

# SAMUDRA

FOR CEBU

INTERNATIONAL COLLECTIVE IN SUPPORT OF FISHWORKERS

## Today

- ⊖ Opening Session  
Chapel, 9:00
- ⊖ Plenary Session  
St. Alphonsus, 11:30
- ⊖ Lunch  
Dining Hall, 13:00
- ⊖ Plenary (contd.)  
St. Alphonsus, 16:00
- ⊖ Dinner, Cultural Show  
Lobby/Lawn, 19:30

## Briefly

Samudra for Cebu is a bulletin which will report on the proceedings of this 6-day conference as well as act as a forum for participants to express opinions and viewpoints. These, needless to add, do not necessarily represent the official positions of ICSF.

The venue of the conference, the Holy Family Retreat House, is a large and spacious place, which commands an arresting view of Cebu City. To help you find your way around, a layout plan of the House is displayed on the Notice Board. The rooms where the sessions are to be held have names like St. Alphonsus, St. Gerard etc. The programme schedule lists the sessions and venues.

Don't worry, it's not going to be all work and no fun. Cultural programmes, dinners and a field trip will liven things up.

# Mabuhay !

Welcome to Cebu, the Queen City of the South of the Philippines. And welcome to the Tenth Anniversary of the Rome Conference and the triennial conference of ICSF.

Mabuhay, the traditional Filipino greeting of welcome, derives from the Tagalog word for 'life'. Today, as 110 persons from 34 countries gather in Cebu to ponder and resolve, that nuance seems singularly fitting—these participants from diverse national and cultural backgrounds are here to address issues which affect the livelihood of thousands of fisherfolk around the world.

Yes, welcome to a period of deliberation which pivots around the issue of livelihood itself.

Conceived as a body responsive to grass roots reality, ICSF draws its mandate from the express demands of fishworkers and their organizations. It is this guiding principle which forms the backbone for the structure of this 6-day conference.

The opening plenary session will see presentations by fishworkers from several countries. These will hopefully reflect a diversity

of experiences, sometimes contrasting, sometimes comparable. It will set the tone for the remainder of the conference.

Subsequently, theme papers will concentrate on the five key areas identified for the conference. These are:

- \* coastal environment and fishworkers
- \* fishworkers' organizations
- \* working conditions and social security
- \* technology and energy use
- \* transnational linkages in fisheries

In the separate and parallel sessions that follow, working groups will enlarge on the issues thrown up by the theme papers. These discussions will be underpinned by the expectations raised by fishworkers at the start of the conference.

On 7 June, at the concluding plenary session, the

working groups will present their reports. These, along with the deliberations of the preceding days, will form the basis for the preparation of the final conference statement.

The organisers of the conference are hopeful of earnest participation in the days to come. They expect to see a high level of informed reflection on the current status of fisheries.

And, on the practical side, they anticipate several concrete suggestions on how to transcend some of the problems that currently confront fishworkers and their living environment. ⊖

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# From Rome to Cebu...

Today, the 2nd of June 1994, in Cebu is a great day for fishworkers and their supporters worldwide. A decade ago in Rome, on 4 July 1984, there was an air of tentativeness and uncertainty about what we could achieve together.

At Rome our purpose was limited. We came together as a diverse group of fishworkers and their supporters from across the globe to highlight to the fisheries ministers of the world, brought together by the FAO, that fishworkers, not fish alone, should be central to any agenda for fisheries management and development.

Our coming together in Rome, given the constraints of finance, time and the fact that we did not know each other earlier, was our greatest assertion of this principle.

The five-day Roman encounter however achieved more than that. While it brought to the fore our diversity, it focused more sharply on the threats which bind together the common future of fishworkers. The fishworkers stressed the need for them to be more involved in national and regional level struggles which could be bolstered with international solidarity by supporters. The Rome conference called for a "just, participatory and sustainable fisheries development and management process."

Looking back over the decade, this seems to be the unmistakable direction taken by the various strands of local action—be it in Chile, Canada, Brasil, Senegal, India or the Philippines, to name a few countries. It also provided the basis for the formalisation of the International Collective in Support of Fishworkers (ICSF) in 1986.

In Cebu today we meet again—fishworkers and their supporters—with a firm sense of togetherness, purpose and resolve. Our assertions of the last decade have finally been accepted at various international forums—FAO, UNCED, ILO.

We now have the onus of proposing an agenda for concrete action to ensure that these hopes and aspirations can translate into live realities. Although today we are better equipped nationally, regionally and internationally to undertake this calling, it will be no easy task. This is particularly true if we are committed to creating our priorities out of the concerns emerging from the struggles of the fishworkers. We must avoid the trap of reducing the struggles of live local reality into mere slogans for global action.

We need to ask ourselves two questions: How do we continue to be sensitive and responsive to the numerous issues that impinge harshly on fishworker families and communities and simultaneously tackle the global forces which are often responsible for them? Can we aggregate the numerous ripples of hope that emanate at the local level to produce waves of change at the international realm?

Surely, only a strategy of continued local involvement with fishworkers alongside our global actions can assure this. It is this approach which has distinguished the ICSF network since its formation in 1986: our ability to think and act both locally and globally. This alone has given us our credibility and is our *raison d'être*.

There were no paved roads from Rome to Cebu. But through the uniting force of the currents of the "samudra" (the expanse of ocean) our hopes and aspirations from around the globe have brought us together once again. This time we decide on our voyage into the 21st century. We must hope that the time we spend together will provide for committed interaction; openness to new thoughts and ideas; careful consideration of options; and the pledge to be in solidarity with one another.

Long live the fishworkers movements! And life to ICSF for as long as it is relevant to the movements!

*John Kurien*

John Kurien is a social scientist who works at the Centre for Development Studies, Trivandrum, India. He is also a member of the Animation Team of ICSF and was instrumental in organising the Rome Conference.

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*Fishworkers must move from the periphery to the centre of the sights of fisheries development and management*

— Brochure announcing the International Conference of Fishworkers and their Supporters, Rome, 1984

*Fishermen are the centre of the concern for sustainable fisheries development and they are entitled to a healthy and productive life in harmony with nature*

— UNCED and its Implications for Fisheries  
FAO Document, 1993

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VOICES

VOICES

# 'Cebu is special'

in

CONVERSATION

**Nenita Cura, director, Family Center, Asian Social Institute, Manila is the Conference Co-ordinator in the Philippines. She talks about what went into the making of this conference**

*Is this the first time a conference of this size is being organised by ICSF in this part of the world?*

Yes, in terms of scale or magnitude, this is a first.

*How did you go about organising this conference?*

At the ICSF Animation Team meeting last year, we decided on three strategic levels of planning. We discussed broadly the themes and subthemes and what we expected of the conference. Being the tenth anniversary of the Rome Conference, we felt this would be very special and therefore we had to prepare well.

The Madras office did the bulk of the administrative and monitoring work. We created the Manila steering committee which discussed the venue and programme in co-ordination with Madras. We set up a local committee in Cebu for orientation of the local fishermen on the conference and its implication for their struggle. We also called all the national fishermen's organisations in the Philippines for a meeting to invite them to participate in the Cebu meeting. I found this challenging because it needed levelling off. This should be an occasion which should unite, not divide, us.

Who knows, the preparation for this conference may yet be the medium by which all these differences could be resolved. This is very important because one reason we chose Cebu as the venue is the strong fishermen support base we have here.

*What's so special about Cebu?*

Cebu is the second most developed city in the Philippines. It is developing so fast that we sometimes call it Ce-boom! It has a strong fishworkers' base with 26



local organisations and 1333 active fishworker members. Cebu also imparts a sense of history. Magellan landed here in 1521 and was killed by the chieftain of Mactan Island who was called Lapu-lapu, now immortalised in

the name of a city as well as a popular fish!

*And why was the Holy Family Retreat House chosen?*

First, because of its central facilities and the breezy building which lets in lots of light and is less dependent on energy. Also, the diocese here is supporting us with all its facilities. This is about the best conference venue in Cebu. The next best would have been a hotel and we didn't want to do that.

*What kind of staff support have you been able to mobilise?*

The whole staff of the Family Center of the Asian Social Institute is working on the conference. The Cebu local committee is headed by no less than Cardinal Ricardo Vidal himself, which helps us get things done. We also have media support through press conferences and interactions with the local press.

*Are you nervous about the conference?*

Honestly not, because I think we are prepared. It took us one year to do our homework. As I always say, we do our best and leave the rest to God!

**THE** final tally has yet to come in, but it looks like a record haul -- 110 men and women from 34 countries representing five continents (save Antarctica and Australia) are now here at Cebu.

£

**IT** is for the first time that an international ICSF meet is bringing together fishworkers from the South Pacific countries of Fiji and Solomon Islands as well as Namibia, Gambia, Vietnam, Indonesia, Maldives, Ecuador, Peru and Brasil.

**THERE** are also supporters from Papua New Guinea and New Zealand and a ministry of fisheries official from the government of Vietnam.

CONFERENCE

NEWS

**SEVERAL** groups have come with audiovisual presentations on their fisheries and the problems they face. These will be screened during the lunch breaks.

**ARRANGEMENTS** have been made for simultaneous translations of the plenary sessions of the conference from English to Spanish and French.

£

**WHILE** several discussions have been held in different forums, there is still very little baseline data on the destruction of marine habitats. The subject of coastal resource management, therefore, finds an important place in the conference agenda.

# A Roman Flashback

In July 1984, Rome was witness to the International Conference of Fishworkers and their Supporters. That epochal meet came up with these recommendations

We fishworkers and their supporters from 34 countries of the world who struggle for survival and sometimes die for their cause, urge governments to be responsive to the demands of the local fishworkers' organizations to:

- \* Reserve and protect for small-scale fishing all near-shore waters and fishing grounds accessible to it
- \* Ban all technologies that disturb the balance of the ecosystem either through overfishing or pollution and prevent the use of chemicals that are forbidden in the industrialized countries
- \* Associate local fishermen's organizations or fishermen communities in devising and implementing regulatory measures (with concrete possibilities of control)
- \* Respect and guarantee the fundamental rights of fishworkers to free association; withdraw all measures that penalize the workers

We recommend that governments of the Third World co-operate on a regional basis to ensure effective management of their fish resources in the long term. We stress the essential role of women in fishing communi-

ties considering their sensitivity to the deteriorating quality of life.

We support them in getting organised to:

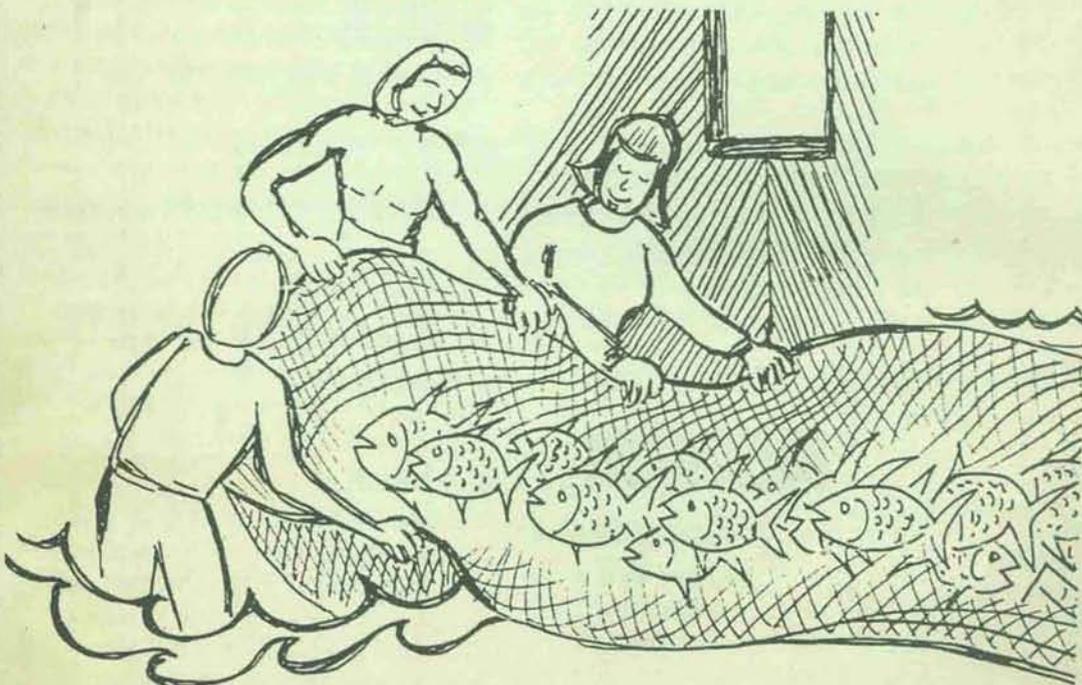
- \* protect their activities in the production process
- \* improve their working conditions
- \* alleviate the burden of their work
- \* actively reduce pollution and protect the environment

We call for a collective effort in changing attitudes and values towards women in order to get their full participation in decision making at all levels.

