

WIF South Africa Workshop

**Recasting the Net: Redefining a Gender Agenda for
Sustaining Life and Livelihood in Small-scale Fisheries
in South Africa**

Report



Women in Fisheries Workshop
Lambertsbaai, South Africa, 16–18 February 2010

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Introduction

When we were young girls, we would sit in our school classroom and then, suddenly, we would hear, “Oooooommm...the siren from the fish factory, signalling that the boats are in...”

Mr. Visser, our teacher, would say, “Friends, the siren goes, let’s honour this and show respect, let’s give our thanks”. And then we would bow our heads and we would pray, and say thank you, that once again we had fish in Lamberts Bay...because, you see, we were a fishing village...”

—Aunty Millie, a fisherwoman from Lamberts Bay, February, 2010

Between 16 and 18 February 2010, 43 women from 16 small-scale fishing communities in the Northern and Western Cape provinces of South Africa gathered in Lambertsbaai on the west coast for the second Women

in Fisheries Workshop. The workshop, supported by the International Collective in Support of Fishworkers (ICSF), with a small contribution from the Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA), was titled “Recasting the Net: Redefining a Gender Agenda for Sustaining Life and Livelihood in Small-scale Fisheries in South Africa”. The workshop was held preparatory to the proposed ICSF Global Workshop with the same title, to be held in Chennai, India, in July 2010. As far as Masifundise Development Trust and Coastal Links – the two South Africa-based fishers’ organizations involved in the meet – are concerned, the workshop helped build their leadership capacity to ensure that the nation’s new small-scale fisheries policy secures equitable access and benefits for women living in fishing communities in South Africa.

Background

The workshop aimed to build on the first Women in Fisheries Workshop, facilitated by Masifundise and supported by ICSF in April 2008 in Simonstown¹. At this women-only workshop, 35 women leaders came together to analyze the new draft small-scale fisheries policy proposals through a 'gendered lens'. The drafting of the new policy emerged from a lengthy ten-year process of struggle for women and men from small-scale fishing communities. Following the election of the first democratic government in South Africa in 1994, new fisheries policy and legislation were developed. While purporting to facilitate transformation in the industry and to promote equitable access to marine resources, the policy regime favoured large and medium commercial enterprises, and failed to accommodate traditional, small-scale fishing communities.² It also failed to address the glaring gender disparities in the allocation of rights to marine resources and the discrimination that women face in accessing benefits from the marine economy.

The first workshop aimed to provide a space for women from small-scale fishing communities to tell their stories, to explore the many diverse roles that women have historically played in the fisheries, and to identify key areas of exclusion and marginalization. Inputs were provided on different theoretical approaches to understanding women's oppression and the key legal instruments that exist to protect women's rights; the women used these to engage more

critically with the policy proposals. The women then developed a policy statement of their own, which was sent to Marine and Coastal Management (MCM). They also lobbied strongly for a woman representative on the National Policy Task Team (NTT), considering that, until then, all the representatives were male. Initially, this request was refused by MCM on the grounds that no woman representative had been nominated by a national constituency. The women subsequently insisted that a Coastal Links representative be included and the Chairperson of Coastal Links, Naomi Cloete, began attending the meetings. The draft policy that was subsequently released by MCM did not take the contributions of the National Task Team into consideration and was rejected unanimously by small-scale fishers in February 2009.

The timing of this second workshop was critical as Masifundise and Coastal Links have continued to participate in the process of developing yet another draft of a new national policy for the small-scale sector, through their participation in the National Policy Task Team negotiations. The National Policy Task Team was due to meet on 23 February, one week after the Women in Fisheries Workshop was scheduled and hence the timing was perfect for the Coastal Links representative to get a clear mandate from the women from the Western and Northern Cape provinces. Coastal Links had already identified the need to ensure that this new policy addresses gender inequities and that the opportunities for maximizing the transformatory potential of the policy are realized. This was a key resolution adopted by the organization at its Annual General Meeting in March 2009.

It is anticipated that a draft policy

1 See *Women in Fisheries Workshop Report*, Masifundise, 2008.

2 See *Concept Note on Women in Fisheries*, Masifundise, 2010, for additional background information on the fishers' struggle.

will be released for public comment in April 2010. Prior to this workshop, policy discussions had focused fairly narrowly on a resource-orientated approach to small-scale fisheries, despite some inputs from Masifundise and Coastal Links on the need to broaden the scope and perspective of the policy to adopt an approach that aims at 'sustaining life and livelihood'. The Masifundise and Coastal Links representatives on the NTT were concerned that this narrower approach might exclude much of the shore-based work that women do, as well as eliminate the potential to ensure that the policy is able to add 'life-sustaining' value for coastal communities.

2.1 Objectives of the Workshop

The objectives of the workshop, based on the prior process and the demands of the context of the small-scale fisheries in South Africa, were:

1. to review the history of women in fisheries in South Africa, including the history of women's organization in fisheries;
2. to analyze the impact of the current policy process on women and on the lives of their communities;
3. to identify strategies for ensuring that the new policy process transforms the existing male-dominated, production and exploitative approach to fisheries;
4. to identify strategies for strengthening women's organization within Coastal Links and developing a shared gender-sensitive ethic within Coastal Links; and
5. to develop a 'gender agenda' for Coastal Links' advocacy at a national and global level that can engage with ICSF, WFFP and forthcoming regional-level workshops of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO).

It was planned that the workshop would

use some of the guiding themes provided by ICSF, particularly for Objectives 1 and 2. These included:

- understanding 'work' and changes in the sexual division of labour within fishing communities;
- rights to coastal and fisheries resources;
- women and decisionmaking;
- impact of fish trade on fisheries resources, community livelihoods and food security;
- gender, culture and identity; and
- organizing women in fisheries.

ICSF had circulated notes on three of these themes to assist partners in developing their workshop programmes in such a way that they would have a 'common language' when reflecting on these issues at the international workshop. The workshop aimed to build on the analysis that many of the women have already undertaken on their role and work in the industry. It sought to enable them to sharpen their analytical skills and, using a 'gender lens', to try and evaluate the strategies that they have used in the past, to identify gains and losses, and to develop a critical approach to their engagement with the policy process. The workshop aimed to introduce a feminist approach to analyzing the current context in a grounded way that was based on the women's own experiences, using the language of their lived experiences but inserting key conceptual and analytical tools drawn from feminist work, where appropriate.

The workshop was facilitated by Jackie Sunde of Masifundise, with inputs from Nico Waldeck, Mandla Gqamlana, Sithembiso Gwaza and Hahn Goliath. The workshop was conducted in Afrikaans, the local language spoken by the majority of the women.³

³ The proceedings have been translated into English for this report, which will be circulated for the ICSF process.

2.2 Workshop Participants

Originally, it was hoped that the workshop could be a national-level one that would include women from all four provinces. However, given the current challenges presented by the policy process, the diversity in experiences across the different regions in the country, the language and cost challenges, it was not possible to accommodate women from all four coastal provinces in the workshop, which had to be subsequently limited to the two provinces in which Coastal Links has established branches. It was thus proposed that the workshop would target 35 women leaders from Coastal Links from the Western and Northern Cape as well as include the three male Masifundise fieldworkers. In total, 43 women participants attended, apart from one woman Masifundise staff member and four male staff members. Just about half of these participants had attended the first Women in Fisheries workshop.

