

Asia Workshop – IYAFA 2022
Celebrating Sustainable and Equitable Small-Scale Fisheries
Report



4 - 8 May, 2022

The Berkeley Hotel, Bangkok, Thailand

Report prepared by Mythili DK, Sivaja K Nair and Nivedita Shridhar

Organized by

International Collective in Support of Fishworkers (ICSF)
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Front Cover

Fishers returning with catch, Puger fishing port, East Java,
Indonesia/ KNTI

Front Inside

Participants at the Asia Workshop – IYAFA 2022, Bangkok, Thailand/ ICSF

Back Inside

Pagadiya fishermen from Gujarat, India

Machimar Adhikar Sangharsh Sangathan/ Usmangani Sherasiya

Back Cover

A woman fish vendor drying fish, Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh/ COAST Foundation

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List of Abbreviations

ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
BPL	Below Poverty Line
CCRF	Conduct for Responsible Fisheries
COFI	Committee on Fisheries
CSO	Civil Society Organization
FACT	National Fisheries Action Coalition Team
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
FWO	Fishworker Organization
GDP	Gross domestic product
GIS	Geographic Information System
GOCC	Government Owned and Controlled Corporation
GT	Gross Tonnage
ICARDA	International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas
ICDS	Integrated Child Development Scheme
ICSF	International Collective in Support of Fishworkers
ILO	International Labour Organization
IPC	International Planning Committee for Food Sovereignty
IYAFA	International Year of Artisanal Fisheries and Aquaculture
KNTI	Kesatuan Nelayan Tradisional Indonesia (Indonesian Traditional Fisherfolk Union)
LGU	Local Government Unions
MCD	Centre of Marine life Conservation and Community Development
MEL	Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MPA	Marine Protected Area
NAFSO	National Fisheries Solidarity Organization
NGO	Non-governmental organization
OBC	Other Backward Classes
PCIC	Philippines Crop Insurance Corporation
PMMSY	Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana
SDF	Sustainable Development Foundation
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SEAFDEC	South East Asian Fisheries Development Centre
SHG	Self Help Groups
SSF	Small-scale Fisheries
UN	The United Nations
US	United States of America
WFFP	World Forum of Fisher Peoples



AZRILNIZAM OMAR, JARING

Fishermen at sea in Penang,
Malaysia

Day 1 : 5 May 2022

1. OPENING SESSION

Considering the Covid-19 pandemic and the protocols established in the host country, Manas Roshan from ICSF urged everyone to follow Covid-19 precautions and adhere to Thailand's rules and regulations. He then invited Maarten Bavinck, Member ICSF to start the session. Maarten welcomed everyone to the four-day workshop to celebrate the International Year of Artisanal Fisheries and Aquaculture. He thanked the organizers, the Sustainable Development Foundation (SDF) and the International Collective in Support of Fishworkers (ICSF). He introduced the day's programme and invited the speakers for the opening session to come forward.

1.1 Opening Presentation

Ravadee Prasertcharoensuk, Director, Sustainable Development Foundation

Ravadee Prasertcharoensuk said that Thailand's historical focus on small-scale fisheries made it a great choice as a venue for IYAFA 2022. She recalled the FAO global conference held in 2008, that served to lay the foundations on voluntary guidelines for small-scale fishers. These guidelines played a very significant role in the fisheries sector. Ravadee said this may well be the first in person workshop conducted by SDF and ICSF. She urged everyone to use the coming days to highlight issues, find ways to address them and support each other to come up with strategies to aid small-scale fishers. There was a clear objective here—to discuss not just food security, but also quality of life, poverty and secure small-scale fishers' livelihoods. She highlighted the threat decreasing resources posed to the sector and said that addressing this was a collective responsibility.

Women played a huge part in fisheries, Ravadee said. There was a need to study and address their discrimination in the sector. ICSF was helping organize a series of programmes to strengthen women's movements across the world. It was also necessary to demand accountability from those who promised policy changes on paper. She ended by thanking everyone for attending the workshop



Ravadee Prasertcharoensuk, Director, Sustainable Development Foundation, Thailand and Member, ICSF welcoming the participants from eleven countries to Bangkok for the IYAFA Asia 2022 during the opening session

despite their schedules and the threat posed by Covid-19. She extended an invitation for a social event later in the evening.

Maarten thanked Ravadee and invited Taworn Thunaji, the Deputy General of the Department of Fisheries of Thailand to make the inaugural address.

1.2 Welcome address

Taworn Thunaji, Deputy General of the Department of Fisheries, Thailand

Piya Thedyaem, Chairperson of the Thailand Association of the Federation of Fisherfolk

After greeting the participants Taworn Thunaji outlined the aim of the workshop—to ensure equality, fairness and sustainability in small-scale and artisanal fisheries. According to the 2020 Fisheries data, over 60 per cent of fishing vessels in Thailand were artisanal fishing vessels. Sustainable resource management was key to ensuring food security and income, as well as creating jobs for small fishing communities. The government, private sector and NGOs would play a vital role to achieve this.

Thailand's Royal Ordinance of Fisheries 2015, Taworn said, proposed to bring together government representatives, experts, fishers and representatives from community organizations to discuss sustainable co-management of local fishery resources and provide the sector with development devices. The government agency recognized the importance of marine resources, efficiency and sustainable ecology based on the principles of the Blue Economy. Fair and equitable resource access for artisanal fishers and small-scale aquaculture farmers was key to this.

The Fisheries department, Taworn emphasized, supported multiple policies to aid capacity building in fisheries. This included funding technological transfer, fish processing and trade and market access. Projects promoting artisanal fisheries and small-scale farmers were also underway. They were making attempts to introduce fishers to trade and marketing. The department had established a marketplace for artisanal and small-scale aquaculture products called 'fisherman shop' that would be accessible both offline and online.

Taworn ended his address by thanking ICSF and SDF for choosing Thailand as the venue for the workshop. He hoped it would spark productive discussions, produce good outcomes and create stronger international networks for small-scale fisheries.

Maarten thanked Taworn for his informed perspective on Thai fisheries and government policies and introduced the second speaker, Piya Thedyaem, Chairperson of the Thailand Association of the Federation of Fisherfolk. Piya Thedyaem welcomed everyone and said that his organization worked at the grassroots, with local communities. Problems faced in Thailand, Asia and the rest of the world, he said, are common to everyone and has to do with access to resources.

1.3 Felicitation

Panitnart Weerawat, Senior Instructor, South East Asian Fisheries Development Centre (SEAFDEC)

Panitnart Weerawat, Senior Instructor, South East Asian Fisheries Development Centre (SEAFDEC), pointed out that across many South East Asian countries a majority of fishworkers and fish farmers were considered small-scale. It was, however, difficult to quantify the exact number of people engaged in the sector. An estimated 89 per cent of Indonesian fishers—2.4 million—were small-scale. In Vietnam, small-scale fisheries provided livelihood to approximately 4 million people and employed around 750,000 fishers. Small-scale marine capture fisheries in Cambodia, Malaysia, Thailand and Vietnam produced 3 million tonnes of catch in 2013. These numbers, she emphasized, may even be underreported. A large amount of production was not recorded properly. Small-scale fisheries were important for domestic and international trade too.



Taworn Thunaji, Deputy Director General, Department of Fisheries, Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives, Government of Thailand addressing the participants during the opening session

The sector, Panitnart said, was facing internal and external competition over the use of limited resources. SEAFDEC was collaborating with other organizations to support countries in South East Asia to enhance capacity building, promote good management and analyze the role of small-scale fisheries and marine resource management and development.

SEAFDEC's work on integrated coastal resource management, ecosystems approach to fisheries management etc has helped local communities obtain information to demand and support appropriate fisheries management plans. Recognizing the global reach and importance of IYAF 2022 over various crucial issues, they had decided to work with the FAO and other partners, she said.

Maarten wound up the proceedings and requested Ravadee to present mementos of appreciation to Taworn and Piya. This was followed by a video that celebrated small-scale fisheries in South East Asia. Maarten introduced Sebastian Mathew, Executive Director of ICSF who outlined the programme for the workshop.

1.4 Overview of the workshop

Sebastian Mathew, Executive Director, ICSF

Sebastian Mathew drew everyone's attention to the UN General Assembly's resolution 72/72 adopted in January 2018. Among other things, the resolution committed to ensuring access to fisheries and markets for subsistence, small-scale, artisanal fisherfolk, women fishworkers and indigenous people and communities. It further emphasized the need to ensure small-scale fishers were involved in policy development and fisheries management. This was essential to ensure sustainability of small-scale fisheries.

ICSF was collaborating with the FAO—the UN's custodial agency in charge of the international year—to organize several activities through the year. This, Sebastian said, was the first of a series of such workshops to be followed by ones in Africa, Latin America and Europe.

These workshops hoped to enhance fishworker organizations' engagement on issues like food security, tenure rights and social development. He said it was important to deepen cooperation between fishworker organizations and civil society organizations, NGOs. Another key objective was to amplify women's voices in the sector. Gender equity would play a key role in fisheries development. Additionally, the knowledge artisanal fishers and fishworkers possessed and the way they utilized limited resources, should be celebrated and treasured. This, he said, would remind the international community of the continued relevance of small-scale fisheries for food security, poverty eradication and cultural heritage. The diversity of knowledge in the sector needed to be preserved.

Many participants, Sebastian reminisced, had also been part of the 2007 FAO conference that developed measures and schemes to protect small-scale fisheries. There was a need to reflect and take stock of measures employed to eradicate poverty, ensure nutrition and food security, promote tenure rights and participatory management since 2014.

Sebastian also said there was a need to contextualize international guidelines in regional meetings. Regional diversity was the reason the definition of small-scale fisheries was left to authorities at the national level, he said.

The small-scale fisheries guidelines focussed mainly on the technical aspects of fish production, processing, preservation, consumption and marketing. While its contributions were huge, efforts were being made to now bring in the human rights dimension. The focus needed to be not just on the types and quantities of fish but also the rights and dignity of the people involved. Both men and women needed to be within this framework.

Fisheries, furthermore, was not just about the fisheries department. It was important to broaden the scope of issues by creating more dialogue between various social development stakeholders, human rights commissions etc to improve life within the community. Engagement had to occur across different levels of the governance pyramid—local, provincial, state and perhaps even regional and international.

There needed to be clarity on what issues fishworker organizations could work on at the local level themselves. There also needed to be clarity on how to work vertically and horizontally across the hierarchy of different organizations and agencies, including fisheries. A certain amount of coherence towards different approaches needed to be provided.

Sebastian went on to acknowledge the participants from 11 different Asian countries, and represented a wide variety of stakeholders. These different perspectives would be essential to arriving at an action programme.

The countries represented at the workshop were responsible for about 27 per cent of capture fisheries production (marine and inland) and housed 44 per cent of the world's fishers. India, Bangladesh, Cambodia, Myanmar and Indonesia topped inland capture fisheries production. Sebastian acknowledged that inland water capture fisheries had been neglected and the profile of small-scale fishers engaged in it needed to be raised. The balance between marine and inland fisheries needed to be redressed.

Sebastian hoped that consultation and participatory management would be in focus when discussing development in coastal and inland waters. Social issues need urgent addressing and a bottom up approach to accessing markets and resources needed to be considered.

Gender equity across the board, Sebastian said, was very important. Women in fisheries also needed to be consulted and informed about important issues equally. Sebastian concluded by reminding participants that three pillars of tenure rights, social development and gender needed to be united to create a powerful statement.

Maarten thanked Sebastian and emphasized his role in ICSF and in support of small-scale fisheries for many years. He then highlighted the diversity present at the workshop and how it would provide

insights into similarities and differences during the pandemic and subsequent economic crisis. A group photograph was taken.

2. Introduction of participants

Maarten outlined the structure of the gathering, introduced different countries and their country coordinators. Participants went on to intermingle and introduce and share backgrounds. This was followed by lunch.

3. Session 1 : Access for small-scale fishing communities to resources

Chairperson: V. Vivekanandan, Member, ICSF

Presentation By: Maarten Bavinck, Member, ICSF

The chair of the session, V. Vivekanandan, member, ICSF, spoke on the significance of access rights of small-scale fishers to resources and then welcomed Maarten Bavinck to present on the same.

Maarten began by explaining why tenure is an important and complex topic in small-scale fisheries. When spending time with a small-scale fisher family in Sri Lanka, he discovered that the older committed, skilled fishers advised the next generation to pick another occupation. This was a common refrain across the small-scale fishing community—even among those able to earn well. Maarten believed tenure rights had caused this.

At the international level, the relevance of fisheries tenure, he said, had already been highlighted as an important issue. It was mentioned in the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries (1995) and the Law of the Sea (1982). Furthermore, tenure guidelines devoted to tenure issues in fisheries, forestry and land were also in existence. Tenure rights was among the most important issues addressed by the Voluntary Guidelines for supporting small-scale fisheries.

Maarten expanded by saying that tenure was one of the basic necessities for fishing. Different tenure systems determined who could use which resources, for how long, and under what conditions. Since



Maarten Bavinck, member, ICSF presenting on access for small-scale fishing communities to resources. He detailed the significance of customary law and reiterated the need to document them and consider them in policy making

these resources were tied to specific land and water spaces, fishers always required access to them. If this was challenged by other actors, their tenure was not secure.

Just like property deeds granted ownership rights, fishworkers wanted ownership rights for the spaces they used—the shoreline and the water. Despite not owning the water in the same way as farmers do land, a system of tenure set rules on practices, identity of fishers and catch.

Along the south east coast of India, Maarten said, the village council could bar certain gear and practices. Their decision making powers extended to seasons and times of day to conduct fishing. This village council was not government designate. It consisted of fishers from the village who took these decisions collectively. This kind of tenure gives fishworkers rights, but also responsibilities. These fishworkers paid tax to the village council, participated in the decision making, and would fight for the village in case of disputes.

On the other hand, governments and international organizations used tenure to promote sustainable practices and dictate the usage of material and gear. Tenure was also used to lay down rules and regulations and restricted fishers could only fish within their country's waters. Tenure, Maarten said, is the cornerstone of livelihood in fishing communities. It is important to ensure food security and is, in many ways, a human right.

There is a serious lack of a clear tenure system. Maarten also noted a reduction in the influence of customary law and the increase of governmental law. There were numerous conflicts, intrusion, poaching, theft and grabbing of coastal land and waters and unclear rules and regulations. Tenure, additionally, could only be successful if it helped sustain fisheries and fish stocks.

Maarten, referencing Professor Elinor Ostrom, said village rules needed to be supported by government and vice-versa to achieve success. The decline and fragmentation of tenure is magnified by legal pluralism, with multiple laws and rules contradicting each other. The existing power pyramid also hinders decision making at all levels. Maarten pointed out that governments and international organizations often make decisions without seeking inputs from fishworkers. The powers of customary authorities are disregarded and customary laws are ignored. Invariably, fishworkers lose out.



V. Vivekanandan, member, ICSF, chair of the session explained the significance of access rights of small-scale fishing communities to resources

Tenure systems also face external threats. The demands of the blue economy, increased oil exploration and construction has aggravated marine pollution. The effects of climate change are already affecting fisheries in noticeable ways. Fishworkers are often forced to move residence and fishing grounds because of rising sea levels and storm threats. This will obviously result in changing tenure, but the question is, whether governments provide space to do so. Problems in tenure results in a lack of security. Fishers are increasingly uncertain about their profession.

Maarten acknowledged that there was no quick-fix solution. But there were ways to make things better. It is important to underscore fisheries' role in a country's food security and employment. Governments need to pay heed to this, more so in these times of economic crisis, with food prices on the rise. Increasing local control would also help solve tenure problems. Customary laws have been disregarded because there is no single guideline document or book that makes note of them. Governments need to be made aware of customary laws.

The fight for proper tenure, Maarten said, must begin with documenting and mapping how fishworkers use the land, sea and resources available and the rules they follow themselves. Documentation helps gather proof, and obtain recognition. Existing rules must be enforced but also revised regularly to address issues that crop up—especially those concerning gender and democracy. There needs to be a system to resolve disputes. Finally, Maarten emphasized the importance of taking initiative and forming alliances to tackle and address any issues that may come up. It was necessary to make fishing a viable occupation for future generations. V. Vivekanandan thanked Maarten and opened the floor for questions.

One of the first questions was about the effect proper tenure systems would have on the involvement and rights and recognition of women in fisheries. Participants from Indonesia pointed out that fisher women were not recognized by the government. Maarten said this was a hugely important point that required dedicated discussion.

Pakistan, participants said, has a legally binding system, where boat owners pay a fee for a licence or permit. There is constant agitation to protect customary rights. In fresh water, where the contractual system prevailed, now licenses were required. Marine rights were completely controlled by licenses. This led to clashes with fishers who claimed their customary rights. A tenure system, they said, could help resolves such conflicts, reduce the huge burden on the fisheries sector and help small-scale fishers currently unable to compete due to lack of money and resources. They hoped the discussions would prove fruitful and pressure governments to adopt sustainable policies. Maarten emphasized the importance of historical rights. Further to which Venugopalan and Manas organized groups for discussion.

4 Group discussion: Access for small-scale fishing communities to resources

The groups were divided as follows:

Group 1: Cambodia and Vietnam

Group 2: Bangladesh, Malaysia and Myanmar

Group 3: Pakistan, India and Sri Lanka

Group 4: Indonesia and the Philippines



Participants from Myanmar and the Philippines discussing major challenges in accessing the resources in the country contexts.

5. Presentation of Group reports on access for small-scale fishing communities to resources

Access for small-scale fishing communities to resources

Chairperson: V. Vivekanandan, Member, ICSF

5.1 Group 1 : Cambodia and Vietnam

5.1.1 Tenure rights of small-scale fishers (SSF)

Than Thi Hien began the presentation by introducing herself as the Deputy Director of the Centre of Marinelife Conservation and Community Development (MCD) in Vietnam. She stated that the country's fishers enjoyed tenure rights, and are recognized by the Fisheries Law from 2017. It mentions community co-management and covers access to land resources and housing, individually and collectively. Proper implementation of the law would ensure access and protection of aquatic resources. The government needed to create strong policy guidelines to implement rights and funds for co-management. Thi Hien highlighted the importance of financial resources for co-management.



The panel of group representatives presenting the country reports on tenure rights and challenges (Sitting L to R- Chatjaporn Loyplew, Dani Setiawan, V.Vivekanandan, Madhuri Mondal, Than Thi Hien, Muhammed Mujibul Haque Munir)

Decree 26, implemented fisheries law in the country, but it needed updated information on how community funds could be feasible, practical and operational for co-management groups.

Cambodia also had a fisheries law, but had difficulties implementing rights for fishers. This was a matter of concern for small-scale fishers, she said. Collaboration between different organizations and stakeholders needed to improve. This in turn would help increase capacity and enforcement. While rights were gender equitable and secured in Vietnam, better enforcement was necessary. The Gender Action Plan was focussed on agriculture and rural development and needed to be expanded to the fisheries sector. The country has a women's union but more community based organizations and women leaders were needed to expand gender equity.

Cambodia, on the other hand was improving female participation in capacity development programmes in fishing villages. This was borne out of the simple fact that the men were often away fishing, so the women at home were available for training sessions. Policy, she said, needed to support men and women equitably and practically. MCD worked with both men and women. But, she noted, there needed to be better arrangements between the two genders in division of work at home, in production activities and in committees. This would ensure they shared responsibilities equally.

5.1.2 Challenges and threats, mechanisms to overcome them

Access to land and water bodies was a challenge. The threat of climate change was omnipresent. In the Mekong delta, Vietnam and Cambodia, Thi Hien said, extreme weather had impacted production, output and the quality of life of fishers. Overfishing and illegal fishing was rampant in some areas. Depleting resources meant fishers had to venture further from shore to get fish—more noticeable over the past decade.

There were problems with enforcement, compliance and governance, but some reforms had been introduced. She said that implementation could become more effective by increasing the technical capacity in areas like data monitoring.

Cambodia, she revealed, faced problems of coordination between different organizations. There needed to be more affirmative action from different ministries. In the coastal areas of Vietnam, a lot of investment had been made for tourism. This had come at the cost of fishing communities. There was a need to ensure their participation and involvement when discussing development projects. This would ensure benefits could be shared and there were clear boundaries in areas allotted for tourism and development and that allotted to the community. There was a need to empower community groups and ensure their participation in development planning and implementation.

5.2 Group 2 : Bangladesh, Malaysia and Myanmar

5.2.1 Tenure rights of small-scale fishers (SSF)

Muhammad Mujibul Haque Munir began by saying the group had combined the first two questions in their discussion. In Malaysia, because of the small size of the inland fisheries sector, marine fishers enjoy tenure rights. All marine areas are open for fishermen. Additionally, there are exclusive zones for small-scale fishers and they can access the deep seas as well. Fishermen have access to special housing schemes and government agencies help with landing sites.

In spite of all this, fishers faced challenges due to sea land reclamation and similar projects. Despite the country's strong federal laws, land was managed and ruled according to state laws, which sometimes overruled federal law. It was, however, possible to stop these projects—evidenced by the work of a fishers organization in Penang. Strong fisher organizations were necessary to combat anti-fisher activities. In Myanmar, men and women enjoy land rights and have tenure rights. However because of development projects, competition among fishermen and developers to access these rights had increased. The government is promoting fisheries co-management to address these issues.