We emphasize the positive contribution of non-governmental organizations in the development of technology and forms of participatory management that ensure the future of small-scale fisheries. Priority should be given to lessening dependency on foreign capital, equipment and know-how.

We ask that all scientists who recognize the importance of conserving and enhancing the person-nature relationship take a strong stand on behalf of the small-scale fishermen.

We urge them to work in collaboration with local fishermen's organizations to complement their knowledge of the sea and to enable them to regain their rights over the sea. ☺



## Help Line

The Conference Secretariat will function round the clock (well, almost!) from the ground floor of this building. Services include:

### Documentation

☞ Patricia Emmanuel

### Travel/Tickets

☞ Betty Solleza

### Accommodation

☞ Nenita Cura

### Special Diet

☞ Mary Cuizon

### First Aid

☞ Cebu Emergency  
Rescue Foundation  
☎ 95676

### Laundry

☞ Mercy Vergara

### Telephone Calls

☞ Malou Valencia /  
Ingrid Medalle

### Odd Jobs

☞ Niobe Espinosa

### Samudra for Cebu

☞ KG Kumar/Satish Babu

## Tomorrow

### Theme Papers I-III

St. Alphonsus, 8:00

### Theme Papers IV-V

St. Alphonsus, 11:00

### Lunch

Dining Hall, 13:00

### Working Groups

St. Alphonsus (Lecture Hall)/  
St. Clement (I Floor)/  
St. John Neumann (II Floor)  
16:00 onwards

### Dinner

Dining Hall, 19:30

SAMUDRA FOR CEBU is specially  
published by ICSF for the Cebu  
Conference

# SAMUDRA

FOR CEBU

INTERNATIONAL COLLECTIVE IN SUPPORT OF FISHWORKERS

## Today

- Theme Papers  
St. Alphonsus, 8:00
- Lunch  
Dining Hall, 12:30
- Working Groups  
Parallel Sessions, 15:30
- Report Preparation  
Working Groups
- Dinner  
Dining Hall, 19:00

## Briefly

All those beautiful large paintings you see all over the place spring from the brush and pen of Virgilio Cristobal, National Co-ordinator of the Asian Social Institute, Manila. With more than a little help from friends, Vir began conceptualising the visuals for the different themes as early as September of last year.

If you have views you would like to convey to other delegates, here's the perfect forum for you. Write up your comments briefly and drop them off at the Secretariat. We will try to carry them in these columns. Poem, illustrations, cartoons—most welcome.

SAMUDRA FOR CEBU is specially published by ICSF for the Cebu Conference

## DRAMATIC OPENING TO CEBU CONFERENCE

# A Day of Listening

The Cebu Conference got off to a dramatic start with the Filipino hosts putting up a spectacular show at the opening ceremony

True to the Filipino reputation for theatrical extravaganzas and dramatic flourish, the hosts put up a show to remember at the opening ceremony of the Cebu Conference: garlands of shells to welcome the delegates, the Philippines flag carried centre-stage in an 'entrance of colours' to precede the rousing melody of the national anthem, an equally colourful speech by the wizened 'old man of the sea', Sofronio Belagtas, on the significance of Cebu ten years after the Rome Conference.

To top it all was a mellow song from 26-year old Jenkin Cabanit, recently elected Councillor of Duljo-Fatima and a faculty member at the Cebu Institute of Technology.

In the general mood of elation, Mina Ramirez, president of the Asian Social Institute, who was compering the opening ceremony, had only to begin to announce the countries of the

participants before boisterous applause took over. Youth, politics, engineering, song—those who thought there would be no more surprises in store were in for a pleasant shock after dinner when hosts Della Villacastin and the Archdiocese came up with a spectacular cultural show featuring some of Cebu's best young talent.

But that delectable feast was to come only after a period of patient and eager listening, when the delegates sat through the first plenary session. This was the start of the serious deliberations of the conference.

As the chairperson, John Kurien from India, pointed out, its importance lay in the fact that the delegates would be listening to what fishworkers themselves expected from the collective entity of the ICSF. Said John Kurien, "This is not an international meeting of experts but a gathering of committed people."

That commitment led to presentations from the Philippines (yes, again colourful and interspersed with song), Fiji, Canada, India, Solomon Is., Japan, Vietnam and Indonesia. In the afternoon, the session continued with talks from fishworkers from Latin American, Senegal and Madagascar as well as France.

Notwithstanding the initial problems with simultaneous translations, those whose attention tended to stray were drawn back fast since some of the presentations were far from routine. Sample this gem from Edylyn Tohikeni of the Solomon Islands. "Husbands are frequent problems," she declared. The

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## Maximo's Maxim—and Other Not-so-happy Thoughts

I am writing this after my first day in Cebu when I found myself at the Midtown Hotel in a forum on coastal fisheries. Seated at coffee tables in a room designed for Tony Bennett were Maximo, president of an agri-business company, an environmental journalist, two fishworker representatives, the Department of Agriculture officials, the municipal authorities and others.

Even as the international guests Nenita Cura, Sebastian Mathew, James Smith and myself, opened with comments, I was struck by the character roles. Maximo saw the coastal area as one of opportunity (for his business) and said what was good for him and his company was good for the nation. Sebastian reminded everyone that the individual's gain was often the community's loss (Maximo notwithstanding). A spunky researcher on community management of coastal zones was particularly concerned about mangrove silviculture. A woman consultant made comments on community development. But, in general, the links with the fishing population seemed tenuous, at best.

At one point in the conference, I interjected. Much of what was being expressed seemed a video replay of sessions at home. I expressed my scepticism that the fishworkers' perspective, which everybody said was important, would ultimately not be heard, if my Canadian experience was much to go by.

Then I sat back and regretted my comments. Who was I to be so negative? This kind of forum can quickly become depressing. Look, I said to myself, even in Canada where we have a cod disaster, the ocean hasn't exactly collapsed; plankton production is still going on. Herring is repopulating the banks that had long since been fished out; the lobsters continue to sustain high catch rates and, most of all, the fishers are still at it. This is not to say all is well but a simple reminder that the ocean resources and the fisher populations are the source of hope in all our work.

I was told that even magazines like *Newsweek* and *The Economist* are now paying attention to fishery issues. More attention by the international media is probably welcome but it could also make a person nervous. I think of our lobster fishery back home. With the groundfish in collapse, more attention is turning to lobster. We are even getting more scientific interest. More attention to lobsters by the scientists is, of course, welcome but it makes me nervous, given what happened to the cod.

Again, I think back to Canada where the media, even in the coastal zones, are 'fishing illiterates' and where the term fisherman is often used in a 'global' sense to refer not only to fishers but to fish companies and fishworkers. Such unwillingness or incapability to make distinctions is similar to Maximo's maxim that what's good for his company is probably good for the fishery.

If the media could build some historical consciousness among the fishery planners, that would be a help. But if the media glosses over the 'inshore' fishers and inshore fishing practices in favour of the industrial and semi-industrial view of the fishery, then their new-found attention to the fishery will probably mean further losses for the inshore (or 'traditional' or 'artisanal') fishing populations.

There are no short cuts in fisheries organization work. Putting the media spotlight on the fishery might sometimes be helpful but the difficult business of building and sustaining fishworker organizations remains.

Every so often, when all seems to be lost, great reversals occur and the fishworkers are thrust on to centre stage and are heard. That is the moment when effective organizational work pays off.

*Mike Belliveau*

Michael Belliveau is Executive Secretary, Maritime Fishermen's Union, New Brunswick, Canada.

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*This conference is important since it lets us know the situation in totality, how problems are interconnected. If you know what problems are all over the world, there could be a perspective for local action, regional action, national action and international action.*

— Mina Ramirez  
President  
Asian Social  
Institute, Manila

*More and more women's groups are getting concerned about fishing conditions*

— J. Kittitornkool  
Network for  
Women in  
Fisheries,  
Thailand

*Our list of problems could go on and on, but it would be best to look for solutions*

— Abdoulaye Diop  
Gen. Secretary  
Kayar Local  
Committee,  
Senegal

”

VOICES

VOICES

# 'Costs are too high'

Fisherfolk around the world continue to organize. One recent example is the two-year old Federation Chretienne des Pecheurs Artisanaux de Madagascar (FECPAMA), which has a membership of 7500 in a fisherfolk population of 40,000. Christian Nestor Velo, who is general secretary of FECPAMA, talks about the organization and the issues that face fisherfolk in Madagascar

## *What is the most important problem faced by Madagascar fishermen?*

The most important problem is the cost of fishing gear. While it was alright about ten years ago, costs have become prohibitive since then. This is mainly due to the devaluation of the country's currency. Now one French franc is worth 500 Madagascar francs but about one month ago, it was only 350 francs.

## *What is FECPAMA doing to help fishermen overcome this problem?*

We collaborate with the National Direction of Fisheries which gave us some material for our fishermen and some other organizations have helped us with programmes for the development of fishermen. I think after one or two years these will bear fruit.

## *Are there other issues which bother Madagascar fishermen?*

Yes, the other big problem is industrial fishing which now takes place as close as one mile off the Madagascar coast. These are the big trawlers that belong to Japanese and Taiwanese as well as Madagascar companies. The smaller fishermen of Madagascar with their row boats can not compete with these industrial boats. The situation

has also led to fights and clashes at sea between these two types of fishermen. This is a big problem. The industrial fishing vessels also throw their bycatch and discard waste fish products all along the coast. This not only creates a bad smell but also pollutes the beaches.



Yes, there are about ten Madagascar companies in industrial fishing.

## *Are there fish processing plants in Madagascar?*

No, the industrial fishing fleets catch their fish here but export them beyond Madagascar's shores. Only some small

industrial fleets supply their catch for local customers here.

## *What is technique of fishing used by the traditional sector?*

Mainly hook-and-line and bottom-set nets and small traditional boats which are not motorised but are rowed or use sails and can carry four or five persons.

## *Has the quantity of fish caught by the traditional sector gone down?*

Yes, the traditional fishermen now get less fish because the industrial fishing fleets do not respect limits to fishing and after their operations, there is no possibility for the traditional fishermen to catch enough.

## *What is the government of Madagascar doing about this?*

The government favours the industrial fishery so as to get dollars. Though other governments like the Japanese give the Madagascar government fishing materials meant for the traditional fishermen, the Madagascar government does not distribute these to the traditional fishermen in time. They do so only for electoral or political gains.



