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SAMUDRA

REPORT

INTERNATIONAL COLLECTIVE IN SUPPORT OF FISHWORKERS



Two World Forums
Fishing in the Gaza Strip
Zoning for Small-scale Fishermen
Certifying the Thames Herring Fishery
Community-based Fishery Management in Japan
Legislating Chile's Artisanal Fisheries
Engaging the WTO
News Round-up

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Comment

Breaking up or breaking down?

The idea of forming a global body representing fishworkers was first discussed at Quebec City, Canada in October 1995. It was recognized by the representatives of fishworker organizations present there that, in a context of globalization, all coastal fishing communities faced common problems, like the degradation of coastal areas and the destruction of fisheries resources by industrial fleets.

Also recognized was the fact that fisheries problems are linked globally. The export of excess fishing capacity from countries of the North to Southern waters, for example, has negative impacts on the livelihoods of fishworkers there. A global forum representing small-scale fishworkers would be in a position to effectively influence governments to change such policies, and to work towards fisheries policies that are environmentally and socially viable.

No one, of course, had any illusions that forming such an organization would be an easy task, given, among other things, the complexities and contradictions within the fisheries sector itself and the differences in the sociocultural and economic realities of fishing communities in the North and South.

It was against this backdrop that fishworkers from 26 countries came together in New Delhi, in December 1997, to form the World Forum of Fish Harvesters and Fish Workers (WFF). There was a considerable sense of euphoria, since it was for the first time that national-level fishworker organizations from so many countries had come together to form a global body to represent their interests. The formation of the WFF was seen as a significant development, and was widely welcomed as filling a major vacuum at the international level for artisanal and small-scale fishworkers (see Comment in SAMUDRA Report 19).

There were, therefore, considerable expectations from the Constituent Assembly of the WFF, which was held in Loctudy, France from 2-6 October 2000, to finalize the Constitution of this body. Events, however, took an unexpected turn, as a report in this issue of SAMUDRA Report recounts (see page 3). The meeting, unfortunately, led to the formation of not one, but two, forums. One, the World Forum of Fisher Peoples (WFFP), brings together fishworker organizations mainly from Africa, Asia and Oceania. The other, the WFF, comprises the Americas and parts of Europe.

The split is, no doubt, unfortunate given that the *raison de etre* for the formation of a global organization of fishworkers has not changed since Quebec or Delhi and that challenges facing the artisanal sector continue to require a co-ordinated and forceful response from fishworker organizations. The disappointment is all the greater since both forums have adopted constitutions that are almost identical and stand by similar objectives.

The repercussions of this development need to be considered. At the international level, it will be difficult to justify the existence of two forums, especially when they stand for similar objectives. Even if the differences are over strategy, surely it is possible to draw from the experiences of other international organizations that are known to adopt different strategies to achieve their goals.

When member organizations of both forums are, in many cases, addressing similar issues within their own countries, working to build bridges, rather than sharpening differences and defending territories, is the call of the hour. The struggle against joint-venture agreements by fishworker organizations in Asia, against foreign fishing under fisheries-access agreements in Africa and against increasing corporate control over the fisheries in the Americas, for example, are no different in spirit. If the two forums are to be effective and relevant, they have little option but to find ways to work with each other.

Troubled seas in Loctudy

The recent Constituent Assembly of the World Forum of Fish Harvesters and Fish Workers erupted in an acrimonious East-West divide

It was intended to be a major step towards international North-South fishworker solidarity. But, instead, the Constituent Assembly of the World Forum of Fish Harvesters and Fish Workers in Loctudy, France erupted in an acrimonious East-West divide. Western and Eastern personalities, and their respective agendas, crashed head on, fell apart, and then set off again almost regardless, leaving a trail of wreckage in their respective wakes: upset plans, broken dreams, wounded pride, bitterness and acute disappointment. This article reflects on the fatal course charted at that meeting, linking its destiny to the tragic loss of the French trawler, *An Orient*.

1 October, Sunday morning, West of Ireland: In days gone by, a day of rest and, according to local folklore, a day unlucky to be out at sea. For the crew of the Lorient-based trawler *An Orient*, things could not have been unluckier. Shortly after setting their trawl, the boat keeled over and sank like a stone. Of the 11-member crew, only three were saved.

For several days after the loss of *An Orient*, the papers sifted over the key questions: Was the ship seaworthy? Was the weather to blame? Was there a freak wave or some undercurrent? Were the captain and crew competent? Was there a technical fault? Reports were contradictory: vessels fishing in the same area described storm force winds and high seas. However, the surviving crew members said that the state of the sea was not a factor, and that the storm blew up only after the vessel went down. While this had hampered rescue attempts, it had not been a cause of the accident. However, the fact is that, once the boat began to list and get out of control, it went down in only a matter of a few minutes. There was little time for the crew to save themselves. The three

survivors were picked up after more than four hours in the water, all clinging on grimly to a life buoy. (This description is based on reports in *Le Marin*, Friday, 6 October 2000, pages 1,2 and 3.)

2 October, Monday morning, Loctudy, France. The following day, at about the same time as *An Orient* had gone down, over 200 participants from more than 30 countries were gathering expectantly for the Constituent Assembly of the World Forum of Fish Harvesters and Fish Workers (WFF). Before inaugurating the meeting, Forum participants were asked, in emotional tones, to observe one minute's silence to show solidarity and respect for the lost men from *An Orient* and their bereaved families.

Like *An Orient*, the World Forum had set sail in fine weather, with extensive preparations. The French crew, more than anyone else, had worked hard to prepare everything, leaving no detail unattended. The venue had been carefully selected, and for nearly two years, the local team had been working up to this big event. The local dignitaries had been consulted and their support solicited; even the French Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries had agreed to address the meeting. Support had been secured from local, regional, and national French sources, and from the European Union (EU).

Broad interests

Together, professionals and volunteers had worked unstintingly to ensure the success of the venture. Last but not least, the French team had achieved something few other national delegations had achieved. They had brought together a broad spectrum of national fishing interests (local fisheries committees, large and small fishers from the Atlantic and Mediterranean coasts, women's groups,

and others) in one single organization, 'The French Branch of the World Forum'. For the French, more than anyone else, the stakes in international solidarity were high: personal and professional reputations and national honour had been put on the line.

Yet, after only three days into the meeting, a storm blew up that wrecked any chances of the success that the French had worked so hard for. On Thursday afternoon, as the Indians and Canadians struggled to wrest control of the WFF, heated and emotional exchanges ensued. This culminated in a bizarre debate over the number of continents, following which voting took place. As the tide turned against the Indians, chaos ensued, and half the assembly walked out. Unity was on the rocks.

The World Forum had divided into two: Canada, the US, Latin American countries, Iceland and France chose to remain with the World Forum of Fish Harvesters and Fish Workers. The Indians, Pakistanis, Sri Lankans, Filipinos, Africans (from Senegal, South Africa, Guinea Conakry, Uganda, Mauritania, Mali, Benin and Madagascar), and New Zealanders, together with the Spanish delegate, abandoned the ship, preferring to embark on the hastily improvised World Forum of Fisher Peoples (WFFP).

As in the sad case of *An Orient*, each group had its own perspective on the dramatic and shattering events that had taken place. But it is worth noting that, as the WFF began to founder, it was mainly a small group of women who rallied round to try to save the ship. Their network is one of the few survivors of the meeting, forming a vital link between the WFF and the WFFP. The other notable survivor is World Fisheries Day, which both the WFF and WFFP will continue to celebrate. Unlike the Constituent Assembly meeting, World Fisheries Day focuses on key issues of mutual concern, rather than on internal power struggles. Thus, within both groups, there is a commitment to work on similar issues and to continue to challenge the dominant model of industrial development, globalized markets, and concentration of ownership. These issues are still key parts of the

constitution drafted in India in 1997, and which remains more or less unchanged for both WFF and WFFP !