In Bangladesh, policies, rules and laws, while great on paper, are implemented very poorly. The country's main fisheries resources are inland and must be leased out to fishermen cooperatives. Unfortunately, these fishermen cooperatives are managed by influential people and political leaders, not by the fishermen themselves. In addition to this, Mujibul said, there was ongoing debate between development and democracy and development and environment.

5.2.2 Challenges and threats

One of Malaysia's biggest challenges was the power the government exerted over land. While Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) existed there was no clear definition or clarification on how marine fishermen could benefit from them. Fishers in Bangladesh lacked knowledge of existing laws and rights—even when these laws and rights worked in their favour. The government has focussed more on aquaculture than fish capture, traditional fisheries and artisanal fisheries. As a result, production from fish capture has dropped from about 90 per cent to about 25 per cent.

Tenure rights are only awarded for one year in Myanmar. This causes a huge uncertainty for every fishing family, as they do not know whether they will have access to the same lands and fisheries sources again. Additionally, approvals are for a specific township—changing towns resulted in a rejection of tenure rights.

5.2.3 Mechanisms to overcome challenges and threats

Dialogue among stakeholders was suggested as a mechanism to overcome challenges in Malaysia. Building strong fisheries organizations was crucial—having already yielded results in Penang. There were no suggestions for specific mechanisms to address these issues in Myanmar. In Bangladesh, while mechanisms existed, implementation was weak. A key way to combat this was to strengthen fishers organizations and improve fishers' knowledge and awareness.

5.3 Group 3 : Pakistan, India, Sri Lanka

5.3.1 Tenure rights, SSF and equity, threats and challenges

Madhuri Mondal from Dakshin Foundation started off by saying that issues faced across the three countries were of similar nature. Sri Lanka did not recognize customary rights. All activities required licenses. Fishers were losing tenure rights due to tourism and development projects. This fact was common for all three countries in the group. Land used by fishing communities was declared tourism or development zones and taken away to start hotel construction or similar projects. People were often displaced. Inland fishers, forced to compete with farmers had it worse.

Pakistan did not have tenure rights in sea areas. Climate change has created additional pressure on inland fisheries. Construction of barrages has resulted in less water being released downstream and the resultant dry ponds are reclaimed for cultivation. Marine areas are being reclaimed to build housing societies—another issue common to all three countries. Madhuri cited an example of development projects in Maharashtra which have led to the displacement of many fishing communities in coastal areas. Women in small-scale fisheries and shrimp farming were impacted the most. In Gujarat, construction of wind farms and salt industries had destroyed the inter-tidal zone.

Madhuri said issues with tenure came up when customary rights were not recognized and encroached on. Rights to land therefore needed to be formally recognized and given to both men and women. Rights for areas used exclusively by women needed to be given to women. In all three countries, anyone could avail of a fishing license. The fishing community was therefore never properly identified. Licenses invariably went to rich industrialists and those with political clout, instead of traditional and small-scale fishers.

In Sri Lanka, Madhuri revealed, an area originally used by small-scale fishers was now being used for the culture of sea cucumbers. Depleting resources meant fishers were forced to work as labour in the same sector. In India, this exact scenario was replicated on the eastern coast. Small-scale fishers were forced to work as labour in the mechanised trawling industry. This shift was a result of not recognizing tenure rights.

Another important observation was that fisheries licenses were for operations only, not for tenure on resources. If the resources were lost, the license was redundant. This had happened in West Bengal. The construction of a waterway meant fishers lost access to fishing grounds, and were therefore unable to fish despite holding licenses. When establishing tenure rights, it was necessary to focus on conservation and protection of resources too. If resources were depleted and polluted, tenure rights became worthless.

5.3.2 Mechanisms to address challenges

There are no effective mechanisms to resolve issues currently. The Sri Lankan government has a non-voluntary resettlement policy. These three countries were among the worst, with regard to tenure rights. Over the last decade there has been a rush to cash in on development projects—ports, coastal cities, tourism, which has caused a lot of conflict. Fishers were never consulted before the projects were implemented.

5.4 Group 4 : Indonesia and The Philippines

5.4.1 Tenure rights

Dani Setiawan noted that fishers were provided space in coastal areas in Indonesia but the government could reclaim the land for coastal projects. This was because of a new law related to job creation formed in 2021.



Participants from Sri Lanka and Thailand discussing major challenges in accessing the resources in their respective countries

In some coastal areas, where housing and land was legalized by the government, people held papers and deeds. In most of the country legal paperwork and status did not exist.

Even in the Philippines, communities were given coastal areas under the caveat that the government could evict them when they required the land. Their lease also covered aquaculture, especially in mangrove areas.

5.4.2 Fisheries resources

Indonesia had dedicated fishing areas for small-scale fishers—defined as those who use boats up to 5 GT. Under a previous law, small-scale fishers included those with boats up to 10 GT. The government revised the definition under the latest law of job creation.

Small-scale fishers, Dani said, did not need licences to catch fish in Indonesia. They just needed to register with their local governments. The constitution also awarded formal rights for traditional and indigenous people to manage coastal areas. However, this was violated in some areas by private companies because of poor implementation of laws.

The Philippines also had regulations to protect areas for small-scale fishers.

5.4.3 Threats faced by small-scale fishers

Commercial fishing expeditions were intruding into waters used by small-scale fishers. Trawling was a common issue for both countries. Reclamation or conversion of coastal water areas was another big issue in Indonesia. This, Dani said, had resulted in a lot of agitation and protest. This reclamation was not just for housing but also mining and port construction and resulted in the displacement of fishing communities. In the Philippines, small-scale fishers lost access to the sea and docking areas because they were fenced off the coastline by private companies.

5.4.4 Mechanism of conflict resolution

Indonesia has no regulations for conflict resolution in fisher communities. Five years back, a regulation gave village governments authority to mediate cases of conflict before approaching the

police or other offices at the regional or national level. This however only worked in communities where traditional wisdom was strong.

The Philippines, conducts conflict resolution through legal means. Dinna L Umengan took over from Dani to explain the structure for representation of small-scale fishers in the Philippines. The structure was designed based on suggestions from local communities and enabled them to participate in decision making and governance. Disputes often involve the use of gear. The Philippines has approximately 1200 economically viable species, of which 200 were regulated. This resulted in the use of a variety of gear in the same area and led to conflict.

5.5 Group 5 : Thailand

5.5.1 Tenure rights

Varuntorn Kaewtankam started by saying that while Thai fishers could access land and resources in coastal areas, there was no legal paperwork that would enable them to claim the land and title. In the past, even the land was used by the community, free of tax. That policy had now changed. Even those living there were required to pay tax.

This had happened because of the gap between different departments controlling land and the marine resources. Departments controlling water acknowledged that communities had the right to use the land. But departments in charge of land insisted on tax. Varuntorn went on to cite an example of her own region which fell under the jurisdiction of the Department of fisheries and the department of natural resources but was also identified as a 'No Hunting' area. The community was forced to follow contradictory regulations.

In another area in the North East of Thailand, residents used to have land titles but some of the land disappeared due to a change in river flow. The change in flow also created new land. While people could use it, they could not claim it.

5.5.2 Access to fisheries resources, threats faced

Small-scale fisheries have been allotted an area up to 3000m from the shore. Commercial fishing is not allowed in this area. Despite this, the decrease in the volume of fish poses many challenges.

The government does not limit or prohibit anything to do with traditional and indigenous practices, but this is not reflected in legal paperwork. Urbanization has led to a decrease in traditional values and methods. Communities must be given the right and the chance to use, conserve, protect and take care of resources. Many communities, Varuntorn said, have their own rules which are acknowledged by the government. They also have agreements about these rules with the national government. Sometimes, however, community rules are against the law, and need to be removed.

While there is no legal documentation or title to the lands, communities can use it. They cannot however improve or extend the land. Conflict of interest and corruption are two major threats. Despite a robust system and strong legal framework, private individuals and groups with financial clout could access lands which were inhabited by traditional communities.

Dialogue was the best form of conflict resolution. Evidence of corruption needed to be gathered and then settled in court. Communities needed to be able to come together, talk, find common ground and use the NGO platform to connect with the government. V. Vivekanandan thanked participants for their detailed discussions and reports.

A photo exhibition of around 50 photos was organized on the first day of the workshop celebrating small-scale fisheries in the participating countries. The photos depicted diverse fishing and post harvest activities across the Asian region. More than one hundred and thirty photos were received



The participants taking a look at the photos exhibited in the workshop celebrating small-scale fisheries

from the participating countries, out of which 50 were selected for the final exhibition based on the quality and content. Ravadee then informed everyone about the cultural programme in the evening, and requested all to participate.



The participants of the workshop taking part in the 'Kwan Khao' dance performance by the Thai cultural group. The Sabadchai Drummers are seen in the background

Day 2 : 7 May 2022

6. Session 2 : Social Development for Sustainable Small-scale Fisheries, Food Security and Poverty Eradication :

Chairperson: Herman Kumara, National Convener, NAFSO, Sri Lanka

Presentation By: Sebastian Mathew, Executive Director, ICSF

The chairperson introduced the topic and expanded on the importance of the voluntary guidelines—among the chief instruments for social development in the sector. He introduced the speaker for the session, Sebastian Mathew, Executive Director, ICSF.

Sebastian drew participants' attention to the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries, negotiated at the same time as the UN Fish Stocks agreement in 1995. The Code was designed with a strong ecosystems approach. As a result, there were many who felt it did not adequately address issues of social development in small-scale fisheries. The main focus of the voluntary guidelines, on the other hand, is social development—also considered the gateway to resource management. This is how ICSF has always approached social development, with the belief that better social development will lead to fishers taking more responsibility for resource management.

Well-being, Sebastian noted, was an important outcome of social development. If education, healthcare and sanitation were not just available but also accessible, it would greatly enhance the well-being of a community. Accessibility also brings to the forefront other invisible biases within communities and shines the spotlight on the most vulnerable. Social development is a way of enhancing human rights by creating social inclusion, economic equality and empowerment.

Social development could be led by communities. When travelling in remote areas of Myanmar, Sebastian noticed that Buddhist schools and monasteries helped educate youth working on Thai fishing vessels. No other schools existed in the area. The Buddhist monastery schools filled this gap all by themselves. Social development could also be community led, but coordinated by the



Sebastian Mathew, Executive Director, ICSF presenting on social development for sustainable small-scale fisheries, food security and poverty eradication

state. The government, for example, could provide legal space for voluntary or community based education. This was often seen in parts of India.

Sebastian then moved on to talk about the principles of social development in the guidelines. While the Code of Conduct mentioned preferential access to resources (Article 6.18), the Guidelines focussed on preferential access to social development for women, indigenous people, children, older people, subsistence fishers, occasional fishers, part-time and full-time fishers, formal and informal fishers and a variety of sub-categories. It was important that this instrument was inclusive of all sub-categories. He pointed out that social development guidelines worked hand in hand with employment and decent work. It was important to ensure fair returns to labour for all categories of fishworkers in small-scale fisheries. If people were paid well, they would be more responsible towards their occupation. It would also ensure sustainability of the profession itself.

The universal declaration of human rights, listed social security as a human right. An important contribution of the ILO's world social protection report 2020-2022 was to expand social protection to include not just that provided by the state but also protection provided between family members. This, Sebastian pointed out, was how many families stayed afloat during the pandemic. Social protection could also come from within the community. In the Comoros islands, Sebastian said, an ICSF study found that the Zakat institution played a very important role in providing for the poor in Islamic fishing communities. This was the first time non-state social protection measures were being recognized by the ILO. Further research on community arranged social protection was needed.

Sebastian moved on to discuss the importance of occupational health and safety for fisheries management and social protection. Focussing on this could improve working conditions. From a labour perspective, there was a need to eradicate forced labour—prevalent in South East Asian countries, in the form of a contract system. People were being forced to work under threat of penalty, without consent, in undignified environments. Sebastian emphasized the need to recognize and accept that forced labour existed in small-scale fisheries too. Communities and governments needed to be informed and made aware of this fact. There was a need to study the ILO's forced labour convention 1930, and find ways in which it was applicable to small-scale fisheries.

Another key issue that needed addressing was that of coordinated migration. Was it possible to facilitate agreements—in consultation with fishworkers—between states that supplied labour and those receiving it? Coordinated migration needed to ensure dignity of work, and protect rights for workers in both countries.

An important pillar of social development was investment in housing, sanitation, health services, drinking water, energy etc. Additionally, there needed to be investment in education, literacy programmes and digital inclusion—the latter key to increasing fishermen's participation in society. There was a need for more investment in saving, credit and insurance. Insurance in small-scale fisheries was severely underdeveloped. With an increase in accidents and loss, new schemes needed to be designed. Sebastian proposed that government subsidies could help pay the premium. These would be socially beneficial subsidies, rather than distractive ones like those for fuel.

Access to justice was important. People needed to be made aware about laws that protected their livelihoods and ways to access justice when they were violated. Civil society needed to draw the attention of the state towards the needs of the community. The sea, Sebastian said, had changed. Wave behaviour, migratory patterns had shifted in unprecedented ways. It was important to rethink seas safety and disaster management in the context of climate change. Sebastian then also recalled Maarten's presentation on customary rights and fishing grounds, and the need to protect them from development initiatives. Protecting customary rights was integral to social development. States needed to invest in mechanisms to do so.

When trying to achieve social development, it was necessary to adhere to regional, national and international human rights standards. If there was a lack of sound robust standards at the national level, international standards could be applied.

Conservation, resource management and social development were interdependent. Inclusive, non-discriminatory and sound economic policies needed to be adopted. Damage to actors along the value chain needed to be minimized. Fishing communities needed to be trained in alternate income generating methods, in case their livelihoods could not support them. The guidelines also highlighted that they be provided an environment free of organized crime, violence, piracy, theft, sexual abuse, corruption and abuse of authority.

Investing in social development, Sebastian reiterated, would lead to social well-being. Fisheries departments played an important role in ensuring social development concerns translated into the well-being of fishing communities. The department needed to serve as the bridge between the community and policy makers. Facilitating communication between stakeholders would help build a coherent, coordinated and robust social development mechanism.

While SDG 14 applied specifically to oceans, for social development, many other goals had to be brought and worked on together. Every year national governments reported back to the UN, in the form of a voluntary national report. This report could also include a section on how fishing communities benefit from social development schemes. Fishing administrations could, additionally, prepare a report on 'SDGs applied to fishing communities' and submit it to the authorities preparing the voluntary national report. This could lead to an analysis and end up with the development of new schemes and approaches. Sebastian encouraged all participants to think of producing such reports and including them in voluntary national reports submitted to the UN. Herman thanked Sebastian for his comprehensive presentation and reiterated the importance of participation. The floor was opened for questions, clarifications and comments.

Ahilan Kadirgamar said that in Sri Lanka, organizations working on human rights were focussed on doing so at the policy level in Geneva, rather than building strength via social institutions at the grassroots. He said that even the ILO's work in the country seemed to be against fisher cooperatives' interests. They were focussed more on the private sector rather than on strengthening social institutions at the ground level. There was a vast disconnect between the Guidelines, the SDGs and ground reality. People were being pushed further into poverty and being denied their rights. It begged the question—did the human rights framework have the capacity to solve these problems?

Sebastian acknowledged the importance of the question. He pointed out that aspirational instruments were easier to develop than pragmatic instruments. The language of the UN was largely aspirational and referred to the best practices and the best standards in that framework. National, sub-national and local frameworks were influenced by other considerations and were therefore pressured to create frameworks for specific interests.

It was important therefore to look at what is best available within the relevant national instruments—such as the Constitution or community development programmes. It was important to explore these horizontally and choose the most favourable option. Strong and robust institutions were important. Cooperatives, for instance, needed to be strong enough to withstand pressure from other groups. This was a global crisis, and a corruption-free, value based approach needed to be triggered from the communities themselves.

Aspirational standards, Sebastian said, were a synthesis of good practices from across the world. Benefitting from them required employing a bottom up approach. It was a complex, time consuming, often debilitating exercise. The key was to not lose hope. If the community pushed forward together, change would occur.

A participant from Pakistan pointed out that in his country, there was no clear plan with regard to SDGs. The ILO was an abject failure, and despite all the conventions and claims, the country didn't even have a minimum wage. How could fishers' demand for decent work be fulfilled in these circumstances?

Sebastian replied by saying that in his understanding, the ILO worked with employers' associations, workers' associations and governments. This was the core of the ILO's negotiation structure. Participation was limited to organized workers. In fisheries negotiations, many unions were actually seafarer unions with fishers represented within them. They took up fishers' issues.

There weren't many fisher organizations because most fishers were owner-operators and there is no owner-operators category in ILO parlance. The fisheries sector lags behind the industrial workforce and therefore its labour structure is still developing. In the future, Sebastian said, if there was a formalization of the workforce within small-scale fisheries then the ILO instruments would become relevant.

A participant from Sri Lanka said that small-scale fishers were also involved in agrarian activities—for instance, some fisher folk in northern Sri Lanka participated in agriculture or toddy tapping. While Sri Lanka had a history of social welfare and development, it had come through sustained struggle. This had been achieved not in isolation, but with many such communities coming together. Now that the country was going through an economic crisis, the coming together of different communities would pave the way forward. In an economy focussed on urbanization, how have other small producers come together to move social development forward?

Sectoral approaches to social protection would not work in the long run, Sebastian said. A universal perspective was needed. All citizens should benefit from social protection. Small-scale fisheries were spoken about separately in the understanding that many small-scale fishers were invisible in society. There were no safety nets and social protection schemes for them. Universal schemes may or may not cover them. The Guidelines therefore were meant to bring everyone to the same level under an equitable social safety net.

Participants from Pakistan said that since issues of allotment were based on politics, was it necessary for fishers—especially small-scale fishers—to become a part of political structures to be able to access their share of social development? Sebastian said it would be good to have some political participation from fishing communities. This would better advance some issues, instead of having others speak on their behalf. He then asked whether fishing community representatives in the Indian Parliament understood issues better than others.

V. Vivekanandan said that while he agreed with the participant's point of view, joining politics and engaging with politics were vastly different. Engagement with the political system was necessary. In India, all mainstream political parties had a front organization for fishers, farmers etc. But unfortunately, fishers communities were social outliers and lacked the ability to influence mainstream politics. Fisher representatives often became servants of the party rather than representatives of the community. While there were exceptions, most of those placed within the political system became dysfunctional.

Ravadee spoke next, pointing out that in most countries, social development was covered across various departments. Any one single department could not be expected to cover all of it and the VGSSF. It was necessary to devise a methodology where issues were covered by fisheries departments but also went beyond their ambit so it could influence national policy. There needed to be better understanding between national institutions to facilitate this. Sebastian said that the Fisheries Department needed to be the midwife, working with other departments but also work to benefit members of the fishing community along the value chain. They could identify key players and bring relevant ministries, departments and other stakeholders together to work on resource

allocation. They could also analyse whether existing schemes were benefiting stakeholders or covering other sectors and not fisheries. A second approach could be via the Union Budget (like in India). The fisheries budget could be funded by other departments in the same way the Environment Ministry mobilizes resources from others. The department could broaden their portfolio. Other ministries would allocate resources, and the fisheries ministry would distribute it to fishing communities through provincial or other arrangements.

V. Vivekanandan then revealed that another approach had been tried in India. Its progress was curtailed because of the pandemic. The approach could work for other countries. All the things referred to in the SSF guidelines are reflected somewhere or the other within the SDGs—just not necessarily for fishers. This new approach focussed on educating fishing communities about SDGs and asking them to identify the most important ones that could be integrated into national planning. Every department had its own targets. The community leadership could then reach out to relevant departments regarding the issues they faced with certain SDGs. This approach put the onus back in the hands of the community. They could coordinate and reach out to departments and help them fulfil their targets. At the same time they could get their issues resolved.

Speaking from personal experience, Piya Thedyaem said that he had started off as a fisher and moved on to a leadership role. Fishers needed to start empowering themselves. There were many challenges because wider society did not recognize the community's efforts to empower and strengthen itself. Obtaining this recognition was important. He concluded by emphasizing a three pronged approach—to strengthen, network and gain recognition for the fishing community.

Another comment from participants was with regard to the SSF guidelines. The government, they said, should take the initiative to frame laws based on livelihood. While doing so, they needed to include a representative from fishing communities to provide grass root knowledge. Sebastian agreed, and emphasized that fishworkers understood the legal framework in which they work. A lack of documentation was the main reason for the loss of customary and traditional rights. Sebastian also stressed the importance of leaders engaging with and disseminating information back to communities. While meetings were conducted at multiple levels, local leaders knew local communities best. Herman summarized the presentation and discussion and complimented participants on a rich discussion.

7. Group discussion: Social development for sustainable small-scale fisheries, food security and poverty eradication

V. Vivekanandan introduced the session and listed the questions to be discussed.

I. In a national or local context :

- (i) Do small-scale fishing communities—including women, men and children—have affordable (and adequate) access to health, education, housing, sanitation, drinking water and energy facilities and services, on par with other citizens?
- (ii) How can access to these facilities and services be improved?
- (iii) What is the role of fishing community organizations and fisheries administrations?

2. At both the sectoral and the universal (national levels) :

- (i) Do all workers and members of small-scale fishing communities enjoy social security protection via social assistance or social insurance schemes?
- (ii) Is there any discrimination in the implementation of these schemes?



V. Vivekanandan introducing the session and detailing the questions guiding the group discussion on social development for sustainable small-scale fisheries, food security and poverty eradication

3. Safety :

- (i) Are there an increasing number of fishing related accidents at seas or in freshwater bodies?
- (ii) Are there safety issues arising from extreme weather events and climate change?
- (iii) How do you improve the overall safety of fishing operation in the face of these threats?