La vida del pescador  
no es una vida cualquiera  
él pasa la noche entera  
pensando en lo que le espera

Se acerca la madrugada  
se tiene que levantar  
a las dos de la mañana  
está listo para zarpar

Su amor está muy lejano  
su bella mujer morena  
cual dulce y cariñosa  
en su lindo Puerto espera

Buena vida del pescador  
que sale solo al mar  
va tirando sus redes  
por si un pez puede pescar

El horizonte está calmado  
se divisa en lotanza  
su bonita embarcación  
toda llena de esperanza

Hoy los vientos ya no soplan  
como aquellos de ayer  
él se encuentra muy contento  
porque viene un nuevo ser

Si hay pesca o hay veda  
eso no le importa  
porque para todo el Pescador  
siempre sale adelante

Hoy su Puerti está de fiesta  
hay que irse a divertir  
porque haciendo amistad  
siempre sabe compartir

Se ha tomado unos tragos  
ya se siente embriagado  
pero eso no importa  
porque ya está acostumbrado

La noche ya se acerca  
hay que irse a descansar  
porque a la madrugada siguiente  
hay que volver ha empezar

—Gregorio Chunga Pazos

What a life fishermen have  
but it's not everyone's way  
the whole night anticipating  
What tomorrow might bring

The early dawn approaches  
and he has to rise and shine  
by two in the morning  
he's ready to up and off

Far away lies his love  
dark complexioned beauty  
so sweet and so tender  
awaits him at home

Good life of the fisherman  
taking him alone to the sea  
to pull in his nets  
to catch whatever comes

The winds of today don't blow  
like those of yesterday  
but he feels quite happy  
because his soul is reborn

It really doesn't matter  
if there's fishing or a ban  
come what may the fisherman  
always come off best

Today its the Port Fiesta  
one must enjoy  
making friends is easy  
when you know how to share

He's had a few drinks  
and feels quite sloshed  
but that doesn't matter  
he's quite used to that

The night is drawing nigh  
he must have some rest  
because early next morning  
he's got to start again

Translation:

—Brian O'Riordan

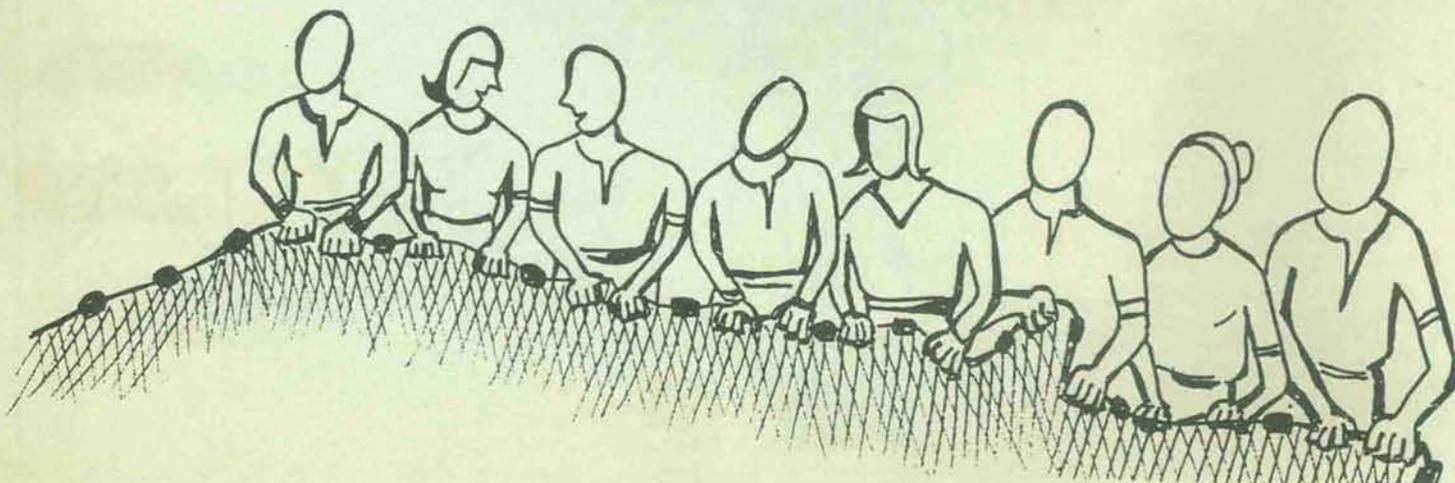
translator went a step further and proclaimed that husbands 'have' frequent problems. Before the laughter could die down, Edylyn continued about how women toiling in the fisheries plopped off for a good night's rest at the end of a hard day—only to have their husbands think their wives were no longer interested in them!

Not so disinterested were the delegates who sat down to the cultural show after the first 'official' dinner of the conference. They were treated to a heady mix of Cebuano songs and dances which portrayed the beliefs, tradition and lifestyles of the Filipino people.

The boys and girls of the San Nicolas Paris Choir put up a particularly splendid performance. Repeated applause for the colourful costumes of the lithe young dancers filled the air. One version of 'ethnic jazz' featured a strange but appealing combination of graceful traditional dance movements and the jerky frenzy of modern Western dance, all performed by girls in costumes from the Muslim regions of Mindanao. Flashguns popped in quick succession.

As singer and artist Vir Cristobal, already familiar to most of the guests as the Filipino fishworker forever hunched over large paintings of murals, took the floor for a session of karaoke, many of the guests joined in and the lobby was soon filled with the sounds of different tongues.

And as the last ones drifted off to their rooms at night, few heard the sound of the lashing rain that heralded the end of the first day of the Cebu Conference. ☺



SAMUDRA FOR CEBU

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FOR CEBU

INTERNATIONAL COLLECTIVE IN SUPPORT OF FISHERWORKERS

## Today

- Working Group IV, V  
Main Hall/Lobby, 8:00
- Presentations  
M.Lizzarraga, FAO  
Matthew Gianni  
Greenpeace, 12:30
- Informal Meeting  
of Fishworkers 16:00
- Video Shows  
(See page 4)

## Briefly

This conference would not have materialised without the unstinting support of the Cebu archbishop Ricardo J. Cardinal Vidal. Not only is he the chairman of the local organising committee, he also mobilised three commissions of the archdiocese to provide support services for the Conference.

The Cardinal's patronage to the cause of small-scale fisherfolk goes beyond mere lip service. In an interview, he expressed concern about the effects of industrial fishing and the need to protect small-scale fishworkers. The organisers of the conference have found the Cardinal to be accessible and down-to-earth, a far cry from the ceremonial image that normally accompanies such a figure.

Accepting the gift of a globe after the first official dinner, he said that looking at it would always remind him of how all fishworkers of the world are linked, just as the waters of the oceans link the land masses of the world.

THEMES PRESENTED, WORKING GROUPS START MEETING

## Getting Down to Work

After an elaboration of the key themes, delegates separated into three working groups for follow-up discussions

On the second day of the Cebu Conference, the really serious bit began. The morning session saw presentations of the five key topics by the authors of the theme papers. As the chairperson explained, the idea was not to invite immediate reactions or debate but to throw up issues which could be followed up by the working groups.

Considering that quite a few hands went up to signal for an opportunity to interject, this was something of a let-down for some participants. But, pressed for time, the chair had no option but to insist on some cut-off point.

Soon after lunch, the delegates split up into working groups to deliberate on three of the themes discussed in the morning session. These were 'coastal environment and fishworkers'; 'technology and energy use'; and 'transnational linkages in fisheries'. And predictably enough, most sessions overshoot their allocated time

slots. In fact, the one on technology broke off for a quick dinner and came back to contend and concede on issues until well past 9 pm.

Not that anyone was grumbling, not even the rapporteurs who had to stay up late to put together their reports. Remarkably, despite the language barriers—displaced only partially by the make-do arrangements for translation—delegates remained engrossed in the debate. As Aliou Sall of Senegal had earlier stated, not quite in jest, 'In the ICSF network any kind of English is permitted'.

Not surprisingly for the age of GATT, the working group on transnational linkages saw the most fervent debate. Consider the questions that flew back and forth:

Opening up of global markets and the breakdown of trade barriers would not affect the fisheries sector as seriously as it would in-

dustrial sectors. So what's the big fuss? At a time when all over the world, governments are doing away with subsidies, how could fishworkers clamour for such protection against falling prices? Theoretically, the system of free trade and unrestricted access to markets is fine, but shouldn't one recognise the inherent inequities that it perpetrates for the marginalised classes?

The working group on technology discussed how technology is not neutral, how it has links with resource depletion and job loss and how women are more affected. Small-scale fishworkers have little say in

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# On resource management

Today, in all sectors and especially in fisheries, the need to manage or regulate the resource is amply recognised. Yet, it is not always clear what is meant by the concept of resource management or regulation. More precisely, the static and the dynamic aspects of the issue are not properly separated. The static problem arises as soon as fish is sufficiently scarce that an additional entrant into the fishery causes the catches of existing participants to decline. The dynamic problem, on the other hand, has to do with the conservation of the resource for future generations. Here the concern is that by catching too many fish today, fishermen create a situation where there may not be enough fish left for future generations.

Note carefully that the first problem may arise in the absence of the second. This is most evident in the case of fisheries which operate from well delimited fishing spots as, for instance, in beachseine fisheries. In many cases, however, the two problems tend to arise simultaneously, hence the aforementioned confusion.

To solve the first problem, co-ordination is needed lest population pressure on a fishing ground should create serious opportunities for violent conflicts and/or lead to significant income decline. Experience shows that fishing communities are quite good when it comes to regulate access to a fishing ground that is well delineated and rather easy to monitor.

When there are too many fishermen compared to the number of fishing spots available, a variety of rules are usually applied. One of them ensures that, on a given day, a fishing spot is assigned to the first entrant, provided that he belongs to a given fishing community. Another widespread allocation system consists of rotation rules which provide for random assignment of fishing spots to rightsholders.

When the fishing ground is not well delimited, things are much more complicated, especially so if new entrants are highly mobile because they possess a more sophisticated technology than the traditional fishermen. The well publicised competition between artisanal fishermen and industrial operators has to be seen in that light. Due to the difficulty of preventing them from entering coastal fishing grounds, an open access situation is de facto being created and there is a risk that the incomes of traditional fishermen suffer as a result.

It is clear from many events that have occurred in developing countries during the last decades that traditional fishing communities need to be protected by the state if they want to avoid such an adverse outcome. Yet, given the difficult enforcement problems which such a protection entails, they have to participate in the regulation process themselves (for instance, by performing surveillance and monitoring activities over their fishing grounds). This approach is known as co-management. The dynamic issue of conservation appears to be trickier still. This is particularly obvious in the case of industrial companies which have no reason to be concerned about maintaining the fish stock because they have alternative income-earning or investment opportunities.

Conservation may prove problematic even among artisanal fishermen. This may be for two main reasons. First, they may not be fully aware of how their fishing behaviour affects the resource stock. Or, they may rightly believe that it is external factors (such as climatic changes) which lie beyond man's control that have the most significant influence on the state of the resource at a given point in time. Second, they may be hard-pressed by subsistence constraints that actually prevent them from thinking about the future. Their main concern is then to ensure their livelihood in a day-to-day time perspective.

The strategies which are needed to make conservation possible will differ depending on which of the above factors is more important. If the problem arises mainly from the operation of industrial fleets, strict state regulation is absolutely required. If it comes from artisanal fishermen who do not see the need for conservation, a crucial role must be played by fishermen's organizations to create awareness about the conservation issue. If, on the other hand, the difficulty arises from subsistence constraints, education efforts will not be sufficient. In order to work, it is important that the pressure of subsistence constraints on the fishermen's behaviour be alleviated. This clearly requires that new income-earning opportunities be created for them outside the fishing sector. That the state has a role to play here is evident but this should not cause fishermen's organizations to dispense with working towards that purpose. There is no escape from this basic truth that, when a resource is stressed, alternative job opportunities ought to be created.

*Jean-Philippe Platteau*

Jean-Philippe Platteau is Professor of Economics at the University of Namur, Belgium



*The Supreme Court of India, in a recent judgement, declared that fishing for subsistence is different from fishing for profit, and that subsistence ought to be given greater weightage than profit.*

— Aleyamma  
Vijayan  
Social Activist  
Kerala, India

*Education is one of the many pressing problems of women fishworkers in Solomon Islands. Most, if not all, have little or no education at all. This problem, however, is addressed through fisheries workshops given by organised fisherfolk.*

— Edylyn Tohikeni  
Fishworker  
Solomon Taiyo  
Solomon Islands

*I would say fisheries need to be more social and less economic.*

— Brian O'Riordan  
Fisheries Adviser  
Intermediate  
Technology  
Development  
Group  
Rugby, UK



# 'Be strong by being together'

Improving work conditions can not happen overnight, says Jean Vacher, director of Apostalate de la Mer, Mauritius who is also co-ordinator of the ICSF's Task Force on Conditions of Work on Industrial Fishing Vessels

## *Can you tell us about the ICSF's Task Force on Industrial Fishing Vessels?*

Set up in Manila in 1992, the Task Force is meant to look into the conditions of work of fishermen on distant water vessels, including questions of prevailing laws. First we considered the Philippines, Mauritius and Taiwan, then we included Madagascar and Senegal. Later we brought into the scope of our study India, Seychelles, Kenya and South Africa and so made a network around the world.

