherence in the name of food security and the human right to food. As a result of the IPC's work, and with support of the G77, the Transnational Agrarian Movements and the FAO, the CFS was transformed into an inclusive global policy forum deliberating on food security and nutrition. From 2009 this ensured a strong presence of small-scale food producers contributing to the definition of the agenda through a Civil Society Mechanism (CSM) that replicated the regional and constituency structure of the IPC. The first outcome of the reformed CFS was the approval of the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security (Tenure Guidelines/VGGT) in May 2012. Moreover, FAO guarantees the IPC formal recognition as a space of co-ordination among different food-producer organizations since 2002 and, through various Exchange of Letters (EoLs), the IPC and FAO agreed on defining the framework in which to collaborate. The last one was signed in 2019 and it is still ongoing. To know more about the IPC, visit:

https://www.foodsovereignty.org/

By: Stefano Mori
Email: s.mori@croceviaterra.it

COFI Declaration for Sustainable Fisheries and Aquaculture

13. The Committee:

(a) reaffirmed the fundamental role of marine and inland small-scale and artisanal fisheries for achieving the SDGs and, in particular, SDG 14.b to eradicate hunger and poverty; achieve food security and improve nutrition; secure sustainable food systems, sustainable resource utilization and sustainable livelihoods; and reiterated the importance of the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication (SSF Guidelines) as a tool for that purpose;

(b) recognized that COVID-19 has had a particularly negative impact on small-scale and artisanal fisheries and aquaculture, and stressed the need to provide the appropriate support and foster resilience for the sustainable development of this sector;

(c) commended FAO on progress of the implementation of the SSF Guidelines under the FAO SSF Umbrella Programme and related activities. It reiterated the importance of continuing FAO's efforts and encouraged seeking synergies and interlinkages with global, regional and national processes and relevant organizations;

(d) requested increased work in relation to support for small-scale and artisanal fisheries with: i) better access to markets; ii) fair access to fishing rights, considering potential impacts of competing sectors and activities; iii) improved legal frameworks; iv) strengthened small-scale and artisanal fisheries organizations; v) improved gender equality and gender and youth empowerment; vi) use of information and communication technology; and vii) reduction of food loss and waste;

(e) appreciated the efforts to improve data collection and analysis, and affirmed the usefulness of the Illuminating Hidden Harvests (IHH) study to better understand the challenges and the opportunities facing small-scale and artisanal fisheries and improve related livelihoods through better policies and participation of stakeholders;

(f) requested FAO to intensify support to Members by building on the IHH study, using its findings and conducting further analyses, and to develop capacity on small-scale and artisanal fisheries' data and information, in particular at the national and regional level;

(g) reiterated its support for the Global Strategic Framework in Support of the Implementation of the SSF Guidelines and for FAO to further develop the knowledge-sharing platform and monitoring system for the implementation of the SSF Guidelines; and

(h) expressed its commitment to the International Year of Artisanal Fisheries and Aquaculture (IYAFA) in 2022, welcomed the proposed planning roadmap and invited countries and partners to be part of the activities; emphasized the opportunity to focus attention on the role of small-scale and artisanal fisheries and aquaculture in poverty eradication, ending hunger, food insecurity and all forms of malnutrition; also emphasized the need for IYAFA to increase awareness and understanding of this sector for the social and economic development of coastal communities and the provision of food of high nutritional value, sustainable use of natural resources, and COVID-19 response and recovery; recognized that IYAFA would also create a positive narrative through promoting partnerships, effective participation of small-scale and artisanal producers and exchange best practices, technical assistance and capacity building, taking into account the diverse nature of small-scale and artisanal fisheries and aquaculture.

2021 COFI Declaration for Sustainable Fisheries and Aquaculture

We, the Ministers and Plenipotentiaries representing FAO Members, Member Organizations, and Associated Members of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) at the 34th Session of the FAO Committee on Fisheries (COFI) in Rome in February 2021, and celebrating the 25th Anniversary of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries (CCRF), adopted in Resolution 4/95 by the FAO Conference on 31 October 1995,

Recalling the goal of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development to end poverty and hunger everywhere, and Noting that the world is not on track to achieve Zero Hunger1, with close to 750 mn people exposed to severe levels of food insecurity in 2019, while one in four children under five remain chronically malnourished,