V. Vivekanandan said that it wasn't easy for nations to prioritize fishers, but a good way to look at it would be to see if fishermen get what other citizens get. The role of cooperatives needed to



The group representatives presenting the country wise reports on social development for sustainable small-scale fisheries, food security and poverty eradication. Sitting L to R - Than Thi Hien (Vietnam), Youk Senglong (Cambodia) Ahilan Kadirgamar(Sri Lanka) Dani Setiawan (Chairperson), Dinna L. Umengan (Philippines), Muhammed Mujibul Haque Munir(Bangladesh)

be considered when discussing access. Social protection, he pointed out, also included specific support for fishing communities like ban period relief and compensation for holidays and disasters. Everything has a gender dimension. The ban period is often seen as a fishermen issue, but this ignores the fact that vendors, mostly women, need support too. It is also important to look at issues across the value chain.

Bearing these things in mind, participants proceeded with discussions in groups.

8. Presentation of country wise Group Reports

Chairperson: Dani Setiawan, Chief Executive, Indonesian Traditional Fisherfolk Union (KNTI).

8.1 Sri Lanka

The participants from Sri Lanka pointed out that everything they were saying was subject to change because of the economic crisis gripping the country. There was a chance that the massive debt would result in many social services axed.

Education in Sri Lanka, from primary school to University (all of which were state run) was free. The same was true for healthcare. The country had some strong welfare policies and a universal welfare system for everyone. Over 99 per cent of the population had access to electricity through the grid. Access to water and sanitation was area dependent. Fishing communities were often excluded from schemes and more needed to be done for them. Furthermore, there was a fear that many services would get cut because of the crisis. It was necessary to ensure this didn't happen. Given Sri Lanka's history, universal services was preferred over targeted schemes as an approach. There was more likelihood of services being maintained and accessed, if they were universal.

Sri Lanka has a very expansive governance structure. Every village has a village officer, a Samurdhi (poverty alleviation) officer and an economic development officer. Every sector has a dedicated inspector. But there was a lack of coordination at the local level. It was important for all organizations



Participants from Sri Lanka during the group discussion. Sitting L to R (Chandrani Gamage, Herman Wijethunge, Annarasa Annalingam, Ahilan Kadirgamar, Jamaldeen Athamkandu)

to come together and ensure access to services continued. While Sri Lanka had strong welfare, access to pensions, insurance, social security and other schemes and social protection, was low. This was particularly true for informal sectors like fisheries. While the department claimed the existence of fisheries insurance, pensions and schemes, in reality they don't work. This raised the question—is there need for a specific pension and insurance scheme for fishers, or the entire informal sector? Car insurance, for example, is very common, but boat insurance didn't exist. Furthermore, women and migrant workers were excluded from these kinds of schemes.

There is a lack of clarity about whether climate change has increased frequency and numbers of accidents. Coastal infrastructure is generally attributed to having reduced them. While there were more reported accidents, it is unclear if this is because of increased coverage. There needed to be more awareness to avoid accidents. Vessel registration was also a prime necessity.

8.2 Bangladesh

Participants said that the gap between the country's average national income (US\$ 2591) and that of small-scale fishers (US\$ 235-1174) was a good indicator of the lack of social development within small-scale fisheries. Furthermore, the data showed that adult literacy and primary school completion rates were lower among fishers in comparison to the national average. Since fishers lived next to water bodies, access was never a problem. But, quality of water was important. Access to sanitation had improved in recent times, but again, the quality remained in doubt. While the government had declared that there was 100 per cent electricity coverage in rural areas, this did not apply to fishers' localities—mostly on islands and in remote areas.

Despite 20 million people involved in the fisheries sector, Bangladesh lacked strong fisher organizations. Another huge challenge was access to finance and credit. These two issues were linked. Strong fishers organizations could promote cooperatives and managed finance and credit services. Formal and informal credit programmes existed in villages. Informal credit services charged 120 per cent or more as interest. While formal organizations' interest rates were lower (20-25 per cent), they were still too high for the community.



Participants from Bangladesh during the group discussion. Sitting L to R -Salma Sabiha, Muhammed Mujibul Haque Munir, Mohammad Mizanur Rahman

It was possible for the community to manage microfinance themselves, examples of which existed across the country. People often made savings and distributed credit at very low interest rates within the community. This mechanism of self-financed groups would work well in remote areas. Collective effort was imperative to find solutions.

Some of the many social development schemes in the country also covered fisher families. There were very few exclusively for the fisher community. Women's participation in income generating activities still left more to be desired. It was imperative, from a sustainability perspective, to give women fishers alternative sources of income.

The country's krishi bank was meant solely for farmers and was the only bank operating in remote areas of the country. It allowed farmers to open bank accounts with a balance as low as 10 cents.. Fishers had demanded a similar system. Because they were not recognized, currently, even boat owners were ineligible for bank loans.

In 2018-19, 14 per cent of the national budget and about 2.5 per cent of the total GDP was allocated towards different social security programmes. This was more than that for the education budget. Unfortunately, there were no specific schemes targeted toward fishers. The one exception was the three-month fishing ban period during which some fisher folk get rice as compensation. A study found that 35 per cent of fishers were not receiving this support. The last ban period coincided with the peak of the pandemic and subsequent lockdowns. 70 per cent of fishers lost their entire income. There was no cash support for them.

Annually, in Bangladesh, about 1300 fishers died at sea. A chief reason for this was boats not being equipped with modern technology. Studies had found that 52 per cent of fishers had experienced injuries due to climate related incidents. Bangladesh's emission rates were among the lowest in the world and yet, ironically, among the most impacted by climate change. Extreme weather and cyclones were very frequent, which put pressure on fishers and increased risk to life. Every boat and person going fishing needed to be registered. This would help tally data and ensure people and boats could be tracked regularly. The boats themselves needed upgrades. The government as well as some NGOs were working to equip boats with GPS systems. Life-saving equipment was another necessity.

The country's weather forecasting systems were very clumsy and often not understood by a vast majority of citizens. They needed to be simplified. There was a need to improve and increase cyclone shelters to ensure security for fisher families. There was a dire need for an increase in hospitals and water ambulances in fishing zones and communities.

8.3 Thailand

Thailand began their presentation by talking about access to health. At the local level, medical centres in the country provided free services and medicines to all. There is one community health volunteer for every fifteen households in the country. Volunteers responded to basic medical needs like checking blood pressure, administering injections (including vaccinations) and spreading awareness about prevalent diseases. Under the 'gold health card'—citizens could access medical treatment almost free of charge. People paid the equivalent of US\$ 1 to access services. This, invariably, depended on whether healthcare is accessed at government hospitals or private hospitals. There is a lot that needed to be improved to address gaps in the system. Rural areas for example, lacked nurses, assistants and even doctors.

The government provided not just tuition fees but also covered cost of transportation, educational equipment, lunch and uniforms. The teacher-student ratio left more to be desired. This was necessary to ensure quality education. There needed to be more information on local livelihoods and resources in the curriculum. This would inculcate in students a desire to preserve local resources and culture.

While the government's housing policy covered vulnerable people in coastal areas, these projects weren't always enough. Communities could get access to the area in which they lived but they didn't



Amnat Traijak, Anusara Phosri, Chatjaporn Loyplew, Kesinee Kwaenjaroen, Piya Thedyaem, Preecha Chaithui, Sattaya Phukpho, Suphaporn Phannarai, Ravadee Prasertcharoensuk, Varuntorn Kaewtankam- participants from Thailand during the group discussion.

own it. Additionally, communities who lived near the shore had to pay tax—oftentimes the same amount as five-star hotels and restaurants. A majority of migrant workers did not have access to sanitation. Neither their employers nor the government did enough to provide them support or services. There were no lavatories or trash collection units in public. This led to a lot of coastal littering. There was no management system for household waste. Waste management needed to be improved by increasing collective responsibility at the household level.

Some rural areas had access to drinking water, although not of good quality. People usually bought drinking water. The government needed to monitor water quality to ensure communities could access good drinking water. Many boats were equipped with solar cells and access to non-renewable energy like gasoline was also plentiful. Access to alternative energy sources remained insufficient because of a lack of policy support. There was a conflict of interest at play here, because the government owned the energy sector. Decentralizing this, while benefitting small households, would see them lose income. Fishing organizations could play a huge role in the sector. Many organizations asked that small-scale fisheries be specifically mentioned in policy. There was a need to improve on existing gender segregated and economic data.

Overall a feeling of insecurity persisted in the sector. This had to do with tenure, land ownership and social protection. A lack of government regulation to mitigate during disasters magnified uncertainty. The current worker registration system was very poor. This helped employers take advantage of the system. For instance, it was easy for employers to extract unpaid overtime work from workers—especially the unregistered.

The rate of accidents and injuries in the fisheries sector had decreased. This was perhaps because communication is stronger and information sharing is easier. Technology was a boon—both in terms of media and in terms of weather predictions. Some fishermen, capable of using the GIS system, helped with weather forecasting. Fishers also had their own skills and indigenous knowledge to predict water and weather conditions. Despite all this, many fishers disregarded basic safety measures and did not use safety equipment. Incentives to use safety systems like life jackets and first aid kits needed to be introduced.

8.4 The Philippines

The Philippines' state-initiated health insurance—Philhealth—gave budget coverage without the need to pay a premium. The fishing sector was included in this. The policy was implemented via local government units. At the ground level though, very few local governments provided access to healthcare. Fishworkers are often denied social protection benefits that workers in other sectors can access legally.

The 4Ps programme provided educational assistance to the poorest members of society—of which fishers were a part. The programme covered secondary education. As a result fishers have the same level of education as others. But, they faced difficulties accessing schools—especially in remote areas. The government also provided a limited number of scholarships for college to fisher children.

Health and other services were the local government's responsibility in the Philippines. The government's national housing authority is mandated to provide housing for different sectors. Under the Fisheries Code, fishers must be provided fisher settlements. Currently there were no guidelines to implement this. This was an issue fisher organizations need to address. Settlements that drove fishers away from their livelihoods and housing sites also did not have access to water and electricity. Fishers could not access mortgage and were often evicted from their houses. This was done in the guise of protecting them from danger zones and critical areas. Private resorts, on the other hand, were allowed to build structures in the same areas. Sanitation too was delegated to local government units. At the ground level, low-income government units—which is where most fishing communities lived—did not have regular waste collection, segregation and material recovery facilities. Big industries often disposed their industrial waste directly in the waters of the community. Domestic waste was not managed, especially in coastal areas far from town centres. Many fishing villages lacked proper toilet plumbing and disposed their waste in the river or the sea.

Communities were allowed to manage their own water systems and many fishing villages depended on community or individually owned wells. There were some private water filling stations too. Reports suggested that the water was not of drinking quality and was mainly for washing. Electricity is privately operated and distributed. The cooperative government authority allowed



Participants from Philippines during the group discussion. Sitting L to R - Dinna L. Umengan, Edlyn Rosales, Venerando Carbon, Ronald Rodriguez

electric cooperatives to provide electricity to communities. Many fishing villages (especially island communities) could not access the electricity grid. Supplementary spaces and zones for fisheries production were identified under each LGU. These zones, however, did not have enough space to support pre-harvest, post-harvest, docking, and access to the sea and were often taken over by private entities for tourism.

The government of Philippines Insurance Corporation is a Government Owned and Controlled Corporation (GOCC). It provided insurance for agriculture and fisheries. Access to insurance depended on the financial capacity of local government unions. The lack of a system for capture fisheries meant most of the insurance was availed by farmers. There were many proposals to improve access to services. To do this, capacity of local government unions and LGUs needed to be improved. The government needed to promote their social protection plan in a better way. Many community members are unaware of the existence of many plans and therefore they were not implemented. National registration programmes like FishR, BoatR and AquaR needed to improve and better facilitate identification of beneficiaries.

Fisher capacity needed to be strengthened to allow participation in designing programmes and services, monitoring the quality of social protection services, and reporting quality of implementation to relevant authorities. Social assistance and insurance schemes for the community were very limited. Even Philippines Crop Insurance Corporation (PCIC) did not actively create insurance schemes for fisheries, saying uncertainties in the sector's production could not be accommodated in their policies. There was a general lack of social protection programmes for the fisheries sector. Fisheries resource management was integral to help predict production volumes. Documentation needed to be employed with these programmes.

There had been an increase in accidents at sea due to the intrusion of large commercial vessels in the area. Uncertainties and rising sea levels due to climate change also increased risk to fishers at sea. All of this was compounded by a lack of training and knowledge. LGUs did not have policies to enforce life-saving equipment on vessels. LGUs needed to allocate life jackets and enforce the use of life saving equipment, even for fishers who could not afford it. Currently equipment was available only on industrial and commercial vessels. Safety training and insurance coverage needed to be integrated into the registration and licensing system.

8.5 Vietnam

The fisheries sector in the country was small-scale. There are about 100,000 fishing vessels in the country. Around 4 million fishworkers were directly employed in the fisheries sector. Fishing was also categorized by the length of the boat—small-scale fishing included boats under 15m in length. It was also categorized in terms of other fishing gear. There had been a rise in economic development in fishing villages in recent years. The community had access to public healthcare and education under the government's New Rural Development Programme.

Most issues stemmed from the fact that employment was seasonal. Fishers did not have contracts or agreements. There was a general lack of skilled professional labour in the sector. Most fishers lacked education beyond primary and secondary school. This inhibited opportunity.

The community had access to electricity and healthcare. Vaccination drives against Covid-19 were hugely successful with many fishers having received three doses of the vaccine. Unseasonal weather and flooding affected fisher housing. Fisher housing needed to be made more resilient to the impact of climate change. In addition, weather monitoring systems needed to be installed on all boats longer than 15m—required by the Fisheries Law. Vietnam did not have migrant workers working on fishing boats.

Insurance requires a contract-based agreement between fishers and owners. In reality, few fishers have access to social insurance. While there were government policies to regulate insurance for boats, more effort and enforcement was needed to ensure insurance for workers. Vietnam does not



Participants from Vietnam during the group discussion. Sitting L to R-Mai Huong, Than Thi Hien, Nguyen Sang

see many accidents in inland fisheries. Because of an increase in extreme weather disasters, there have been a number of cases recently, where despite having had information, fishers were unable to secure boats safely. There is no gender discrimination in access to policies and schemes.

It was recommended that social development be provided via both government and community led programmes. Vietnam faces issues with depletion of near-shore resources. Policies must focus on diversifying livelihoods and creating more income generating opportunities there. Many fishers have shifted to work in the tourism sector. In addition to increasing income opportunity, this also helped ecosystems heal and recover.

8.6 Cambodia

Senglong Youk introduced himself as the Deputy Executive Director and Programme Director of the National Fisheries Action Coalition Team (FACT) in Cambodia. Cambodia has three important regions—the Mekong basin, the Tonle Sap great lake and the marine or coastal area. Around 3 million Cambodians live in and around the Mekong basin—mostly part-time job fishers who did not really depend on fishing. The Tonle Sap great lake was very important for the livelihood of fishers. Their lives, health, education and everything else depended on the lake. The situation in the coastal areas is similar to the Mekong, and fishers did not have full access to facilities and services.

The situation in the Tonle Sap is exceptional and pitiful. People lived in floating villages, far from stores, banks etc. They rarely had access to social development facilities. It was worse for facilities like water and sanitation. Most inhabitants drank lake water—some boiled it, but a scant few had purification machines. Not everybody could afford these services. Accessing electricity on floating villages was fraught with danger. Most inhabitants used traditional lamps. Solar lighting had become popular but was unaffordable for all.

There was a general need to improve facilities and services, as well as the capacity of service providers. Senglong emphasized the need to prioritize social development in areas like health, education, drinking water and sanitation. The government's focus on physical infrastructure like roads was meaningless for those who lived in floating villages.

There was a general lack of knowledge in the community. A recent study revealed that fewer than half the population were aware of state run programmes and schemes like the National Social



Participants from Cambodia during the group discussion. Sitting L to R-Sadeas Loah, Senglong Youk, Eangnaim Eang

Security Fund. Recently, the government introduced a programme to financially support people who tested positive for Covid-19.

Between January 2018 and March 2022, around US\$ 30 million of cash support was provided to female workers in the country. Senglong said that this campaign was conducted mainly for fishers living in fishing villages, but they were unaware of it.

Discrimination is rampant. People mistrust the government and regularly opine that programmes were designed to benefit the rich. The poor complained that they received no government support and schemes solely benefitted families of local authorities.

While social protection and development were important for lake dwellers, they could not rely solely on the government's support. It was important to diversify their income generating sources. This is why, despite its seeming irrelevance, the proposal mentioned the need to introduce new livelihoods.

For those living on the lake, reliant exclusively on fishing, issues ranged from climate change, hydro power development, overexploitation, population overgrowth to movement around the lake. It was better therefore that they moved to other income sources. This was where government agencies and other existing civil society groups need to intervene.

Income diversification methods, using existing resources, were introduced in recent times. Senglong said that ecotourism had been promoted in the flooded forests of the Tonle Sap. Horticulture had also become a source of income. The eco-market, he said, was another viable income source. Many fishers spent long hours (often the entire day and sometimes many nights) away from their homes. The eco-market was a space where they could buy and sell products, especially local and ethnic products and fish. A proposal to construct another floating market had been floated. It would comprise of three floating buildings to be used by fishers living on the lake.

Improving access to social protection was a priority. Meetings with stakeholders and government authorities had been conducted. They aimed to find viable collaborations and implement public campaigns. Efforts were made to raise awareness about the government's US\$ 190 financial support for pregnant women, children under two years of age, and old people. However, registration and equity cards were necessary to receive this financial support.

While Cambodia did not experience many accidents at sea or on the lake, climate change had impacted fisher livelihoods in a huge way.

8.7 Indonesia

Suryani Pacong started by detailing that the government provided free basic education—from elementary to senior high school—for all. Despite this, there were many dropouts in fisher families. Gender discrimination was common. Fisherwomen for example, were not included in government training for safety at sea.

While the government provided fuel subsidies, a lack of fuel stations and infrastructure created issues with access. The government provided subsidies on healthcare insurance and free insurance for the poor. This included fishers. While there was employment insurance, the government did not subsidize it. Women fishers could not access this, because they were not recognized by the country's legislature. Indonesia facilitates affordable housing, in cooperation with banks.

Fishers usually bought drinking water, spending about Rupiah 300,000-600,000 (US\$ 20-40) per month or had their own wells.

A big challenge was the lack of fisher data. There was no separate data for men and women, and this made it difficult to design programmes specifically for fisherwomen. Fisherwomen who protested against development programmes were ostracized.

There had been an increase in accidents at sea, with about a 100 such incidents reported among small-scale fishers in 2020. The three main causes of accidents were extreme weather, high waves and a lack of safety. It was necessary to provide fishers accurate weather information.

Fishers did not know how to register for or access payment outlets for insurance. There needed to be a general improvement in education and skills. The payment and guarantee scheme for housing needed to be more flexible—per day rather than per month. It was necessary to improve awareness on the need for sanitation as well as develop waste transportation and processing. Fishing villages needed clean water infrastructure. It was necessary to promote community based management. NGOs could play a bigger role in the community, especially when it came to advocacy on policy



Participants from Indonesia and Malaysia during the group discussion. Sitting L to R: Nilawati, Alhafiz Atsari, Suryani Pacong, Mohamad Abdi, Azrilnizam Omar, Dani Setiawan

8.8 Myanmar

Participants revealed that small-scale fishers had limited access to social development services. The national vaccination programme had been very comprehensive. While healthcare remained in the public domain, remote areas lacked access to services.

Villages had primary schools, but the poor could not access them easily. Access to water was a problem in some areas, especially during the summer months. A majority of the fishing community could not access the national power grid. In the past, there had been a lot of advocacy and lobbying. The present day situation was deplorable. Any upliftment required strengthening small-scale fisheries institutions and organizations. This would help promote services, especially community services like micro finance.



Participants from Myanmar during the group discussion. Sitting L to R—Maung Maung Kyi, Zaw Zaw Han, May Hnin Wai

Men and women were generally treated equally, except in the case of off-shore and sea fishing—mainly done by men and the women mainly involved in marketing. Access and rights were mostly equal.

There had been a rise in accidents, mostly because large fishing boats had intruded and damaged gear for small boats. These incidents often also resulted in injuries. Illegal fishing practices often caused accidents—in addition to harming the ecosystem. There had been an increase in cyclones and changes in water currents. This had impacted fishers livelihoods.

There was a need to increase awareness, improve access and knowledge and build insurance mechanisms for fishers

8.9 India

Participants started by explaining the three qualifiers for small-scale fishers in India. The first included fishers with manual boats, or boats with two cylinders up to 30 hp. The second included small-scale fish farmers, retailing and vending processors, net menders, sorters, dryers and workers involved in allied fishing activities. People directly involved in fishing for livelihood and not commercial purposes were also considered small-scale fishers. The participants clarified that their focus would be on their home states—Maharashtra, Gujarat, West Bengal and the Andamans.

In Maharashtra, the Koliwadis, fisher women directly involved in fishing and marketing, were deprived of facilities like housing. They did not receive special health facilities as fishermen but enjoyed facilities available to all Indian citizens. Marine fishermen suffered from some specific diseases, but these were not treated specially by the government. Jyoti Meher cited the example of women fishers in Tarapore district suffering from exposure to the nuclear power plant.