## *Why is Mauritius so important for distant water vessels?*

Mauritius, though it is a small island, is at a strategic point on the Indian Ocean. And because of the small islands it has, its 200-mile Exclusive Economic Zone is large. Some Taiwanese fishing vessels that go to the Gulf of Kutch in India later come to Mauritius to land their fish catch. We have a good fishing port and we have good airline links with all countries. It is also a fuelling point for ships. I am not sure, but I think Mauritius is a cheap place for fuel. Also, with the establishment of the Free Trade Zone, many companies have opened up to avail of facilities like fast currency transactions.

## *How do conditions vary in the countries you have studied? Are working conditions on industrial fishing vessels in some countries better?*

I can't tell you about better conditions, though there are some countries that have better laws, even if they are not implemented, like Madagascar, which has just copied French laws. But it's up to the maritime officers to make sure these laws are applied. We have been able to achieve a bit with Madagascar. We have forced the government in Mauritius to adopt laws for ships passing the country that if they take a fisherman from Madagascar to

work on a Mauritian boat, he must be paid the same salary as the Mauritian. That will soon become law.

## *Did this come about because of pressure from your union?*

Yes, ICSF also. Along with the union representatives, I sat on the government committee as representative of the Apostalate de la Mer and ICSF. In my own opinion, I think ICSF must put up not just a task force but must help the



unions of these countries. A task force only examines what must be done. In Mauritius I can do something mainly because I am also working with seamen's and seafarers unions. Otherwise, in most countries we can only say we must do something, but who will actually implement it? Of course, ICSF can't take the place of the unions but could form a sort of federation of the unions of all these countries.

## *The condition of Filipino workers aboard Taiwanese vessels is particularly bad. Why is that so and what has been done about it?*

Not all Taiwanese ships are bad and nowadays it is not only Filipinos. We now have plenty of other nationalities aboard these vessels like those from Sri Lanka, Madagascar. The first problem is of language. Also, these guys need to

work and, it's very sad to say, but sometimes I think if I just send a guy back to his country, he will have nothing there, not a cent.

But when a ship is fishing in the vicinity of Mauritius, they know that here is a strong organisation and that if someone is treated badly, they will have problems. In April we had a case in Mauritius where two Taiwanese killed the captain and the chief engineer and the Filipino workers, seeing this, became quite afraid to return to the ship. So they stayed at our centre and afterwards two Taiwanese crew members also came to seek shelter there. Later all of them were able to return to their countries.

I can't say things have changed one hundred per cent. But now some recruiting agents at least know that behind me is not only the Apostalate de la Mer but also ICSF.

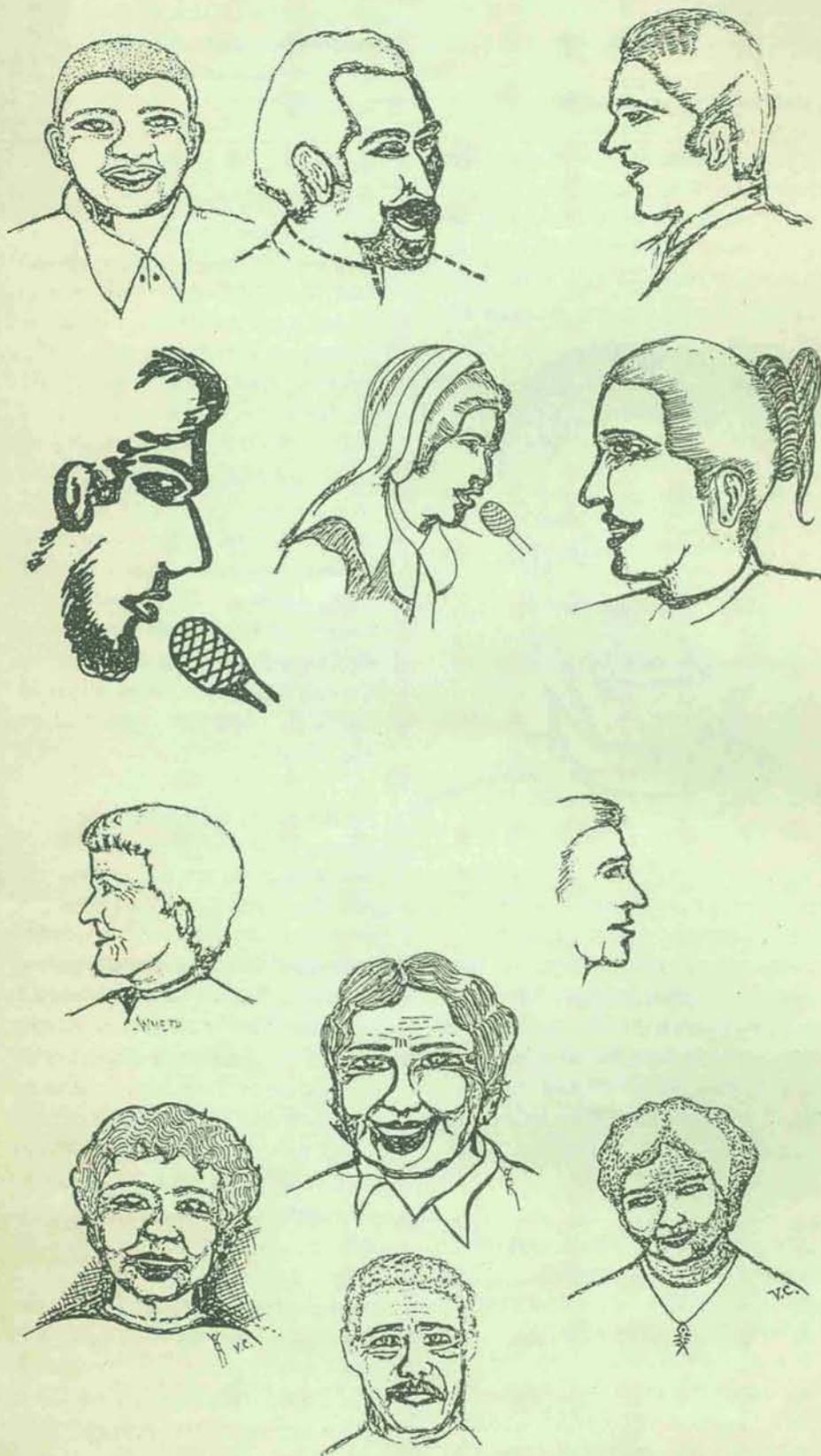
## *On the whole, have conditions aboard industrial fishing vessels improved in the last two or three years?*

Sometimes, on some boats, with some agents and some owners, things have improved. But now there is using another tactic being used. Let's take the case of the Philippines. Instead of recruiting people from Manila, as in the past, now they recruit from all over the country. So the problem really has to be tackled at the level of the recruiter who takes money in advance from the workers.

## *So you have a long way to go...*

Our success will not be an easy job. I can not do anything alone but together we can do something. As we say in Mauritius, you can break a single piece of wood but if you put plenty of them together you can not break the bunch.

# Vir's Sketchbook



Sketches by Virgilio Cristobal

## To Work... (from P. 1)

choosing technology and so, the group felt, consciousness must be raised about the implications of such choice, including how legal constraints can limit technology choice.

Where the group nudged—without quite crossing—the radical edge of counsel was on the issue of banning destructive technologies like trawling and intensive forms of aquaculture.

The far-reaching implications of these propositions attracted several notes of caution, including a call for an awareness-building campaign in the North where trawling is often regarded a 'traditional' technology. As for aquaculture, the group felt that there should be a clear definition on the type of aquaculture sought to be banned.

Clearly, several of the issues tossed up by the working groups had a potentially decisive tinge to them. Understandably, therefore, only further reflection and review can lead to a semblance of a consensus. This is what the remaining days of the Cebu Conference will seek to do.

### Video Shows

<b>Skipjack Trolling</b> (11 min)	13:45
Kubo Sae, Japan	
<b>Traditional Sustainable Resource Management</b> (20 min)	14:00
<b>Jakarta Bay Fisherfolk</b> (30 min)	14:20
<b>Boat Tribal Group</b> (15 min)	14:35
Don Marut, Indonesia	
<b>Artisanal Fishermen</b> (70 min)	18:00
in Brasil (video + slides)	

More video and slide shows are scheduled for the coming days. Please check here for listings. Also, don't forget the photo exhibits.

SAMUDRA FOR CEBU is specially published by ICSF for the Cebu Conference

# SAMUDRA

FOR CEBU

INTERNATIONAL COLLECTIVE IN SUPPORT OF FISHWORKERS

## Today

- **Plenary Session**  
Report presentations  
by Working Groups  
Main Hall, 10:30
- **Plenary (contd.)**  
Discussions  
Main Hall, 14:00
- **Fishworkers Meet**  
Main Hall, 17:00

## Briefly

Several observers used to international conferences, including a couple of invited speakers, are surprised to see how seriously the delegates are taking their participation at Cebu. Delegates sit (and sometimes, squabble) through sessions, rapporteurs take notes and reports are written up, often in three languages. Whoever said conferences were meant to be some talk and all fun?

Given the amount of writing that needs to be done here, almost everyone is on the look-out for a computer terminal. Unfortunately, the conference secretariat has just two systems and someone or the other is always pecking away at the keyboards of these. Luckily, though, more than a couple of delegates towed along their laptops—these have become as lapu-lapu! And if, after so many days in the Philippines, you don't yet know what that is, you've been working far too hard!

GUESTS MAKE PRESENTATIONS AND FISHWORKERS MEET INFORMALLY

## Aiming for Common Ground

Prior to the presentation of the reports of the working groups, two more themes are discussed and delegates listen to invited presentations on international issues

As the working groups split up into smaller gatherings on the third day to discuss the two remaining themes of fishworkers' organizations and working conditions in fisheries, the Conference was only half-way to common ground. So large was the group on the first theme that it had to break up into four—two conferring in English, one in French and another in Spanish.

But before that was a talk by Margarita Lizarraga, FAO's Senior Liaison Officer on International Fisheries. Said Lizarraga, "FAO attaches great importance to the work and the relationship with the non-governmental sector." She explained the background to the proposed International Code of Conduct on Responsible Fishing and how NGOs could play a significant role in drawing up the Code.

This point was taken up again in the afternoon in another guest talk by Mat-

thew Gianni, representing Greenpeace International. He pointed out that the Code 'will be a central focus of the FAO's political work on fisheries over the next two years'. As such, he said, fishworker organizations should try to influence the processes and negotiations which would lead to the Code.

The third presentation was by Leith Duncan, a Fisheries Environmental Consultant from New Zealand. He elaborated on his country's system of managing fisheries resources through Individual Transferable Quotas (ITQs).

This system, as it currently operates, is not proven to be efficient for conservation. On the other hand, it seems to have helped corporate interests enlarge control over New Zealand's fisheries, Duncan argued.

This drew forth some interesting and contesting views. Hernan Peralta

Bouroncle of Peru claimed that the World Bank wanted his country to adopt the ITQ system. This was fraught with problems, he said, since about 50 boats will be needed to police around 600 fishing vessels in Peru's waters, where 20 per cent of vessels account for 80 per cent of the total catch.

While agreeing that in operational terms the ITQ system might run into problems, economist Jean-Philippe Platteau disagreed that it could be dismissed on the grounds of encouraging conservation through the profit motive. It could be a way of internalising the externalities of

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## Inside

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- Voices ..... ②
- In Conversation ..... ③
- Peru Fisheries ..... ④

Samudra for Cebu is specially published by ICSF for the Cebu Conference

# Caught in a watery trap

Hatiya is a small island situated in the southern part of Bangladesh, at the mouth of three of the mightiest rivers in the world. It touches the Bay of Bengal, and is in the district of Noakhali. With an area of 500 sq. miles, including several small islands, it has a large population of about 300,000 people. Seventy per cent are farmers and 30 per cent, fishermen. Around 40 per cent of the farmers are also involved in pond aquaculture.