2.3 The Setting for the Workshop

The workshop was located in Lamberts Bay (“Lambertsbaai”, in the local language), a small, traditional fishing town on the west coast of South Africa. From shortly after the First World War, this town has been the heart of the west coast rock lobster industry and has also served as an important base for the industrial processing of the pelagic catch, such as sardines. Coloured and black women from neighbouring villages up and down this coast, have been employed as seasonal workers in the large, White-owned, apartheid structured factories. Most of the women can trace three generations of women in their families who have worked in these factories. In the 1980s, the demand for canned crayfish began to shift, as consumers in Europe opted for live lobster. That trend had a great

impact on the local industry, resulting in the retrenchment of large numbers of women workers. Some companies began moving their processing plants further south, to be closer to the airport and marketing infrastructure, but also in response to the movement of the pelagic shoals and lobster, southwards. The reason for this ecological shift has not been determined, but climatic changes are cited as a key cause. As a consequence of these shifts, women workers from the fishing communities have lost the waged labour that they enjoyed, albeit of a tenuous, seasonal and poorly paid nature. The location of the workshop thus provided a poignant and rather haunting setting; with the backdrop of the empty factory providing a constant reminder of the impact of globalization and the export-orientated macroeconomic development policies that have shaped women’s lives in fishing communities.

2.4 Workshop Process: Introductions

The workshop commenced with a prayer and welcome by Rosy Shoshola, the local Coastal Links Executive Member, who wished the women a very warm welcome to her home town. Sithembiso welcomed the new Masifundise programme manager, Mandla Gqamlana. Jackie Sunde, from Masifundise, welcomed the women and explained the background to this workshop. She dwelt briefly on the link between the workshop and the international processes that ICSF had initiated, showing them the example of the programme from the workshop on women’s rights to be held in Phumrieng village, Thailand, and highlighted that this workshop was going to be addressing very similar issues to those of the workshops in Brazil, India and Thailand. The link with the previous Women in Fisheries Workshop held in Simonstown in 2008 was emphasized. Jackie also emphasized the strategic timing of this

workshop, coming one week prior to the final National Task Team meeting to be held at MCM.

Jackie briefly explained the history of the National Task Team. Following the signing of the Equality Court Order in May 2007, the Minister of Environmental Affairs and Tourism was ordered to begin a new policy development process, and to ensure that MCM developed a policy, through a participatory process, that meets the socioeconomic needs of the traditional fishers who had been excluded from the long-term fishing rights allocations. While this policy development process was unfolding, the Minister was also required to implement an ‘interim relief’ mechanism so that the fishers could go to sea to sustain their families. Subsequently, a National Task Team (NTT) was nominated to develop the policy, and Coastal Links and Masifundise have been participating in the NTT. There have been a number of obstacles to the policy development process, in particular, the fact that the industry launched court action against the Minister because of the ‘interim relief’ measure, the fact that the national elections in 2009 led to a re-organization of the administration and confusion as to which Minister would have the mandate for fisheries, and because of lack of capacity within MCM. During this period, MCM went ahead and released a draft policy which did not include the inputs of the NTT and did not have the support of the NTT. This version was rejected unanimously by the fishers and civil society partners and so MCM finally had to return to the drawing table with the NTT. In the past few months, significant progress has been made, and the NTT is now on the brink of completing this long and challenging task.

At the Women in Fisheries Workshop in 2008, participants examined, through a ‘gender lens’, the draft policy proposals that were on the table at the time. They then developed a statement,

based on their analysis of the draft policy and on their demands⁴. The message that came from this first workshop was loud and clear: women have played a significant role in the history of fisheries in South Africa and in small-scale fishing communities and continue to do so. This role needs to be accommodated in the new draft policy. Jackie reported that the current policy negotiations were still ‘sticky’ on the issue of gender equity and how it will achieve equitable benefits for women. She said that the new draft is still not very clear on this issue and that there was resistance from some of the male members of the NTT to including a stronger statement on women’s fishing rights. The women in the workshop were horrified to hear this. The workshop unanimously agreed that the message from this current workshop needed to be loud and clear and convey the women’s demands. The workshop agreed that by the end of the workshop, they needed to have a very clear set of demands that their representative, Naomi Cloete, could take into the policy negotiations the following week.

Jackie pointed out that this was in keeping with the theme of the workshop ‘Recasting the Net’, and explained why this theme had been selected. When she translated the English title into Afrikaans for the women they shouted out their support for the title, adding very powerfully in their local language that government must go back to the drawing board as it has left them out of the policy process and “re-cast the policy net to include women in fisheries”.

The participants then went around the room introducing themselves, identifying briefly where they were from. Several of them included comments on how they felt about coming to the workshop. Auntie Annie Saal from Hondeklipbaai created a vibrant spirit when she volunteered that she was at the workshop because “ek wil

⁴ See Women in Fisheries Workshop, April 2008 Statement

hê my kinders moet weet ek het vir hulle geveg” (“I want my children to know that I fought for them!”). Charmaine Beukes added to this saying that she was there to fight for disadvantaged women fishers. Millie Don, a local fisher from Lambertsbaai said that this day was a ‘skietkundige dag’(a very important day). She went on to add that the male fishers have been having meetings and getting interim relief but they have said to the women, “No, this is not for you women folk”. Now she is happy that the women are having their own meetings.

Cathy Poggenpoel, also from Honderklipbaai, said, “Die see was die lewe van Hondeklipbaai” (“The sea has been the life of Hondeklipbaai”) and hence access to the sea was critical for food security. Christa Kuinders from Paternoster said, “Kom ons skep moed” (“Come, let’s build hope”). Carmelita from Saldanha stood up and reminded the women, “In Simonstown, we began this process...now we have a deadline for the draft policy. Let’s make sure that we are part of this policy”. Trudie Andrew from Elandsbaai said that she felt used by the men and the Interim Relief⁵. Aunty Cathy commented that she had been fighting for women fishers’ rights for a long time – she had been part of the Coastal Links Network and had also represented the women at the National Workshop in Polokwane. Rosy from Lambertsbaai said, “We have fought enough for the men. Now we must give more attention to women fishers, especially the policy.” Sarah Niemand said that her heart was bubbling over: “You were the women who prepared food for your husbands, worked in the factories and at sea...now it is time to join hands and fight for a new policy”. Maria Hoffman noted that

this was the third workshop addressing women’s issues, including the workshop on 16 days of activism against violence against women in Riebeeck Kasteel in 2007. Solene Smith noted that she also wanted her children and grandchildren to know that their parents had fought for them and that they were “making history”.

5 The Interim Relief Measure is a short-term measure, ordered by the Equality Court, which grants permits to selected fishers to catch a small quantity of fish, while the new policy is being developed. It has primarily been allocated to male fishers who personally harvest lobster and line fish.

3. Lambertsbaai: ‘Ons geskiedenis, ons erfenis, ons lewens’ – Our Herstories, Our Heritage, Our Life and Livelihood ...

Following the introductions, the Lambertsbaai local participants were asked to share some of the local context with the group. Aunty Millie began by noting that Lambertsbaai was a real fishing village: “Ons het uit die see opgegroeï” (“We grew up out of the sea”). She went on to explain: “When we were young girls, we would sit in our school classroom and then, suddenly, we would hear “Oooooommm...” -- .the siren from the fish factory, signalling that the boats are in...Mr Visser, our teacher, would say, “Friends, the siren goes, let’s honour this and show respect, let’s give our thanks”, and then we would bow our heads and we would pray, and say thank you, that once again we had fish in Lamberts Bay...because, you see, we were a fishing village....”