Fishing communities were considered a part of Other Backward Classes (OBC) and were thus eligible for the 2 per cent reservation under law. They did not have special education facilities. In Gujarat, the healthcare situation was dire. Vaccination drives had not been conducted since 2005. West Bengal's special housing schemes were merged with general schemes, therefore reducing access for fishers. While there were a lot of vaccination drives and children education centres, there was no special assistance for fishers.

While electricity and drinking water was available in places, there were issues in places like Gujarat. In West Bengal, shrimp aquaculture affected the drinking water supply in fisher villages. General health facilities were unavailable and doctors and medicines were in short supply. Across India, women faced issues accessing sanitation facilities. Fisher organizations could play an important role in placing demands and highlighting issues to local panchayats, public departments and authorities. There was no infrastructure in markets, especially in districts like Palghar, Maharashtra. The administration needed to allocate a budget to build facilities like markets, landing centres, creches, toilets and restrooms, especially for women.

Fisher organizations needed to assist in conveying demands to the department and ensuring fishworkers benefit unequivocally. The role of Anganwadi and Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) needed to be made more prominent. This was important to aid and provide childcare for working mothers.

While there were insurance schemes for small-scale fishers, in Gujarat, it required membership in cooperatives. An annual fee of Rs 14 (US\$ 0.18) needed to be paid to cooperatives, to access benefits. No fishers were covered under the Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY) in Gujarat. Additionally, the department was yet to recognize fisherwomen under the scheme. In West Bengal, insurance schemes under the Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Suraksha Yojana required annual fees of Rs 12 (US\$ 0.15). They had ceased to exist. There had been no accident scheme or insurance for five years



Participants from India during the group presentation. Sitting L to R- Usmangani Sherashiya ,Jyoti Meher,Shilpa Nandy,Fatima Majeed, Pradip Chatterjee, Madhuri Mondal

now. The PMMSY offers a scheme with a ceiling amount of half a million rupees (US\$ 6314), but it was yet to be implemented on the ground.

Even in Maharashtra, all schemes were available to fishers solely through cooperatives. This needed to change. In places like Odisha, accident insurance could be claimed only after bodies were recovered from sea. A current recommendation asked that in case of accidents leading to death the time period for body recovery be reduced (it is currently 7 years) and the fisheries department issue certificates so families could avail insurance.

It was also necessary to remove the Below Poverty Line (BPL) tag currently attached with social security schemes. Fishers needed to be given allowances during the ban period. While mentioned in the PMMSY, there had been no implementation of separate life insurance, boat insurance or net insurance schemes for fishers. Migrant workers faced a lot of discrimination. Unable to become members of cooperatives or unions, they were denied benefit from schemes. In addition, there was some caste discrimination too.

In Odisha, the migrant fishworker database had been curated by the Dakshin Foundation. They trained locals to collect data and it had been successful. The Dakshinbanga Matsyajibi Forum ran a similar initiative in West Bengal. There had been an increase in the number of accidents at sea due to a rise in the number of cyclones.

Climate change, increased frequency of natural disasters and shipping traffic posed threats to fisher lives and livelihoods. Navigation routes for ships needed to be well defined to improve fisher safety. Early extreme weather warning systems needed to be put in place. There needed to be better rescue and reporting facilities.

8.10 Pakistan

Pakistan began their presentation by showing a photograph of people who lived below the poverty line. Their living and working conditions were woeful. Fisher communities living near big cities had partial access to electricity and educational facilities. Most fishers lived in poor areas in urban centres and could not access drinking water or sanitation facilities. While water was a national issue, fishers were among the worst affected. Even fishers living within a stone's throw of rich housing areas, received water once a week. The quality of the water was also questionable.



Participants from Pakistan during the group discussion : Muhammad Saeed Baloch and Fatima Majeed

Remote marine and inland communities had no access to healthcare. Quality healthcare and education was expensive, accessed only by those with means. There were no housing subsidies or bank loans.

Women and children were the worst affected. The government and the fisheries department failed to provide any support during the pandemic. While charity organizations did their utmost, they couldn't provide for all. Additionally, most areas received no support during the fishing ban in June and July.

Many accidents were recorded, but neither the government nor private operators had provided any compensation. Safety issues persisted on both boats and landing sites. Security issues due to shared borders with India and Iran meant fishers were often arrested and imprisoned for long periods of time. The government failed to provide any financial support in these circumstances.

There was no insurance for missing or dead fishers due to natural disasters. There was a need to set up a separate department to address these issues. The fisheries department was failing to do so. Early warning systems, police boats and boat ambulances were needed to assist with rescue and aid. There was a need to address climate change by listing realistic targets and acting on them urgently. The participants stressed that these demands were constantly raised by fisher organizations, often in huge gatherings in the presence of government officials.

8.11 Malaysia

In general, small-scale fishers in Malaysia had access to health, education, housing, sanitation, drinking water and energy facilities. Malaysians could access health services from government clinics and hospitals for a minimal charge.

Primary and secondary education was available at low cost. Parents were compulsorily required to send their children to primary school for six years—not doing so could result in legal action. There were some housing schemes for the small-scale fishing community. A special scheme applied to coastal areas. While sanitation was not an issue, in rural areas, there were issues with clearing waste.



Azrilnizam Omar, the Malaysian participant talking about the major social development challenges faced by the small-scale fishers in Malaysia

State governments handled their own water management agencies. All citizens had access to drinking water either through a piping system or through underground water sources. They also had access to energy and electricity. In remote areas, solar panels were provided to residents.

While land is under state jurisdiction, funding and planning was done by the federal government. There was a need to consolidate this to ensure both are involved with planning and smooth implementation.

While migrant workers didn't face discrimination, there was a huge issue with illegal migration. Those who entered Malaysia legally automatically received insurance through boat owners. Social insurance also covered accidents and health. The government took control over this in 2020. Licensed small-scale fishers, living below the poverty line, received 300 Ringgit (US\$ 67.41) as aid every month. They also received petrol subsidies and had access to personal loans or boat loans at no interest. Both licensed and unlicensed small-scale fishers received assistance with fishing gear.

There has been an increase in accidents but no significant increase in loss of life. These incidents were mainly caused by bad weather and boat engine failures. The government needed to increase training for boat maintenance and engine repair among small-scale fishers.

Day 3 : 8 May 2022

9. Women and Gender in Small-scale Fisheries

Chairperson: Elyse Mills, Programme Associate, ICSF.

9.1 Photo Exhibition

Participants from all countries put together an exhibition of photographs that highlighted the role of women in fisheries.



Participants exchanging views on the photos exhibited in connection with the discussion on women and gender in small-scale fisheries

9.2 Key Issues Faced by Women Fishers

Virtual Presentation by: Arlene Nietes Satapornvaint, Project Manager, USAID

In the recorded presentation Arlene began by recalling work done in collaboration with different partners to help develop a cooperative action plan to promote decent work for women in fisheries. Over two-third of the world's aquatic products (70 per cent) come from the Asia-Pacific region. This meets the global demand for food and supports more than 50 million workers in the primary producing value chain nodes. In Asia, women make up 18 per cent of workers in primary production nodes, but in other nodes with more employment, women outnumber men. These statistics, Arlene clarified, referred mainly to paid labour. Her presentation would focus mainly on pre-fishing and fishing nodes where women were employed.



Women were involved in pre-harvest, pre-fishing and fishing activities too. As a pre-fishing activity, they prepared fishing gear and vessels, mended nets, cooked food and even obtained financial resources and loans for fishing. Women often went out to sea to fish, sometimes with their husbands or in smaller groups of women and men. They also practiced foot fishing or gleaning in shallow waters near the shore. A majority of these women were unpaid labour.

Women undertook a wide range of productive labour in small-scale fisheries. This labour is often not recognized to be contributing economically. Even the women themselves considered their work to be an extension of household duties. It was necessary to ask how many of these women were registered as fishers and how much of their catch was counted.

A key issue faced by many women was the lack of recognition of their labour across the value chain. They needed protection and support. Additionally, they also needed to be given a voice in fisheries processes and be able to exercise their work rights. There was a severe lack of gender sensitive infrastructure. Women couldn't access credit and lack knowledge about state sponsored schemes and programmes.

A reason women lacked negotiating power was the lack of opportunity to upgrade their skills. Lacking formal recognition, they could not approach formal authorities and agencies to improve their labour status as fishers. Women's labour is still not recorded, given appropriate management or protection. A lot of work needed to be done.

Reproductive care and community work were areas that needed attention. Across the fisheries spectrum, women faced constraints due to reproductive and care responsibilities. This limited their economic and social participation.

There was ample evidence to suggest that women bore a disproportionate load in housework, in addition to community duties and resource management. This labour went unacknowledged and unrecorded. Often, because men didn't share the burden, women were juggling fisheries work, community work as well as reproductive and care work. Furthermore, domestic violence in fisher communities was brushed aside and rarely discussed openly. Women were statistically invisible, mainly because they did not have formal recognition. The work they did was considered men's work and therefore they were excluded from policies and initiatives.

In the fisheries sector, international and national labour laws focus mainly on work at sea, chiefly carried out by men. These laws did not address women's work across fisheries value chains. This meant women were also excluded from social security provisions. Unless registered under the government's registration system, women fishers could not avail programmes and incentives meant for the sector. They were not even included in fisher organizations.

Arlene ended her presentation by showing a photograph of a group of women who had formed their own group, to put forth their own voice and ensure their concerns were aired to the government.

9.3 Gender Issues in Post-harvest Fisheries

Kyoko Kusakabe, Professor, Asian Institute of Technology, Thailand

Kyoko Kusakabe's presentation was focussed on post-harvest. According to definition in the voluntary guidelines, it is clear that post-harvest is a part of fisheries. Despite this, post-harvest activities are often not considered real fisheries, and is marginalized.

This, however, is a very important sector and employs a large number of workers, both women and men. It also exists in a variety of sizes—from big export factories to artisanal small-scale fish processing. Fish processing and trade is important for poverty alleviation and food security. Fishing may provide the catch, but post-processing is what generates income.

Fish processing includes a wide range of activities. It is a complex sector which is important for poverty alleviation. Kyoko pointed out that in Indonesia, the number of women dependent on fish processing to tackle income loss is four times than that of men. When fishing income fluctuates, processing helps communities tide over.

Women play a very important role in the sector, making it one where gender equality is vital. Many small fish processing businesses are owned by women. In Cambodia, Kyoko said, more than half the fish processing businesses are owned by women. However, she noted, these businesses are normally very small, seasonal, microbusinesses and therefore lack modern facilities like freezers and dryers.



Kyoko Kusakabe, Professor, Asian Institute of Technology presenting on gender issues in post-harvest fisheries. She talked about the structural challenges influencing access to resources for women engaged in post-harvest fisheries

Access to space is another problem. With no space at home to store, clean and process fish, women need to access public working spaces. Technology training is important, but held away from fisher localities. Women, often can't attend them because of travel constraints due to household responsibilities. Additionally, those with lower literacy and education levels find it harder to understand the sessions.

Access to markets is another problem. This is linked to technology. Better quality and packaging ensures higher prices and therefore access to better markets. The absence of certification, and lack of technology means fishers can't sell their products to niche markets. Education is key to this. During the pandemic, Kyoko said, educated fish vendors were able to sell fish directly to customers, online. Women often lack the digital literacy to be able to do this.

Access to fish is another problem. Women processors and traders depend on their husband's catch and succumb to fluctuation. To access other catch, it is necessary to have connections, vehicles, and the ability to go and procure it. Poor women lack these facilities. Health problems are fairly common in fish processing. Exposure to smoke while smoking fish results in lung irritation. Back pain and postural issues are also common amongst women who spend long hours working in fish processing.

Since the fishing season is seasonal and irregular, when it is on, processing is conducted for long periods of time. This is true for poorer women without access to storage facilities. Unless the fish is cleaned immediately, it is lost. Many fishworkers also work in fish processing factories—notorious for paying low wages. Women working in these factories are often paid half the wages that men get. Sexual harassment is rampant in these factories.

There are a lot of regional and contextual differences in who trades fish. Even when women are active in fish trade, they trade locally. Larger, regional trade and exports are male dominated. Here again, women traders are often harassed and denied access to the best spaces. Just like in fish processing, women lack access to finance, insurance and market information. Poor and small traders face difficulties in accessing protective gear like gloves, clean water, ice, equipment and cold storage. A lack of cold storage means fish has to be sold immediately and there is little chance to negotiate price. If there is a large quantity of fish, the price drops simply because traders do not have storage space. If women fish vendors achieve success, they are accused of seducing and forcibly selling their fish to drunken men. Independent women are seen as threats to the business.

There have been some successful strategies to empower women in the sector. Women's groups have helped develop new businesses. These groups make it easier to access finance and access to insurance can be facilitated through fisheries organizations. Women, however, are not considered members of these organizations. Women traders and fish processors are not considered real fishers. These groups help women gain decision making powers, boost their confidence by making them more visible in society.

But, Kyoko stressed, not all such groups were successful. Fish processing is not recognized as a fishing activity and so, despite being part of groups, women in fish processing and trade do not have much say. The group's success is also dependent on family support, of which, very often, is little. Kyoko said that if the existence and roles of women were not recognized, discrimination wouldn't be either. Recognition was key to addressing any issue. There was a necessity to gather gender related data and conduct an analysis of gender issues. Women needed to participate not just in learning technology but also in developing it. The fisheries budget needed to include support for women's post-harvest activities in its mandate.

9.4 Discussion on gender issues in post-harvest fisheries

The session was kicked off by Indonesia pointing out the limited number of scholars, professors and academics talking about fisherwomen. This meant limited recommendations were made to the government. Women fishers and organizations needed more help from the academic community.

Participants from Sri Lanka stressed the importance of women only cooperatives. They said it was important to market these and push agencies to formalize women's work. This, though, was a double edged sword. It could also result in the complete marginalization of the informal sector. Additionally, studies suggested that women's work could be undermined in certain formalized structures.

Respondents agreed that women's organizations needed more recognition. Women cooperatives provided them a safe space that could also be used for training. However, separated from the mainstream could affect them negatively in the long run. Numbers matter in cooperatives. They are essential to running insurance schemes, for example. It was not advisable to run cooperatives for women, and instead there needed to be a push to integrate women's groups into cooperatives.



Participants engaged in group discussion on women and gender in small-scale fisheries

Formalization of work was a core aspect of gender issues. But if formalization led to regulation and taxation, it would increase problems. Formalization should facilitate protection, recognition and inclusion. It was necessary to ensure formalization did not lead to marginalization of any community.

Sebastian came in to draw attention to the discussion from the previous day, highlighting the changes made in the world social development report. In the report, the ILO also recognized family and community arrangements for social protection. It was the first time the ILO had recognized arrangements outside the tripartite structure.

When formalizing the informal, Sebastian said, it was important to ensure they remained informal from an equitable point of view. Formalization was necessary to add value to the key elements of an informal economy and bring visibility and recognition to those activities. Aspects like local employment and no taxation needed to be protected. A subsistence model needed to be followed.

Participants from Sri Lanka said this is why cooperatives were helpful. Being part of a cooperative meant people could work for the required hours. Formalization may end up regulating minimum hours and not recognize multiple sources of income and associated labour in households. Formalization in Sri Lanka was focussed solely on increasing women's participation in the labour force to boost the country's GDP.

Sebastian said it was necessary to be clear about the kinds of inclusion needed. The cooperative model focused on how people would like to be recognized. This needed to be respected. It was part of the human rights approach, as mentioned in the guidelines.

Group Discussion: Key Issues Faced by Women in Fisheries

Manas and Elyse organized groups for discussion to conducted after a short break.

10. Panel discussion: Solutions and ways forward for improving women's access to resources and participation

Chairperson: Kyoko Kusakabe, Professor, Asian Institute of Technology, Thailand

10.1 Indonesia : Suryani Pacong

Suryani Pacong outlined the main threats faced by women. Not being recognized was a key issue. Even their husbands did not recognize their roles in selling and processing fish. Women faced ocean grabbing through reclamation and lost fishing grounds. Traditional skills and insights were not recognized by the community, affecting their participation. Women's voices needed to be consolidated to ensure they were articulated correctly on the political stage. Education was key to improve participation. It would empower fisherwomen to demand their rights and voice concerns within the community.



10.2 Pakistan : Fatima Majeed

Fatima Majeed, vice-chairperson of the Pakistan Fisherfolk Forum pointed out that women lose jobs because of the patriarchal system. Low river flow and destruction of mangroves had led to a loss of livelihood. Women working in these areas were forced to migrate to big cities in search of work.

Women also lost work as net makers, because nets were now coming from China, Taiwan and even factories in Pakistan. A lot of fertile land had been lost to sea intrusion. Those who cultivated those lands became fishers, thus increasing the load on the sector.



Only a few women, Fatima said, actually went fishing. The few that did, went on small boats, made of thermocol and netting. Most women worked in textile factories, or were housewives. 70 per cent of women were engaged in domestic work.

10.3 India : Jyoti Meher

Jyoti Meher, shifted the focus to success factors based on the experience of different groups. She began by saying that while society was largely patriarchal, more than 50 per cent of women were actually engaged in fishing activities—fishing, drying, sorting etc. Cyclones, natural disasters, pollution etc had resulted in a decrease in catch, the effects of which were felt deeply by women fishers. There were few existing markets for women fish vendors, and even those that existed were in poor condition. Forced to sell by the roadside, women were harassed and removed by the government or the police.



There were no health care schemes to help women facing health troubles due to exposure to polluted waters etc. The problems and challenges were common across all states. There needed to be gender segregated data on work. Women fishworkers needed to be allocated separate funding in budgets. Members of self-help groups (SHGs), cooperatives and similar organisers needed to unite, put their demands to the government and ask for solutions. Jyoti said that ICSF had invited women fishworkers from five states for three events over the past months to work together to find solutions.

10.4 Vietnam : Mai Huong

Mai Huong, Director of the Huong Thanh Commune Fishery and Tourism Service Cooperative, said she herself got into the small-scale fisheries sector without adequate knowledge on how to process the product. She learnt with the aid of NGOs and other organizations. She elaborated on the work done by co-management groups to protect coral reefs and resources. They were striving to balance conservation and human employment. Women's participation was mobilized via cooperatives. Cooperatives conducted waste-reduction programmes to reduce plastic waste. Solar energy was being promoted as an alternative to electricity. Women's participation was valued as much as that of men in cooperative groups.



10.5 Cambodia : Sadeas Loah

Sadeas Loah, Deputy Chief of Trapaing Ropov Community Fisheries, detailed the different roles women fishers played in the country. They accompanied their husbands to the sea and traded and processed fish. Challenges included a lack of technology, facilities and fishing gear. They were, additionally, unable to generate income by diversifying income sources. A solution that has found success involved establishing and strengthening women's self-help groups to mobilize capital in villages, to support each other. There was a need to build capacity and awareness among women, especially because husbands didn't support them attending events and trainings. There have been attempts to increase women's participation in community processes, including local elections and committees.



10.6 Myanmar : May Hnin Wai

May Hnin Wai, an ASEAN representative from Myanmar said gender discrimination was a minor issue in the country. Most of the issues had to do with participation and organizations. There was a need to coordinate government departments to ensure smooth policy implementation.



10.7 The Philippines : Edlyn Rosales

Edlyn Rosales, General Secretary of Pangisda Pilipinas began by saying that recognition alone was insufficient. If recognition was genuine, the government needed to make concrete efforts to secure coastal areas and protect women's rights. In spite of many challenges, women had managed to make their voices heard—evidence by their participation in workshops such as these. Edlyn said that the experience women had in governing and managing households needed to be translated into governing and managing fisheries communities and industries.



10.8 Bangladesh : Salma Sabiha

Salma Sabiha, began by drawing a direct contrast with the situation in the Philippines. Most women in the country were not recognized as fishers, because they were involved in post-harvesting. The few involved in fishing were considered fishers. The unrecognized did not receive benefits from the government.

Of the 3.5 million people involved in fishing in Bangladesh, only 12 per cent were women. However, in inland fisheries, 60 per cent were women. Despite the visibility of their activities, they were not recognized as fishers.

Salma revealed that women based or women focused fisher organizations did not exist in Bangladesh. There were many social barriers for women who wanted to be fishers. Interviews she had conducted with fisher women on a remote island revealed that they did their work at dawn to avoid scrutiny. They had no access to the market.

Even in formal sectors, there was a huge wage gap. Women in fisheries did not have access to healthcare or sanitation facilities. Unorganized and few in number, it was difficult to imagine women in leadership. There were very few who spoke or were even heard.



10.9 Sri Lanka : Chandrani Gamage

Chandrani Gamage, an executive committee member of National Women Federation of NAFSO started by saying that they had managed to unite the Northern, Eastern and Western women's federations to address women fishers' issues.

The women's federations encouraged various income generation programmes and livelihood assistance methods. Women fishers had engaged with the federation to develop a people's draft of the national fisheries policy



addressing the issues of fisherwomen and men. Fishers, both men and women, were educated on the ill effects of drug abuse and addiction. Government authorities had been intimidated about pregnant women facing harassment in government clinics and hospitals. Women fishers had come together to engage with government authorities on issues around waste collection and disposal.

10.10 Thailand : Chatjaporn Loyplew

Chatjaporn Loyplew said there was a lot of success to be achieved by working in groups rather than as individuals. Informal dialogue needed to take place between households and issues discussed together to find solutions. Dialogue and networking needed to follow the bottom up approach. While dialogue could start informally it must later be formalized in the form of MOUs between communities. Continuity was key to ensure success.