Powerful currents cause severe erosion in the north and east of the island. Every year homes of many families are lost to the river. In the last 20 years some 20,000 fishing families have seen their lives literally washed away. They are forced to re-re-settle on the only available land—generally the thin strip next to the surging river, vulnerable to storm and tidal surge. Cyclones have killed hundreds of thousands of fishermen; their families, houses and other assets smashed and destroyed. Very few initiatives have been taken to rehabilitate these fisherfolk.

Since there is no registration of fisherfolk, nobody knows how many die in the regular cyclones in the Bay of Bengal. Often their families are also washed away, and those who remain do so in very open areas prone to the risk of further cyclone and storm damage.

In recent years agriculture has become less profitable for land owners, as prices have dropped due to increased production. The rise in prices of fish (due to high demand in the capital cities), has made fish marketing an attractive alternative for moneylenders and landlords (*Zamindars*). They began to invest in the fisheries sector by purchasing boats and nets, and taking over important fishing grounds in and around our islands.

Due to their sad plight, many fishermen have become 'water slaves', cruelly exploited by these unauthorised riverine *Zamindars*. They are trapped in a vicious cycle of landlessness, debt and few alternative options. NGOs are trying to address the rights of the fisherfolk on land, but on

water the fisherfolk have to pay for their 'river rights'—the right to navigate and to fish. This is due to an iniquitable system, where local *Zamindars* are able to purchase river leases from the government. They then extract payment from the already overtaxed fisherfolk, which is 10 to 15 per cent of their catch.

To improve the situation, *Dwip Unnayan Songstha* (DUS - or the Association for Inland Development) was set up in 1981 by former 'freedom fighters', teachers and social workers to organize fishworkers and other underprivileged classes. DUS now has 600 organized fishermen's groups with a total membership (both genders) of 9000. It addresses socio-economic, development and health needs, and supports awareness building. Along with other fisherfolk, groups organized by DUS have entered collective fishing in the Bay of Bengal. DUS also helps in marketing the catch in city markets like Dhaka, Chandpur, Barishal and Chittagong. While a kilo of *hilsa*, a popular local fish, costs 50 cents in the local market, it would fetch up to US \$3 in Dhaka markets.

Due to severe river erosion around Hatiya (and other islands), many fishing families are homeless. Cyclones, which are more prevalent these days, have also taken their toll. The tragedy is that even if these fishermen are killed by such natural disasters, the fact that they are not registered or that often their boats capsize in far-off waters, denies their families the benefits of compensation from the government. Only if a dead body is physically recovered does the state government consider the grant of monetary relief to the fisherman's dependents.

On land and on the water our fisherfolk are locked in a struggle with Nature as well as their fellow man. There seems little hope of breaking this harsh condition under current circumstances.

*Rafiqul Alam*

Rafiqul Alam is Executive Director, *Dwip Unnayan Songstha*, Bangladesh

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*It is not only the persons who are directly involved in the catching of fish who should benefit from it. The vendors and the cannery workers should equally deserve the same benefits as the fishermen do.*

— Maureen Larkin  
Maritime  
Fishermen's  
Union  
Canada

*Our government doesn't believe in pressure politics. What we need now is a solid, politically mature organization of fishworkers.*

— Rudolfo  
Sambajon  
PAMALAKAYA-  
Pilipinas  
Quezon City  
Philippines

*Traditional fishworkers have no access to banks. Only the 'illegal' banks' offer loans to these fishworkers. Sixty per cent of Indonesian fishworkers are indebted to these 'illegal banks'.*

— Don Marut  
Oxfam  
Indonesia

”

VOICES

VOICES

# 'We came to look, listen, learn'

in

CONVERSATION

Sorna Aminata Wade is Animator and Thérèse Senghor is Secretary of the Women's Committee of the Collectif National des Pecheurs Artisanaux du Senegal (CNPS). They focus on the difficulties faced by women in Senegalese fisheries

## *Do women confront specific problems in Senegal?*

The general problem in our fisheries is the difficulty in getting fuel due to the price increase following the devaluation of the African franc to almost half its former value. This has doubled the cost of fuel not to mention engines and machinery. Since a number of big boats come to fish in the coastal area, our resources are depleted and so our fishermen have to go farther to get a better and bigger catch.

As for women, we have to deal with a lot of competition, especially in dealing with local middlemen. They deal directly with transnational corporations, buying the catch at low prices and selling it at a higher price. The problem is that we lack proper training as well as materials and equipment and so our standards are poor. We have particular problems in marketing as we do not have the skills to export our processed goods

## *What is being done about this?*

To produce better quality, we have to teach the women novel techniques to enhance their skills and make sure their products are sold. We need freezers, trucks and a larger area to dry the fish. We also need to educate our women about economic and environmental issues. Above all, we need financial assistance.

have had relatively unhampered access to credit. NGOs have extended financing to labour organizations which benefit fishworkers in the form of better training, more materials and technical necessities.

## *What has your government done to address these problems?*

The government talks a lot and makes a lot of promises but shows no results.

## *Do you think they will heed the suggestions or recommendations of a conference like this one?*

They would probably listen but since our country is poor and can not finance any legitimate steps to alleviate the plight of the Senegalese fishworkers,

the Government can't probably do much.

## *Why did you decide to come to this conference? What do you think could possibly result from such meetings?*

We came here to look, listen and learn from this conference. We want to meet other women and learn how they work.

We would also like to know what their techniques are and how we could use these in our processing work.

We also came here to meet our partners and financing bodies to seek more financial help for the Senegalese fishworkers.



## *How have organizations like CNPS affected the plight of women?*

Well, before such organizations came on the scene, there was great trouble in terms of financial support, especially in the context of the rigorous competition confronting fishworkers. But with the formation of these organizations, they

## Common Ground... (from P. 1)

exploiting the fishery resource, he said.

In the afternoon there was an informal meeting of fishworkers who shared experiences and anecdotes on conditions of work and living in the fisheries of their countries.

One such elaboration came from Mercy Alexander, a woman fishworker from Kerala, India, who explained how, in her highly politicised state, women fishworkers were in the forefront of the struggle to wrest gains from the state. In the process, they have come to acknowledge and even demand the imperative to conserve the fisheries resource. ◊

# Struggles in the Time of Cholera

During the cholera epidemic of 1991, a few brave fishermen who set up the National Defence League for Artisanal Fishworkers, struggled to create the Federation for Unification and Integration of Peruvian Fishworkers (FIUPAP). Their efforts led to 26 artisanal fishworkers' trade unions coming together to establish the FIUPAP to defend their common interests.

One incident in particular serves to illustrate just how hard and difficult this process has been. During a formal visit to a fishing hamlet, a delegation was beaten up and robbed of all their documents, equipment and money. They were unable to draw money from the bank, as the guards refused them entry, taking them for bandits. So until help arrived from Lima, they had no funds for food or lodging.

Despite these difficult beginnings, a great deal has been achieved by FIUPAP in a relatively short time. At its Second National Congress held in October 1993, 110 fully affiliated delegates and 28 fraternal delegates representing 50,000 riverine, lake, and coastal fishworkers from 98 of the 146 base organizations met to elect a National Executive Committee. The meeting also reflected on FIUPAP's achievements. This a summary of those reflections, in FIUPAP's words:

- \* We have consolidated our activities and reached a position where FIUPAP is now the only genuine trade union organization of artisanal fishworkers of national character.
- \* The demands that were presented to the government in July 1991 to create an exclusive artisanal fishing zone within 5 miles of the shore, were ratified on the 18 September 1992. The government has now defined a conservation zone for flora and fauna within this limit, where fishing by industrial and commercial fishing boats is banned.
- \* Following a petition to the government in December 1991, the Ministries of Fisheries and Health organized and imple-

mented a national information campaign against cholera. The campaign included exhibitions, meetings and information bulletins.

- \* On 29 June 1991, President Fujimori handed over a first assignment of 26 lorries to FIUPAP, from a batch of 110 promised to our fishworkers' trade union organizations, whether or not they are affiliated to FIUPAP.
- \* The Ministry of Fisheries has welcomed the participation of artisanal fishworkers in a national census of seals and sea lions.
- \* The Ministry of Fisheries has transferred the use of 36 regional infrastructural artisanal fisheries installations to fishworkers' unions. The respective unions are now administering these installations.
- \* FIUPAP has asked the government to donate 36 insulated and refrigerated lorries to fishworker unions to enable them to by-pass middlemen. In the mean time, some organizations have been able to hire a few lorries and are already demonstrating their ability to meet their obligations.
- \* Following their representations, the government has transferred responsibility for running the state fish auction centres and centralised markets to FIUPAP.
- \* FIUPAP has requested special arrangements for credit to purchase boats, gear and spare parts from FONDEPES. In response, the Minister has ordered FONDEPES to make special provision for artisanal fishworkers.
- \* The government has agreed to a new programme to construct 200 artisanal fishing craft, of up to 4 tonnes. These will be made available exclusively to fishermen recommended by their organizations and approved by FIUPAP.
- \* Through their National Executive Committee, FIUPAP has succeeded in persuading the government to have a fisherman as a Director of FONDEPES. This gives real hope that FONDEPES will provide necessary support to the fishworkers.

A full account (in Spanish) of the deliberations of the Second Congress of FIUPAP is available to delegates from the Conference Secretariat. The report contains a great deal of very interesting and useful information about fishworkers' struggles in Peru, and about the fishery in general. ◊



*Contributed by Brian O'Riordan, Fisheries Advisor, Intermediate Technology Development Group, UK*

# SAMUDRA

FOR CEBU

INTERNATIONAL COLLECTIVE IN SUPPORT OF FISHERWORKERS

## Briefly

The work's a strain, the climate's different, the food's strange, even making small talk via an interpreter can become a pain—but happily, no one has had any major health problems. So far, out of over 100 persons from different parts of the world, only ten have complained of various minor ailments—and most of them are locals!

But who cares about minor hiccups when there is a chance for an exciting night out? Delegates crowded into three buses last night and headed for the grand home of Marilou Briones Chiongbian who hosted two types of sumptuous feasts—one for the taste buds, the other for the delight of the eyes, ears and mind. This came in the form of a cultural show of traditional ethnic dances in a programme co-ordinated by Della Villacastin. The effect seemed to linger long after the guests left—some were seen dancing away back at the Holy Family Retreat House! Marilou Briones Chiongbian, the hostess, is Chairperson of the Citizen's Movement for Peaceful Elections (CIMPEL), which is an NGO and a new sub-commission on the Commission on Service. According to her, the predominant issue in Cebu fisheries today is that of trawling and purse seining.

## WORKING GROUP REPORTS DISCUSSED

# Yes, no, wait, maybe

Words flew back and forth as delegates came to grips with the recommendations of the working groups which will form the basis of the final Conference Statement

It was only to be expected. After three days of ardent discussion and impassioned debate, no one was going to give up positions so easily—not that there ever was any hint of animosity in the contemplations. Only a couple of the five working groups got away with something approaching unanimous acceptance when they presented their recommendations to the delegates.

The most vehement discussions were generated by the issue of trawling and whether a ban on trawlers was needed or justified. The group on technology felt that there was a strong case to initiate 'some steps' towards a ban. Yet, in the face of dissenting voices, especially from the North where trawling is not seen as an alien technology, the group stopped short of going all out to actually advocate a total ban.

The group on working conditions and social security waded in similar waters when it called on ICSF to take a 'clear stand against deep-sea fishing because it is uneconomical, energy consuming and socially uncontrollable'. The chairperson explained that the group had reached that conclusion based on the various experiences reported by its different country representatives.

But that was hardly convincing enough for several of the listeners. In fact, that statement seemed to set the place on fire. It was immediately labelled as being precisely the kind of ill-conceived and unrigorous declaration of fact, not based on any hard data which would stand the expert scrutiny of international forums of negotiation.

Instead, it was based on emotion and feeling. This went against the call for a 'holistic' approach to the management of resources.

The problem of defining what constitutes 'deep-sea' fisheries was also pointed out. V. Vivekanandan of the South Indian Federation of Fishermen Societies said there could be several criteria, ranging from type of gear and size of craft to distance of operation from the shore.