But in France, more than elsewhere, people are struggling to understand what happened and why. Did it mean that work on building global unity and solidarity amongst fishing communities had to start again from scratch? Had this set back more than 15 years of work (since Rome in 1984)? Who and what were to blame? Such questions will, and can, never be answered. They may even be counterproductive, hiding a basic reality. True, a division had occurred, but apart from the French and others who had invested so much time and effort, and apart from anger, hurt feelings and pride, what were the real casualties? While some had chosen to remain on the WFF boat, the new vessel that emerged was founded on the same basic principles that had launched the venture in the first place! The hastily drafted WFFP constitution is more or less identical to that of the WFF. In the case of the WFFP, the terms 'fishworker' and 'fish harvester' have been changed to 'fisher people', and there are only five continents, with America forming a single, but conspicuously vacant, block.

The bereavement of the French can be partially explained by their motivation. For many, the WFF had been seen as an exercise in building international solidarity, with a key objective of uniting against outside threats. In this regard, the selection of Loctudy was highly significant. Loctudy is typical of many Brittany fishing ports, with long fishing traditions and associations with the sea. But, above all, for the French, Loctudy had become a symbol of solidarity. In the winter of 1998, one of the worst storms of the century had devastated the port. A solidarity fund was established to assist hard-hit community members. This took as its symbol the black-and-white chequered light beacon at the river entrance.

Natural symbol

It was, therefore, natural that this symbol of solidarity and strength against the storm be then taken by the French as the symbol of the WFF Loctudy meeting. As explained by André le Berre, President of the Regional Marine Fisheries Committee

and retired owner-operator, “The black-and-white squares symbolize the different problems faced by each of us. In the interests of building understanding and solidarity, we must forget these differences, and unite to spread the light of understanding to all.”

The symbolism was to prove too complex and perhaps unfortunate. Today, the black-and-white squares of the beacon are very clear, but the light no longer functions. Worse, ships must give the beacon a wide berth, or risk running aground. In Loctudy itself, in the interests of providing fish for the French market and earning a living, many local vessel owners are in joint-venture or chartering arrangements with fishing companies in West Africa. Here, their small trawlers fish in direct competition with the local artisanal sector. Hardly international solidarity!

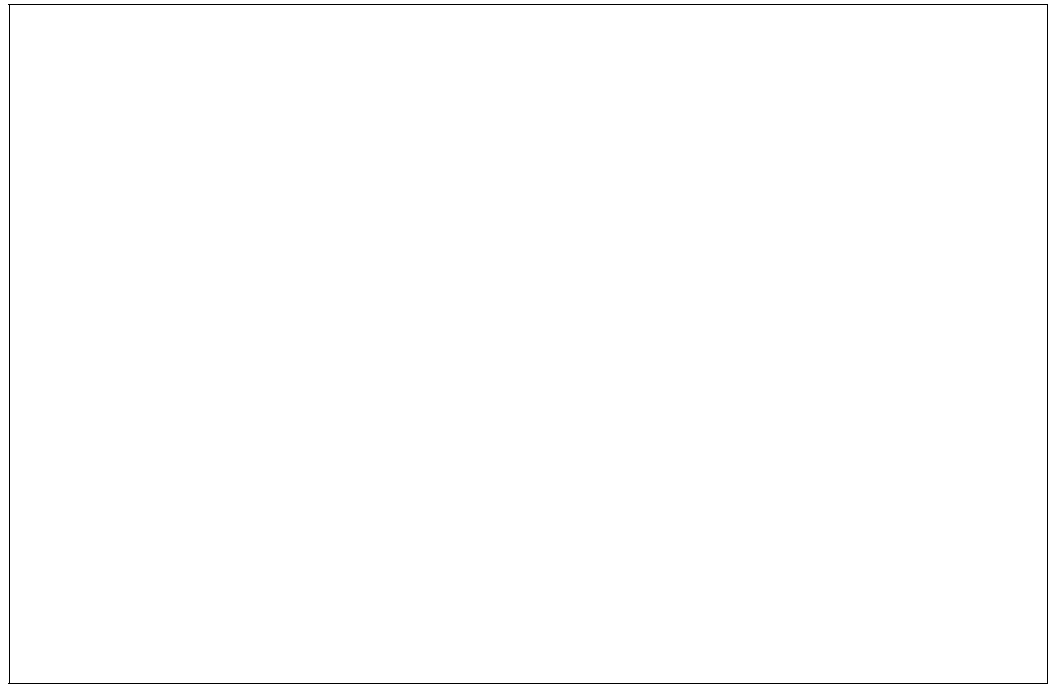
A further contradiction in Loctudy, and a serious one for any world body that attempts to unite professional, commercial and highly modernized fisheries in the North, with small-scale, traditional and subsistence-oriented fisheries in the South, is where to draw the line. Size, power and scale matter! The WFF embraces the concept of artisanal fisheries, which in France and Canada may include trawlers of 25 metres. In many countries of the South (with the notable exception of Madagascar),

artisanal equates with traditional small-scale fisheries, in many cases non-motorized, or, if motorized, using outboard engines. Trawling, a traditional fishing technology in the North is synonymous with industrial-scale fisheries.

In the lead up to Loctudy and in all good faith, the French had tried to open a discussion with the Spanish. The Spanish had questioned the credentials of some of the organizations associated with the Loctudy initiative, asserting that such organizations did not comply with the WFF objectives. For their part, the French had questioned the Spanish fishermen’s support of the Greenpeace campaign to ban drift-nets in European waters. When the Spanish delegation tried to propose a resolution to ban certain kinds of trawling in the Bay of Biscay, the French delegation tried to censure them. This polarized the discussion around trawling, and this Franco-Spanish tiff became a major issue for the Forum.

Issues mixed

The related issues of gear bans, selectivity, environmental concerns and artisanal fisheries got mixed together, and was used by several delegates for their own political ends. Vested interests hijacked what should have been an open and far-reaching debate to generate political capital for their own relatively narrow interests, and few have escaped untainted.



In the days immediately following the Loctudy meeting, much reflection took place. In many quarters, there is still a feeling of bitterness that so much time, effort, goodwill and money had been wasted; that international solidarity received a slap in the face. The bitterness is particularly apparent in Canada, where many people were shocked, dismayed and deeply wounded by the allegations made against Canada.

Several people had financed their own trips, and their high expectations had not only been dashed, but a slur had also been slapped on their reputations. From India, several voices complained: "We came here to establish an organization, not to wreck it. Why do people see us as the culprits?" But, as some others pointed out, for every accusing finger, there were at least six pointing back. Such personal bitterness will take time to heal.

Others questioned why people had been brought from the four corners of the world, when they could not even agree on whether there are five continents or six! Also, why had so much emphasis been placed on deciding a constitution and launching an international organization when there seemed to be such a radical divergence of views on basic issues, and different perspectives amongst the participants? Others still questioned the interests represented by the various people delegated to the Forum, and the

kind of organizations they were from. The role of the 'Observers' and the 'Auditors', who often played a key role in influencing processes, was further questioned. In the main, these much-discussed questions remain impossible to answer fully.

There has been no impartial evaluation of the various people who came to the meeting claiming to be delegates, nor have the claims of the various organizations to represent national fishworker and fish harvester interests been validated. The interests represented in Loctudy and the organizational credentials have been taken at face value, and on trust.

But trust has been broken, and such questions are now begging to be answered. Similarly, the issue of democracy needs to be addressed, and what democracy really means in such an assembly, where perhaps more than 99 per cent of the world's fishworkers and fish harvesters have no relationship with any of the organizations present.

Questions galore

For example, should the number of votes in the Constituent Assembly be based on the number of fishworkers in a given region, when most fishworkers remain unorganized? Or should votes be based on the size of the fish catch, particularly in regions where most of the catch is taken by the industrial sector? Or by the length of the coastline, when coastal

communities are often on the margins of mainstream society?

While such questions of power and structure were hotly debated by several of the men, it is worth noting that a small group of women associated with the WFF initiative (as delegates, observers and auditors) had initiated a process of consultation on issues of mutual concern. They had then developed this dialogue into a proposal for an alternative agenda, and had lobbied hard for a proper discussion on these issues within the Loctudy assembly. Their rationale was that “current systems and practices of fisheries management give little importance to the special concerns of women.” Loctudy would provide “an opportunity to challenge this, and to highlight the importance of communities in the North and the South, and of the people (men and women) who depend on, and support, each other to defend their interests.” They advocated adopting “a community approach that recognizes the importance of both men and women, and promotes the involvement of communities in the negotiating processes with the political and economic powers.”