Currently, she said, meetings were held every three months and focussed on fisheries, ecosystems and natural resources. There needed to be discussions on alternative sources of energy and processing of products. If household incomes could be increased, more issues would be solved. It was necessary to ensure women representation in government committees related to fisheries.



Kyoko summarized the discussion by outlining three key points.

1. How could women fishers get recognition?
2. How could it be ensured that women's voices are heard?
3. How could women's organizations be strengthened and mobilised?

She highlighted the variety and diversity in the culture and social structure among participating countries and communities and opened the floor for discussion.

11. Brainstorming to develop a regional action plan

11.1 Indonesia

Dani Setiawan said that collecting and maintaining data was crucial to any effort. He cited an example from Indonesia, where a few years prior, around two hundred fishers, men and women, were mobilized to conduct a social audit and map from the community. The government eventually provided participants fisher cards. The fisher card is an important tool for fishers in the country. It helps them access insurance and fuel subsidies.

Women participation and visibility was low. A few years back, women organizations were set up to help empower women. Dani requested that organizations like ICSF consider focussing on capacity building programmes and trainings that helped form community organizations in villages. There was a need to invest in community leaders to bolster the movement.

11.2 The Philippines

Recognition and participation in the country exists solely on paper. Women needed to be trained in planning, programme design and programme development. If they were not part of groups that addressed issues, they would be the ones to suffer, and may even end up misrepresented. Citing an example, the spokesperson described a study a few years ago that revealed a need for water sources in the community. Pump wells were brought in. Unfortunately, women were unable to use it, because it was designed by men—height, resistance etc. The project was an abject failure and demonstrated the necessity to involve women in planning.

11.3 Pakistan

Participants from Pakistan emphasized the need to have women representation within government departments, cooperative societies and organizations to ensure changes occur. The representation needed to be real and not mere tokenism.

11.4 India

Madhuri Mondal said that fishing communities looked up to women leaders. She cited the example of the recently deceased Chittamma, a cooperative leader in Odisha. Capacity building and enhancement as well as women leadership was vital for women empowerment. Madhuri pointed out that data was a necessity, and must be properly collected and maintained by the government. The human rights commission must also be taken into account when determining maintenance and segregation of records.

11.5 Thailand

The sole representative of the North Eastern Mekong regions of Thailand pointed out that when talking about fisheries, ocean fisheries tended to overshadow river fisheries. He stressed on the challenges in the Mekong region, and changes taking place in the ecosystem. He maintained that actual gender issues would be discovered only by collecting and studying segregated data.

From an earlier approach driven by advocacy and protests, there was a shift towards dialogue and evidence gathering as a way to work with the government. The representative pointed out that even if women were given increased participatory roles in the community their household responsibilities did not change, thus limiting the time they had. No matter how much women wanted to do things, it was physically impossible unless there was better division of responsibilities within households.

11.6 Cambodia

Participants from Cambodia said that the general belief among men was that women should take care of households. If women attended events they wouldn't have time for other household responsibilities. Women who challenged this notion were part of fisheries committees, pushing others to attend meetings a few times every month.

The problem was that most women did not have their own occupation or income and were dependent on their husbands for support—of which they often didn't get enough. There were many issues at the community level too. Committees were not keen on having women representatives or hearing women's voices. Discussing women's issues with local authorities, was effective when the authorities were women. Women were also more successful at protests. Men ended up getting arrested and imprisoned for long periods of time.

11.7 Vietnam

Participants highlighted the importance of education and social security among the younger generation. Greater access to information and technology would reduce labour. Vietnam's social structure is still traditional, and efforts needed to be made to release the burden on women. The government needed to consider the needs of women when planning and implementing fisheries laws. Co-management groups needed greater women participation. Women also need to be able to network and increase their confidence.

11.8 Sri Lanka

Fishing communities faced challenges due to cyclones, storms and other disasters. The participants highlighted the vulnerability of fisher families and said that there needed to be ways to ensure

security of fishers at sea, perhaps through the ILO convention or other policies and insurance or pension schemes. Women leadership needs to be recognized and promoted.

11.9 Myanmar

Myanmar does not have wide gender inequality. Participation of men and women is almost even. There are five co-management areas along the coast—spread across approximately 1500 km—and even here participation between men and women was equal. While some village committees were chaired by women, in others there was scope for improvement.

11.10 Bangladesh

Participants emphasized the need for recognition at both the local and national levels. They also stressed the importance of capacity building and participation of women at all levels, and in gender sensitive organizations. Feedback from workshops was very important. This was subsequently passed on to decision making authorities. Participants spoke about the need to change mindsets about women empowerment.

12. Concluding Remarks

Chairperson: Madhuri Mondal, Programme officer, Dakshin Foundation, India

In addition to general feedback and expectations, Maarten asked everyone to consider two questions. He pointed out that when talking about social development, very few participants brought up issues due to Covid-19 and the economic crisis. Additionally he called attention to the fact that many participants were members of the WFFP (World Forum of Fisher Peoples), a fact that was never brought up. He questioned the importance of WFFP for the Asian region. Concluding remarks were shared by representatives from each participating country.

12.1 Cambodia

Cambodian participants emphasized that the challenges faced were not just fishery issues. Empowering women and strengthening women takes time and investment. Participants proposed a national and regional action plan to strengthen capacity, empower women-led initiatives, and eradicate the social norm of women being shackled by household responsibilities. A second idea proposed establishing and strengthening networks through a platform where fishers could meet a few times every year. They would use the platform to discuss challenges and experiences and work towards addressing them. Joint action plans for countries facing similar issues were also a good idea. It is also important that women fishers and leaders meet and engage in dialogue with not just each other but also with government officials. Diversifying income sources was essential to ensure women's livelihoods did not suffer. Domestic violence needed to be addressed.

12.2 The Philippines

Since a lot of Philippines is export oriented, fishers suffered during the Covid-19 lockdowns. The government failed to assist fishers with transportation or any other way during the lockdowns. Small-scale fishers suffered the most.

It was much later that the government realized the importance of fishing communities and recognized them as front-line workers who provided food. An opportunity to improve the community's fortune was lost. Participants said they would ask that the government adapt a new approach and redesign policies to provide benefits for women. Participants suggested a 'best practices' data bank be created and made accessible to all. Ideas could be 'borrowed' and later 'returned' with 'interest'. The WFFP could be a meeting point.

12.3 Sri Lanka

Participants from Sri Lanka shared struggles they faced during the pandemic, a long civil war and a growing economic crisis. Areas used by small-scale fishers for decades have been taken over by the government. Policies have to be formed using a bottom up approach. At the same time, small-scale fishers' problems need to be addressed through international norms and guidelines. In northern Sri Lanka, small-scale fishers have been able to pursue the livelihood only because of the presence and strength of cooperatives. The government needs to support cooperatives to ensure 23,000 small-scale fishers survive. Without them even participating in a workshop like this would be difficult.

Cooperatives also help address women's issues. The government needs to create forums to address concerns. Speakers from Sri Lanka compared the situations in different countries with that in Sri Lanka. They pointed out that since 2014 all projects had been thrown out of the window, because of the pandemic and turmoil in the country.

12.4 Thailand

Piya Thedyaem said that no matter the topic, proper on-ground implementation of solutions was a must. Policies existed on paper, and without any on-ground implementation. Development, he said, was always looked at from the point of view of GDP. Discussions on this forum, had emphasized the need for well-being and sustainability. There needs to be a balance between GDP, well-being and sustainability. While there had been no talk of money in the workshop it was an important factor—especially for government budgets. Getting a share out of the budget requires considerable political power. Piya said there had been a change in lifestyle and a reliance on technology due to the pandemic.

12.5 Pakistan

Pakistani participants said all Asian nations needed to work together to combat climate change. They proposed a day that Asian women pick a day to celebrate 'Women Fishworkers Day'.

12.6 Myanmar

Myanmar reiterated the need to practice sustainability, and monitor new fishing gears which might be harmful to biodiversity.

12.7 Bangladesh

Bangladesh pointed out that despite the diversity at the workshop, their struggles and challenges were often the same. While a common action plan was important, it may also prove beneficial to have action plans at the country level. There was immense potential in sharing knowledge and ideas for good practices.

While Covid-19 played a huge impact on fisheries, it had also sparked a response from within the community. The governments investments for the poor were admirable, even if they didn't directly focus on fishers. They pointed out that while the WFFP was making huge strides in advocacy at the global level, at the country level it lacked visibility.

12.8 The Philippines

Dinna applauded the fact that Asian fisheries feed not just the world but also each other. Despite their contribution, government support was pitiful. This needed to change, even in international bodies like ASEAN. Dinna highlighted the importance of collaborating with academics to find solutions for problems in the sector.

12.9 India

Small-scale fishworkers, Indian participants said, were the largest primary stakeholders for water bodies. They were also the natural custodians of water bodies—good fish needs good water. The future of water bodies and fish resources is linked to the future of small-scale fishworkers. A platform for Asian small-scale fishworkers would be very helpful. Discussions from the workshop needed to be taken forward. Regular contact would help everyone work with each other.

At the start of the pandemic, fishworkers were issued advisories before the government provided their own. The government's blanket ban on movement had to be opposed and appealed against. Eventually, they permitted fishing if safety measures were followed. A source of confusion was the difference in central and state advisories.

All in all, the pandemic came with a valuable lesson. Shorter value chains (local) endured but longer value chains (international) snapped. Small-scale fishers survived because of local economic activities. Participants expressed willingness to collaborate with any organization seeking to benefit fisheries.

12.10 Vietnam

Vietnam highlighted the importance of tenure rights to ensure food security among small-scale fishers. Zoning for seasonal fishing was important to ensure recovery of coastal resources. Access to public services, social security and health care systems needed to be improved. Women could add great value to fisheries if their roles across the value chain were recognized by communities, households and policy makers. Facilitating women's participation could enhance their access to the network. Participants hoped the workshop's action plan could be implemented successfully everywhere.

12.11 Malaysia

The speaker from Malaysia highlighted the importance of access to resources. A regional agreement to control or remove trawlers would be beneficial.

Manas concluded the day's proceedings by detailing the next day's schedule. He requested that all women participants take a group photograph.



The women participants on the third day of workshop focusing on women and gender in small-scale fisheries. Building a platform for Asian small-scale fishworkers would be very helpful

13. The Asian regional action plan: Women and gender in fisheries

The participants acknowledged that women across Asia experience a range of challenges. Despite different local and national contexts, they often face similar obstacles which include a lack of access to: fisheries resources, spaces to sell fish, participation in decision-making processes, opportunities to organize, education, training and technology. Women often experience a triple burden of trying to balance household responsibilities, harvest and pre and post-harvest activities, and participating in community activities and organizations.

The women participating in the Asia workshop highlighted the importance of working together to find creative solutions and tackle the challenges they face. They collectively pinpointed several actions that need to be taken in the Asian region:

Women's labour must be more widely recognized for its crucial contributions to the fisheries sector. This includes household responsibilities (caring for families and children); harvesting (fishing and mollusc gathering); and pre and post-harvest work (preparing for fishing, mending gear, processing and selling). This work is often invisible, and seen as a familial duty without economic compensation. Doing so fails to acknowledge the fundamental role this work plays in the functioning of the sector.

Women's organizations and networks must be established as spaces where women can discuss common challenges, support each other, collectively develop ways to address issues they are facing, and amplify their voices. These organizations and networks should be established by women in fishing communities themselves. Allied groups and organizations can provide them with technical and logistical support. This also helps foster valuable alliances with like-minded groups. Existing women's organizations need to be supported and strengthened in order to continue to grow, become more visible, and provide spaces for the next generations of leaders.

Family support must be encouraged to facilitate women's participation in organizations, networks and community work. Many family members worry that women's participation in community activities will interfere with their household responsibilities. Public activism, most believe, will put them in danger. Women dependent on their husband's income are often not able to access funds to travel to mobilizations or other events. Efforts should be made at the community and family level to discuss these issues and find appropriate context-specific ways to address them.

Training programmes must be set up to provide support and guidance to the next generation of women leaders. They need to be provided opportunities to learn from and be inspired by others in their communities. This is particularly important for empowering and building the confidence of young women, and educating them about their rights as community members. Women-led organizations can establish their own networks to mentor and train women in their communities, while allied groups and organizations can provide support and resources (technical, information, funding) for such programmes.

Access to capacity-building opportunities for women at the community level must be facilitated and supported by governments and local organizations, including access to education and training programmes to build knowledge, skills and technology literacy. Support—transportation, child care and funding—should also be provided in order to facilitate women's participation in such programmes.

Spaces must be opened up for women to participate in fisheries governance and co-management processes. Women have the right to review and advice on programmes and processes that directly affect them. Their direct participation will ensure that their voices are heard, and that they can contribute their knowledge and experience to developing programmes to address their challenges and enhance their opportunities. Community committees should ensure equal participation of male and female representatives, and women's representation must be real and equitable, and not just tokenism.

Data collection on women working in fisheries must be expanded significantly in order to develop a better picture of the contributions they make to the sector, the challenges they face, and what is needed to address these challenges. More data on women working in inland fisheries is necessary. Women themselves should be directly involved in the collection of this data, as they are best situated to connect with other women in their communities, while governments and fisheries departments should include gender disaggregated information in fisheries databases.

Gender-sensitivity in fisheries policies must be improved to ensure that differences in roles and responsibilities in the sector are not glossed over. Women are too often excluded from social security protection, and become dependent on male family members to access government support, such as loans, healthcare, unemployment and life insurance, and childcare subsidies. Women should be able to register themselves and access services directly in order to facilitate empowerment and independence.

Day 4 : 9 May 2022

14. Presentation of workshop statement draft

Chairperson: Ravadee Prasertcharoensuk, Director, Sustainable Development Foundation

Ravadee appreciated the effort put in by the Secretariat to draft the statement. Manas clarified that the statement was based on discussions during the workshop. Participants were invited to give feedback.

Participants from Indonesia called for a stronger statement asking for a ban on trawling and other destructive fishing methods. They also demanded fuel subsidies for small-scale fishers. They reiterated the impact of climate change, proposed alternative income opportunities during the ban season and the need for social protection in the absence of fishing.

Participants from Pakistan said waste needed to be treated before being dumped. The government needed to support the fisher cooperative societies. They asked for a ban on development projects in creeks and islands. Mangroves—fish and prawn nurseries—needed to be protected. Development needed to be sustainable, not destructive. Resource protection needed to be highlighted in the statement. Fishers needed rights, not compensation.

Participants from India asked the words ‘in post-harvest activities’—with regard to women—be replaced by ‘in fishing’. They requested the insertion of a clause against destructive fishing gear and practices. They also requested that ‘adequate rescue and healthcare facilities’ be mentioned in the ‘safety at sea’ section.

Cambodian participants highlighted the need to categorize suggestions according to relevant stakeholders. National governments needed to provide capacity to local governments. Budgets needed to account for not just local governments but also grassroot community organizations. The national government needed to prioritize the needs of local fishers rather than their own political agenda. Women needed to be promoted to leadership roles.



Manas Roshan, Programme Officer, ICSF presenting the draft workshop statement. The session was chaired by Ravadee Prasertcharoensuk, Director, Sustainable Development Foundation, Thailand

The team from Sri Lanka requested a strong statement for the implementation of the SSF Guidelines. They also requested that illegal methods of fishing be spoken about to minimize transboundary international conflicts. Liberal trade needed to be checked and local production encouraged. This would directly help small-scale fisher livelihoods. International aid, they pointed out, supported large infrastructure, not what small-scale fishers required.

Bangladeshi participants highlighted the need to focus on disaster risk reduction and climate change. A large amount of funding was needed to implement the SSF guidelines and—because the government didn't consider it a priority—potential sources for this needed to be found. They also mentioned transboundary problems in fishing.

Participants from Thailand reiterated the need to consider the well-being perspective. They also expressed a need for technical colleges for fisheries, especially to train small-scale fishers. Vietnamese participants said that access to resource was as important as the resource itself. Small-scale fishers' resilience needed to be increased and more recovery capital created to help them sustain their livelihoods. Different stakeholders needed to coordinate their efforts in fisheries management.

Ravadee summed up the suggestions made by participants. Sebastian responded to some of the suggestions and also provided feedback on the statement. In many instances, he said, the voluntary guidelines had become customary international law. Every year, the FAO sent governments a questionnaire on the CCRF which contained a section on the SSF Guidelines. Governments respond to these questionnaires, and slowly they became international customary law.

Sebastian said that in a post globalization era, liberalization of trade was no longer an international issue. Trade was getting more fragmented with development of regional blocs. There was a need to prioritize south-south trade over international trade when discussing food security and local communities.

15. Session 4: Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) framework for the SSF Guidelines

Chairperson: Maarten Bavinck, member, ICSF

Maarten said that the SSF Guidelines lay at the heart of small-scale fisher movements. Maarten asked participants to highlight the aspect/section/topic they considered most important.

15.1 Opening discussion – SSF Guidelines implementation by country

Malaysia said fisheries management was most important. Bangladesh and Cambodia prioritized tenure rights and governance of tenure. Thailand emphasized the human rights approach, governance, gender, resource management and better access. Indonesia said gender rights and gender equality was most important. The guest from IPC mentioned climate disasters and participants from the Philippines brought up forced labour. Sri Lanka spoke about government accountability towards fishers. India also said responsible and sustainable fisheries and gender equality were most important. Pakistan brought up climate change and tenure rights. Vietnam said co-management, protection of the ecosystem, gender equality and climate change adaptation.

Participants were asked what the status of implementation for the guidelines was, eight years from their formulation. They could pick one of three answers. The guidelines were not being implemented. They were being completely implemented. They were being partly implemented.

Some countries said the guidelines were not being implemented, while a few said they were being partly implemented. Maarten concluded that no country had implemented the guidelines completely. He asked Elyse to elaborate how much was being implemented, and what could be learnt from the implementation process.

Maarten also introduced participants to two guests, Velia Lucidi and Amélie Tapella from the organization, Crocevia, which hosts the secretariat for International Planning Committee for Food Sovereignty. They were from the fisheries working group. The IPC was also actively organizing events for IYAFa.

15.2 Developing a MEL Framework – Rationale and process

Presentation by: Lena Westlund, Equitable Livelihoods Team, FAO

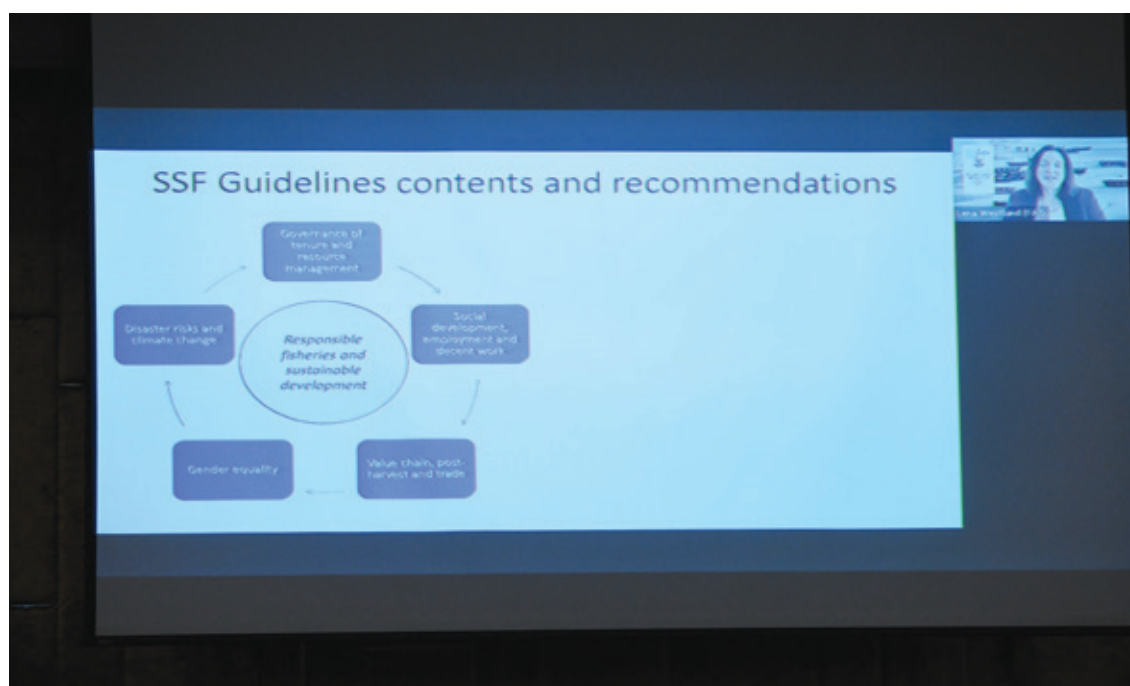
Elyse said that a formal monitoring framework would help stakeholders identify gaps in the implementation process. She went on to introduce Lena Westlund's pre-recorded presentation.

In the video, Lena gave a brief background on the Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) Framework being developed for the SSF Guidelines. The framework would help determine if the objectives of the guidelines were being met. A section of the guidelines dealt exclusively with the practical aspects of implementation. This contained advice on policy coherence, information, research and communication, capacity development etc. An entire chapter dealt with implementation support and monitoring. Paragraph 13.4 provided a framework for monitoring. This guided the work of the MEL framework.