But several delegates from Asia were assertive in highlighting the dangers of trawling, based on the impact it has had on the catch levels and, consequently, the livelihoods of their artisanal fisherfolk. Trawling was a specific case of 'ecosystem overfishing' which could not be controlled or mitigated; only a total ban would work. Earlier, it was pointed out how the UN ban on drift nets

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# What Cebu means for Latin American groups

Fishworker organizations and support groups from Latin America who are attending the Cebu Conference had an opportunity to meet and discuss the common problems existing in their region, such as coastal degradation, increasing demand on natural resources, lack of power in the decision-making process, insufficient education of fisherfolk, limited access to credit, and marketing problems.

In some countries, official fishermen's organizations were created from above by the government, without social participation. In recent years, social movements of fisherfolk have appeared in Latin America in order to change existing paternalistic practices, to introduce a more democratic and grass roots participation.

Some of these organizations have succeeded in obtaining basic social rights and exclusive access to natural resources, as in the case of reserving five miles for artisanal fishermen in Chile. Peruvian artisanal fishermen's organizations have also obtained government investments in infrastructure so as to make their activity more competitive. Brazilian fishermen organizations are now called by official institutions to propose "fishing reserves" in Amazonia in order to protect fish resources against industrial fishing.

Some of the Latin American fishermen's organizations have succeeded in creating their own communication system such as magazines and newsletters and have been able to disseminate information about their activities through the mass media.

The active participation of fishermen's organizations has given a higher social visibility at national and international levels. Fishermen representatives have participated in important international forums such as the UNCED in Rio de Janeiro and in the UN Conference on Straddling Stocks and Highly Migratory Stocks in New York.

We feel that the meetings taking place in Cebu are crucial for the exchange of experiences in the present time, as some of the Latin American fishermen's organizations are quite recent in origin and they can take advantage of the successes and failures of the older ones. So far, through ICSF there has been intensive exchange of experiences among some Latin American fishworkers' organizations through regional seminars and workshops.

The new fishermen's organizations in Brazil and Peru have benefited from the vast experience of the Chilean CONAPACH through visits of leaders and participation in seminars. At the same time, we are learning from the example of the arduous struggle of our Mexican friends how to mobilise fishermen and larger social groups for coastal environment conservation and protection of the communities' livelihoods.

In Cebu, our organizations have broadened their views considerably through discussions of problems and perspectives with sister organizations of other continents. In spite of language constraints, we feel that co-operative experiences in boat building and marketing mechanism in Kerala, India, trawler bans in Indonesia and technological innovations in Senegal are relevant to our countries.

Although there is a great variety of cultural and social contexts and situations, the continuous dialogue of the past few days emphasised the importance of strengthening the role of fishworkers' organizations in finding solutions to existing problems. It is increasingly clear that the strength of ICSF is derived from the strength, commitment and cooperation of its members.

*Antonio Carlos Diegues*

*Héctor-Luis Morales*

Antonio Carlos Diegues is Director of Cemar (Center for Maritime Cultures in Brazil), University of Sao Paulo, Brasil and Héctor-Luis Morales is at the Universidad Tecnica Federico Santa Maria, Chile

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*It is quite difficult to organize in Papua New Guinea because of cultural differences and languages. We have about 800 different languages from various cultural backgrounds.*

— J. Soranzie  
Fisheries  
Co-ordinator  
Lutheran  
Development  
Service  
Papua New  
Guinea

*Technology is not the problem, technology development is.*

— Rolf Willmann  
Economist  
Germany

*My father was a fisherman but he didn't want me to become one, because he didn't see a future in fisheries. Perhaps that was why I became a fisherman.*

— Guy Cormier  
President  
Maritime  
Fishermen's  
Union  
Canada

VOICES

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VOICES

# 'Yes, the FAO has changed'

in

CONVERSATION

Representing the FAO at Cebu is Margarita Lizarraga, Senior Liaison Officer of its Fisheries Department. She explains the proposed International Code of Conduct on Responsible Fishing.

*We are meeting here ten years after 1984 when, in Rome, the FAO was seen as some kind of enemy by fishworkers and their supporters. But today you are here as a representative of FAO. Does that itself indicate a change in the thinking of the FAO?*

Well, I think this is clear. The FAO secretariat is just a little part of the organization which consists of country members and we, as the secretariat, receive directions from them. They are the ones who take the decisions. Of course, there is now a better understanding and relationship between NGOs and government itself.

The strategy determined at the Rome conference in 1984 is now under revision, taking into account aspects of the environment and the new socioeconomic framework and order which has to deal with open markets. Therefore, there is a full revision of our activities. So, yes, there is a change and I think it's a healthy change.

*Has the initiative for the proposed International Code of Conduct on Responsible Fishing come from within FAO itself or has it been a demand of NGOs?*

It has been a demand of countries. It was first raised in March 1991 at the FAO Committee on Fisheries. It was raised by developing countries and also agreed to by industrialised countries, considering the importance of the whole fisheries sector.

*Do you think that, just as happened at the UNCED Earth Summit at Rio, there will be a clear North-South divide on the proposed Code of Conduct? Will the Northern industrialised countries take a stand against the interests of the South?*

Well, I think in this case, it is a world commitment for the sustainability of

fisheries. In the case of fisheries, most of the depleted resources are from the North, from industrialised countries. The current situation in the Northern Atlantic areas as well as the Northern Pacific has proved the need to end the indiscriminate increase in fishing efforts. I think it is now the right moment to come to a very good understanding between North and South. But I think that the South has to be prepared for this.

*Do you foresee a clash of interests within the South itself since, for example, some developing countries have a greater stake in industrial fishing than others who are traditionally artisanal?*

I think it has to be made clear that the situation in the fisheries sector differs not only according to the level of development of the country but also with climatic situation, the type of resources and the environment. The concept of transfer of technology has to be approached very cautiously because conditions are different and you can't just transfer from one to the other.

Many of the developing countries are on the list of the main fishing nations and they are very different, so the approach can't be the same. Some of them have a real problem with long-distance fleets while there is also great competition at the national level between artisanal and industrial fleets for the same share of resources.

*How will the Code be drafted?*

We are simultaneously preparing each of the many chapters of the Code. We are putting together a first raw draft and we consider it more important to send it to all countries and parties in order to have reactions on how to finalise the preparation of the Code.

We are drafting and putting together the thematic chapters and we are going to

have technical consultations from the 26th of September to the 5th of October. But we want to distribute the documents to the countries or parties involved, including international NGOs, and get the feedback immediately so that we can prepare for the session of the COFI (Committee on Fisheries).

*When do you think we can hope to see the final draft of the Code?*

Our expectation is to send the papers hopefully by the middle of August. We will then bring the paper with us to the informal consultation that we are willing to have with NGOs in New York. We are also taking care to ensure a balance among NGOs because some NGOs have different approaches and we also want a good balance between North and South, fishworkers and environmental groups, consumers and trade. We hope the governments will take care of having a dialogue at the national level and also bring in some representatives along with their delegations.

*As a common property resource, fisheries is particularly difficult to manage. In this context, what will be the regulatory mechanism for the Code of Conduct? How will FAO ensure that countries which agree to this Code will abide by it?*

A code of conduct, by definition, is voluntary. It involves ethics and moral values. The mechanism proposed is for FAO to have statistics and information on how fishing fleets move, and when there are problems of encroachment, recognition of the boats involved will be possible from the registers that will be maintained. We hope that regional organizations will have a very strong role to play in assisting countries in the implementation of the measures. The role of FAO is in assisting countries to implement things.

## Cree en ti

Mujer, sangran tus manos  
al careo de espineles  
tu trabajo cotidiano  
va blanqueando tus sienes

En tus ojos danza la pena  
faz de serena humildad  
de pobreza estás llena  
si nadie te ha dado más.

De oportunidades te hablan  
los generosos de siempre  
te entregan sólo palabras  
que te confunden la mente

Cree en ti y en tu fuerza  
haz de ti fortaleza  
no claudiques, tu voz por nada  
la patria, tiene, contigo, deuda.

## Have Faith

Woman, your hands bleed  
clenching handlines  
your daily chores  
furnow your brow

Pain flickers in your eyes  
face humble and serene  
of poverty you have plenty  
nothing else you received.

They talk of opportunities  
the usual generous providers  
words only they procure  
phrases which cloud the mind

Have faith in yourself and your strength  
be a tower  
don't let your voice quiver  
the country is in your debt.

## Crois en toi

Femme, tes mains saignent  
au bout des lignes de fond  
ton travail quotidien  
va sillonnant ton front

Dans tes yeux danse la peine  
face d'une humble sérénité  
de pauvreté tu es pleine  
rien d'autre ne te fut donné.

Ils te parlent d'opportunités  
le généreux de toujours  
ils n'ont que des mots à distribuer  
des phrases qui te troublent l'esprit

Crois en toi: en ta force  
fais de toi une forteresse  
que ta voix jamais ne vacille  
la patrie a une dette envers toi.

*Humberto Mella Ahumada  
a fisherman from Antofagasta, Chile*

## Yes, No... *(from P. 1)*

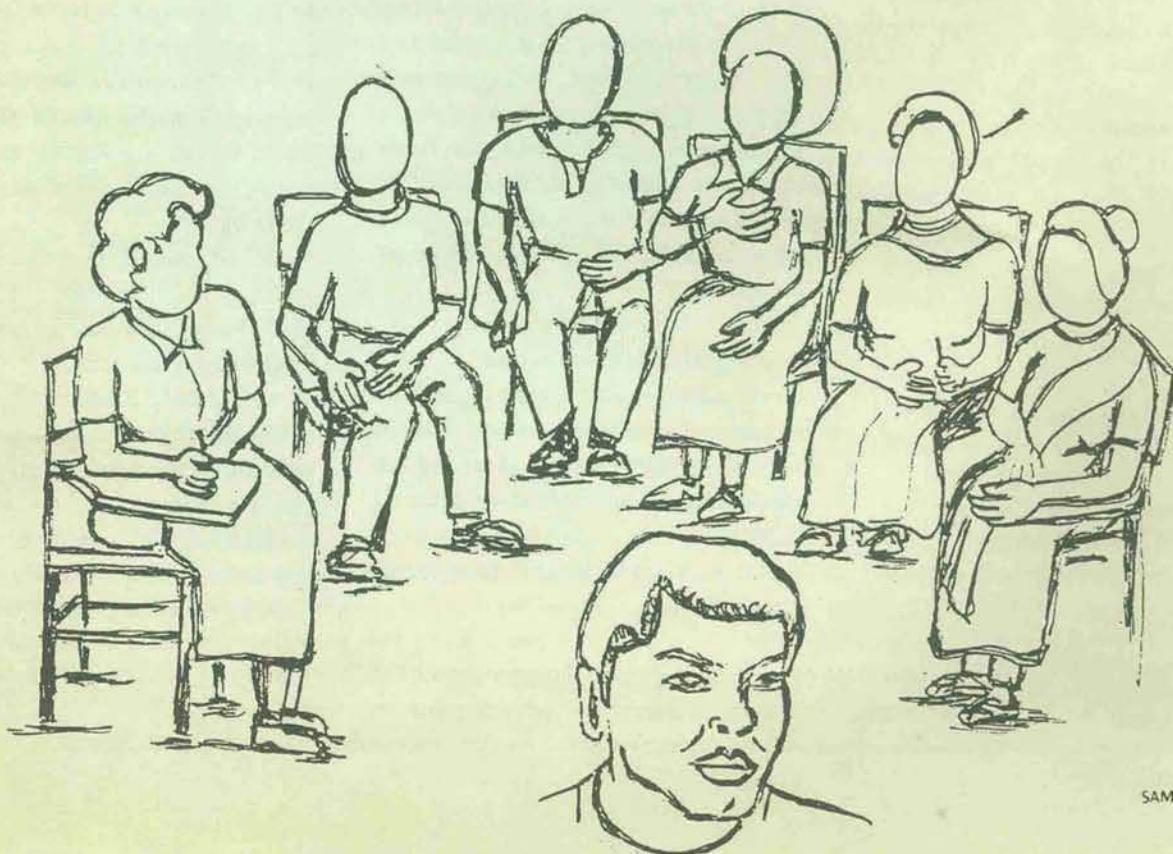
was a political act not born of technological or biological imperatives.