Millie explained that she was a fisherman’s daughter, and came from a family in which nine children were “uit die see opgegroeï” (“brought up by the sea”). In the afternoons, when her father came in with the boats, the children had to go down to help carry the fish. In the early mornings, at 3.30, she would also have to make him coffee in a ‘visblikkie’ (fish can made from a tin cup). Telling this made her “heart sore” as “we had nothing then and now we still have nothing” (“nou nog by niks”). They also helped to clean the fish – the ‘doppertjies’. She said the White factory owners did not want to give them the fish cans. They came through hard times. “My mother worked in the factory. She worked until her hands were so sore she could hardly use her hands....”. Millie had to make a huge sacrifice for her brother; to give him a chance to study further, she had to leave school and start work. When she thinks of what she did for him, she feels that God had a plan

because she also married a fisherman and has a fisher son. But they had very hard times....

Katy added to Millie’s story. She came from a family with ten children. Her mother also worked in the factory – for 47 years. She herself had to leave high school in Standard 9 to work in the fish processing factory. They worked very long hours...they would start work sometimes at three or four in the morning and work until ten o’clock at night. “Until the work was done, sometimes we worked 16-hour long shifts”. They did a variety of work, cooking the crayfish, peeling it, weighing it, and putting it in the containers. Most of the fish was exported. In the closed season, they were lucky if they got a R30 (US\$4) cheque.

Rosy described her different history of working on the sea. When she left school, she started out working on the local potato farms. That involved long hours, and she often returned home in the dark, and she had very little time for her family. She found it very hard working under ‘apartheid’-style White farmers who made all the decisions. She rebelled and got a reputation for speaking up. She decided after some time that she could no longer take this work and decided to get herself a recreational fishing permit and go to sea to feed her family – in this way, she could work for herself. She was sea sick initially but her overwhelming experience of being at sea was that “on the sea, I was close to God” and that “nature was clean...like it must have been in the beginning...”. She thought to herself, “Here is the place where I can work”. She says fishing is dangerous work for a woman, but no more dangerous than driving in a car. She says men have discriminated against her. She said, “They say things

like this is bad luck...they see the sea as a woman and they have an idea that it's somehow bad luck for a woman to be on a woman...I think they are jealous. I don't ever want to do any other work. I can achieve things spiritually here ("ek kan hoogtes bereik...gesteelik...").

The session then opened the floor for any additional reflections. Sarah from Hondeklipbaai said that in the 1960s, they caught just crayfish and a bit of snoek, and suffered a great deal. They used to get paid a R2 (US\$0.3) 'good for', which could buy two rands worth of goods. But what was good was that they used to share what they had with their neighbours. She was a cleaner and had to clean crayfish with a knife. The women used to get up at 3 a.m. to go and work on the crayfish, which destroyed their hands. When the factory closed down, everything closed. Promises were made about payouts, but nothing has been forthcoming.

Aunty Cathy Sauls, who worked in the factory, reflected on the old days in Gansbaai when they had open access to the sea, to "everything that jumps in the sea". "We worked long shifts in water. This is where I learnt to strike for our rights. We were even locked up," she recalled. She said that one night the security police came and hammered at her door. They sent her to Grabouw jail. The factory bosses used to call her "Hottentot meid" and she used to respond "Hottentot boer" and she used to say to her boss: "Mr. Botha, women will win their rights". She used to often work under a lot of pressure and on many occasions, she would get called into the office. The other women used to joke about her having to "walk the red carpet" to the office. She used to insist that she could have her say and that she also had rights. She was so happy the day that they recognized the trade union and their overtime was recognized. "Only later did we fight for equal rights, as women", she added. "I have been in the struggle for 45 years.

The sea is my calling ("Die see water roep my"). I have now been going to sea myself for 12 years. I am involved ("Ek is betrokke") !.

Nico commented that what had emerged strongly from the group was the fact that the women had made many sacrifices, often playing an important role looking after children, and helping their parents support their families. They had worked under difficult conditions, with little labour rights. What was significant was the culture that had existed in their communities in the old days – a culture of helping each other, with neighbours caring for one another and fostering a community-based approach. There was a strong feeling that the women had focused on fighting for the men to get access to the sea but now they recognized the need to focus on their own rights.

The first session in the workshop enabled women to give oral testimony to the 'triple shift' that many of them have worked – as mothers, wives and daughters in their homes, preparing food and doing 'reproductive' work, to the roles they have played in the artisanal, small-scale sector, assisting their husbands prepare bait, mend nets and liaise with marketers, to themselves working in the industrial sector in the processing plants providing 'productive' labour. Women realized that their position is unique in that they straddle several different economies: at household and family level, at the level of their community and local fishery, and often at the level of large-scale production and the market. A very powerful sense of the sacrifices or, in Afrikaans, "op offering" that women have made over the years. Women expressed their anger that they have been marginalized and that the roles that they have played have not been recognized in the new fisheries policy processes that have emerged following the election of the first democratic government in South Africa in 1994.

4. Women's Work in Fishing Communities: Changes and Challenges

The second day of the workshop opened with a brief summary of the key issues that had emerged in the first session. Jackie commented that the discussion the previous day had highlighted the many different types of work that women have done over the years. The first session on Day Two included a brief presentation on the different work that women do, based on the information that the women had shared the first day and also in Simonstown. This was then used to introduce the concepts of 'reproductive' and 'productive' work and provide a brief input on a feminist approach to understanding the value of women's work.

It was noted that women's reproductive work, assisting in preparing men to go to sea, cleaning and preparing fish for food at home, caring for children and community members was important work that never got recognized by the Finance Minister, Trevor Manuel, nor included in the national accounting system.

Some of the work that women living in fishing communities undertake are:

On the shore and in the near-shore zone:

- Collecting mussels, red bait, shellfish (unpaid labour)
- Collecting seaweed (may be paid)
- Grinding seaweed (may be paid)
- Collecting bait (usually unpaid)
- Mending nets (unpaid)
- Assisting with baiting (unpaid)
- Catching crayfish (paid and unpaid)
- Catching fish (a few women do this – paid and unpaid)
- Rehabilitating mussels (unpaid)
- Cleaning fish (paid and unpaid)

- Selling and marketing fish (paid and unpaid)
- Liaison with fisheries inspectors, dealing with creditors and loans, applying for permits

In factories:

As workers in fish processing plants (paid, but poorly); may be permanent or seasonal, but often casual, on a piece rate basis.

At home: (all unpaid labour)

- Preparing food for the fisherman and the family
- Washing dishes
- Washing clothes
- Nurturing the children
- Caring for grandparents and extended family members
- Liaising with schools and clinics
- Working with family income and savings
- Paying accounts
- Funeral preparations
- Wedding preparations

In the community: (unpaid)

- Advocacy and organizing
- Church groups
- Savings groups ('stokvels')
- School fundraising activities
- Maintaining other social networks



5. Development Through a Gendered Lens: A Local-to-global Perspective

A brief presentation was made on some of the key developments and changes in the fishing industry, locally and globally. This was followed by a discussion amongst the women in plenary on the impact of the current development paradigm, and how it had affected women in fishing communities, in particular.

The key issues highlighted included:

- Worldwide, there have been technological and economic developments and 'growth', including increasing production levels.
- In the fishing industry, this is reflected in changes in vessel technology – bigger boats, change from wooden boats to fibreglass, changes in gear, larger engines, the increased use of satellite navigation (SatNav), vessel monitoring systems (VMS) and fishfinders, as a result of which more fish are caught; yet the women are seeing less fish available locally for food security.
- There have been significant changes in the marketing and trade in fish, with the globalization of fish trade under the approach that the market dictates.
- In some countries, there has been an increase in the diversity of fish products, with increased focus on value-addition.
- There has been an increase in tourism developments along the coast.
- Privatization of coastal land has taken place.
- Access to public ground adjacent to the sea has been closed off in some areas.
- The government embarked on a macroeconomic, export-

orientated growth strategy called GEAR.