That such a process was possible was due mainly to the policy adopted by the WFF on parity. However, parity itself was to come under fire in Loctudy, when attempts were made to question the rights of women to participate. It must also be acknowledged that while parity is an important tool for promoting equity, when it becomes an end in itself, it can quickly be transformed into a powerful political tool and become open to abuse.

What happened in Loctudy can only be explained by the processes and dynamics that led up to it. In the words of the surviving captain of *An Orient*, “in such cases, there are often many small things which build up” (Taken from an interview with the skipper in le Marin, on 6 October 2000: “Dans ces cas-là, il y a souvent un tas de petites choses qui s’ajoutent” .)

In New Delhi, India, in 1997, representatives from more than 26 countries agreed to form a World Forum of Fish Harvesters and Fish Workers (WFF), with an ‘interim’ charter, membership regime and structure. An

interim Co-ordination Committee (CC) was appointed to carry out ‘regular duties’, with the main task of drafting a constitution. A General Co-ordinator, Thomas Kocherry from India, was elected, and the CC was mandated to meet every three years. A Co-Co-ordinator, François Poulin from Canada, was subsequently appointed.

Cracks began to appear from the outset, giving rise to serious differences within the CC. To begin with, there appeared to be a basic lack of trust between the two key players who had taken the initiative forward, with the Indians and the Canadians vying for control over the WFF. The lack of trust between the Canadian and Indian delegates became further polarized over environmental issues and relationships with NGOs, in general, and with Greenpeace, in particular. This theme ran through all the CC meetings, and finally exploded openly in Loctudy, severely damaging possibilities of unity.

But why couldn’t the Indians and Canadians put their differences aside? To understand this first requires an understanding of the nature of the respective organizations, their style of leadership, and the interests each side had in the initiative.

The Canadian Council of Professional Fish Harvesters (CCPFH) was founded in 1995 for three main reasons: to represent fishing professionals in Canada at the governmental level; to provide a structure for professionalization of the sector; and to act as a national council to plan and implement training for fishing professionals.

Terms interpreted

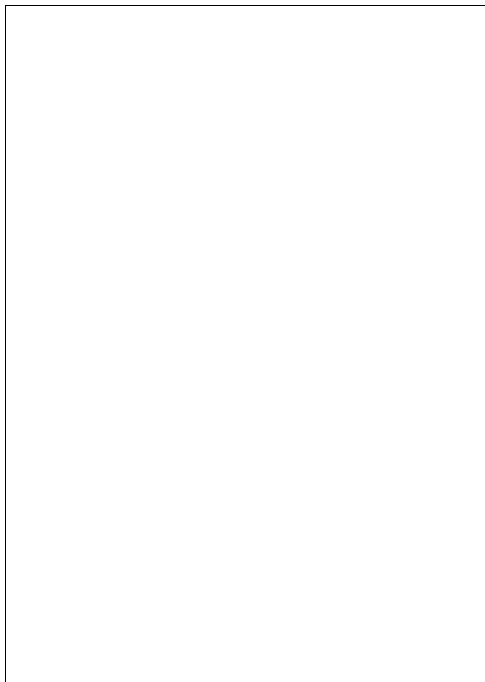
The term ‘professional’ and ‘fish harvester’ also need some explaining. Professional implies an economic motivation, rather than a cultural or social motivation, while ‘fish harvester’ appears to be a term coined from the French ‘*pêcheurs professionnels*’ literally professional fishermen. How and why does *professional fisherman* become translated into *fish harvester*, a term more usually associated with aquaculture? This contradiction aside, the whole rationale of the CCPFH is geared towards the interests of fishing professionals and of

organizational links with the Canadian government.

On the other hand, the National Fishworkers Forum (NFF) of India claims to be a “Federation of State-level registered trade unions in India”. It includes “fishworkers, both men and women, working in mechanized crafts and non-mechanized crafts, fish vendors, those working in processing plants, and those working in marine and inland sectors”. The rationale of the NFF has always been one of mass movement and mobilization of people to claim their rights, and to protest against rights violations.

Professional representation and mass movements require very different approaches and styles of leadership. Mass movements require charismatic leadership and unquestioning loyalty. In organizations more geared to professional interests, such leadership is often seen as dictatorial and undemocratic. Professional rights are obtained more through negotiation than through mass protests (there being notable exceptions to this rule, such as the protest actions of French fishermen in 1993 over fish prices, and, in August 2000, over fuel prices).

What brought the CCPFH and the NFF together seems to be the shared view (articulated in the Quebec Statement) that “without the participation of the primary



stakeholders, the international debate on resource management is meaningless.” It was agreed that such participation could only be “achieved through political representation in a global forum of primary stakeholders.” They, therefore, proposed that an international platform be established to:

- campaign against the unregulated and uncontrolled behaviour of industrial fleets, both domestic and international; and
- lobby for the livelihood rights of artisanal and traditional fish harvesters, whose survival is threatened by destructive fishing, overfishing, industrial aquaculture and coastal pollution.

Such concerns united both the mass movements and professional organizations at a time of common threat. The collapse of the cod fishery due to unregulated expansion of the industrial sector in Canada had led to widespread suffering in fishery-dependent coastal communities. In India, the NFF leadership had initiated a protest movement against the Indian government’s deep-sea joint-venture policy. Both organizations saw opportunities in establishing an international body to aid their respective agendas. However, in both cases, the battles had moved on to new territories. In Canada, other fisheries had been developed, and, in the case of India, the deep-sea policy had been withdrawn. What was then left to unite the interests of these two bodies?

Further contradictions exist in the mode of operation of professional organizations in the North and mass-based organizations in the South, and on the power and dependency relations that exist between the North and the South. This has implications for genuine equity in partnership between the North and the South. This became a considerable sticking point between the NFF and CCPFH, and it was noticeable at Loctudy that, while most Northern delegations were complete, several delegations from the South were unable to attend because of financial difficulties or due to visa restrictions. For delegates from West Africa (notably, from Senegal and

Women's voices

The key issues highlighted by women associated with the World Forum:

- citizenship, professional and political participation, representation;
- sustainable development (sustainable use of resources, addressing the threats that undermine development of community activities);
- working conditions, valorization of skills;
- access to credit;
- destructive tourism, protection of the environment;
- access to health, access to education;

Guinea), this was a particular problem, and explains, to some extent, why the Africans chose to unite with the WFFP, rather than stay with the WFF .

In a separate meeting, African delegates had drafted a four-point statement of concern, which, *inter alia*, demanded greater recognition of the importance of African interests in the WFF, expressed concern about the lack of transparency on financial issues, and noted dissatisfaction with the treatment received from the visa-issuing authorities.

What is it that makes a vessel put to sea despite storm warnings and mechanical failings? On the one hand, fishermen are often under a great deal of financial pressure to make both ends meet. Debt, hungry mouths, and narrow margins push fisherpeople, their skills and equipment to the limit, and often beyond. On the other hand, fishing is based heavily on optimism. Against all odds, weather, costs, faulty and worn-out equipment, fishermen put to sea because there is always the chance of a big catch.

So what was the big catch that the WFF was hoping to land? In particular, why were the Indians and Canadians so hell-bent on establishing a Constitution and an organizational structure that they could control? And, in any case, what can a World Forum really do for fisher people, for improving the real lives of fish

harvesters and fishworkers? With so many unanswered questions hanging in the air, why did so many people and organizations go along for the ride?