This argument did not find much favour with delegates from the North save, perhaps, for some from Canada, where the memory of the collapse of the cod fishery is still fresh. As Guy Cormier, President of the Maritime Fishermen's Union said, ultimately it was up to individual nations—should a country choose to stick with trawling, it must also live with the responsibility that entails.

For others, taking a stand was not easy. As Alain Le Sann pointed out, to criticise trawling in his French home town of Brittany would be to invite certain trouble. A call for a trawl ban must come from fisherfolk themselves, he said.

As for ICSF, so many calls were made on it during the discussion session that, as one informed listener joked, if it were to incorporate all those wishes it would have the mandate to do just about anything in fisheries! ☺

Samudra for Cebu is specially published  
by ICSF for the Cebu Conference



# SAMUDRA

FOR CEBU

INTERNATIONAL COLLECTIVE IN SUPPORT OF FISHWORKERS

## Briefly

The first issue described *Samudra for Cebu* as just a bulletin on the Conference. We had initially called it a daily bulletin—which was what it was always meant to be—but we chickened out at the last minute and dropped the 'daily' from the announcement. Quite simply, given the skeletal staff and the bare minimum of infrastructure, we were worried if we could pull it off. But yes, we did it. Computers broke down, printers grew finicky, paper became brittle, diskettes got swapped, nerves snapped but yes, *Samudra for Cebu* came out on each day of the Conference. And that was possible only because so much happened during these six days. It was a reporter's dream beat—all the fishy news you ever wanted and all under one roof!

Thanks to all of you who gave interviews and wrote for us, despite your cramped time schedules. And thank you for reading the issues. We hope you found them interesting. Many thanks to our hosts in the Philippines and a special word to those who helped us out, particularly Kristina Godinez, Olivia Salajog Jr., Rhoel Orillaneda, Denver and En-en.

And now, goodbye, chao, ciao, adios, adieu, au revoir, paalam...

CONFERENCE STATEMENT PREPARED, PRESENTED TODAY

## And now on to the next decade

As the Cebu Conference closes with a Statement, expectations about the future role of ICSF grow, even as areas of difference remain

Six days of meetings, six days of talk, six days of sharing—but at the end of it all, what remains, what is left that is solid and which will not melt into air? Plenty or very little—depending on what you choose to see and what you hope to do once you leave Cebu.

But looked at from the point of view of expectations, the Cebu Conference will be regarded a success not just for meeting many of them but also for raising new ones.

Above all, the Cebu Conference affirmed the fact that, after a decade, ICSF can confidently claim to be a network in the true sense of the word, linking people and organizations with the threads of shared experiences.

But whether that is enough is debatable, as made clear by some of the demands, especially from a few of the Asian developing countries. The problems

that face the fisheries of the world are complex and offer no pat solutions. But meanwhile, the problems that these create for human beings—the fishworkers and their families, particularly in the less developed countries—can not be wished away nor can they wait eternally for solutions.

In that dilemma lies the call for a greater, more publicly active role for ICSF. Such an urging is not new nor is it unexpected. Yet the fact that it is still expressed demonstrates that ICSF continues to be seen as an appropriate forum.

Thus the recommendations on the five key topics emphasise networking and collaboration with like-minded persons and organizations. They suggest a role of 'advocacy' and lobbying, especially in international forums.

They further propose a guardianship role on matters of development projects, resource manage-

ment, social and work conditions of fishworkers. And they also suggest the empowerment of fishworkers' organizations through education and information.

Clearly, the agenda and direction for the future work of ICSF has been set by the Cebu Conference.

This is what Cebu will be remembered for. Gone are the days of tentativeness and diffidence.

For ICSF the future is one of work, more work—and then some more. ◊

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# Women must not be forgotten

**M**exico is a country with a long coastline, rivers, lakes and estuaries. Alongside them lie a community of fishermen who are very important in the production of food for the entire nation even though they are in a critical situation of poverty and marginalisation. Almost fifty per cent of Mexican fishermen receive an income less than the minimum daily wage of a worker elsewhere in Mexico and 80 per cent receive less than one-and-a-half times this wage level.

In Mexico women are the nuclei for the stabilisation of the community. Largely on their shoulders lie the weight of poverty and marginalisation. Fishermen communities are generally isolated which means that they have no access to basic needs like health, education, communication, sanitation facilities etc.

Wives, mothers and sisters have the traditional roles of looking after the welfare of their families. But they have to cope with empty tables and the illnesses of their children. They are economically unable to satisfy the basic needs of their families.

In the first instance, she has the responsibility of giving attention to the fisherman husband when he returns from the sea. The duration of her work is as long as the hours of the day because the woman always has to prepare food before the husband goes to fish and the children go to school.

Moreover, she has to be ready to serve them when they return. She has no right to be tired and she always gets up before everyone else and goes to bed after everyone. Women also face poverty in parallel commercial activities.

Usually, a woman of the coast gets married very young and because she has neither information on, nor access to, good medical services of family planning, she ends up having many children (on an average, no less than five). Such a situation makes her always either pregnant or in

a stage of early motherhood or caring for her babies. Moreover, this is a good arrangement for the men by which they ensure that their women stay at home on shore and under their control.

Previously, the situation of the community was sustainable because it lived in harmony with nature. But now it is in extreme crisis due to the entry of big industrial or tourist projects. These have led to the deterioration of life in the community and reduced sources of work. Not only does this make the people much poorer than before but it also affects the social health of the community. With the entry of these new inhabitants come some social evils like drugs and prostitution.

Confronted by such situations, women have reacted by supporting the struggles of the fishermen for their rights. They derive strength and determination from the feeling they have for their children, even though they often have to face the incomprehension of their husbands.

One night I was with some women who stayed up late cooking supper for their husbands who were agitating at strike outside an industrial factory. One of them told me in a sad and weary voice, "I am thinking, Adriana, that perhaps if the strike is successful and my husband wins some compensation, he will just go off with another woman." And this, even though she was doing all she could to support her husband in the strike.

In such a situation, we have a great deal to do to raise the consciousness of both men and women in the fishing communities of Mexico, especially in respecting and defending the rights of women. In the above example, we were able to force some of the fishermen to use their compensation money as well as the new houses that they are due to get, to ensure the security of their own families.

*Adriana Luna Para*

*Adriana Luna Para is founder of Grupo de Apoyo de la Red de Pescadores Riberenos, the Riverine Fishermen's Support Network in Mexico*

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*I am highly impressed by the capacity of the ICSF to bring together groups from so many countries. And, as a female, I was particularly motivated to see the participation of women in this conference and how they have grown in their ability to express points of view.*

— Margarita Lizzáraga  
Senior Liaison Officer  
Fisheries Department  
FAO, Rome

*The fists emphasise the centrality of the fishworker in producing wealth from the sea. That they are clenched and that they do not touch, highlights the need to forge new links.*

— From a 1984 note explaining the design which subsequently became the logo of ICSF

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VOICES

VOICES

# 'Life on earth being gambled with'

Two fishermen—Melecio Perez Chan from Mexico and Juan Torres Crespin from Peru—were both at the Rome Conference in 1984. Here they look back at Rome—and forwards beyond Cebu

## *What are your impressions of Rome 1984 and Cebu 1994?*

JUAN: For fishermen like me, participating in Rome was like a dream. That invitation to fishworkers and support groups marked an important point of time in history. What prompted that invitation was a desire to protect water resources, knowing that these resources are the very source of food and work. For fishermen it has been of great importance to have beside us a movement of professional people who are organized at a scientific and professional level to defend these resources. After ten years of the historical Rome Conference, we are again in a meeting sponsored by ICSF. But now it is no longer a meeting of mere individuals but of representatives of already existing organizations in the small-scale fisheries sector. With the professional support of ICSF and other groups from different countries, we clearly see that there is a definite advancement in organizational and scientific analysis which has been well received by some governments.

MELECIO: I feel that the Rome Conference was like a worldwide awakening or recognition of global fisheries prob-

lems. Moreover, it contributed a great value which I would wish for many fishermen of the world to have. When the first exploratory meetings of the Network of Riverine Fishermen of Mexico took place, I realised the importance and the necessity of creating a new organization.

At that moment, I was clear in my mind of the kind of basis we needed to strengthen the national movement of Mexican fishworkers. Moreover, I knew how to make the most of the relationships and contacts with fishworker organizations as well as support groups.

## *What are the problems of small-scale fisheries in your country?*

JUAN: The biggest problem is the indiscriminate fishing by industrial fisheries of sardines, anchovies and mackerels. In 1993 they caught ten million tonnes of fish.

MELECIO: The main problem is pollution and depletion of natural resources and degradation of the environment.

## *How do you face this problem?*

JUAN: We do not have the possibility of facing it because the present govern-

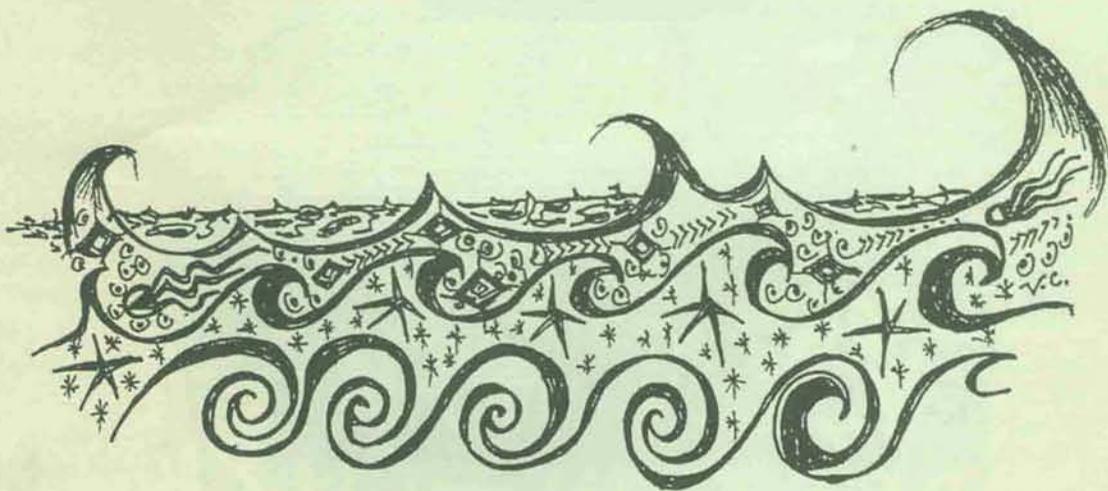
ment's policies have caused a decline in trade union organizations and this has affected small-scale fisherfolk.

MELECIO: We see as urgent the need to have technical support in the area of litigation to make our demands more legally sustainable. In Mexico, there is little human resource with this skill.

## *What message would you like to convey as the Cebu Conference ends?*

JUAN: We call on all the professionals in this noble work to continue strengthening it and to continue contributing with their knowledge for the benefit of small-scale fishworkers the world over. I also call on all the leaders who are participating in this Conference to assume roles that will help conserve resources and to put to practice the conclusions and lessons learnt at this Conference.

MELECIO: I would like to ask workers and professionals in fisheries to work together for a joint effort for the preservation of our marine resources because it is really life on earth that is being gambled with.



# Are fishworkers to blame?

by Rodolfo C. Sambajon, President, PAMALAKAYA, Philippines

Our small country was once called the 'Pearl of the Orient', rich in all natural resources, from forests to rivers and seas. But now our forests are denuded and most of our people are homeless. Our mountains are destroyed and our gold has gone. What is left to us are the mine tailings that pollute our marine habitat. The birds and the bees in the green fields are now replaced by buildings and factories that pollute the air and water.

Our rice fields are gone and what is left to us are bridges, pavements and mountains of garbage. And on the pavements, you will find squatters in our own land. Inside the buildings are men and women who work for the rich, making them richer at the expense of the poor labourers. At night you will see beautiful lights but behind the neon lights are sons and daughters of farmers and fisherfolk who have long been neglected and exploited.

This is not the end. Exploitation will continue. In fact, we are now facing a bigger problem which needs to be addressed. Our coastal lands and mangrove forests and even our fishing grounds are subject to massive conversion, also for the interest of the powerful. Some say this is for our development and for the future. But

our question is, for whose development? Are we sure of a development imposed by the IMF-World Bank and being implemented by their local collaborators who for a long time exploited our people?