- GEAR has focused on capitalist expansion.
- We now see that GEAR had many gaps but, in the meantime, the damage has been done.
- Government has introduced new means of managing the fishing industry, such as individual quotas.
- Women have borne the brunt of this economic approach – consider, for example, the closure of the factories because of the export-orientated policy of the government and big business.
- The large factories have benefitted the most from the GEAR approach, in contrast to the labour-intensive, small-scale sector approach that looks at local food security first and that is relatively more environmentally friendly.

The women participants commented on the fact that most of them had lost their seasonal work as a result of the factories closure. The closure of the factories was due primarily to the decision to no longer process lobster, but rather to export it as a better price can be gained from live exports. Live exports involve no local value-addition. Although the scientists state that part of the reason that the factories has closed is due to climate change, as sea temperature rise has caused the resource to move southwards, the local fishers are not sure if this is the case, or if it is because the industrial sector has fished out these waters. The women commented on the fact that the government's approach to development has not considered them, the small-scale sector. Instead, it has favoured the rich, who, they believe, are getting richer. The participants and facilitator

brainstormed a few of the ways in which the current system failed to support the local sector. A key example provided was that of the snoek industry. Woolworths, one of the large retail outlets, is currently importing smoked snoek pate from New Zealand. Snoek has historically been the staple fish for poor people in the Cape. Snoek is one of the few line fish that is not overexploited in South Africa and is readily available. The women could not believe that government would allow the import of snoek that has been processed thousands of miles away, instead of trying to create work for women locally. The women felt that government has taken decisions and adopted a particular policy that has impacted women in particular, as not only have women lost the work that they had, but they have also not been given equal access to the existing resources. Instead, male control over the resources has been entrenched through the existing interim relief criteria, which stipulates that you only qualify for interim relief if you are personally involved in the actual catching of lobster or line fish. This criterion excludes most women.

The women were reminded of the presentation that was done at the previous workshop in Simonstown on developing a 'gender lens'. Jackie Sunde also briefly summarized the various approaches to understanding the differences between men and women, highlighting the usefulness of a feminist approach that notes that the fact that much of women's work is not valued locates women in a different power position, compared to men in our society and our economy. Patriarchal social relations operating at the level of the household, community, in the labour market and at the level of government all place men in a powerful position. It was noted that only if we tackle the root causes of this unequal power relations will women be able to address the discrimination that they face. The

women made the links between the existing interim relief that has once again been granted (by the State) primarily to men only, and that gives men access to control over resources, and further entrenches inequality at the household level. The fact that the entire lobster catch from the interim relief is exported means that the market further excludes women from benefitting from this resource.

Jackie reminded the women that South Africa's Constitution protects gender equality under Article 9 on Equality of the Bill of Rights. In addition, there are international policies and laws that protect and promote women's rights. Article 14 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) addresses the discrimination that women in rural areas face, and places a specific obligation on the State, at all levels, to adopt measures to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women. This has particular relevance for women in fishing communities, where often the discrimination is not immediately visible, and it rather appears to be women's choice not to get involved in certain aspects. This Article highlights women's right to get access to training, credit and infrastructure. The group discussed how the women could use CEDAW to lobby their local government to ensure that the local Integrated Development Budgets included priorities for women. Analyzing the local government budgets from this perspective was another way in which women could bring a 'gender lens' to bear on development.

The workshop noted that a 'gender lens' approach tries to understand the differences between men and women's experiences and opportunities, to see the instances in which women experience discrimination and to make women aware of their rights.

In the exercise that followed, the participants were requested to divide into small-groups to mull over the following questions in the light of the discussion on the development paradigm and the gendered impacts of globalization.

Questions for small groups:

1. What have been the biggest changes that have taken place in your fishing communities and villages in the last 20 years?
2. What has been the impact on women?
3. How have women responded to these changes and impacts?

Reporting back

In reporting back to the plenary after the group sessions, many women chose to interject their own personal stories in between their reports as the issues that came up reminded them of their own experiences.

The first group noted that a great deal has changed over the past 20 years in their fishing communities. In particular, values have changed. In the old days, fishers had open access to the sea. Even during apartheid, although times were very hard, they were able to catch a little on the side for themselves and were able to put protein on the table for their families. It was not necessary for women to also go to sea. But the introduction of the individual quota system has changed all that. It has forced women to go to sea. If a woman wants a quota, she has to go to sea herself. At the same time, many bona fide traditional fishermen were excluded from the quotas and so have no access to the sea. This has been a big heartsore for fishing communities and has had a huge impact. It has brought division and conflict into communities because some got rights and some did not get anything. As a result of this system, people no longer share with one another and many of those who did not get quotas are forced to steal. The increase in permit costs has also

added to the problem. Women in fishing communities have been particularly stressed out since they have to ensure that their children get something to eat. Women are often forced to take young children out of school. They have had to go and work in the factories in wet and cold conditions. They have helped 'vlek' or clean fish, and now they are helping to catch lobster. Women have to do everything – they must care for and raise their children; they must harvest; they must do whatever they can for their families. On top of all this, they have been fighting to restore the rights of male fishers.

Although women's rights have been recognized in South Africa's Constitution, the reality in fishing communities is different. There is discrimination against women in the fishing industry. The interim relief measure has only made things worse. The men have taken away women's work. In the old days, for instance, women were responsible for making and mending nets, but now men do this. Aunt Sienna from Steenbergs Cove reflected on her work mending nets, which she did for over 20 years. She said that if the nets were broken, no matter where the boats were, then she would have to travel to where they were to mend the nets. The net repair work put bread on the table. In those days, she said, she was a traveller. However, the larger companies are now forcing men who work as crew on the trawlers to mend their own nets. In this way, the big companies save money. Previously, women in fishing communities used to make and mend the fishing nets. Net making was a finely tuned skill that was passed down from generation to generation. Aunt Sienna said she used to get called from harbours up and down the coast to come and mend nets and she would immediately drop what she was doing and travel to where she was needed to mend the nets. More recently, however, men have started mending the nets themselves. This seems to have

come about for two reasons. On the one hand, apparently, the industrial sector has decided it can save money by getting its fishing crew to mend their nets. On the other hand, the men in small-scale fishing communities who use nets are also struggling financially, so few of them have the money to pay someone else to mend their nets. Many of them lost their fishing rights and are now using nets illegally, which explains why they mend their own nets.

The women reported that in some areas men have also begun to clean and 'vlek' their own snoek catch, a skill previously almost exclusively reserved for women. Jackie tried to assist the women in exploring why this might be the case. In some communities, the women were adamant that they were still the only ones who would vlek snoek, while in some other communities, this has changed. The assumption was that in those communities where this practice is changing, it is because men are feeling the impact of less access and less income and hence they want to retain this little bit of additional income for themselves. Women were able to see that in the context of globalization, pressure from the market shaped how people respond to what was previously seen as 'men's work' or 'women's work'. Common in both instances, however, is the fact that women lose out. The management regime that MCM has imposed has further exacerbated the situation as the individual quota approach has taken away from the community a sense of shared decisionmaking. Now individual fishers make economic decisions that will best suit them and their families alone.

Women have responded to these changes in different ways and at different levels. They have fought for their rights. They have stood behind their male partners and supported them through a variety of work – preparing food, helping clean fish, bringing money into the home.