Monitoring, she said, needed to loop back as feedback and lead to further action, policy formulation and continued implementation. The monitoring needed to be done through participatory assessment and provide better understanding and documentation on the contribution of small-scale fisheries to sustainable development.

The MEL framework, Lena said, was participative, gender sensitive and aligned with the SSF guidelines and principles. It was necessary that MEL framework be easily usable, in particular by governments, but also by other entities, organizations, initiatives and projects. It was intended to promote transparency, accountability and promote implementation of the guidelines. It was a work in progress.

Over the past few years, events like a workshop with the IPC's working group on fisheries of the IPC and an initiative by John Kurien on a participative approach for implementing the guidelines



Lena Westlund, Equitable Livelihoods Team, FAO presenting (virtually) on the rationale and process that led to developing of the MEL framework

have helped guide the framework. The draft MEL framework was developed in collaboration with WorldFish, ICARDA and a dedicated consultant. ICSF was asked to refine, finalize and take it forward.

The framework's impact pathways show how outputs, outcomes and impacts are linked. These impact pathways focus on the thematic areas in part two of the guidelines. Indicators were developed after analyzing each statement. Existing Monitoring and Evaluation frameworks were consulted to ensure there was no duplication in terms of reporting.

This ended up in a very long list of indicators, too long to remain practical. Prioritization was necessary. The structure of the framework needed to be finalized, indicators prioritized and a draft handbook prepared. Pilots could then make it operational. Maarten took over to reveal that the FAO was monitoring the implementation of guidelines at the international level. But, it was important to monitor this at the local level too.

15.3 Overview of the MEL structure and handbook

Presentation by: Elyse Mills, Programme Associate, ICSF

Elyse Mills expanded on what the ICSF was doing to take the framework forward. The indicator list was complicated and too technical to use. They started with about 800 indicators and were tasked with revising it and creating a more accessible structure. It was important that this tool be accessible for governments, FWO, CSO and other equally.

The MEL framework is not just for monitoring but also learning. It hopes to gather information on small-scale fisheries and evaluate as well as make implementation feasible and adaptable. A participatory process is imperative. Elyse said they were working on finalizing the structure. There had been many working group discussions and they had received a lot of feedback. The next task was to draft a handbook. Then they would test it in two countries, receive feedback before asking other countries to pilot it. Elyse hoped they could launch a digital framework during the COFI in September.

She went on to show the current structure of the framework. Five sets of indicators were divided according to chapters in the guidelines. She elaborated on the kind of data to be gathered for each



Elyse Mills, Programme Associate, ICSF gives an overview of the MEL structure and the handbook

indicator. Countries could identify indicators according to their own needs. She also presented the potential content of the handbook. It included examples on how the guidelines were being implemented and recommendations for different stakeholders for implementation.

15.4 Group Discussion: Improving SSF Guidelines implementation

A group discussion on “How can the SSF Guidelines implementation be improved in your country?” was conducted. Participants were asked the following questions:

1. Is your government actively implementing the SSF Guidelines? How would you like them to use the MEL Framework?
2. What questions do you have about SSF Guidelines implementation in your country?
3. What questions should be included in the handbook to help those using the MEL Framework?
4. How do you imagine the MEL Framework complements bottom-up SSF Guidelines monitoring processes (for example: People’s Tribunals)?

15.4.1 Sri Lanka

The team from Sri Lanka said that all CSOs needed to advocate for the guidelines. Even if there were no positive responses, it was necessary to push the government to implement them.

15.4.2 Vietnam

Participants said co-management had already been partially implemented with six working groups to enhance capacity and manage resources. They hoped to introduce more aspects in three provinces. Gaps would be addressed in the coming years. They said that a framework would enhance empowerment of community based organizations. Women needed to be more involved in implementation.



Than Thi Hien from Vietnam raising a question on ways to improve SSF Guidelines implementation during the group discussion

15.4.3 Bangladesh

Participants highlighted the need to prepare a document to find synergies. The government had proved resistant to implementing new policies and these synergies might boost confidence. Furthermore, there was a need to translate the MEL into local languages and make it relevant to the local context. Grassroot participation was key.

15.4.4 Thailand

Participants from Thailand said that while government implementation was necessary, it could also be kick started from the ground. Capacity needed to be increased. It was necessary to find a network that specialized in certain topics. The guidelines were broad and specific recommendations were the need of the hour.

15.4.5 India

Participants admitted that on ground, people lacked knowledge of the guidelines. To better understand the situation, stakeholder analysis needed to be conducted. There was a need to redefine small-scale fisheries in a way where it didn't divide the community. The FAO needed to institute guidance for states and fisheries departments. The MEL must look into monitoring inland fisheries too.



Madhuri Mondal from India raising a question on ways to improve SSF Guidelines implementation during the group discussion

15.4.6 Indonesia

Participants said that SSF guidelines needed to mainstream gender equity. It was also important to strengthen public participation—especially development planning—and collaborate with civil society organizations and community organizations to socialize the guidelines.

15.4.7 Myanmar

Participants said that the guidelines were implemented partly along the coastline. It was necessary to form co-management areas as well as fisher associations at the local and state level. There was a

need for government advocacy. Community awareness needed to improve. Local communities find it difficult to follow the guidelines. Technical assistance was needed to improve implementation.

15.4.8 Pakistan

The team Pakistan highlighted the need for a sustainable fisheries policy under the SSF Guidelines. Without this there could be no implementation. The guidelines needed to be translated into Urdu so local fishers could read it. It was necessary to ensure complete participation of small-scale fishers in SSF management.

15.4.9 Malaysia

The government claims Malaysia had already implemented all parts of the guidelines. But, at a 2019 meeting with WorldFish in Penang country's fisheries official didn't know anything about them. The fishers' community needs to be mobilized to monitor implementation at the grassroots level. The information must be shared with the government to show where gaps exist.

15.4.10 Cambodia

At the local level Cambodia has fisheries co-management systems for inland fisheries. Fisher associations have been empowered to participate in management.

16. Presentation of the workshop statement and discussion

Chairperson: Saeed Baloch, General Secretary, Pakistan Fisherfolk Forum

Manas read out the finalized workshop statement—titled 'The IYAFA ASIA Statement' by common consensus. Pradip Chatterjee from India raised a point about the work done by women. Another participant from Thailand said co-management areas needed to be included. The chairperson pointed out that there were zoning restrictions for large scale fishers, like trawlers.



Saeed Baloch, General Secretary, Pakistan Fisherfolk Forum chairs the presentation of the finalized workshop statement incorporating the suggestions from the participants

The IYAFA ASIA Statement

Asia Workshop: IYAFA 2022-Celebrating Sustainable and Equitable Small-scale Fisheries, 5 to 8 May 2022, Bangkok, Thailand

We, the representatives of small-scale fishworker associations, cooperatives, trade unions, community-based organizations, and non-governmental organizations from eleven South and Southeast Asian countries that account for nearly 30% of global capture fishery production (marine and inland) and nearly 45% of the world fishers' population;

Having met in Bangkok, subjected to all COVID-19 protocols, during the International Year of Artisanal Fisheries and Aquaculture (IYAFA), as proclaimed by the United Nations General Assembly Resolution 72/72, appreciating its emphasis on the participation of small-scale fishery stakeholders in policy development and fisheries management strategies and the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication (the SSF Guidelines);

Upholding the principles of regional and international cooperation as well as collaboration among all forms of small-scale fishworker and support organizations, plus consultation and participation in all development activities affecting the land or water bodies of interest to small-scale fishing communities;

Celebrating the knowledge and skills of marine and inland small-scale fishers and fishworkers;

Cognizant of the continued relevance of small-scale fisheries, marine and inland, in the context of food and nutrition security, poverty eradication and cultural heritage;

Aware of the important role that women play in the inclusive development of small-scale fisheries;

Concerned about losing traditional/customary tenure rights of small-scale and Indigenous Peoples to water bodies and land to live, operate fishing gear, and to process and market fish (especially for women), including the drying of fish. Such loss occurs in result of: reclamation/conversion for tourism-related activities; special economic zones; real estate projects; navigable waterways; coastal aquaculture, wind farms and power plants; infrastructure development, including ports; compulsory resettlement of fishing families; and impoverishment of fishers to wage labour or contract labour in fish farms and other forms of marginalization;

Further concerned about the adverse impacts of sea level rise, climate change, extreme weather events and pandemics;

Conscious of how conservation and sustainable use of living aquatic resources and components of the marine, coastal and terrestrial ecosystems is fundamental to the enjoyment of all forms of tenure rights; and how tenure rights can protect access for women and men to their resources and markets (SDG 14b);

Taking note of women facing a range of challenges across the Asian region; some of these challenges follow from different national contexts, it is recognized that there are many common challenges. Women often face a quadruple burden –trying to balance household responsibilities (caring for their families and children); engaging in activities along the fisheries value chain; participating in community organizations and mobilizations; and dealing with discriminatory practices; and

Further concerned about the range of impacts of COVID-19, subsequent lockdowns and economic crisis on fishing communities, plus the need to promote social development and provide effective social protection schemes to all persons along the fisheries value chain;

Call upon the Asian governments, private parties, civil society organizations, and the international community to:

Address threats from upstream dams to national and transboundary rivers that reduce water flow and availability of fish in the downstream fishing grounds of small-scale fishers; in this context, provide adequate compensation to small-scale fishers for damages suffered from degradation of the ecosystem;

Adopt fair and equitable allocation of water to allow small-scale fishers and fishworkers to practice their fishing for livelihood activities round the year, taking note of the multiple uses of freshwater resources;

Allocate and raise awareness about tenure rights to land and water bodies, and further strengthen capacity of local communities, including women, to enjoy these rights in an unhindered manner, especially in the context of the recognition of co-management and community-based management rights under national legislation in inland and coastal fishing grounds;

Protect traditional/customary tenure rights, to restore these rights if they be denied, and to provide reparation and just compensation to affected communities, should these rights be annulled after due consultation;

Promote greater security of tenure in consultation with fishing communities; in this context governments should make adequate provisions to extend budgetary support to improving security of tenure in relation to land and water bodies (marine and inland);

Provide space for women to participate in fisheries governance and co-management processes, both so their concerns are heard, and so they can contribute directly to developing programmes for addressing the obstacles they face;

Recognize women's labour for its crucial contributions to the fisheries sector. Women's work is too often invisible, and seen as familial duties without economic compensation. Yet, women's household, care, pre- and post-harvest work are central to the functioning of the fisheries sector;

Facilitate women's organizations and space for network building where women can discuss common challenges, support each other, and develop ways to address the issues they are facing;

Undertake industrial, as well as aquaculture and domestic effluent treatment before it is released into marine or inland water bodies;

Provide improved access to healthcare and medical facilities, including to treat diseases caused by exposure to industrial pollution in coastal areas;

Develop and institute legal measures to proscribe or phase out the use of destructive fishing gear and practices that have a negative impact on equity and sustainable use of aquatic resources and biodiversity. Measures must be put in place to phase out bottom trawling from the internal, archipelagic, territorial waters and the exclusive economic zone, within a reasonable period of time;

Improve access to sustainable fishery resources for small-scale fishers using non-destructive and responsible fishing gear and practices, including through the provision of affordable fuel to ease hardships;

Consider alternative livelihood opportunities for small-scale fishers and fishworkers during off-seasons;

Discourage arrest and detention and promote humane treatment of small-scale fishers for unintentionally crossing into waters under the jurisdiction of other States; in this context, create inter-governmental mechanisms to deal with issues related to transborder movement of fishing vessels;

Provide accident, vessel and gear, life, natural calamity and pandemic insurance schemes for all fishers through government subsidies and make provisions for closed season allowance irrespective of their membership status in fisheries cooperatives/associations and ensure timely access to benefits from these schemes during accident, illness or death, or when there is permanent or partial loss of fishing equipment or opportunities;

Ensure maritime safety agencies are well-equipped to improve disaster preparedness and marine rescue operations in light of increasing incidents of cyclones/typhoons and sea surges;

Develop a database of migrant fishers and fishworkers and remove all forms of discrimination against them including denial of membership in cooperatives and trade unions and access to social protection schemes;

Extend to fishers and fishworkers all social protection benefits that the workers in non-fishery sectors are eligible for. In this context, improve awareness about social protection schemes at various levels that can benefit small-scale fishing communities;

Ensure that men, women and children of fishing communities at the national level enjoy the same level of access to education facilities as other citizens in the same country. Capacity-building of women at the community levels is crucial. This includes increasing their access to education and training programmes, technology, and opportunities to learn from and be inspired by women leaders;

Document the impact of COVID-19 on livelihoods of small-scale fishing communities and their ability to recover and provide support to move towards greater resilience;

Provide adequate budget support especially to poorly-funded local governments to improve sanitation, industrial and domestic waste management and to implement effective pollution control measures;

Improve access to electricity of fishing communities and facilitate power supply to remote fishing villages through innovative power distribution mechanisms;

Protect easement zones at the local level assisting pre-harvest and post-harvest activities as well as docking and launching of small-scale fishing vessels from being displaced by the tourism industry to establish resorts and hotels;

Build capacity of local governments to be at the forefront of social development for small-scale fishers and fishworkers;

Strengthen capacity of fishers and fishworkers to participate in designing social protection policies and schemes, to monitor the quality of these services and to report to the authorities;

Strengthen sex-disaggregated registration of all fishers, fishworkers, and members of fishing and fish farming families to bring authenticity to beneficiaries and greater visibility to small-scale fisheries stakeholders;

Protect autonomy of fisheries administrations and encourage them to co-ordinate with agencies in other fields on issues outside of their mandate;

Improve sea safety by: (i) reducing intrusions of larger vessels into the fishing zones designated for small-scale fishers; (ii) providing training on safety at sea to small-scale fishers; (iii) enforcing life-saving equipment on all small-scale fishers in light of greater uncertainty and unpredictability at sea from climate change and extreme weather events by integrating it with the registration process for fishing vessels; .

In this International Year of Artisanal Fisheries and Aquaculture (IYAFA 2022), we are fully aware that the implementation of the SSF Guidelines within a human rights-based approach can help governments at various levels to address our concerns and to take up our recommendations in South and Southeast Asia.

Implementing the SSF Guidelines, we believe, can promote justice and fair treatment of men and women, protection of tenure rights of small-scale fishing communities and promotion of participatory and effective management regimes, as well as the achievement of social development of children, youth, men and women of fishing communities and Indigenous Peoples in coastal and riparian areas.

For more details about the workshop, please visit: <https://www.icsf.net/resources/asia-workshop-iyafa-2022-celebrating-sustainable-and-equitable-small-scale-fisheries/>

17. Vote of thanks

Sivaja Nair, Programme Executive, ICSF, Chennai gave the vote of thanks. She thanked the participants who attended the workshop, Sustainable Development Foundation for partnering in conducting the workshop and the staff and management of hotel Berkeley for all the support.

Annexures

Annexure 1

Concept Note

International Collective in Support of Fishworkers (ICSF)

Asia Workshop: IYAFA 2022-Celebrating Sustainable and Equitable Small-scale Fisheries 5 to 8 May 2022, Bangkok, Thailand

Context

The UN General Assembly has proclaimed 2022 as the International Year of Artisanal Fisheries and Aquaculture (IYAFA 2022), with FAO as the lead agency. This provides an opportunity to further reiterate the objectives and promote implementation of the small-scale Fisheries Guidelines.

Approximately 90 per cent of the 140 million people engaged in fisheries globally work in the small-scale fisheries sector, predominantly, but not only, in the global south. These small-scale fishers (men and women) catch half the world's seafood and provide over 60 per cent of the fish for direct human consumption. For each fisher person in the small-scale sector, at least four other people are engaged in related land-based activities, such as the preparation of equipment, fish processing, and marketing. In total, more than 500 million people are estimated to depend on fisheries for their livelihoods. As a family-based activity, fishing makes a direct contribution to household food security, where women play a particularly important role both as the link with the market and as the provider of food in the household. This significant contribution to food security, livelihoods and to local and national economies is expected to improve through the implementation of the SSF Guidelines.

Small-scale fisheries provide the first and most important link in a long chain of social, cultural and economic activities that contribute to the health and well-being of local communities and wider society. Fishing is more than just an economic activity. It forms a part of the culture, identity and way of life of fishing communities—marine and inland—with customs, food habits, rhythms of life, rituals, spiritual beliefs, value systems, traditions and social organization closely linked to the aquatic milieu on which their livelihoods depend. The provision of fish and fishery products by small-scale producers also plays an important role in food sovereignty, ensuring low-income consumers enjoy their right to food and other human rights. Often, small-scale fisheries have been the only form of social protection available and accessible to many marine and inland fishing communities.

Women play a vital but largely unrecognized and undervalued role in realizing the right to food by supplying fish and fishery products. The FAO estimates that in 2018, 59.5 million people—at least 14 per cent of which were women—were directly engaged either full time, or more frequently part time, in capture fisheries or aquaculture. This is likely to be a gross underestimate given that women's work in the fisheries sector is often unpaid and unrecorded. The most significant role played by women in fisheries is at the processing and marketing stages. Active in all regions of the world, women have become significant entrepreneurs in fish processing. In fact, most fish processing is performed by women, either in their own household or as wage labourers in the large-scale processing industry. However, despite their entrepreneurial success, women often have to deal with considerable hardships and adverse working conditions. They often face unequal competition to access raw materials for their processing and trading activities.

The Covid-19 pandemic has highlighted the lack of social protection and the disproportionately negative impacts of pandemic control measures on the small-scale fisheries sector. While reducing the supply of fish to the post-harvest sector, and diminishing access to fishing grounds and resources, including of migrant fishers, the pandemic control measures have exacerbated poverty in the small-scale sector, the burden of which is disproportionately shouldered by women.

Objectives of the Workshop

In this context, ICSF and its members are organizing four regional workshops and women's exchanges in 2022 in Asia, Africa, Latin America and Europe, in partnership with fishworker organizations globally. The overall goal of the Asia workshop is to strengthen the recognition of small-scale fisheries' crucial contributions to global food security and nutrition, the importance of tenure rights in the sector, and social development. The objectives of the workshop are:

- To increase international engagement of fishworker organizations regarding food security, tenure rights and social development issues;
- To deepen cooperation between fishworkers and like-minded organizations regarding food security, tenure rights and social development; and
- To amplify the voices of women in the inclusive development of small-scale fisheries. The workshop is an opportunity to take stock of how the SSF Guidelines are being implemented in Asia to eradicate poverty, ensure food security and nutrition, and promote the tenure rights of small-scale fishing communities.

The Asia workshop was held in Bangkok, Thailand from 5-8 May 2022 at the Berkeley Hotel, Pratu Nam, 559 Ratchaprarop Road, Makkasan, Rachatewi, Bangkok 10400 Thailand Tel: (66 2) 309-9999 ext. 3114, Mobile: 087-547-3936 and Fax: (66 2) 309-9900-0.

Participants

The workshop included 45 participants from community-based organizations, national and international fishworkers' organizations, women in fisheries networks, and civil society organizations from 11 South and Southeast Asian countries - including Thailand, Sri Lanka, India, Malaysia, Myanmar, Bangladesh, Indonesia, Pakistan, Philippines, Cambodia, and Vietnam.

Methodology

The workshop was held over three days, plus an additional day for exchanges between Women in Fisheries (four days total). It broadly focused on discussing the obstacles to securing rights to food security and nutrition in fishing communities and how small-scale fisheries contributed to the food security and nutrition of others in their local and national contexts. Another focal point of the discussions was on ensuring the protection of tenure rights in small-scale fisheries, including rights to access and use of marine and inland waters, and coastal and riparian lands.

The specific methodology of the workshop was developed with inputs from participating organizations. Fishworkers' inputs to the process were key in determining questions and specific topics that were discussed at the workshop. ICSF developed a questionnaire and country fact sheets to be shared with participants. Some of the sub-themes addressed in the workshop, and which are central to the work of ICSF and its fishworker partners, include: human rights of fishers, fishworkers and fishing communities; social protection; impacts of 'blue economy' agendas on small-scale fisheries; impacts of climate change and mitigation and adaptation initiatives on small-scale fisheries; roles of fisheries organizations, associations and cooperatives; decentralization of fisheries governance structures; mainstreaming gender equality/equity in fisheries; and promoting decent work and social development of fishing communities.

The workshop involved

- Collaborative discussions and activities in which fishworkers were able to share their experiences and perspectives, learn from each other, and develop collective strategies and plans of action to address these issues in their local and national contexts;

- Providing open, inclusive spaces for fishworkers' and like-minded organizations to meet face-to-face and deepen their cooperation on advocacy work related to food security and tenure rights; and
- Exchanges between women in fisheries, about their experiences, their challenges, and the creative solutions they have developed to address them.

The general structure of the workshop was as follows:

- **Day 1:** Discussions and presentations on access to resources for small-scale fishing communities
- **Day 2:** Discussions and presentations on social development for sustainable fisheries, food security and poverty eradication.
- **Day 3:** Exchanges between women in fisheries and development of a gender action plan
- **Day 4:** Development of a collective declaration or action plans on specific themes that participants want to prioritize.