We must now learn from our experiences. Who benefited from our resources? Who destroyed our environment? Is it really the fisherfolk whose only means of livelihood depends upon the marine resources or those who have the capacity and capability? Sometimes the fisherfolk are blamed for the destruction of the environment and marine life. Are they really the culprits or are the culprits those who pretend to be environment-friendly and protective by offering

grants and aid to protect the environment?

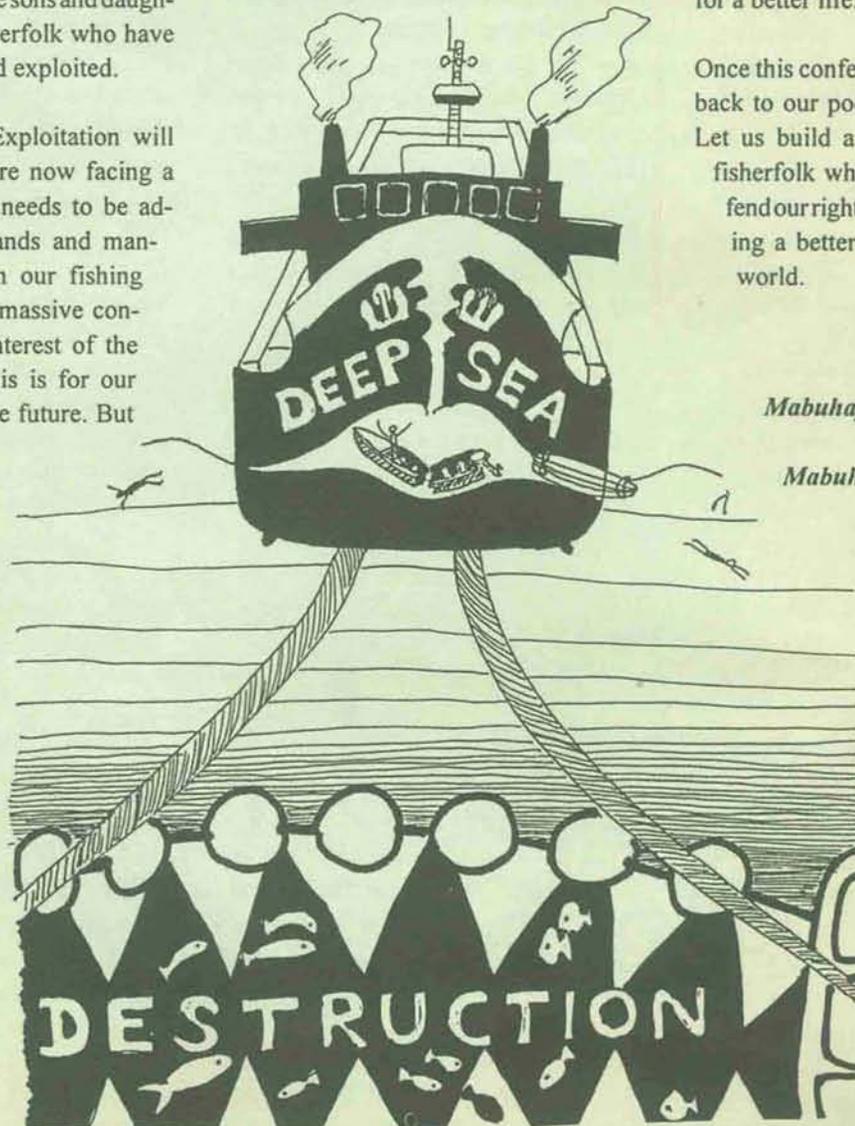
This is not only a question of environmental protection. The problem and struggle still remains between the oppressor and the oppressed. And the oppressor will never place gold on a silver plate and offer it to us. We need to struggle to get it.

Maybe we have differences but I believe we have our commonalities too. From our common grounds we should unite and fight for our rights and for our future. In this struggle, we may even give up our life but never the lives and destiny of our children whom we love most. We will not allow our loved ones to die of hunger and homelessness. They need to survive for a better life.

Once this conference is over, we will go back to our poor fishing communities. Let us build a strong organization of fisherfolk who are determined to defend our rights and committed to building a better society and a peaceful world.

*Mabuhay ang ICSF!*

*Mabuhay ang mangingisda!*



# Making a meal of Peru's fisheries

by *Héran Peralta Bouroncle, Fisheries Adviser to the Government of Peru*

Incredible but true! I think you would be amazed to learn that in Peru in 1993 effluent from industrial fishmeal plants processing sardines and anchovy leaked 5 million tonnes of fish worth US \$175 million into the sea.

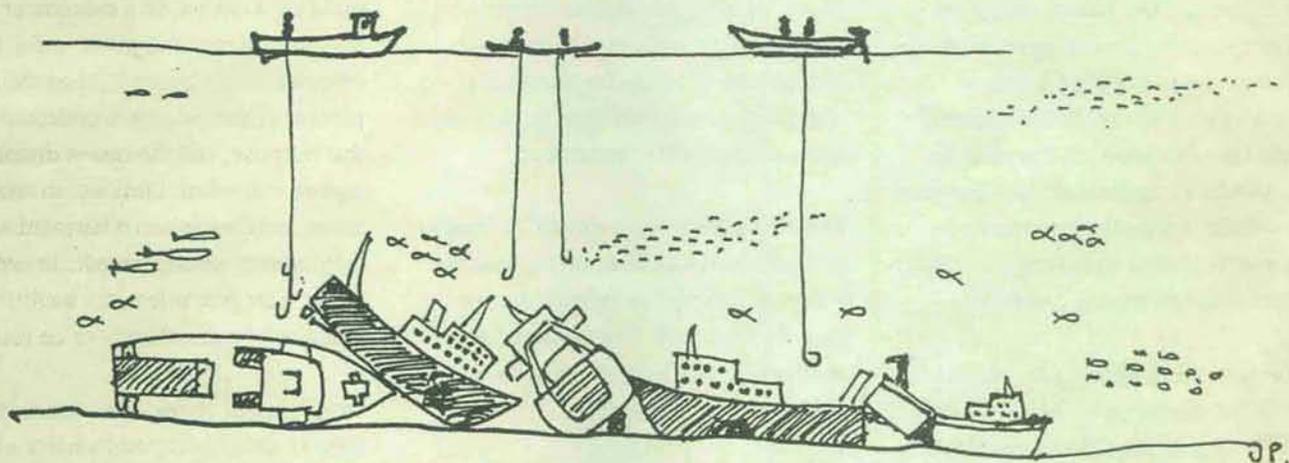
According to the official statistics of the Peruvian Ministry of Fisheries, 8 million tonnes of sardines and anchovy were landed by the industrial fishing fleet in 1993. However, the industrial fishworkers only declare 80% of their catch. According to the fishermen and independent boat owners, the actual amount received by the processing plants in 1993 was 9,600,000 tonnes.

As part of his government's commitments, President Fujimori must transfer the ownership of this state enterprise to the private sector—national or foreign. This momentous event has opened up the debate as to what privatisation really means.

The fishermen and independent boat owners feel that privatisation is a means by which the government would transfer its facilities into the hands of national industrialists and merchants. This would neither guarantee a monopoly nor protect the small and medium scale businesses.

age the industrial sardine and anchovy fisheries. In June 1992 the Ministry of Fisheries, financed by the World Bank, organised an International Seminar on Resource Management, in which experts from countries which had developed this system participated.

Despite concluding that ITQs were not an appropriate means for the fishmeal industry, the World Bank has continued to put pressure on the government saying that it is the only alternative, for reasons of profitability, transparency and balance with market forces. Whatever the World Bank says, the experience in New Zealand has shown it to be an unmiti-



Since both private and national processing plants use technology from the 1960s, for every tonne of meal produced, 2.3 tonnes are washed into the sea as effluent. That is to say, 51% of the raw material is dumped back into the sea. This means that in 1993 alone fish factories discharged effluent into the sea containing 5 million tonnes of fish products. As raw material, this effluent would have a value of US \$175 million, lost to the fishermen and boat owners, which could realise US \$250 million if transformed into meal and oil.

PESCAPERU is the world's largest producer of fishmeal and oil. It is a state-owned corporation of 20 plants spread over 1,700 kilometres, which alone controls 20% of the world trade in fishmeal. In 1993 PESCAPERU exported 600,000 tonnes of meal worth US \$210 million.

The union of private industrial fishmeal producers said that privatisation would only be allowed for national capital, as a measure to prevent the industry being controlled by international capital. Chilean and Chinese investors thought that the package of new rules, legal guarantees and tax concessions would allow them to purchase the entire industry.

The Peruvian fishworkers rejected this last measure because it would allow the Chinese and Chilean capitalists to control price as well as the future of this industry. Also, they suspected that ownership by large national investors would mean the collapse of 80% of the industry and the independent fishing fleet. There is an agreement between the Peruvian government and the World Bank about the introduction of Individual Transferable Quotas (ITQs) as the means to man-

aged disaster for sustainable development. The Scandinavian experience shows that it is only feasible with huge state subsidies for boat owners. Nor, according to the outcome of our conference, is it certain that ITQs would be good on matters of transparency, control or monitoring.

Moreover, the use of ITQs in the Peruvian industrial fishery would be extremely complex and costly.

There is also the danger that the privatisation of quotas, that is to say our available marine resources, would allow a great concentration and centralisation of transnational capital, resulting in the control of the entire Peruvian industrial fishery, with the disintegration of the industrial fleet, and the Peruvian fishmeal and oil industry.

# Protecting nature means protecting ourselves

by Don K. Marut, Programme Officer, OXFAM, Indonesia

Sustainable resources management might be a concept debatable worldwide, but not for most of the people in Moluccas islands, a province consisting of 1007 islands in the eastern part of Indonesia. The people in Moluccas have inherited a traditional system of wisdom and knowledge which supports the sustainability of their livelihoods and the environment. This traditional indigenous wisdom is called *sasi*.

*Sasi* literally means 'prohibition'. It is a traditional law that regulates the people from exploiting the natural resources, according to a communal agreement. As the people believe that all kinds of creatures in the world are interdependent, the law also arranges the relationships among human beings and between human beings and other creatures. In principle, *sasi* aims to maintain harmonious relationships among creatures.

As for natural resources, *sasi* applies both on the mainland as well as at sea and in coastal areas. On the mainland, *sasi* manages the harvest of cash crops and timber, and regulates the protection of forests which have direct or indirect relations with other resources such as water sources in uphill areas, mangrove

forests on the coastlines and estuaries. Sago plants—the staple food—are also protected by *sasi*. As sea, *sasi* arranges the harvest of certain kinds of marine resources such as sea cucumber, pearl shells in Aru islands, a kind of sardines in Haruku islands and other kinds of fishes in other islands in the province of Moluccas.

'Closing' *sasi* means that for a certain period people are prohibited from taking out certain natural resources. The period is determined by communal agreement which, in turn, is based on the time needed for the resources to multiply enough and be ready for harvesting. 'Opening' *sasi* means that the people are allowed to take the resources.

The community has a council of leaders or representatives of extended families which is assigned to enforce the law. They are not paid. The position of chairperson has been given to certain families by inheritance.

Traditionally, all the members are men but in certain communities women have been involved. Anyone breaking the law is punished and the forms of punishment are decided by the community. The

people obey the law not only because they want to uphold the dignity of their families (as a single person's faults are regarded as the faults of the family) but because they are really aware of the advantages of the regulation. The people in Moluccas believe that 'we live from nature and we are part of nature', so protecting nature also means protecting ourselves.

The harvests are divided in accordance with the main purpose of the *sasi*. If it was initially decided that it is for building a church or a mosque or a community meeting place or for some other community needs, then the largest portion of the harvest is collected for that purpose, and the rest is divided among individual families. In social terms, *sasi* maintains a harmonious relationship among people. In economic terms, *sasi* guarantees the quality and quantity of natural high-value resources.

In ecological terms, *sasi* ensures the quality, availability and variety of natural resources. And in institutional terms, *sasi* maintains a participatory process in the community which contributes to the making of a solid and integrated community.