Recognizing fisheries and aquaculture's role in supporting countries to achieve sustainable development, particularly in the fight against poverty, hunger, and malnutrition, bearing in mind the continuous positive growth of the sector, which in 2018 contributed 32 mn tonnes of aquatic plants, as well as 156 mn tonnes of fish for direct human consumption, which is a 7-fold increase from 1950, and provides 3.3 bn people with almost 20 per cent of their average per capita intake of animal protein,

Noting also the Agenda's Sustainable Development Goal 14 to conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development, and the critical role sustainably managed fisheries have in achieving biological diversity outcomes, in line with sustainable and inclusive ocean economies,

Recognizing further that women are critical to all Sustainable Development Goals, in particular as agents in achieving food security and improved nutrition in poor and vulnerable households, and the fisheries and aquaculture sector's potential for growth in opportunities for women,

Acknowledging the important role and contribution of artisanal and small-scale fisheries and aquaculture in poverty eradication and in providing livelihoods, as well as ensuring food security and nutritional needs of local communities,

Noting with concern that the COVID-19 pandemic has the potential to aggravate poverty, hunger and malnutrition, including an unprecedented impact on the fisheries and aquaculture sector,

Recognizing further that sustainable fisheries management requires integrating fisheries into broader planning and ocean governance frameworks, within the context of the ecosystem and precautionary approaches, and strengthening the political will and capacity to improve the implementation of existing policy frameworks,

Recognizing that aquaculture has been the fastest growing food production industry over the last five decades, is responsible for the doubling of global per capita fish consumption since 1960, and is making increasing contributions to the provision of food and livelihoods for a growing population,

Recognizing further the need to ensure that the sector promotes sustainable feed sources, and develops in a sustainable manner, including by improving aquatic health and biosecurity, reducing the burden of disease and encouraging the responsible and prudent use of antimicrobials...

Source: Excerpts from Report of the 34th Session of the Committee on Fisheries (1–5 February 2021) http://www.fao.org/3/ne907en/ne907en.pdf

INFOLOG: NEW RESOURCES AT ICSF

Publications and Films

Report of the Special Rapporteur on the right to food, Michael Fakhri 24 December 2021
https://undocs.org/A/HRC/46/33
In the present report, submitted to the Human Rights Council pursuant to Council resolution 43/11, Michael Fakhri, provides an outline of the direction that he intends to take during his tenure.

Implementation of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries: Trends over the last 25 years
http://www.fao.org/3/cb2990en/CB2990EN.pdf
This booklet offers a glimpse into the objectives of the Code and the framework of instruments and guidelines that have, over the last 25 years, been built on the Code and in support of the implementation of its wide-ranging provisions.

Women's Economic Empowerment in Fisheries in the Blue Economy of the Indian Ocean Rim: A Baseline Report
https://www.unwomen.org/-/media/headquarters/attachments/sections/library/publications/2020/womens-economic-empowerment-in-fisheries-in-the-blue-economy-of-the-indian-ocean-rim-en.pdf?
This report provides a baseline analysis of women's economic empowerment in the fisheries sector in the blue economy of the Indian Ocean rim region.

ILO training package on inspection of labour conditions on board fishing vessels
https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_dialogue/---sector/documents/instructionalmaterial/wcms_766744.pdf
The training package responds to the needs for training material while being consistent with the requirements of the Work in Fishing Convention, 2007 (No. 188), to the "Guidelines on flag State inspection of working and living conditions on board fishing vessels" and to the "Guidelines for port State control officers carrying out inspections under the Work in Fishing Convention, 2007 (No. 188)".

Paumari - The Water People by Operação Amazônia Nativa
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a637goXzMqk
Known as water people, the Paumari are excellent fishermen and divers and inhabit lakes, floodplains, beaches and streams in the Tapauá River basin. The management of pirarucu, after seven years of work, recovered the fishing stock and contributed to the strengthening of its organization.

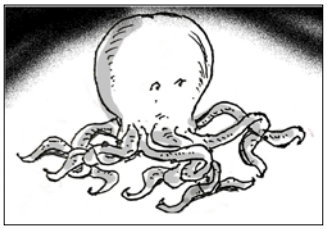
Conservación con la gente del mar: Avance y retos hacia el futuro
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S8c-VRMp1BM
Cultural and environmental diversity are intrinsically linked. The culture and resources of the sea are fundamental for the security and food sovereignty of marine fishing communities. This video shows in six minutes that if we lose our local fishing communities, a fundamental part of our culture, our identity and our gastronomy also disappears.