Annexure 2

Programme

Day 1 Thursday 5 May, 2022	
08.30 - 09.30	Registration: SDF Logistics: Sivaja K Nair, Programme Executive, ICSF
09.30 - 11.00	Inaugural Session Chair: Maarten Bavinck, Chairperson, ICSF Welcome Ravadee Prasertcharoensuk, Director, Sustainable Development Foundation, Thailand and Member, ICSF Opening Addresses Taworn Thunaji, Deputy Director General, Department of Fisheries, Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives, Government of Thailand Me Priya Yamthet, Chairperson, Thailand Association of the Federation of Fisherfolk Felicitations Panitnard Weerawat, Senior Instructor, SEAFDEC Overview of the workshop Sebastian Mathew, Executive Director, ICSF
11.00 - 11.30	TEA/COFFEE BREAK
11.30 - 13.00	Introduction by participants (by country group)
13.00 - 14.00	LUNCH
14.00 - 14.45	Session 1: Access for small-scale fishing communities to resources Chair: V. Vivekanandan, Member, ICSF Presentation by Maarten Bavinck, Chair, ICSF Board
14.45 - 16.00	Group discussion: Access for small-scale fishing communities to resources
16.00 - 16.15	TEA/COFFEE BREAK
16.15 - 17.15	Presentation of Group reports (10 minutes each) Chair: V. Vivekanandan, Member, ICSF Discussion
19.30 - 21.30	Special Dinner and Cultural Programme
Day 2 Friday 6 May 2022	
09.00 - 10.00	Session 2: Social Development for Sustainable Small-scale Fisheries, Food Security and Poverty Eradication Chair: Herman Kumara, National Convener-NAFSO, Sri Lanka Presentation by: Sebastian Mathew, Executive Director, ICSF
11.00 - 11.30	TEA/COFFEE BREAK

11.30 - 13.30	Group discussion: Social Development for Sustainable Small-scale Fisheries, Food Security and Poverty Eradication¹
13.30-14.30	LUNCH
14.30-15.30	Presentation of country wise group reports Chair: Dani Setiawan, Chief Executive, Indonesian Traditional Fisherfolk Union (KNTI)
15.30-16.00	TEA/COFFEE BREAK
16.00- 17.00	Discussion
Day 3 Saturday 7 May 2022	
9.00- 11.00	Session 3: Women and Gender in Small-scale Fisheries Chair: Elyse Mills, Programme Associate, ICSF Photo Sharing Exhibition and discussion of photos contributed by participants, showing the role of women in fisheries in their community. Key Issues Faced by Women Fishers Presentation by Arlene Nietes Satapornvaint, Project Manager, RTI International, Thailand Gender Issues in Post-harvest Fisheries Presentation by Kyoko Kusakabe, Professor, Asian Institute of Technology, Thailand Discussion
11.00 - 11.15	TEA/COFFEE BREAK
11.15 - 13.00	Group Discussion: Key Issues Faced by Women in Fisheries²
13.00 - 14.00	LUNCH
14.00 - 16.00	Panel Discussion: Solutions and Ways Forward for Improving Women's Access to Resources and Participation Chair: Kyoko Kusakabe, Professor, Asian Institute of Technology, Thailand Panel: One woman representative from each country ³ Brainstorm: Developing an Action Plan What key actions are needed to address the challenges facing women in fisheries?
16.00 - 16.15	TEA/COFFEE BREAK
16.15 - 17.30	Concluding Remarks Chair: Madhuri Mondal, Programme Officer, Dakshin Foundation, India One representative from each country
Day 4 Sunday 8 May 2022	
09.00 - 11.00	Presentation of Workshop Statement (Draft) Ravadee Prasertcharoensuk, Director, Sustainable Foundation, Thailand and Member, ICSF and Manas Roshan, Programme Officer, ICSF Discussion
11.00 - 11.30	TEA/COFFEE BREAK

11.30 – 13.30	<p>Session 4: Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) Framework for the SSF Guidelines</p> <p>Chair: Maarten Bavinck, Chairperson, ICSF</p> <p>Opening discussion – SSF Guidelines implementation by country</p> <p>Developing a MEL Framework – Rationale and process</p> <p>Presentation by Lena Westlund, International Fisheries Analyst, FAO (pre-recorded video)</p> <p>Overview of the MEL structure and handbook</p> <p>Presentation by Elyse Mills, Programme Associate, ICSF</p> <p>Group Discussion: Improving SSF Guidelines implementation</p>
13.30 - 14.30	LUNCH
14.30 -16.00	<p>Presentation of Group reports</p> <p>Chair: Mohamad Abdi, National Coordinator, Destructive Fishing Watch, Indonesia</p> <p>Presentation of the Workshop Statement and Discussion</p> <p>Chair: Saeed Baloch, General Secretary, Pakistan Fisherfolk Forum</p> <p>Manas Roshan, Programme Officer, ICSF</p> <p>Discussion</p>
16.00-16.15	Vote of thanks: Sivaja Nair, Programme Executive, ICSF

Annexure 3

Group discussion 1 (Day 1): Access to resources for Small-scale Fishing Communities

Questions for group discussion:

1. Do you enjoy tenure rights, individually and collectively, to housing and other land resources needed for your activities along the fisheries value chain? How can these rights be made more equitable and secure for both men and women?
2. Do you enjoy tenure rights to fishery resources, to the coast and riparian areas for men and women fishers and fish processors? Are they formal rights or traditional/indigenous/customary rights? Do tenure rights, for example, recognize the role of small-scale fishing communities to restore, conserve, protect and co-manage local aquatic and coastal ecosystems?
3. What kind of threats related to their access to land or water bodies do fishing communities face? How are the tenure rights able to withstand and overcome these threats?
4. Are there any effective mechanisms to resolve disputes over tenure rights? Do they ensure availability of remedies such as restitution, indemnity, just compensation and reparation?

Group 1: Cambodia, and Vietnam (Coordinator: Than Thi Hien; Rapporteur: Senglong Youk)

Group 2: Bangladesh, Malaysia, and Myanmar (Coordinator: Muhammed Mujibul Haque Munir; Rapporteur: Azrilnizam Omar)

Group 3: Pakistan, India, and Sri Lanka (Coordinator: Pradip Chatterjee; Rapporteur: Ahilan Kadirgamar)

Group 4: Indonesia, and the Philippines (Coordinator: Dinna Umengan; Rapporteur: Dani Setiawan)

Group 5: Thailand (Coordinator: Varuntorn Kaewtankam; Rapporteur: Kesinee Kwaenjaroen)

Group discussion 2 (Day 2): Social Development for Sustainable Small-scale Fisheries, Food and Poverty Eradication

Questions for group discussion:

1. In your national or local context, do small-scale fishing communities, including women, men and children, have affordable (and adequate) access to health, education, housing, sanitation, drinking water and energy facilities and services, commensurate with that of other citizens? How can access to these facilities and services be improved? What role can be seen for fishing community organizations and fisheries administrations?
2. Do all members of small-scale fishing communities and all workers enjoy social security protection in the form of social assistance or social insurance schemes, both at the sectoral and universal (national) levels? Is there any discrimination against any segment, including women and migrant workers, during the implementation of these schemes?
3. Is there an increase in the number of accidents at sea/freshwater bodies related to fishing? Are there safety issues, in the marine and inland fisheries context, arising from extreme weather events and climate change? How do you improve the overall safety of fishing operations in face of these threats?

Group Discussion 3 (Day 3): Challenges Faced by Women in Fisheries

Questions for group discussion (in country groups):

1. What are the major challenges faced by women in fisheries in your country in terms of access to: resources, fishing cost-harvest trade and markets, social security and healthcare, and leadership and participation in fishworkers' organizations?

Panel Discussion (Day 3): Solutions and Ways Forward for Improving Women's Access to Resources and Participation

Questions for panel discussion (women representatives from each country):

1. How have you been successful in addressing the challenges women in fisheries face?
2. How are women mobilizing and organizing?

Group Discussion 4 (Day 4): Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) Framework for the SSF Guidelines

Questions for group discussion (in country groups):

1. How can SSF Guidelines implementation be improved in your country?

Annexure 4

List of participants

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SAMUDRA

for Bangkok

INTERNATIONAL COLLECTIVE IN SUPPORT OF FISHWORKERS



WHAT'S ON TODAY

- Inauguration and introductions
- SSF access to resources
- Group discussions
- Dinner and cultural programme

Side note

The UN General Assembly has proclaimed 2022 as the International Year of Artisanal Fisheries and Aquaculture (IYafa 2022).

ICSF is organizing four regional workshops and women's exchanges in 2022 in Asia, Africa, Latin America and Europe in partnership with fishworker organizations. The overall goal of these workshops is to strengthen the recognition of small-scale fisheries' crucial contributions to global food security and nutrition, the importance of tenure rights in the sector, and social development.

SAMUDRA for IYafa 2022, published daily during the workshops, brings you programme updates, interviews with participants and short articles on SSF in the region.

For more information, write to icsf@icsf.net or manas.icsf@gmail.com



Yindi ton raab!

Welcome to Bangkok and welcome to the International Collective in Support of Fishworkers (ICSF) IYafa 2022 Asia Workshop celebrating sustainable and equitable small-scale fisheries.

This is ICSF's first international workshop since 2016 and it's particularly exciting that this is our first international meeting since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Asia Workshop brings together 58 participants from 11 countries: Bangladesh, Cambodia, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, Pakistan, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Vietnam. They represent diverse fishworker organizations, NGOs and researchers, co-operatives and community organizations, including women's solidarity groups. (Twenty-eight women will lead the gender in fisheries exchanges on Day 3!) Many of these organizations contributed to the development of the SSF Guidelines.

In preparation for the workshop, we sent questionnaires to participants to learn about their work (see Pg4), the small-scale fisheries in their countries, and the status of these fisheries and fishing communities eight years after the endorsement of the SSF Guidelines in 2014.

As the responses from participants continue to trickle in, several important themes have emerged from the stories of the diverse small-scale fisheries in Asia, which you can read in subsequent newsletters. The responses pointed to similar threats faced by coastal fishing communities, including coastal reclamation, infrastructure development and destructive fishing practices, such as trawling. These threats have increased their vulnerability to climate change and disasters, which, all participants have emphasized, is a major challenge.

In some countries, constitutional or legal frameworks have allowed some decentralization in fisheries management, for example in the Philippines and Indonesia. In several countries, traditional fisheries institutions and practices (see the resources on the workshop webpage) have survived but remain unrecognized in formal law. Women play an active role in all these fisheries, including in harvesting activities in several countries. But they are largely invisible in policy and data on the sector.

All the responses point to the impacts of COVID-19 on SSF. Although fishing operations could continue during the lockdowns in 2020 and 2021, restrictions on movement and markets affected the fisheries value chain and incomes of workers. Some countries with stronger social protection programmes successfully reached out to the most vulnerable populations (through cash- or food-based assistance, for instance). Overall, these protections were not adequate and communities relied on their fisheries to tide over the crisis or temporarily switched to other livelihoods.

As we emerge from the pandemic, we are enthusiastic about the opportunity to connect and to work together to celebrate and secure small-scale fisheries in Asia!

INSIDE

- Implementing SSF Guidelines in Asia
- Profile of fisheries in Asia
- Workshop Overview
- Logistics
- Resources

Overview of the Workshop

The objectives of ICSF's IYAFa 2022 Asia Workshop are:

- To increase international engagement of fishworker organizations regarding food security, tenure rights and social development issues;
- To deepen cooperation between fishworkers and like-minded organizations regarding food security, tenure rights and social development; and
- To amplify the voices of women in the inclusive development of small-scale fisheries.

The workshop is an opportunity to take stock of how the SSF Guidelines are being implemented in Asia to eradicate poverty, ensure food security and nutrition, and promote the tenure rights of small-scale fishing communities.

The workshop will be in three days, plus an additional day for exchanges between Women in Fisheries (four days total). The workshop will focus broadly on discussing the obstacles to securing rights to food security and nutrition in fishing communities

and how small-scale fisheries contribute to the food security and nutrition of others in their local and national contexts. Another focal point of the discussions will be on how to ensure the protection of tenure rights in small-scale fisheries, including rights to access and use of marine and inland waters, and coastal and riparian lands.

The general structure of the workshop includes:

- Day 1: Discussions and presentations on access to resources for small-scale fishing communities
- Day 2: Discussions and presentations on social development for sustainable fisheries, food security and poverty eradication.
- Day 3: Exchanges between women in fisheries and development of a gender action plan
- Day 4: Development of a collective declaration or action plans on specific themes that participants want to prioritize.

What are participants saying?

The workshop can address lessons learned from countries with quota-based fishing policies and their impact on SSF. Indonesia plans to implement such a system. Second, what are the good practices of SSF economic institutions. Finally, what progress has been made on the World Trade Organization (WTO) negotiations on fisheries subsidies?

- **Dani Setiawan**, KNTI, Indonesia

The encroachment of foreign fishing vessels from neighbouring countries into Malaysian waters affects local fishermen's livelihoods. This kind of illegal fishing needs to be addressed.

- **Azrilizam Omar**, Jaring, Malaysia

There are several types of fishers' organizations in Bangladesh, such as co-operatives, groups established by development programs, autonomous organizations at the local and national level, even fisher wings or sections of large political parties.

- **Md. Munir**, COAST Trust, Bangladesh

There are no specific laws for women in fisheries. But unified fisheries laws do not exclude women and are flexible. But they need to be supported and encouraged to play an active role and to express themselves.

- **Piya Thesayam**, Federation of Fisherfolk Associations, Thailand

Definitions

Tenure Tenure systems determine who can use which resources, for how long, and under what conditions. The systems may be based on written policies and laws, as well as on unwritten customs and practices. (FAO)

Social Development Processes of change that lead to improvements in human well-being, social relations and social institutions, and that are equitable, sustainable, and compatible with principles of democratic governance and social justice. (UNRISD)

In the context of the SSF Guidelines, factors that contribute to social development include affordable access to health, education, literacy and digital inclusion; housing, sanitation, drinking water and energy; and saving, credit and insurance; access to justice; decent work and reasonable returns to fishing communities from their labour and investment in fisheries.

Food security All people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life. The four pillars of food security are availability, stability of supply, access and utilization. (FAO)

Social protection The set of public measures that a society provides for its members to protect them against economic and social distress that would be caused by the absence or a substantial reduction of income from work as a result of various contingencies (sickness, maternity, employment injury, unemployment, invalidity, old age, and death of the breadwinner); the provision of health care; and, the provision of benefits for families with children. (ILO)

Workshop webpage!

For each IYAFa 2022 regional workshop, ICSF has launched a dedicated page on its new website, with resources, publications and useful information on SSF in the region. Visit the Asia Workshop page here:

<https://www.icsf.net/resources/asia-workshop-iyafa-2022-celebrating-sustainable-and-equitable-small-scale-fisheries/>

Implementing the SSF Guidelines in Asia

Mainstreaming SSF Guidelines in Asia

Today, SSF organizations, CSOs, development partners, IGOs, RFMOs, NGOs, foundations and research institutes are applying the SSF Guidelines in their work in Asia. The growing engagement by a multitude of actors is promising—and key to making the SSF Guidelines a reality on the ground.

Activities in Asia

The Asia-Pacific Fishery Commission (APFIC), in their Executive Committee's 76th session held in 2017, welcomed continued support for the implementation of the SSF Guidelines at the national and regional levels. Then in their Seventh Regional Consultative Forum Meeting in 2019, APFIC acknowledged the need for *"reinforced legal frameworks and guiding policies to ensure a human rights-based and environmentally friendly development"* in line with the SSF Guidelines.

Translating the SSF Guidelines into languages of the region

The SSF Guidelines are available in the following languages spoken in the region: Arabic, Bengali, Burmese, Chinese, Gujarati, Hindi, Indonesian (Bahasa), Japanese, Kannada, Malayalam, Odia, Oriya, Russian, Singhalese, Tamil, Telugu and Thai. Most of these translations have been prepared on the initiative of our partners, especially civil society organizations, including ICSF.

Efforts to advance human rights and gender issues

At the regional level, SEAFDEC organized an expert workshop on

implementing the SSF Guidelines with a focus on the human rights-based approach and gender equality in 2017. This resulted in a policy brief and a practical guide for gender analysis. SEAFDEC is now starting to apply this guide in selected countries with support from FAO.

The Danish Institute for Human Rights (DIHR) organized a regional seminar in Asia in November 2019 to discuss the role that national human rights institutions can play in the fisheries and aquaculture sector.

Tenure rights, resource management and the SDGs

Some examples of dedicated work of partners in the region to implement the SSF Guidelines at national level are national capacity building on the ecosystem approach to fisheries management and the SSF Guidelines in Myanmar, a national workshop on improving inland fisheries governance in India and a training on the Tenure Guidelines and the SSF Guidelines for civil society organizations in Sri Lanka.

Initiatives for safe and decent work

FAO worked with the Cambodian Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries and the International Labour Organization to prevent child labour in Cambodia, and FAO has funded and given input to a research summary on social protection in small-scale fisheries, conducted by WorldFish. Studies from the region.

From Implementing the SSF Guidelines in Asia and the Pacific by FAO. Read the full article here: <https://www.fao.org/voluntary-guidelines-small-scale-fisheries/news-and-events/detail/en/c/1272959/>

Profile of fisheries and aquaculture in Asia

Global fish production: 179 million tonnes

Asia fish production (excluding China): 61 million tonnes (34 %)

Asia workshop countries: 54 million tonnes

Global marine capture fisheries production: 84.4 million tonnes

(Top 20 include Indonesia, India, Malaysia and Myanmar)

Asia (excluding China): 27 million tonnes (32 %)

Asia workshop countries: 23 million tonnes

Global inland fisheries production: 12 million tonnes

(Top 20 include India, Bangladesh, Myanmar, Cambodia, Indonesia, Thailand, the Philippines, Vietnam and Pakistan)

Asia (excluding China): 6 million tonnes (50 %)

Asia workshop countries: 6 million tonnes

Global aquaculture fish production: 82.1 million tonnes

Asia (excluding China): 26 million tonnes (31 %)

Asia workshop countries: 25 million tonnes

Global employment in fishing and fish harvest: 59.51 million

Asia (including China): 50 million (85 %)

Asia workshop countries: 34 million

Global fishing fleet: 4.56 million vessels

Asia fleet: 3.1 million (68 %)

Asia motorized fleet: 2.1 million vessels

Asia non-motorized fleet: 947,000

Asia workshop countries: 1.8 million vessels



Who's at the workshop

- 1 Coastal Association for Social Transformation (COAST) Trust, Bangladesh
- 2 Coastal Fishers Association (CFA), Bangladesh
- 3 Community Fisheries (CFi) organizations, Cambodia
- 4 Fisheries Action Coalition Team (FACT), Cambodia
- 5 National Fishworkers' Forum (NFF), India
- 6 National Platform for Small Scale Fish Workers (NPSSF), India
- 7 Dakshin Foundation, India
- 8 Kesatuan Nelayan Tradisional Indonesia (KNNTI)
- 9 Kesatuan Perempuan Pesisir Indonesia (KPPI)
- 10 Solidaritas Perempuan Anging Mammiri, Indonesia
- 11 Destructive Fishing Watch (DFW), Indonesia
- 12 Ekologi Maritim Indonesia (EKOMARIN)
- 13 Jaring, Malaysia
- 14 Rakhine Coastal Region Conservation Association, Myanmar
- 15 Pakistan Fisherfolk Forum (PFF)
- 16 Tambuyog Development Center, the Philippines
- 17 PANGISDA, the Philippines
- 18 National Fisheries Solidarity Movement (NAFSO), Sri Lanka
- 19 Jaffna District Fisheries Co-operatives Union, Sri Lanka
- 20 Sustainable Development Foundation (SDF), Thailand
- 21 Federation of Thai Fisherfolk Association
- 22 Southern Fisherfolk Women's Association
- 23 Thai Sea Watch Association
- 24 Centre for Marinelife Conservation and Community Development (MCD), Vietnam
- 25 Commune Fishery Tourism Service Cooperatives, Vietnam

Read the profiles of these organizations here: https://www.icsf.net/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/IYAFEA_Asia_Workshop_Organizations_Profiles.pdf

The hosts

Sustainable Development Foundation (SDF)

SDF is an NGO founded in 1996 and registered in 1999. SDF works to secure sustainable futures for resource-dependent communities and vulnerable natural ecosystems all across Thailand. SDF employs human rights, gender mainstreaming, and ethical governance principles to promote and support communities to become an active driver in achieving just and sustainable development.

Logistics

Currency: Thailand's official unit of currency is the Thai Baht (THB).

US\$ 1 = 35 THB or
Euro 1 = 36 THB (approx.)

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Transportation: Ratchaprarop (9 minutes) and Phaya Thai (20 minutes) are the closest subway and bus stations to the Berkley Hotel. Airport Rail link to Bangkok Suvarnabhumi Airport operates daily from 06:00 to 24:00. Trains depart every 10 to 15 minutes.

International Collective in Support of Fishworkers (ICSF)

ICSF is an international NGO that works towards the establishment of equitable, gender-just, self-reliant and sustainable fisheries, particularly in the small-scale, artisanal sector. As a support organization, ICSF is committed to influence national, regional and international decision-making processes in fisheries so that the importance of small-scale fisheries, fishworkers and fishing communities is duly recognized.