They have experienced many health problems because of long shifts, as did their mothers. A man's work remains the same every day, but a woman's work differs each day since she does so many different things. Even now women are the ones doing all the work in applying for men's interim relief permits. But now women are fighting for their own rights to be recognised. In 1956, women stood up as part of the struggle against apartheid and took part in the march to Pretoria to have their rights recognized. They ensured that their voices were heard. Now they are again having to stand up for their rights. As part of the struggle, they have held prayer meetings at church and have worked with the youth. In the last few years, the conditions of women in fishing communities have worsened, and their suffering has increased. Girls have to leave school at a young age to try and help the family. There has been an increase in sex work and teenage pregnancy. Many women are left behind as single parents, sometimes as a result of fishermen migrating to other towns to find work. They leave their own wives and children behind and sometimes find new partners in other towns.

The tradition that has been passed down from one generation to another no longer exists as MCM only gives out rights to individuals and these are no longer transferable to the next generation. In the old culture the eldest daughter in the family always got up early to help her parents prepare for the father to go to sea; and then they always knew when their parents would come home.

Many girls had to leave school at an early age to take care of younger children so that their mothers could go to work in the factories. Though work was hard, at least the women did manage to afford to buy things, like jam, now and then. With the factories now closed, the women have no work.

“We made many sacrifices but actually those days were better than today – it’s worse than apartheid now with the new rules that have come in...We think the old days were better. At least in those days we managed to have some access to the sea. Now we have nothing because of the quota system and we cannot even rely on our neighbours. It has changed the culture in our villages completely,” said the women of this group.

In those days the women used the small wooden non-motorized rowing boats called ‘bakkies’ to access the sea. They would put tents up and stay overnight next to the beach where the men were fishing. Now they are not allowed to do this. In those days boats could be tied up anywhere; now the harbour fees are R600 (US\$81) per month, which few women can afford.

Christine from Mamre told her story: “Our family comes from the sea, from a deep tradition of living off the sea...Ons kom diep uit die see uit. From the age of ten, I helped my mother clean lobster. I came from a family of 11 children. My father was a lobster boat skipper. Ten out of 11 children have worked in the fishing industry. We survived on snoek, which kept our lives going (“dit het ons op die lewe gehou”) from one generation to another”.

The women added several observations to these personal reflections. They noted that many of them had to live away from home in order to go to school as many of the villages did not have high schools. Children then lived in boarding schools or with relatives in other towns, away from their own families, in order to attend school. Many children were brought up by their grandmothers or other relatives. In those days, they were often forced to get on with their work and had no choice. Several of them lost their families at sea, and had to survive without social security or compensation.

One woman said that she had fallen pregnant at a very young age and because of the circumstances in her family, she was unprepared for motherhood and had little knowledge about breast feeding or childcare. She hoped that today’s young girls would get the sex education and parenting training that they need, which was absent when she was younger.

Several of the women commented on the sacrifices that they have made over the past ten years to leave their homes to travel and attend workshops and meetings as part of the struggle for their rights. Some men do not want their wives going to workshops.

Naomi Cloete from Paternoster shared her sister’s history to highlight the sacrifices that women have had to make and how the new management system has failed to improve the situation. Her sister, Mabel, who is now 64 years old, is forced to get on a boat and go to sea to harvest lobster in order to make a living. Her husband was a fisherman who died a few years ago, leaving behind no pension or social security. Their 17-year-old son drowned at sea some years ago, trying to catch fish to put food on the family’s table. Her own father had been a lobster boat skipper for the Pharo’s all his life but when he fell ill and was forced to retire, he did not get any compensation package. The same week that he died, the Pharo’s came and informed the family that they had to vacate the home that they had lived in all their lives. Naomi said, “Our human rights are being violated. This is why we must fight for a community-based right...It’s not right that a woman Mabel’s age must do what she has to do, which is the result of the individual quota system”.

A recurring theme in the discussions was that very little has improved in the 15 years since the first democratic elections in South Africa in 1994. The women noted that the individual quota system gave access rights to some fishers, but not most, which

created inequity and divisions amongst traditional fishers. Some of the women said that their lives and the lives of fishing communities had deteriorated. They felt women had become more involved, fighting harder and harder. They pointed out that “behind every successful man lies a strong woman”.

Carmelita urged the women to take the lead and move ahead and decide what they would like to see in the new policy. Several of the women commented that they had worked harder than men in many instances and that they were more involved in the fishing industry than many of the men. They noted that they held a unique position in their fishing communities as they straddled the large industrial sector and the small-scale sector, doing unpaid work at home, seasonal, poorly paid work in the factories and unrecognized and unpaid work in the small-scale fisheries. They encouraged each other, saying, “You must never give up!”.

The women unanimously agreed that a community-based right would enable them to care for the community again and would begin to heal the current crisis and enable them to restore the cultural traditions that they believed were important. They saw the challenges ahead centering on making sure that the new policy incorporated this approach and created opportunities for them to add value at the local level. A further challenge was persuading men to support them in their struggles.

Rosy Shoshola said that she felt that women must get the right to access marine resources. Women need to choose if they want to go to sea themselves. But there is a real concern whether there is enough fish for everyone. Recently, 500 women who are not fishers said that they wanted to benefit from the interim relief. They do not have a history in the industry but most of them are poor women. The fishing community is worried that because of high levels of poverty, there will be many new entrants into the

fishery, which may not be sustainable. The solution is to opt for a community-based approach which would allow the bona fide fishing community to decide who should get the right to go to sea. In the old days, women used to harvest mussels. Rosy urged Coastal Links and Masifundise to explore the possibility of setting up mussel projects for the women so that women who do not go to sea can also enjoy the benefits of harvesting marine resources. Rosy emphasized that a community-based rights approach would enable the local fishing community to decide what was sustainable in their basket of resources, and how the women could benefit. It would also enable them to share the benefits their communities more widely as women have a caring approach.

Sarah Niemand pointed to the doubts being expressed about whether the community-based rights approach would work, given the fact of corruption in managing money. Will women’s work be valued if the community-based rights route is chosen, Sarah wondered.

Naomi Cloete argued for the formation of co-operatives to harvest a basket of resources, favouring a multi-species approach, rather than MCM’s current single-species approach. Women must not be forced to go to sea and they should get a share in the co-operative. Every fisherman and woman must get a right, and the basket must be shared on an equal basis amongst the fishers. It was agreed that the community-based approach, in which women got equal shares in the legal entity, was a key demand. Cathy said that there were a number of species that women could harvest, including *alikeukel* and mussel, which could be turned into seafood curry for tourists.

The rights of the community must be made transferable, and there should be provisions to support women who lose their partners at sea. Rosy emphasized the need for a fund for fishers, pointing to the long-standing demand for a ‘fishers bank’. The new policy must

make provision for social security and some form of insurance for the fishers. The women agreed that this was a key point on the agenda.

The women said that MCM did not always see this as part of its mandate. The women agreed unanimously that they needed to place pressure on MCM to make sure that other departments meet their obligations and comply with the women's requests. One of the women demanded 'workmen's compensation'. The women then agreed that it should be designated as 'workperson's compensation' and it must be provided in the small-scale fishing industry. Rosy said, "We must push this demand ahead."

Sarah Niemand supported Rosy very strongly. She referred to an experience a month ago in her village, Buffelsjag, in which three traditional fishermen drowned after they responded to the call for help from a group of poachers who had got into trouble at sea. She said that for days afterwards, the young son of one of the fishermen kept asking, "When is my father coming home?". She called for a plan of action to get other departments that are responsible for social security involved. It was agreed that this issue was of critical importance to the agenda of demands for the new policy.