The WFF initiative has raised more questions than can be addressed in a short article like this. Furthermore, the answers to many of these questions are likely to be very difficult to deal with, because they expose so many failings. But the fishing sector is riddled with such contradictions and failings. In the case of the French trawler *An Orient*, it turns out that its owners were the supermarket chain, Intermarché, and that it had put to sea without a Navigation Certificate. These facts complicate answers to the questions posed by the bereaved about why the boat was lost. But they must be separated from the real reasons for the vessel's loss. According to the ship's captain, "No one could believe that it was sinking. We were all terrified. There is nothing else to add. It was absurd that it sank." (Taken from an interview with *Le Marin*, 6 October 2000: "*On ne pouvait pas croire qu'on coulait. Tout le monde était pétrifié. Il n'y avait aucun signe annonciateur. C'était absurde.*")

As they prepared for 25 November, World Fisheries Day, it is doubtful that anyone stopped to question what was being celebrated and why. They knew. For coastal communities the world over, life goes on, and the struggles for survival and a better future continue. With or without a World Forum, and whether there be one or more 'world bodies', fishing communities around the World will find ways to express solidarity and unite to make their voices heard. **¶**

These personal reflections on the Loctudy meet come from Brian O'Riordan (icsfbrussels@yucom.be), Secretary, ICSF 's Brussels Office

Gaza Strip fisheries

Under siege

The fishery of Palestine has deep-rooted traditions, but has developed little, due to various occupations and political upheavals

Fishing is a profession with a long-standing tradition in the Gaza Strip (Palestine). The Palestinian people have always lived along the eastern shores of the Mediterranean Sea. However, after the tragedy of Palestine, which began in 1948, many fishermen communities from Palestinian cities north of Gaza, such as Askalan, Jaffa, Jura and Majdal, were forced to flee southwards and take refuge in the Gaza Strip. Many of these displaced Palestinians had to continue in the only profession they knew best as a means of making a living, thus joining the fishermen population of the Strip. The fisheries sector has always played a major role in the economy of the Gaza Strip, where other economic activities are limited. Furthermore, since the war of 1967, the fishery activities became severely controlled and restricted by the Israelis who occupied the Strip that year.

In 1994, as a result of the Oslo Peace Accord of 1993, the Gaza Strip came under the autonomous rule of the Palestinian National Authority (PNA). It is very densely populated, with over one million inhabitants living in an area of 360 sq km—about 2,800 people per sq km, one of the highest population densities in the world.

The coastline of the Gaza Strip, which is located in the southeastern corner of the Mediterranean Sea and is Palestine's only outlet to the sea, is 45 km long, of which only about 40 km is permitted for fishing. The Gaza coastline has a straight and sandy shore with no proper fishing harbors. The continental shelf is wide and said to be relatively rich in both pelagic and demersal species. Although the Palestinian fishing zone is up to 20 miles, fishermen are not allowed to fish beyond 12 miles. The constantly present Israeli

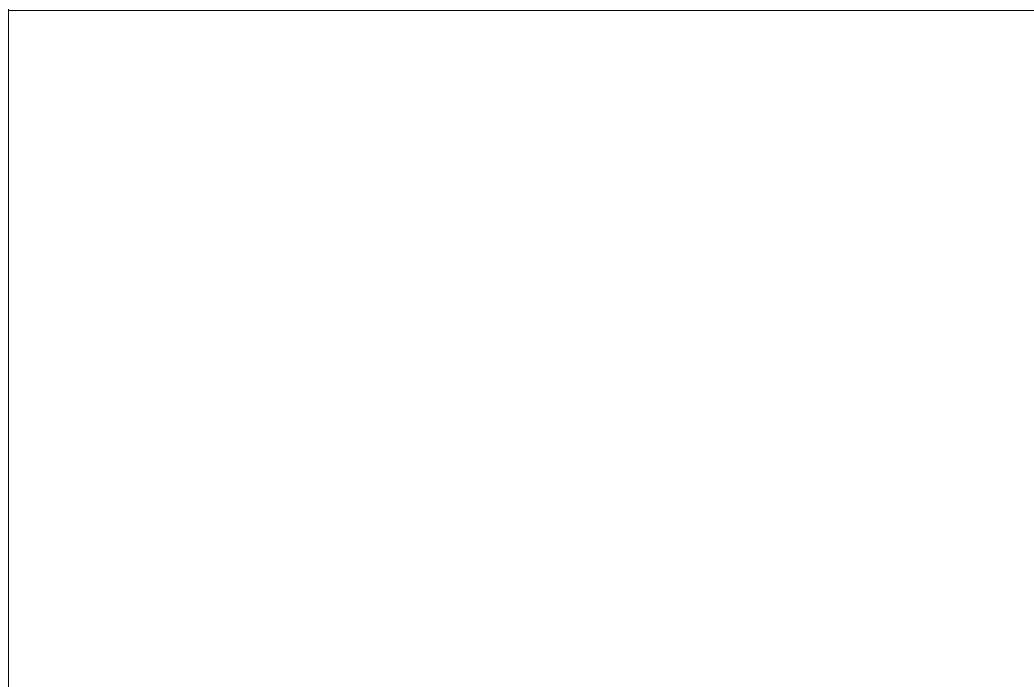
gun/patrol boats make the fishing area rather 'elastic'. Sometimes, unfortunate accidents happen and the fishing limits are consequently reduced.

In 1998, the total fish landings were estimated at 3,618 tonnes. Landing figures for the first eight months of 1999 indicate an important increase over the same period of 1998. (During occupation years, landings did not exceed 1,000 tonnes). The species composition in 1998 showed that sardines (*Sardinella aurita*) constituted, by far, the largest quantity in the catch, accounting for 1,779 metric tonnes (mt) or 49 per cent. This was followed by mackerel (*Scomber spp.*), with a total of 337 mt or 9.29 per cent, bongue (*Bobs bobs*), with 162 mt or 4.47 per cent, cuttlefish (*Sepia spp.*), with 114 mt, prawns (*Penaeus spp.*), with 123 mt or 3.39 per cent, and mackerel (*Trachurus spp.*), with 115 mt or 3.18 per cent. Other important species in the 1998 catch, which contributed to less than 3 per cent of the total, included red mullet (*Mullus spp.*), barracuda (*Sphraena spp.*), and Spanish mackerel (*Scomberomorus*).

Fishing activity along the Gaza Strip is carried out in four main fishing sites, namely, Gaza City, the largest, followed southwards by Dier el Balah, Khan Yunis, and Rafah. In terms of fishing gear used, most catches in 1998 were caught by purse-seines using light attraction equipment. This fishing method landed 2,467 mt (68 per cent), followed by trawling with 969 mt (27 per cent), light fishing 96 mt (2.6 per cent) and gill-net fishing, 91 mt (2.4 per cent).

Fleet composition

According to a survey conducted in late 1996, the fishing fleet is made up of a total of 818 fishing units, operated by a population of about 2,700 fishermen.



These units consist of 19 trawlers, built locally for catching shrimp, and a variety of demersal species, 55 purse-seiners, called *shanshulla* boats, made locally for catching sardines, and 431 small boats, or *hasaka*, which form the largest number of fishing units powered by outboard engines. Other fishing units consist of 153 wooden *felukas*, 131 *hasakas* with oars and 29 *tires* for shore fishing with set gill-nets.

The average retail prices for fresh fish differ considerably between Gaza and Israel, a major market for fish from Gaza. For example, a kilogram of grouper (whole) in Gaza would cost around US\$17/kg, while in Israel it could fetch over US\$35/kg. Likewise, for shrimps, in Gaza it would be around US\$20/kg, while in Israel it is about US\$45/kg. *Calamari* (squid) would cost US\$10/kg in Gaza, but in Israel, over US\$20/kg. Sardines, however, would fetch about US\$3-4/kg in Gaza and are not exported to Israel, since there is no demand. Only high-value species are exported. In the past, sardine canneries in Israel had demand for Gaza sardines, but most canneries are now closed.

Cultured sea bream imported from Israel to Gaza fetches around US\$10/kg. Very few fish-processing activities take place in Gaza. Only some species, such as mullet and bream, are salted. The quantity may not exceed 10-15 mt a year. Very limited smoking activities are carried out.

No adequate or precise knowledge is available on resource potential, since no proper comprehensive surveys have been carried out in recent years. During 1999, however, the DANIDA project was allowed to carry out limited and restricted fishing trials in deeper waters. Preliminary results indicated good possibilities for increased catches, new fisheries and the possibility of pelagic resources availability throughout the year, rather than on a seasonal basis.

The post-harvest activities of marketing and distribution of catch, although traditional and out-dated due to limited infrastructure facilities, seem to be adequate for the present needs. Fish is unloaded from the fishing units into wooden and/or plastic boxes and then loaded on carts pulled by mules and brought to a central location. The boxes are lined up along the open street opposite the retail fish market, where 12 fish retail shops are located.