Rebuild or Leave 'Paradise': Climate Change Dilemma Facing a Nicaraguan Coastal Town
https://www.nytimes.com/video/world/americas/100000007494833/nicaragua-hurricane-eta-iota.html
Two major November hurricanes slammed into the same part of the Nicaraguan coast, laying waste to the Miskito village of Haulover. Faced with a future of intensifying storms, the residents must now consider whether to abandon their way of life by the ocean and move inland.

FLASHBACK

Need for Ratification

It is high time that countries ratify the ILO Work in Fishing Convention No. 188 so as to ensure better social protection for fishers



It is nearly six years now since the adoption of the Work in Fishing Convention No. 188 (C.188) by the International Labour Conference of the International Labour Organization (ILO). Only two countries (Argentina and Bosnia and Herzegovina) have ratified it so far, thus delaying its entry into force. This delay underscores the widely held view that fishers and fishworkers still do not receive the kind of attention they deserve when it comes to securing their social protection.

Why does it take such a long time for countries to ratify C.188? There are several reasons for this holdup. First of all, in most countries, especially in the developing world, there are hardly any requirements under current legislation to provide social protection for fishers. As a result, there is not much independent information on how fishers are hired, under what conditions they live and work, and what benefits they receive on leaving fishing due to injury or death or retirement. Information on issues such as child labour and forced labour in fishing and fishery-related activities is under-reported and anecdotal. For instance, while observing that existing laws are too fragmented or inadequate to provide sufficient social protection, the gap analysis of Indian legislation in relation to transposing C.188 has recommended legislating a new legal instrument. Many new elements in national legislation have to be developed to make them consistent with C.188. This is turning out to be a time-consuming process, which is holding up ratification of the Convention.

Secondly, in many countries, a new-generation sectoral labour instrument such as C.188, which has unprecedented elements with a sliding scale of standards on multiple axes such as the size of the vessel, days at sea, and distance from baselines, falls within the purview of different ministries. In many countries, for instance, various elements of C.188 fall within the jurisdiction of the labour authority, the fisheries authority or the maritime authority at different levels. It will take time to achieve some extent of coherence across these authorities.

Thirdly, while governments and trade union representatives are in support of ratifying C.188, sections of fishing vessel owners remain sceptical and insist that ratification would lead to non-viable fishing operations. According to some vessel owners, fishing operations would become less flexible and financially impracticable if improved labour standards are introduced on board fishing vessels. Separation of work hours from living hours on board fishing vessels is challenged on the basis of fishing operations being essentially different from land-based jobs and that fishers are, in fact, paid higher wages in compensation for their flexible hours of work. It is, however, moot if higher wages should be seen as justifiable compensation for poor, or fatigue-inducing, working and living conditions.

– from SAMUDRA Report, No.64, March 2013

ANNOUNCEMENTS

MEETINGS

United Nations World Oceans Day: The Ocean: Life and Livelihoods on 8 June 2021

https://unworldoceansday.org/un-world-oceans-day-2021/

Fifteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, 11 - 24 October 2021-Kunming, China

https://www.cbd.int/meetings/COP-15

People and the Seas conference 'Limits to Blue Growth?' held from 29 June – 2 July 2021

https://marecentre.nl/

WEBSITES

Social Protection and Fisheries

http://www.fao.org/social-protection/thematic-priorities/agriculture-natural-resources/fisheries-and-aquaculture/en/

The FAO has launched a new webpage detailing the high levels of poverty and vulnerability in small-scale fisheries which stem from social and economic marginalisation.

Gender Platform

https://gender.cgiar.org/

Generating Evidence and New Directions for Equitable Results (GENDER) is a new platform designed to put gender equality at the forefront.

The Regional Inshore Fisheries Groups (RIFGs)

https://rifg.scot/

The Regional Inshore Fisheries Groups (RIFGs) aim to improve the management of inshore fisheries in the 0-6 nautical mile zone of Scottish waters, and to give commercial inshore fishermen a strong voice in wider marine management developments.

EDITRUDITH LUKANGA/EMEDO

Endquote

When anxious, uneasy, and bad thoughts come, I go to the sea, and the sea drowns them out with its great wide sounds, cleanses me with its noise, and imposes a rhythm upon everything in me that is bewildered and confused.

– Rainer Maria Rilke