What have women done in response to these changes?

The women felt that over the past ten years they have fought very hard for the rights of fishermen. They have become activists and joined the struggle. In many instances, they have taken the lead. Some of the women who were part of the struggle within the organized labour sector, like Aunty Cathy Sauls, have fought very hard for women's rights to be recognized by the trade unions. It was also noted that women in Coastal Links have supported one another. For instance, four Coastal Links women representatives travelled in a bus to the National Women's Environment

Conference at Polokwane in 2008 to take part alongside 600 women from other sectors from all over the country. The other women in the bus were heard commenting that the Coastal Links women really supported one another.

The women said they have tried to put gender issues on the agenda of Coastal Links. This has not always been easy. They recalled the very heated debate in Simonstown where one of the male leaders from Coastal Links exclaimed, "Women are just baby machines". One woman noted that now that the Fisheries Minister is a woman, opportunities might open up for them to lobby her on these issues.

Another woman urged the rest not to give up or break the links and networks that they have established. Using the metaphor of the net, she said, "We must hold on to the net that we have thrown out, and we must keep it fast" ("Die net wat ons gespan het moet die strewe hou"). We have fought for our rights. We have achieved some success but we have focused on men. Now we must continue fighting for the rights of women".

The women appreciated the fact that several of the participants at the workshop were young women; they said the youth needed to join in the struggle and also provide leadership. The young women at the workshop were requested to comment on what they had heard. They said that though some things had changed, there were still many needs in their communities. While a lot of emphasis has been placed on training youth, it would be pointless in the absence of resources to establish projects. Among the primary needs they identified were land and bursaries to allow young people to access education and training opportunities. There are still many young people in fishing communities who have had to leave school early, for whom there is very little support or opportunities to complete their education. There is a great deal of discrimination in the

workplace against youth who do not have a matriculation certificate. Youth from fishing communities are doubly disadvantaged as they have to face both the general economic obstacles and the fact that many of them do not have a matriculation certificate.

Developing a more strategic approach

Nico Waldeck then challenged the women to draw on their unique position in these communities to mobilize as women to tackle the problems that they have been describing. He noted that women play so many critical roles in their communities and they have described a crisis situation in which the social fabric of their communities is disintegrating. He challenged the women to begin to develop a plan for how they can ‘take back’ their communities. He felt that they need to challenge Coastal Links to address the social issues that they have put on the agenda at this meeting. He suggested that they need to face the fact that the men are just focusing on themselves now that they have got their interim relief. He felt that the women need to be very strategic and look at how to develop a plan of action that is going to tackle the social and economic problems. He cited the example of the links between the increase in drugs and the marketing of fish under the new interim relief. He said that we all know it is happening. In Buffelsjag, for example, the drug lords are sustaining abalone poaching and the community is now maintained by gangs.

Nico felt that there were gaps in the women’s proposals that had been placed on the table thus far – the women have just been saying that they want “equal rights” as men enjoy. But he felt that women are currently playing a far more important role than men and they need to take up the challenge. That is not just a question of equal rights; going by what they were saying, it is about a whole set of community values, a tradition and a way of caring for one another in their

communities. That is what ought to be articulated in their demands. The new policy creates an opportunity to put these demands on the table and to articulate what sort of society the women wish to see in the future and how they can take back their communities from the drug lords and gangsters. What does it mean to demand “equal rights” if the women are not going to go to sea? They must think strategically, he said. For example, they could demand that all new alternative livelihood opportunities such as aquaculture should be given to the women. Only women themselves can take back their communities.

The participants agreed. Noting that women are the protectors of children and teenagers in the community, Cathy Thomas pointed out that they are not able to fulfill this role anymore as a result of the current crisis. She said that many women are forced into sex work and into selling drugs by the moneylenders in order to repay their debts. Single parents are particularly vulnerable. In the absence of basic social security, single women parents are often placed in such desperate situations.

It was noted that men from fishing communities have occupied the space in the process of fighting for fishing rights, even though women fought side by side with them. The women wondered what they could do locally to realize their vision and restore order and values in their communities. The possibility of launching a campaign against drugs was raised. The women then shared very personal experiences of living under extreme fear as a result of the drug-related violence in their communities. One of the women noted that the situation for women was so bad that “we cannot even dream...” (“ons kan nie eers droom nie”). Aunty Cathy shared her experience of trying desperately to address the drug problem in her community. She said that currently there did not seem to be a solution and

nothing was being done at the local level. The drug lords break down the doors of homes of single parents and force them to sell the drugs. She said that the President of the country makes nice speeches but nothing is being done to address these problems.

The workshop participants noted that the situation has deteriorated since April 2008, the previous time they had met. The only change is that they now have a representative on the NTT. Nonetheless, women's rights are not yet secured and it is not clear how the new policy is going to address the social concerns that are leading to a crisis in their communities.

Nico Waldeck again challenged the women to ask themselves how much of the problem is their fault. Women do have power in their communities, he said, and they need to develop new strategies to address these problems.

Women are on the wrong, receiving end of the interim relief scheme. Men are catching more fish, are poaching and are not caring for the resource. The interim relief has brought the struggle to the local level. The need is to respond at this level as well and to mobilize communities. Young women should be encouraged to take up leadership positions and get involved in a community-based response.

Sarah Niemand noted the importance of including the youth in the process, but said that the older leaders had a more important role to play in leading the struggle at this critical point. She noted that CEDAW highlighted women's rights and said that we must now focus on fighting for these rights and end the discrimination against women. The budgets of local governments must be examined to see if funds are being allocated for what needs to be addressed at the local level.

Carmelita noted since 2008, the only change is that Naomi is now representing the women on the task

team. She called on the women to get empowered and demand recognition. She added that all over the world, women are taking the lead and they must now move forward.

The youth representative from Doringbaai said that the government is focusing on youth and there is training for youth but one of the big problems is that there is no follow-up. She and the other youth felt that the women and Coastal Links needed to be creative in attracting youth to the struggle, perhaps through the medium of music. The Arniston youth representative felt that the government needed to respond to several different issues such as supporting the youth in employing the training they have received to start small businesses.

Using overhead projection sheets, Jackie queried the youth on the different aspects of support that they felt they needed to make a difference: It was noted that a multi-pronged response was needed, which would address issues at different levels. The youth had identified the need for a petrol station. On repeated questioning and brainstorming, the group then identified the need for access to land at the level of local and provincial government. They also identified the need for access to credit, transport, bursaries and a means of getting their message out through advertising support.

The youth representative from Pearly Beach highlighted the breakdown in community values in her area and stressed the need for efforts to rebuild a sense of community connectedness. She shared the concern that even in her culture—the Xhosa culture—where a lot of emphasis is placed on community and taking care of one another, the current crisis has undermined all that and brought on despair. She gave the example of two groups in her community, both of whom come from the same area in the former Transkei, but who are now part of two different poaching groups in Pearly Beach. She said the

breakdown in community is so extreme that if a member of one poaching group gets into trouble at sea, members of the other group will not respond to the cries for help. In the past this was unheard of in the community.

The Pearly Beach youth representative noted that her culture was a very patriarchal one, which creates very real challenges for women, as men regard women as existing to work for them. She said that it was very hard to challenge prevalent male perceptions of women's role. She described the very high levels of violence against women in the area. Many of the young men have access to large sums of money and drugs because of the poaching of abalone. As a result, some of them are in a position to use the money to bribe women whom they have raped or sexually assaulted. She cited the example of a young woman who was gangraped recently. The men paid her R5000 (US\$672) to withdraw charges against them. This has now become common practice. The women's weak financial situation makes them very vulnerable to accepting money in exchange for sexual favours and for not pressing charges against men who abuse them. There is no police station in their area. The nearest police station is many kilometres away and that has increased women's vulnerability. The women reported very high levels of gender violence in general in their communities.