A sole auctioneer dominates the daily auction. He has a unique position in the marketing of fish. He receives a commission of 5 per cent from the producer and 3 per cent from the buyer, that is, 8 per cent in total. He pays to the Gaza municipality an amount of NIS 1,200,000 (approximately US\$300,000) for the whole year and a small amount to the municipalities of the other three minor landing sites. The municipality awards

the fish-auctioning job after an annual competitive bidding, and it has always been the same auctioneer who somehow wins the bidding. This gives him exclusive rights on all fresh fish that enters the fish market in Gaza and he has control over most of the fishermen through the services he provides.

While the system seems to operate rather well, it is outmoded and goes back to the Ottoman Civil Code of 1870, issued during the period of the Ottoman Empire which ruled Palestine. The British then amended the Code with the Gaza Municipality Law of 1934 during their mandate over Palestine. The PNA is currently preparing new rules and regulations to modernize the system.

As far as fish trade is concerned, compilation of statistics on imports/exports was started only in August 1998 by the Department of Imports, under the Ministry of Economy and Trade of the PNA. Some frozen fish were imported from Uruguay, Argentina, Iceland and Denmark. The quantity of frozen fish imported during September 1998 to February 1999 did not exceed 300mt, valued at NIS 2,000,960 (US\$500,000). Furthermore, imports from Israel for the period August 1998 to March 1999 were estimated at 4,478 mt, at a value of NIS 4,300,000 (US\$1,075,000). The imports constituted species not consumed in Israeli markets due to local dietary practices. It is estimated that about 400 mt of fish not accounted for in Palestinian statistics (about 11 per cent of total Gaza fish landings) were transferred at sea from Palestinian fishermen to Israeli traders.

Generally speaking, the Israeli government gives security as the reason for prohibiting fresh-fish imports into Gaza. Furthermore, the adverse effect on prices of locally caught fish is also another reason cited to ban the import of fresh fish from neighboring countries like Egypt.

The high duties and complicated procedures make it very cumbersome and costly to import a very highly perishable product such as fish to the West Bank to be sold at reasonable and affordable prices. This is coupled with other impediments: very stringent security checks; unavailability of fish inspectors at

the check point outside regular office hours; and permitting such an import only through a remote check point (Al-Oja) along the Egyptian-Palestinian border, rather than the more convenient one at Rafah.

Fishermen's co-operative societies date back to 1972, with the El Ekhlash Fishermen's Co-operative, which was annulled a year later. In 1973, the El Tawfiq Fishermen Co-operative Society was established and is still operational. It has a membership of about 400 fishermen from all over the Gaza Strip. Its income is generated from membership dues, discounted sale of fishing gear and other equipment, sale of petrol, ice and other essential services. A general manager and a board of directors of nine elected members manage it.

The meager services that are available to the fishery seem to be adequate to support the present level of production. Supply of ice is covered by a block ice plant, with a five tonnes per day capacity, built in 1987 with assistance from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Government of Japan to the El Tawfiq Fishermen Co-operative Society. A cold store of 20 tonnes capacity is attached to the ice plant. As for fuel, it is readily available. However, petrol for the outboard engines is rather costly, as no subsidy is provided. Concessionary credit facilities are provided by the CARE Project, which operates through the co-operative, with funding from the International Fund for Agriculture Development (IFAD) and the Arab Bank. The fund, which is now about US\$1 million, is operated on a revolving basis for the repair and maintenance of boats and engines.

The administration of the sector is carried out mainly by the General Directorate of Fisheries in the Ministry of Agriculture. The Directorate is charged with the issuing of licences, develops fishing technology and is responsible for research and training activities. Also, it functions as a counterpart to international aid organizations.

International aid

International assistance is provided by two major agencies, which extend highly commendable aid to fisheries in Gaza.

These are DANIDA of Denmark and CARE International. DANIDA provides assistance through a project operating since 1996 with an initial amount of US\$2.8 million. CARE International, with funding support from IDRC, CIDA, IFAD and the Arab Bank, has been executing a fisheries conservation project since 1995.

Port and harbour facilities in Gaza are very limited. The small units are beached with the help of tractors. The larger trawlers are berthed inshore using small boats for access. However, after the PNA took charge of the Strip, work commenced during 1999 to construct a shelter for fishing boats in Gaza city. It is about 300 m from the site of the co-operative, the ice plant and the cold store as well as the retail fish market where the fish is normally auctioned. The shelter is expected to help in having a more organized and efficient fishery. For the longer run, the PNA has now obtained the approval and funding to commence the construction of the main Gaza Harbour. Fisheries facilities will be provided for the sector.

At present, the only market accessible to the fish traders is the Gaza fish market and Israel, where fish is either transferred at sea or through the Gaza/Israeli checkpoint at Beit Hanoun (Eretz). While the present landings, mainly the small pelagics are totally sold in Gaza, demersal species of high value are exported to

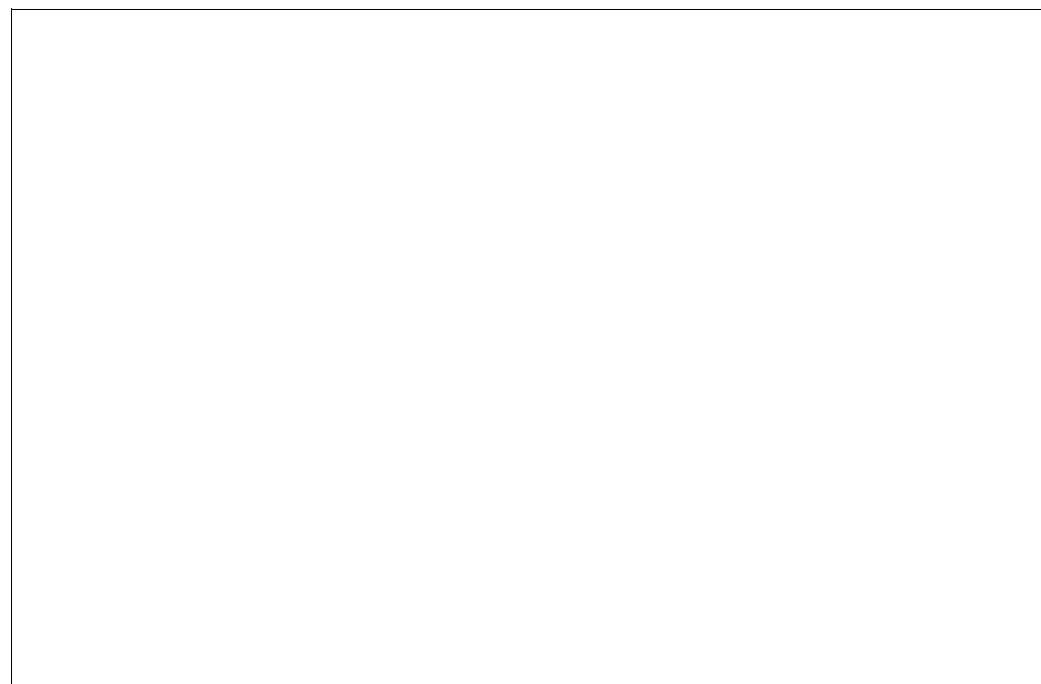
Israel, where they fetch higher prices. Only a limited quantity of high-value demersal species is sold locally in Gaza for the high-income consumers as well as hotels and restaurants.