Films on Asian SSF

An assortment of recent films on fisheries and coastal communities in Asia, selected by Alain Le Sann, President of the 'Pêcheurs du monde' (Fishers of the World) film festival in Lorient, France:

https://www.icsf.net/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/IYAFEA_Asia_Workshop_Films_on_SSF_in_Asia.pdf

ON THE AGENDA (6-8 MAY)

- Social development of SSF
- Women and gender in SSF
- Group discussions
- Panels and concluding remarks
- Monitoring Framework for the SSF Guidelines
- Workshop Statement

SAMUDRA

for Bangkok

INTERNATIONAL COLLECTIVE IN SUPPORT OF FISHWORKERS



WHAT'S ON TODAY

- Social development for SSF
- Group discussions

Side note

SAMUDRA for IYAFA 2022, published daily during the ICSF Regional Workshops for the international year, brings you programme updates, interviews with participants and short articles on SSF in the region.

For more information, write to icsf@icsf.net

A Vibrant Start

The IYAFA 2022 Asia Workshop is off to an exciting start, with lively discussions between the 11 countries and a celebration of local cultures with song, dance and storytelling.

The Asia Workshop, organized by ICSF and SDF, was inaugurated by Dr Tawom Thunaji, Deputy Director General, Department of Fisheries, Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives, Government of Thailand. Also present at the inaugural session were: Ravadee Prasertcharoensuk, Director, SDF and Member, ICSF; Me Piya Yamthet, Chairperson, Thailand Association of the Federation of Fisherfolk; and Panitnand Weerawat, Senior Instructor, Southeast Asian Fisheries Development Center (SEAFDEC).

Mr. Thunaji said that Thailand recognizes the importance of marine resources, and fair access of artisanal fishers and aquaculture producers to resources. The SEAFDEC representative also discussed the importance of small-scale fisheries in the region, both in domestic and foreign trade.

Mr. Yamthet said that in Thailand fishers are facing similar issues to those confronted by fishers around the world. He welcomed the occasion to discuss and solve these problems together. In her welcome address, Ms. Prasertcharoensuk

said that the participants should use this opportunity to build networks and alliances, and strengthen the fishers' movement.

Sebastian Mathew, Executive Director of ICSF, provided an overview of the Workshop, reiterating its objectives to enhance the engagement of fishworker organizations in food security, tenure rights, social development; deepen cooperation between fishworker and like-minded organizations; and to amplify the voices of women in the inclusive development of small-scale fisheries.

He said that IYAFA 2022 is a chance to celebrate the knowledge and skills of fishers and fishworkers utilizing traditional, small-scale fishing and processing methods. "The small-scale sector is not vanishing," he said, "but is a sector to be preserved and protected."

INSIDE

- Tenure—the cornerstone of SSF
- Legislate for fishery tenure rights
- IYAFA recipes
- Trawling in Indonesia

Tenure—the cornerstone of small-scale fishing

by **Maarten Bavinck**

Many small-scale fishers in Asia do not want their children or grandchildren to become a small-scale fishworker. Could it be that ‘problems of tenure’ are the main reason our fishworker friends want to leave fisheries? This question guided the Workshop’s first session and my presentation to the participants.

What is tenure? The FAO Tenure Guidelines provide a description of what tenure does, rather than what it is: “Tenure systems determine who can use which resources, for how long, and under what conditions.” ‘Tenure’ describes a relationship between a fishing family or community and their resources. As these ‘resources’ are not free-floating but tied to specific land and water spaces, a fisher family or community always requires access to these spaces too. A tenure system defines the access of fishworkers to the resources and the coastal spaces that they depend on.

Tenure is a form of property; it provides control over who is allowed to fish there and in which way. It provides rights and responsibilities. It provides the foundations of their livelihood and thereby ensures food security. A coherent and just tenure system for fishworkers is a human right.

But what is the situation of tenure of fishworkers today? Generally speaking, a clear tenure system is lacking: There are multiple conflicts, many intruders, and a mix of rules and regulations. What we see is not only a decline but a

fragmentation of tenure systems. While customary tenure systems are under pressure, governmental systems are expanding their presence.

Threats to systems of tenure in fisheries come from the outside too. The term ‘blue economy’ or ‘blue growth’ is often used to describe the many new activities that governments are promoting in coastal regions. Marine pollution and climate change also threaten small-scale fishworkers and their tenure systems. If fishworkers must move, they will have to be provided with rights to other coastal land and to changing fishing grounds.

There are no quick fixes for the flawed situation of tenure in fisheries. The underlying problem is that small-scale fishworkers lack power.

In the ensuing plenary discussion, the large-scale encroachment of fisher resources and the displacement of fishworkers in the region were emphasized. This highlighted the fragility of contemporary tenure systems and the challenges of resolving them.

***Maarten Bavinck** is the Chair of the ICSF Board. He was a professor of coastal resource governance at the University of Amsterdam and UiT, The Arctic University of Norway.*

A slice of life of SSF!

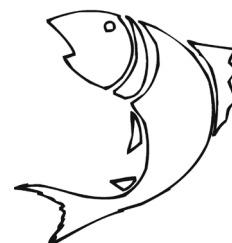
Watch the introductory video to the IYafa 2022 Asia Workshop, celebrating small-scale fisheries in the region. Visit the ICSF YouTube channel:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sXQsOuvqY8M>

Workshop webpage!

For each IYafa 2022 regional workshop, ICSF has launched a dedicated page on its new website, with resources, publications and useful information on SSF in the region. Visit the Asia Workshop page here:

<https://www.icsf.net/resources/asia-workshop-iyafa-2022-celebrating-sustainable-and-equitable-small-scale-fisheries/>



IYAFA recipes

Pla Tod Kamin (Turmeric Fried Fish)

Turmeric fried fish is a popular southern Thai dish, both at home and in restaurants.

The dish is commonly cooked using the *pla bed kone* (sillago), a beloved local sand fish that school along beaches, sandbars, mangrove creeks and estuaries. Adults bury themselves in the sand when disturbed

Ingredients:

4 cloves garlic
2-3 Sillago, red snapper or mullets
1/2 tablespoon salt
4-inch piece turmeric
1/2 cup cooking oil

Prep and cooking:

Make slits at an angle across the body of the cleaned fish. Grind the turmeric, garlic and salt together. Rub the mixture into the fish and let it marinate for a few minutes or even overnight.

Heat 1/2 cup of oil in a wok or pan and when it shimmers, gently add the fish to the wok. Fry one side for 6 minutes, then the other for 5 minutes. The fish should be yellowish brown on the outside. Set aside the fish and fry the leftover marinade for 2 minutes. Add on top of the fish. Serve hot.



Delegates at the inaugural session of the IYAFA 2022 Asia Workshop organized by ICSF and SDF

A saga drags on

An interview with Dani Setiawan, Chief Executive of Indonesia Traditional Fisherfolk Union (KNTI) on why trawl fishing needs to be regulated

SAMUDRA: Tell us about the history and characteristics of the trawl fishery in Indonesia.

Dani: Trawling was introduced in Indonesia, particularly in the Java Sea, in the 1960s and became very attractive to fishers. Its popularity continued to increase till 1980.

A lot of the bottom trawling activity for shrimp is around North Kalimantan. And also in Sumatra, Sulawesi and other areas. Looking at fish production in the Indonesia, a large share of the catch is from this group. At the time there was no surveillance or regulation of trawl fisheries. There was also no estimation of marine fish stocks in Indonesia.

The first government regulation to ban trawling was in 1980. This was further enhanced by ministerial decree in 2017 to ban particular types of trawling operations. But, following the national election in 2020, the government once again allowed trawling in Indonesian waters. This, too, was not effective,

because the minister of fisheries changed again in 2021, reimposing the ban. This shows how dynamic the situation is with regards to trawl fisheries. This is because on the ground, trawling is still very active. And regulations are not implemented.

SAMUDRA: What are the impacts of unregulated trawling on small-scale fisheries and fishing communities?

Dani: The implications for small-scale fishing communities is huge. The share of catch of small-scale fishers has continued to decline. The 1980 ban on trawling was for the same reason. Also, this gear causes a lot of conflict between communities on the ground. Stopping this conflict was one of the main reasons behind that regulation...

The full video interview will be uploaded on the ICSF's Asia Workshop webpage and YouTube channel in a few days: <https://www.icsf.net/resources/asia-workshop-iyafa-2022-celebrating-sustainable-and-equitable-small-scale-fisheries/>

Legislate for fisheries tenure!

‘Tenure Rights’ for small scale fishing communities mean the right to access fish, land and water resources for fishing, fish farming, fish vending and related ancillary works in a sustainable way. Tenure rights are the cornerstone of the livelihood of small-scale fishing communities. For small scale fishers and fish farmers, the right to protect water and fish resources is integral to tenure rights.

It is distressing to observe that the land, water and fish resources used by the small-scale fishing communities are under severe threats of encroachments, diversions and degradations that result in their loss of livelihood and eviction. The land and water resources used by small-scale fishing communities are encroached by non-fishery activities, including port construction, inland waterways and tourism. Water resources from large inland water bodies are diverted for non-fishery uses so much so that they lose their biodiversity and fish resources. Destructive fishing practices in both marine and inland waters decimate fish stock. Inequitable fishing by mechanized boats robs the small-scale fishers of the share of their catch. Pollution from industries and agriculture, and waste from urban settlements degrade the water bodies and fishery resources.

Small-scale fishing communities have been striving for their rights to access and protect the land, water and fish resources. But their efforts are challenged by the absence or the failure to implement



legally recognized rights on the one hand, and by governments’ support to competing interests on the other.

It is further observed that, among the 11 countries represented in the IYAFA Asia Workshop, tenure rights for small-scale fishing communities are not formally recognized, except in the Philippines and partially in a few other countries. This has led to fishing communities not being recognized in legal or administrative mechanisms, with reference to the use and protection of land, water and fish resources.

The survival of small-scale fisheries with its contributions to sustainable fishing, food security, employment with gender balance and equitable income distribution calls for legally binding tenure rights for small-scale fishing communities.

***Pradip Chatterjee** is the Convener of National Platform for Small-scale Fish Workers (NPSSF), India*

FAO IYAFA Newsletter

Subscribe to the FAO SSF Guidelines/IYAFA 2022 newsletter for monthly updates on events, publications and celebrations for the international year:

http://newsletters.fao.org/k/Fao/ssf_guidelines_implementation_subscription_form



WHAT'S ON TOMORROW

- Women and gender in SSF
- Photo sharing
- Action plan on gender
- Concluding remarks

SAMUDRA

for Bangkok

INTERNATIONAL COLLECTIVE IN SUPPORT OF FISHWORKERS



WHAT'S ON TODAY

- Workshop Statement
- Monitoring the implementation of the SSF Guidelines

Side note

Participants, please check your flight departure times and airport taxi details at the reception or with the ICSF team!

SAMUDRA for IYAFa 2022, a newsletter of the IYAFa regional workshops brings you programme updates, interviews with participants and short articles on SSF in the region.

For more information, write to icsf@icsf.net



Voices of women

At the Women and Gender in Fisheries exchange, organizations discussed the need for fisherwomen to be at the forefront of decision making and change in small-scale fisheries

On the third day of the IYAFa 2022 Asia Workshop, organized by ICSF and SDF, participants shared the experiences of women in the sector, recognizing the challenges they face and the collective actions that are needed to achieve gender equity in their fisheries.

The gender in fisheries exchange started with participants gathered around selected photos of women fishworkers in Asia (from the Workshop photo exhibition). Shining a light on women's unrecognized contributions to the sector, the photo sharing set the stage for presentations by facilitators, Kyoko Kusakabe, a professor at the Asian Institute of Technology, Thailand and Arlene Satapornvanit, a development consultant specializing in gender in southeast Asia. They provided an overview of women's roles and gender issues in both, fisheries harvest and post-harvest activities.

Group discussions then identified key challenges women face in terms of access to resources, markets, social development, and participation in decision making. They then shared their successes in addressing some of these problems, including mobilizing women to

demand action from government agencies (Philippines, Indonesia and India); integrating women members and their livelihood issues into fisheries co-operatives (Sri Lanka); and using innovative marketing and technology to improve women's incomes (Vietnam).

In the concluding session to develop a regional plan for action, the participants pointed to the importance of recognizing women's roles as "fisheries" work. They pointed to the need for more gender disaggregated data, including on women in fish harvest activities. Some participants highlighted the limitations on women's time because of their responsibilities in the household. There was consensus on the need for strong community organizations.

The reports of the gender exchanges and a regional plan of action on gender will be up on the Asia Workshop web page in a few days:
<https://www.icsf.net/resources/asia-workshop-iyafa-2022-celebrating-sustainable-and-equitable-small-scale-fisheries/>

INSIDE

- Gender equality in SSF
- Slogans for SSF
- Monitoring the implementation of the SSF Guidelines
- Sri Lanka's economic crisis

Why we need gender equality in fisheries

by **Kyoko Kusakabe**

Women play a large role in fisheries, but often their roles and contributions are invisible or not recognized. Women participate in fish harvest (both, using fishing craft and without craft), sorting, sale, processing and many other activities. However, women are often not seen as “real” fishers and are underrepresented in fisheries organizations, and have inadequate access to resources such as technology, loans, insurance and information. Women have responsibilities for household work and childcare, which limit what they can do in fisheries. They often have less decision-making power in the household and society. Some people might feel that women are not discriminated against, but the problem is that they are not even “discriminated”, since they are not even recognized as fishers and their work seen as support to their families.

Such invisibility of women stems largely from the masculine image of fishing, and fishing being the principal concern in fisheries. However, faced with declining fish resources, by now, we recognize that for small-scale fishers to survive be sustainable, it is important not to focus only

on fishing but the whole fisheries value chain. To this end, a gender perspective is useful.

Fisheries management and decision making should be inclusive, so both women and men’s voices are heard. Small-scale fishworkers, including women, need secure, sustainable and regular access to fish resources; fish spoilage needs to be minimized; and the food security of fishing communities should be ensured. At the same time, fishers and fishworkers need a better price for their fish and returns on their work. How can they add value to fish so that they can sell in niche markets and increase their incomes?

In order to answer these questions, it is not possible to talk only to women, or only to men. We need to empower women to speak out alongside men to ensure active participation. With active participation of women and men, we can ask the following questions.

How can we better understand what women and men are doing in fisheries? Often, what women do is seen as an extension of their work in the home (such as gleaning or setting small traps to catch small aquatic animals for household

Workshop photo album

View a selection of photographs of sessions at the IYafa 2022 Asia Workshop, along with a virtual exhibition of images contributed by participants on small-scale fisheries in Asia, all on the Workshop web page:

<https://www.icsf.net/resources/asia-workshop-iyafa-2022-celebrating-sustainable-and-equitable-small-scale-fisheries/>

consumption). So, we need to go beyond the usual understanding of “fishing” to capture all the activities that women, men, children, and the elderly are doing.

Next, we need to ask what kind of support we can provide to facilitate each of these activities. And what are some of the opportunities that women and men in the sector can build on? We need to identify what can be done by individual fishworkers and what needs to be done collectively. Finally, what can beneficiaries of sustainable fisheries (such as governments, consumers, and the private sector) do to support women and men’s role in fisheries?

Kyoko Kusakabe (kyokok@ait.ac.th) is a professor at the Asian Institute of Technology, Thailand





Delegates at the IYFA 2022 Asia Workshop organized by ICSF and SDF

Overheard

Education is vital for improving knowledge for fisherwomen so they can voice their rights as citizens. When they have education, they can represent themselves as food producers

- **Suryani Pacong**, *Solidaritas Perempuan Anging Mammiri, Indonesia*

In Pakistan's Indus delta region, creek areas have dried up so women aren't able to fish anymore. Fish have migrated because there is not enough water flow. Many women have lost their ancestral livelihoods.

- **Fatima Majeed**, *Pakistan Fisherfolk Forum (PFF)*

Women's networks and self-help groups should be strengthened to mobilize capital for fisheries livelihoods. Facilitate women's participation, especially in elections of community fisheries institutions.

- **Sadeas Loah**, *Trapeang Ropov Community Fisheries, Cambodia*

It is us women who can better understand other women's struggles. In spite of the challenges, women's voices are strong, so the opportunity to be here is proof that we are giving voice to our women.

- **Edlyn Rosales**, *PANGISDA, Philippines*

Sou sou! Slogans to beat the blues

Thai fishworker organizations shout 'sou sou' to inspire their members to try harder. What do the our other Asian friends say to inspire each other?

Bangladesh: *Heyo beyo* (To Motivate People)

Cambodia: *Sou sou!* (Same as Thailand!)

India: Long Live Fishworkers' Rights!

Indonesia: *Nelayan Sejahtera* (Fishers' Welfare!)

Pakistan: Long Live the Fishers' Alliance!

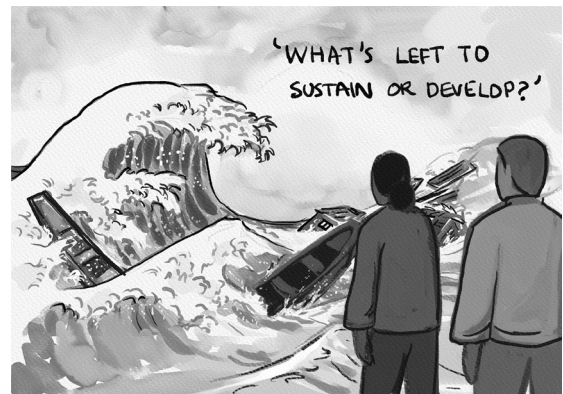
Vietnam: *Quyết Tâm* (The Struggle Goes On!)



Sadeas Loah from Cambodia shares a photograph of women from the Trapeang Ropov Community Fisheries in Kampot

An island in distress

How are fishing communities coping as Sri Lanka faces the worst economic crisis in its independent history? We interviewed Herman Wijethunge, the national convener of NAFSO, a Sri Lankan civil society organization with fishworker members; Annarasa Annalingam, President of the Federation of Jaffna District Fisheries Co-operative Unions; and Ahilan Kadirgamar, a lecturer at the University of Jaffna



Food shortages, soaring prices and power cuts has pushed Sri Lanka's citizens to the streets in protest, and the government to request emergency financial assistance from the International Monetary Fund (IMF). As we speak, the President has just declared a state of emergency. Fisheries are very important to Sri Lanka, employing one-tenth of its people and contributing a crucial 70 per cent of animal protein in the diets of many households.

Mr. Kadirgamar described the chronology of events that have led to the current impasse that has affected all sections of the population, including fishworkers. He pointed to the liberalization policies initiated over the last few decades, making Sri Lanka an export- and tourism- led economy, making its domestic food security and social services more fragile to external shocks. The COVID-19 pandemic was such a shock.

Mr. Wijethunge and Mr. Annalingam explained how the shortages of fisheries inputs, such as fuel, fishing gear and ice have either stalled fishing entirely, or severely increased operating costs.

This added to the economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, when a tourism, exports and foreign remittances also reduced demand for fish in many places.

While the boost to exports and tourism increased the island nations' revenues, the benefits of this boom haven't reached fishing communities. In many areas, as the interview noted, small-scale fishing communities have faced land dispossession, and increasing competition from powerful fishery players even as Sri Lanka's imports of fish to meet local demand continued to increase before the pandemic.

Where will Sri Lanka go from here, and what do fishing communities need to tide over this crisis?

Read the full interview on the Asia Workshop web page in a few days: <https://www.icsf.net/resources/asia-workshop-iyafa-2022-celebrating-sustainable-and-equitable-small-scale-fisheries/>

MEL Framework for the SSF Guidelines

There has been a long-standing interest from those working with the SSF Guidelines to monitor and learn from their implementation. Where are the guidelines being implemented? And what changes are being brought about? Find out more about the development of the draft Framework by FAO and its partners:

https://www.icsf.net/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/IYAFEA_Asia_Workshop_Participants_Profiles.pdf

Participant profiles!

Learn more about the diverse and passionate supporters of small-scale fisheries participating in the IYAFEA 2022 Asia Workshop:

https://www.icsf.net/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/IYAFEA_Asia_Workshop_Participants_Profiles.pdf

Workshop Statement

Concluding the IYAFEA 2022 Asia Workshop: Celebrating Sustainable and Equitable Small-scale Fisheries, participants from the 11 countries are developing a Statement listing their recommendations and aspirations of the international year.

These eleven South and Southeast Asian countries account for nearly 30 per cent of global capture fishery production (marine and inland) and nearly 45 per cent of the world fishers' population.

Read the Statement on the ICSF Asia Workshop web page:

<https://www.icsf.net/resources/asia-workshop-iyafa-2022-celebrating-sustainable-and-equitable-small-scale-fisheries/>



Organized by



International Collective in Support of Fishworkers (ICSF)
and
Sustainable Development Foundation (SDF)



Asia Workshop – IYAFA 2022

Celebrating Sustainable and Equitable Small-Scale Fisheries

International collective in support of fishworkers (ICSF) in partnership with Sustainable Development Foundation (SDF) Thailand had organized an International Workshop titled “IYAFA 2022-Celebrating Sustainable and Equitable Small-scale Fisheries: Asia” from 4 to 8 May 2022 at Bangkok, Thailand. The Asia workshop was the first of the series of four regional workshops planned by ICSF in connection with the proclamation of 2022 as the International Year of Artisanal Fisheries and Aquaculture (IYAFA) by the United Nations. The workshop revolved around discussions on the SSF Guidelines implementation and monitoring and specifically focused on the themes of tenure rights, social development and gender and women in fisheries. The workshop had a diverse group of 58 participants from CSOs, CBOs and FWOs from 11 participating countries namely-Bangladesh, Cambodia, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, Pakistan, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand, and Vietnam. The discussions of four day workshop resulted in the formulation of a ‘The Asian regional action plan: Women and gender in fisheries’ and the ‘The IYAFA Asia statement’.

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