The two representatives from Mamre then shared the horrific experience that their family recently had. One of the participants' young sons was held up at gunpoint by a known drug gangster who demanded his shoes and cell phone. The gangster had in his car a young woman who came from the same area as the participants. She, and another young woman, were murdered later that day when a petrol bomb was thrown into the bedroom they were sleeping in. The son is now living in constant fear and wants to withdraw

charges against the gangsters, for fear of his own life.

The women participants reiterated the fact that they feel that they cannot protect their girl children from sexual abuse and they cannot protect their children generally from the violence that they live with in their communities on a daily basis. This violence has instilled a fear that pervades all their lives all the time. It was agreed that the crisis in their communities was largely caused by the way in which the long-term rights has impacted them, and that they need to make sure that the new policy is able to address the crisis.

Jackie thanked Nico for his very important and useful intervention and urged the women to respond to the challenge that he had presented to them. The women acknowledged the need to take up this strategic challenge and link their demands for equal rights to their demand for transformation and change of the whole approach. The approach to fisheries ought to be a more integrated one, which addresses the social issues in communities, and strives to sustain and nurture life and livelihood.

The women decided that they wanted to develop a statement from the workshop, which could be sent to government at different levels. It was agreed to do this on the last day of the workshop and link it to a plan of action. It was agreed further that Naomi would take this statement and key demands into the policy negotiation process next week.

6. The Importance of Organizing

Mandla provided a brief input on the importance of organizing in fishing communities. He said that it was critical that the women organized, as women, as young people and as fishers from traditional fishing communities. He said that in 1994 people thought that things would change. But it is apparent from the workshop that many things have not changed. The women need to state very clearly the changes that they would like to see

take place. Mandla pointed out the need to know precisely what the demands are. People are now resisting and are standing up to government, saying enough is enough. Why are the fishing communities not standing up and doing the same? Why are they not asking government what it has done to make sure that fishers' rights are realized? Mandla urged the women to build a strong organization with clear demands in order to take their struggle forward.

7. Coastal Links' Response to the Gender Question

In the following exercise, the participants were divided into groups. They were requested to discuss and evaluate Coastal Links' response to the gender issue to date, and discuss the obstacles that women have faced within the organization, and explore strategies for creating a gender agenda.

Some of the women were initially a little reluctant to be critical of their own organization, Coastal Links. Others were able to acknowledge that women's issues have been cast aside, and little attention has been focused on gender relations between men and women. One group noted, however, that there have now been several good workshops organized around these issues; the strength of Coastal Links was the good communication network established with ICSF and other international organizations that support women's rights.

On reflecting on the current situation, the women felt that Coastal Links needed to acknowledge and admit that the male members of the organization have benefitted from the women's support over the past few years. It was felt that women had been supporting men for years but particularly from Interim Relief 1 in 2007 until Interim Relief 4 in 2009. They have always been there, organizing and leading campaigns, marches and workshops. Many of the women were critical of their male comrades, who, they felt, had, on the

whole, failed to address this issue or take up leadership. One of the women felt that they had been used by the men. They recalled the derogatory words of some of the male leadership on women's role, such as "Women are just baby-making machines".

Obstacles within Coastal Links

The policy process has not paid sufficient attention to this issue. The criteria that have been applied in the interim relief process have excluded women. The men perceive themselves to be the sole breadwinners; the work that women do is invisible and men do not regard it as important.

Coastal Links was forced to focus on the issue of fighting for the new policy but, as a result, the issue of gender relations within the organization and at the community level was neglected and not enough attention was focused on women's situation. There was recognition that communication on this issue has broken down at times. Similarly, it was felt that Coastal Links did not have a vision, a mission, passion or a plan of action on how it was going to address this priority issue. One of the groups felt very strongly that the women themselves needed to accept responsibility for not claiming their rights and demanding that this issue be addressed. They felt that they must keep up the pressure not only within the organization but also in their policy negotiations with MCM.

8. Recasting the Net and Developing a Gender Agenda for the Future

The women at the workshop said that in the past they had little space to organize around their own issues since they had to put their families, communities and male partners first. The meeting unanimously felt that it was now women's turn, and they needed to seize the moment in the policy process to highlight their concerns, as women, and, simultaneously, as caretakers of their communities.

It was agreed that the male members of the organization must be actively lobbied to stand together with women and support them. They need to understand that just because women demand equitable benefits from the fishing industry, it does not mean that men should lose out. Further, women need to make men understand that they play a critical role in nurturing and sustaining their communities, and unless men support them, the crisis in coastal communities will deepen.

Coastal Links leaders, it was felt, need to stand together on the issue of ensuring that women's rights are included in the new policy. There was consensus that they must support one another and reduce the conflicts around this issue. It was also felt that more workshops of this nature should be held, but they should include more men, to help them understand the role that women play in the fishing industry and in their communities, and to make them realize that the women's demands will only strengthen their communities and address their social crises. There should be adequate representation of women, including young women, on the executive committee of Coastal Links, it was suggested.

The women identified the need to mobilize around community issues that have historically been relegated

as 'women's work' but that affect both men and women equally. Women must help men realize why they need to support these demands. There should be campaigns organized around these community issues so that an alliance between men and women can be built.

The women identified a range of issues that would enable them to establish a gender agenda:

- A woman's right to choose whether or not she wants to go to sea must be respected.
- Those women who do choose to go to sea must be supported with training and equipment.
- The new fisheries policy must recognize the demand for a community-based rights approach.
- Women must get equal shares in any local co-operative or legal entity and they must participate equally in the local co-management of that entity.
- Coastal Links and Masifundise must support the demand for women to get access to a range of marine resources such as mussels, seaweed and *alikeukel*.
- Women must get access to credit and infrastructure so that they can add value to local products.
- There must be negotiations with other government departments so that unemployment insurance funds, social security insurance and workpersons' compensation can be included in the new policy.
- Young women in fishing communities must get access to training, education and bursaries for further studies.
- Young people in fishing communities must get access to the funds and support they

need to establish new livelihood opportunities.

- Women, especially young women, must get access to land for livelihood opportunities.
- Women's work in their homes and within their families and communities must be recognized as valuable work that makes an important contribution to

the sustenance of small-scale fisheries.

The women identified the need to lobby the new Fisheries Minister on these issues. They decided to request a meeting with the new Minister as soon as possible. This decision was carried forward to the plan of action that was developed on the last day of the workshop.

9. Developing a Statement and Plan of Action

The final day of the workshop began with a reflection on the extreme conditions that women and small-scale fishing communities are living under. It was noted that while women play a particularly important role in nurturing their communities, it is becoming increasingly difficult for them to continue playing that role in the face of the violence, marginalization and exclusion that they face at many levels. The women felt that this crisis was caused by the failure of government to recognize the rights of small-scale fishing communities. The poverty faced by fishers who did not get rights, coupled with the role that the drug lords and gangsters were playing, has resulted in increasing violence as well as overexploitation of the marine resources. The women linked the violence in their communities to the violence that is being perpetuated through poaching. They repeated their assertion that their human rights are being violated. This was summed up by Naomi Cloete: “Ons mense regte is ontneem”. The women noted that there is a direct connection between the denial of their own rights, as women, and the approach that the State has taken towards development in their communities. The women endorsed Nico’s call to them to launch a campaign to “take back their communities”.