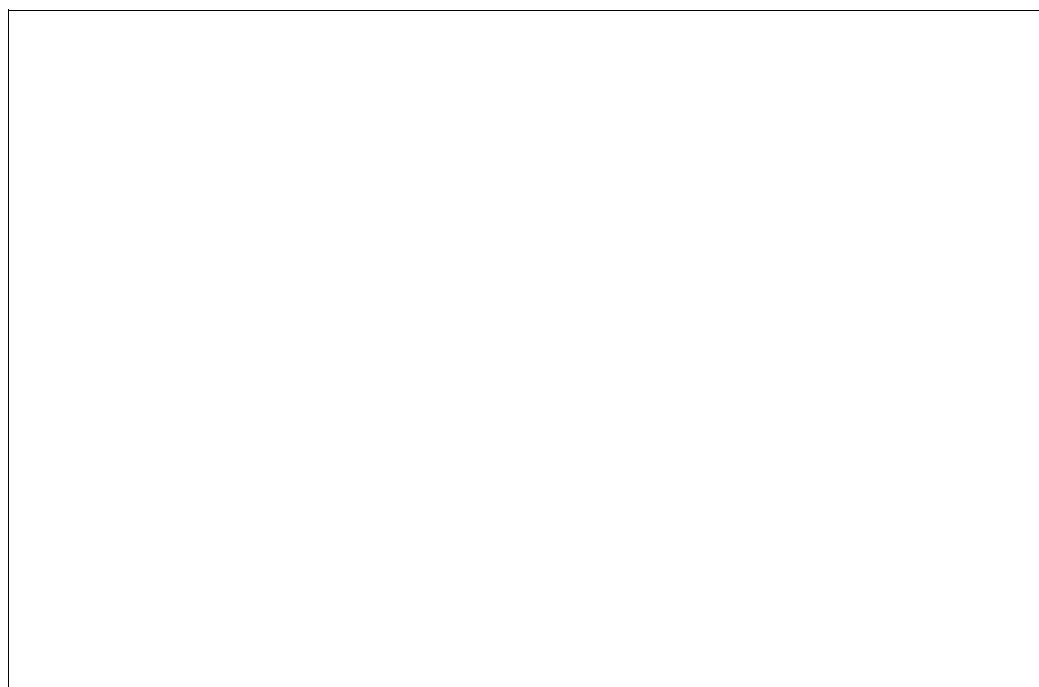
Under the prevailing restrictive conditions imposed by Israel, Palestinian fish consumers are denied supplies, as no fish marketing is allowed or permitted from Gaza to the West Bank and beyond to the Jordan market. Both areas have a high demand for fresh fish. If such access becomes available, Gaza fish traders will have an additional market access just as lucrative as the market in Israel.

These areas could also become an alternative outlet for Gaza fish when the Israelis sometimes abruptly close the borders between Gaza and Israel. Price-wise, high-value demersal species will continue to fetch good prices in Israel, the West Bank and Jordan. As for small pelagics, an alternative market in the West Bank cities would give the chance for a slight increase in prices, which will give fishermen an opportunity for increased incomes, but would keep prices about the same in Gaza.

Demand-supply

Increased demand for fish will most likely encourage an increase in supplies. This could be obtained by lifting restrictions to fish in deeper waters beyond the present 12-mile limit imposed on Palestinian





fishermen, as well as to go into international waters. Furthermore, opportunities for better fishery management will open up.

In spite of the already harsh conditions and restrictions imposed by the Israelis even during normal times, Palestinian fisheries are prevented from functioning to at least a fraction of its present capacity. After years of desperation and frustration, the *Intifada 2000* (popular uprising) erupted in late September 2000 to protest Israeli occupation. It calls and demands independence for the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, the two land areas that will constitute the present-day State of Palestine. As a consequence, the fishery sector is currently at a standstill. The Israelis have enforced additional, and more severe, sanctions on the whole fishing sector as well as the whole population. Israel has waged, besides military warfare, a harsh economic blockade against the Palestinians. All access roads between the cities and towns were closed, thus preventing fishermen from moving to their boats and conducting other essential activities. The Israelis also prevented fishermen from collecting their set gill-nets. The ever-present gun/patrol boats along the Gaza coast blockaded the waterfront, preventing all fishing boats from going to sea. The local market is, therefore, deprived of much-needed food supplies.

Even food aid from foreign countries is prevented from entering through the Egyptian-Palestinian boarder. Fishing boats that try to venture out are shot at sight. It is also reported that the Israeli settlers, who still occupy some parts of Gaza, have damaged, and/or confiscated, a number of fishing boats and their gear.

In the general economic sanctions, the Israeli government froze all the funds that are due to the PNA from customs duties and value-added taxes, thus preventing the payment of salaries of personnel, including the fisheries personnel of the Directorate of Fisheries. Exports of goods, including fish, to Israel were stopped, as were imports of frozen fish to supplement local supplies. Such activities severely curtail the already low income of fish traders. Imports of petrol, gas and kerosene are restricted, making stocks very low. Cuts in other essential goods, as well as electricity and water, are frequently experienced.

A consequence of the Israeli military warfare and economic sanctions forced the international experts attached to the DANIDA Project to leave Gaza. Furthermore, a proposed fisheries project, assisted by Japan, was put on hold for the same reasons.

Small sector

The fisheries sector in Gaza is relatively small compared to the fisheries of most of

the Eastern Mediterranean countries, but for the economy of Gaza, which lacks other natural resources and severe shortage of job opportunities, the sector provides a major source of employment and income, as well as a major source of animal protein. The fishery has deep-rooted traditions, but has experienced very little developmental changes, due to various occupations and political upheavals. It is hoped that when the Palestinians ultimately achieve their long-awaited aspirations in establishing their independent State of Palestine, the fisheries sector, alongside other economic components, will finally achieve stability, sustainability and progress.

It is essential for the rehabilitation of the fishery sector to introduce some basic foundations for more solid and sustainable development, such as the continuous upgrading of professionals, administrative personnel and workforce. It requires the introduction of more modern and appropriate infrastructure, as well as more efficient practices. A sound combination of both people and materials, under good economic conditions and political stability, are vital for success in this important sector. ♣

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Tamil Nadu fisheries

The twilight zone

The experiences of zoning for small-scale fishermen in Tamil Nadu, India reveal both potential and hazards

One of the suggestions made to protect the livelihoods of small-scale fishermen throughout the world is the installation of special artisanal fishing zones. Such zones would make inshore fishing areas off-limit to industrial fishermen and, correspondingly, reserve them for small-scale operators. The experiences of Tamil Nadu's zoning from the 1970s onward point out potential hazards as well as conditions necessary for the success of such arrangements.

At the onset of the so-called Blue Revolution in the early 1960s, Tamil Nadu had thousands of marine fishermen, operating from small hamlets along its 1000-km long coastline. These fishermen generally confined their operations to an innermost sea area, which roughly coincided with the contours of the continental shelf. Seasonal migration took them up and down the coast, but rarely further than 10 km from shore.

The government's promotion of trawling technology drastically changed the seaside panorama. By the late 1960s, harbour centres berthing small trawlers had developed all along the coast, and conflicts between trawler and artisanal fishermen were rampant. The main problem was that trawlers ventured inshore to catch high-value shrimp. Not only did they intrude on grounds that artisanal fishermen considered theirs, but the trawlers also caused extensive damage to artisanal fishing gear.

These confrontations resulted in major unrest. The State government, anxious to keep the peace, constituted committees to investigate and settle whatever incidents came to its attention. At the same time, it started to explore available policy choices. One of its core options was the physical

separation of the antagonists through the installation of distinct fishing zones.

As the government of Tamil Nadu exerted strong control over access to trawling technology in the first phase of modernization—most trawler fishermen depended on the government loans and construction schemes for their vessels—it first tried out this lever. Around 1968, the Fisheries Department included a clause in its contract, stating that recipients of trawling gear could only fish outside a limit of three nautical miles.

This clause is important as it constituted the first, albeit indirect, mention of an official artisanal fishing zone in Tamil Nadu. However noble its intent, the measure failed to make a dent on the flow of the 'pink gold rush'. As trawlers did not bear registration marks, violators of the clause could not easily be identified. Moreover, the clause's foundations were shaky, such as in the case of a transfer of ownership. Could the new trawler owner be held to the original terms of agreement? The Fisheries Department had its doubts and rarely seems to have pursued the matter.

In 1978, after serious riots between artisanal and trawler fishermen rocked Tamil Nadu's capital, Madras (now Chennai), the State government decided to formulate legislation based on the distinction of fishing zones.

Long-drawn process

Realising, however, that law-making is a long-drawn process and that immediate action was being expected, the government immediately issued an executive Government Order (GO 881 of 1978). Alongside other measures such as time zoning, GO 881 prohibited trawling activities within a 3-mile inshore zone. For

the first time, the government also made attempts to *mark* this zone by means of a series of 'country buoys'. As the name suggests, however, these markers were so elementary that the first storm washed them away.

Trawler fishermen straightaway challenged GO 881 in court. It was not the 3-mile rule which incurred most of their wrath, however; it was time-zoning. According to the order, time-zoning implied that trawler fishermen remain in port during the night, only to be released at 6 a.m. Not only would this deny them the best fishing moments (night-fishing purportedly being more productive than fishing in daytime), it also closed off fishing grounds that could not be reached in a day's voyage. Most seriously, time-zoning stood a great chance of being *enforced*, as it involved no more than installing a chain across the harbour mouth.

In response to the appeals, the High Court of Chennai imposed a stay order suspending GO 881's main clauses for several years. The order was finally superseded by the Tamil Nadu Marine Fishing Regulation Act of 1983. This Act continued along earlier lines, decreeing the introduction of geographical fishing zones as well as time-zoning arrangements for trawler fishermen. It too was greeted by a flurry of court cases from disquieted trawler owners.

Interestingly, one of the plaintiffs argued that if trawler fishermen were to be relegated outside the 3-mile zone, artisanal fishermen should be obliged to stay within. Although this was contrary to the import of the Act, which did not make any mention of a mandatory zone for artisanal fishermen, the district court judge who was handling the case felt otherwise. According to his decree, artisanal fishermen not only enjoyed a preferential *right* to a separate inshore zone, it was also their *duty* to confine their operations to this area. This, of course, artisanal fishermen protested against.

As in the case of GO 881, courts pronounced stay orders on the Act of 1983, and it was only toward the end of the decade that the various legal objections were definitely refuted by the Supreme Court of India. During all this time, the State government was unable to enact any of its fishing regulations.

By 1995, the situation had fundamentally changed. Although time-zoning was still in cold storage, the Fisheries Department was now free to implement other sections of the 1983 Act. The 3-mile rule was its showpiece regulation. Any beachside visitor, however, could tell that it was poorly observed. In fact, trawler fishermen regularly encroached on inshore waters, and conflicts with artisanal fishermen persisted. It is instructive to consider why the 3-mile rule

was, and is, so badly implemented by the State government.

One of the basic factors is a lack of political will. This is related to the fact that trawler fishermen wield considerable clout in Tamil Nadu, whereas the movement of artisanal fishermen has lost force since the 1970s. Fisheries Department officers charged with enforcement thus receive insufficient backing to undertake sensitive missions, such as the apprehension of trawlers. Another reason is found in the Act's motivation, which is primarily of a social nature. Like similar legislation in other parts of the world, its main goal was the resolution of social conflict, not the management of depleting marine resources. Once overt conflicts died down, government attention was once again diverted.

The character of coastal fisheries and the set-up of fisheries management also posed formidable barriers to the enforcement of an artisanal fishing zone. Where does one find the resources to install an infrastructure capable of guarding a 1000-km long coastline? And how does one establish encroachments, if the artisanal fishing zone is unmarked and participants lack advanced positioning technology?

In 1995, the Fisheries Department in northern Tamil Nadu owned only one

small speedboat and a small crew to patrol 400 km of shore. This boat was slow and frequently out of order. In addition, officers generally lack sea legs and are reluctant to set out for sea, fearing molestation and other unpleasantness. The prevailing reality, therefore, is that patrolling seldom occurs, and fishermen are left to settle any problems that arise amongst themselves.

This directs attention to the management set-up. In spite of the fact that fishermen along the Coromandel Coast of India have a long and rich tradition of resource management, their institutions do not enjoy any official recognition. As it is, the State government is the sole authority for fisheries regulation and enforcement with regard to inshore waters. There is, however, a mismatch between governmental capacities and the sweep of fisheries legislation. Under present circumstances, the 3-mile rule in Tamil Nadu mainly has a token value.

The idea of artisanal fishing zones derives its charm from its comprehensiveness as well as its simplicity. It ventures a simple and apparently effective solution to the problems of artisanal fisherfolk. Developments in Tamil Nadu, however, indicate potential obstacles and potholes.

Unenforceable rule

An important question is whether it is worth striving for an artisanal fishing

zone if the rule cannot be enforced. Many inshore fishing zones are heavily contested, and industrial fishing interests do not give up their stakes without a fight. Political support is imperative to achieve any success.

It also helps if a proposal stands a real chance of being implemented. Declaring an artisanal zone many kilometres in length and badly marked does not contribute to its realization, particularly if staffing and resources are meagre. Co-management arrangements of government, together with fishermen, might form a solution, provided fishermen are also given official enforcement authority. To my knowledge, however, this has not been tried out seriously at a more than local level in Africa, Asia or Latin America. Many governments are wary of decentralization and the loss of power it implies, and will not readily concede far-reaching co-management arrangements.

This does not deny the potential value of artisanal fishing zones as an instrument of fisheries management. It does suggest, however, that the scheme should be well designed and tested.

The Tamil Nadu experience finally makes clear that the successful enactment of any measure to defend the interests of artisanal fishermen requires concerted and enduring effort. The proclamation of GO 881 and the Tamil Nadu Marine Fishing Regulation Act of 1983 was directly related to the activities of the artisanal fishermen movement in India. This movement, starting in Tamil Nadu and in Goa, soon developed into a potent nationwide force. The decline of the same movement in Tamil Nadu after the 1970s, likewise, constitutes one of the main reasons for the non-implementation of available legislation. To achieve success, political momentum must clearly be maintained over a long time period. For many fishermen movements, this is a huge challenge.

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Marine Stewardship Council

Thames up or thumbs down?

The certification of the Thames-Blackwater herring drift-net fishery of the UK by the Marine Stewardship Council has been far from rigorous

On 5 September 2000, the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) certified the Alaska salmon fishery as sustainable and thus eligible to carry the MSC label. This is the third such certification, following those for Western Australian rock lobster and the Thames-Blackwater herring drift-net fishery in the UK.

This decision by the MSC piqued my curiosity, for, like many in the fisheries world, I had been watching developments with interest. I decided to look into one of these in more detail, choosing the herring fishery, as it is relatively small and close to where I live. On the MSC website (www.msc.org), I found a document entitled *Fisheries Certification-Public Summary Report*, dated 1 July 1999.

The paper explains that the Thames-Blackwater herring is a small but unique stock of spring-spawning herring, which is fished in the Greater Thames Estuary. Following the decline of the North Sea herring stock, increased effort was exerted on the stock, with catches peaking at 606 tonnes in the 1972-73 season. The fishery had to be closed in the winter of 1979-80, but was reopened some time after 1981.

It is an extremely small fishery, with recent total allowable catches (TACs) of 131 tonnes (1998) and 128 tonnes (1999). The MSC certification is for the fish taken by small drift-nets, mostly less than 10 m, though the stock is also fished by Belgian- and French-flagged pair trawlers operating immediately to the south of the Drift-net Regulatory Area. Various controls, such as time and area closures, have been implemented.

As I read the rest of the report, discussing a series of other aspects of the fishery, a

few points struck me as noteworthy. The Public Summary Report states:

During hauling it was observed that gilled fish were within a narrow range of sizes; specimens that were significantly larger or smaller than this narrow size-class range were dropped from the net and those alive swam away as the net was lifted from the water. The gear employed appears to be size-selective. [Section 2.1]

No documentation exists on by-catch and discards. For the operation that was observed, by-catch was limited to 12 fish for three fleets [about 1200 m] of drift-nets fished over the course of four hours, with a total of 80 stone [509 kg] of herring taken. Of these, eight were pouting, two were whiting and two were codling. All were discarded to sea. [Section 2.2]

The anecdotal observations described above do not constitute a proper analysis of gear selectivity and discards—this would require a scientifically designed programme of observation of species composition, measurement of length frequencies, etc. The report does not even state what was the “narrow size-class range”, nor does it mention when the observations were made nor how many vessels were sampled; by-catch is known to vary widely from place to place and season to season. The scientific authority, CEFAS, does conduct sampling of length frequencies, but these seem not to have been used in the certification.

No logbook

Since most of the herring drift-netters are less than 10 m, they are not required to submit a formal logbook. However, they are required, as a drift-net licence condition, to submit simple catch forms to the local MAFF officer. The form provides details of the vessel and skipper, and an estimate of the landed catch of Thames

estuary and Southern North Sea herring. No cross-correlation of landings data is undertaken. All landings are estimates, since no physical weighing is conducted, and, in fact, the scales at West Mersea [a major landing site] were inoperable at the time of visit. [Section 2.3]

Reliable catch data are of fundamental importance to stock assessment and, therefore, fishery management. The approach described here is rather casual, with no verification of landings, so it is difficult to know how reliable are the data provided by the fishermen.