The women divided into regional groupings to develop a plan of action that would aim to take back their communities and formulate a gender agenda. Some of the activities that were identified were beyond the scope of the women at the local level and also lacked strategic focus. Hence, the facilitator used the strategy of questioning and probing at the plenary session to get the women to break down these actions into various sub-activities that could

realistically be achieved by the women as well as to identify strategic actions.

For example, the first task to be identified was the establishment of more drug rehabilitation centres. On questioning, the women identified a variety of actions that could be taken for long-term prevention:

- Raising awareness among the youth of the dangers of drugs.
- Building up the self-confidence of the youth and helping them identify alternative livelihood projects.
- Setting up meetings with local and provincial governments to examine the provisions of preventative and therapeutic services for young people in rural fishing communities.
- Addressing the causative factors of the present crisis, such as the quota system, and the need to move towards a community-based rights approach.

Subsequently, the women developed the following plan at the plenary session, combining the inputs from each group:

Strategy and Plan of Action for Coastal Links

It was agreed that there should be co-ordinated action at all levels, including at the national, provincial and local government levels; within the community; and within Coastal Links.

Coastal Links and Masifundise:

- The issues from this workshop must be placed on the agenda of Coastal Links at the next Annual General Meeting to be held in March/April.
- Coastal Links and Masifundise need to host workshops that will address women’s rights as well as the social issues in communities.

- A clear vision, mission and plan of action must be developed towards addressing the issues raised in the workshop. A pamphlet should be developed that spreads information about the mission and vision, and explains what women mean when they say that they want to enjoy equitable benefits from the new policy.
- Coastal Links representative, Naomi Cloete, must take the statement from the workshop to the NTT meeting next week.
- Coastal Links must keep up the pressure on MCM on these issues until solutions are found.
- Coastal Links should target a wide range of organizations, and alliances must be sought to build a strong lobby that can address the crisis in the communities. This should include: TCOE, the youth organizations, health and welfare organizations, Vital Connection, TAC, Coastcare and Rainbow Trust.
- Trade unions like COSATU as well as the independent trade unions must be approached directly. The women themselves must set up meetings with these organizations in the next two months.

National Level:

- There was a strong recommendation that the women should lobby their local government representatives to support them in taking a mandate to the national government in order to address the problem of drugs, violence and poverty at the local level.
- A memorandum must be handed over to all State departments, setting out what is required, and requesting urgent intervention.
- The Ministers must be targeted so that they are fully aware of women's demands. The women felt that it would be appropriate to target the Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries directly, as well as the Minister of Safety and Security, the Minister of Social Development and the Minister of Labour.
- Corruption in both the police and MCM, particularly in relation to their involvement in poaching, must be investigated.

Provincial Level:

- Provincial and national governments must be requested to make adult literacy classes available in rural areas, with a specific focus on small-scale fishing communities, and within these, to target women who have had to leave school prior to completing their matriculation. Bursary funds should be established to support such persons.

Local Level:

- Women must ensure that they are recognized by the local government. One way of doing this is to lobby the local ward committees and representatives.
- Local governments must be lobbied to make municipal land available for alternative livelihood projects.
- Local governments must be targeted to provide adequate recreational facilities for young people.
- Local campaigns to address the problem of drugs, violence and poaching in each community, involving the municipality, the police, churches and other organizations as well as Coastal Links, should be organized.
- A meeting with the local media should be set up in each area to discuss the crisis and outline the women's demands.
- The women should set up appointments with local government officials to introduce

Coastal Links so that they recognize the women as key stakeholders and consult them on relevant matters.

The workshop then examined the **Women in Fisheries Statement** that had emerged from the 2008 workshop. This was projected on the overhead screen. The women commented that very little has changed or improved since that

workshop and the set of issues that they had raised in that statement remained valid. The women felt that this statement could form the basis for a new statement from this workshop but indicated that they wanted to use this new statement to lobby the new Minister. The women then agreed upon the following wording for the **Lambertsbaai Statement**:

The Lambertsbaai Women in Fisheries Statement

Lambertsbaai, 18 February 2010

Our fishing communities are currently facing a life-threatening social, economic and environmental crisis arising from the combined effects of the individual quota system, the closure of the fish processing factories and the lack of effective governance and management of marine resources. This has led to a situation in which we live under constant threat and fear due to violent drug and poaching-related crimes. The human rights of our communities, particularly those of young girls and women, are being violated on a daily basis and we can no longer protect our children or our marine resources under these conditions.

Noting

That apartheid affected many Black communities that depended on the sea for their livelihoods. However, for many of these communities their access to marine resources has been further restricted since 1994 through the introduction of the new fishing rights policies, which have been geared towards the big commercial companies and not the values, traditions and customary practices of our small-scale communities;

Noting

That women living and working in traditional fishing communities have historically played a very significant role in the development of the fishing industry in South Africa, as well as in sustaining life and livelihoods in coastal communities; and

That much of the work that women have done in the past, and continue to do in small-scale fishing communities, is not recognized, nor is it regarded as valuable;

Noting

That many women from coastal fishing communities have worked as seasonal workers in the fish processing plants, working long hours under extremely harsh, icy conditions, and most have suffered chronic health problems as a result of this work, with no compensation or adequate healthcare;

Noting

That many women have lost their male partners and breadwinners at sea, with no compensation or financial support available to their families;

Noting further

That many mothers and fathers had to work long hours in the fishing industry, and that, in many instances, their children were forced to leave school at an early age and take care of each other. This resulted in low formal education levels in many communities and has further contributed towards the social and economic hardship experienced in these areas;

Noting therefore

The provisions on Equality in Section 9 of our Constitution, and the provisions contained in the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, Agenda 21, the Beijing Platform of Action and the Millennium Development Goals and that the South African government has ratified these international legal instruments;

We strongly assert our right to life, to dignity, to safety and security, and to sustainable development.

Noting too, our rights as women to participate equally and effectively in the development of a new small-scale fisheries policy for South Africa and our right to benefit equitably from this policy;

We call on our President, Jacob Zuma, on our Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, Minister Tina Joemat-Petersen, on our Minister of Environmental Affairs and Water, Minister Sonjica, and on the acting Deputy Director of MCM, Dr. Razeena Omar, to intervene immediately in the crisis facing our fishing communities and our marine resources.

We appeal to our government at all levels to commit to a new small-scale fishing policy that will contribute to the restoration of a community-based approach to the governance of our marine resources, based on an ethic of care in coastal communities, so that we can sustain our communities and our natural resources for the benefit of the generations to come.

10. Follow-up: Impacting the Small-scale Fisheries Policy Development Process

On 22 and 23 February 2010, the Coastal Links representative, Naomi Cloete, attended the NTT meeting in Cape Town, where the final draft policy was debated. Naomi spoke very strongly, drawing on the Lambertsbaai Statement. She made specific policy text interventions with regard to the need for the draft policy to recognise women's rights to equitable benefits and to implement a community-based rights approach to fisheries management.

These points were accepted by the NTT. The revised draft of the policy

has yet to be made available by the government fisheries department. However, it is anticipated that it will be made available for public scrutiny and comment in April. A copy of the statement, signed by Naomi, with the full list of all the women workshop participants' names attached, was also given to the Acting Deputy Director of MCM, Dr. Razeena Omar. The women leadership will take the outcomes of the workshop and table these as resolutions for Coastal Links at the Coastal Links and Masifundise Annual General Meeting on 17 April 2010.