At present, the TAC consists of the total catch recommended for Thames herring plus a small amount of North Sea (Downs) herring. It is set solely to conserve the stock. No technical document was available of the stock assessment. Effort is not directly recorded, and by-catch and discards are not recorded at all. [Section 3.2]

With no technical document to explain the assessment, it is impossible to verify its reliability. This is compounded by the problem of the quality of landings data.

Although the stock assessment takes full account of all catches from the previous year of this stock, Thames Estuary herring caught outside the drift-net box, by the mid-water pair trawling fleet off the Kent coast, are not counted against the TAC as the season progresses. In the 1997/8 season, 50 per cent of the catch was taken outside the regulated area.

Once the TAC is met, the drift-net fishery is closed. However, because the TAC does not cover all the catch from this stock, the TAC alone cannot guarantee to limit fishing mortality to the required level. [Section 3.2]

The fact that all catches are not counted against the TAC is a very serious problem. Although the report notes that there is little demand for the fish at present, were demand to increase due to the MSC label, the situation as described here could result in double the TAC being taken before it is realized. As effort is neither controlled nor directly recorded, it is, at present, impossible to control the fishery by that

means either. Other sections of the report describe monitoring and control, social and environmental impacts of the fishery, ghost fishing and other aspects. The report then summarizes all of the above information and lists a series of strengths and weaknesses of the fishery.

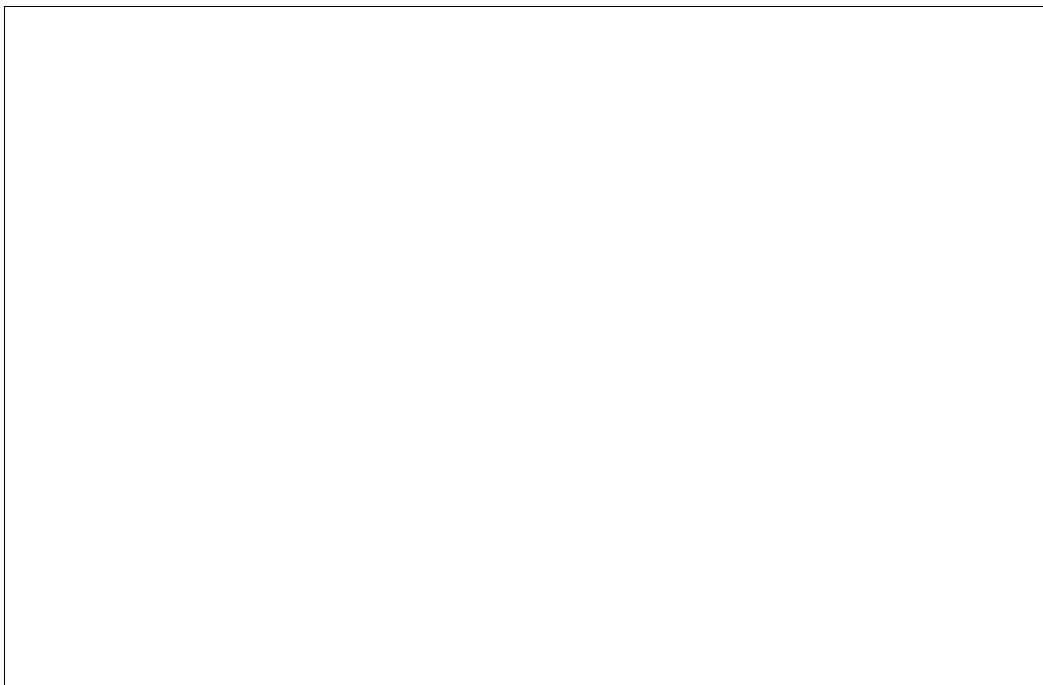
Among the aspects of the fishery which I have included in this note, the following are considered by the MSC to be strengths:

- the stock assessment is extensive, given the small size of the fishery, and the data appear to be good, even though dependent upon voluntary contribution by fishermen;
- the TAC is based securely on the scientific assessment and appears well-enforced;
- the fishing method appears highly selective, with small by-catch and discards;
- the Herring Management Committee provides an important forum for co-management.

Nonetheless, information contained in the report directly contradicts some of these perceived 'strengths', as I have shown above.

The weaknesses, according to the report, are as follows:

- the TAC does not cover catches of the stock outside the regulated area;
- the stock survey conducted for the assessment could be at the wrong time, adversely affecting its reliability;
- no cross-checking of data is conducted to verify landings;
- by-catch and discards are not recorded, and effort data are weak;
- the fishery is essentially open-access, as there is no legal limit to the number of vessels permitted to fish; and



- while the stock assessment is probably adequate, given the small size of the fishery, the lack of technical documentation is problematic.

The following were seen as “potential problems, but not currently a hurdle to certification:”

- the management and administration of the fishery is subsidized;
- no account is taken of the socioeconomic situation when the TAC is decided; and
- not all catches are properly recorded.

As a result of these weaknesses, six Minor Corrective Action Requests (CAR) were issued, which must be acted upon by 1 October 2001. One Major CAR was issued, relating to the inability of the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food to effectively close the fishery when the TAC is reached, as catches by the pair trawlers outside the Driftnet Regulatory Area are not counted against the TAC during the season. The Kent and Essex Sea Fisheries Committee was then to develop a two-year programme to correct this, by 1 October 2001. The Report concludes that “*the outstanding Minor Corrective Action Requests do not preclude certification*” and

the fishery has been certified to carry the MSC logo for a period of five years from 3 March 2000.

The MSC considers this to be a well-managed fishery, which fulfills the Principles and Criteria for Sustainable Fishery (which can be downloaded from www.msc.org). As I read through the documents that have been posted, I was, however, struck by a number of what I can only describe as shortcomings in the management of the fishery (unverified landing data, no by-catch data, no formal management plan, no technical report on the stock assessment, etc.). The report makes reference to further information available elsewhere, such as a technical description of the method used for the stock assessment (but not the stock assessment itself) or a fuller report of the MSC assessment. In the interests of transparency, though, any essential information on the fishery, and the reasons for the MSC accreditation, should be contained in the Public Summary Report posted on the web. Additional information could elaborate upon, but not fundamentally change, the MSC assessment.

One of the first

As the Thames-Blackwater herring fishery was one of the first to be certified by the MSC, I would have expected their examination to be extremely rigorous, so as to establish strict and commendable

precedents. This is especially so for such a small fishery which should be easier to manage.

Now, though, other fisheries seeking certification can reasonably ask why they should produce verified landings data, a technical stock assessment report or information on by-catch and discards when one fishery without them has already been approved. Should further information on this fishery become publicly available, I would be only too pleased to consider it. ♣

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Students fishing for information

Small-scale fisheries and fishing communities in developing countries could benefit from involving students in the collection of fisheries data

In many developing countries endowed with plentiful living marine resources, fisheries of several types are found competing for attention from the managing authorities, while stocks are stagnant or dwindling under increasing fishing pressure. As a general rule, commercial offshore fisheries, generating hard currency cash revenues for developing coastal States (mostly in the form of foreign fleet access fees) are given priority over inshore small-scale fisheries. Fisheries administrations facing shortages in human and financial resources generally prioritize the management of offshore resources, to the detriment of inshore resources. This almost invariably leads to a situation where authorities, central or decentralized, do not manage to effectively monitor small-scale fisheries. The grasp on data and information from these fisheries being weak, transparent or efficient management of the resources remains elusive, if not impossible.

Yet, it can only be reiterated that small-scale fisheries play central and vital roles in the lives of coastal communities on a global scale, both in terms of food security and socioeconomics. It is hence critically important for these communities that ways be found, through which management of these fisheries becomes a reality—ways that recognize that basic data or information embodies the starting point for coherent management attempts, and ways that address the inherent and omnipresent constraints linked to data collection within resource-deficient institutional frameworks.

There are vast numbers of youngsters in fishing communities worldwide, eager to learn about the aquatic resources their households are gaining sustenance from. It has also been recognized that there is a pressing need in many communities, that

the young generation be sensitised towards, and taught about, the issues that threaten the sustained welfare of these resources, for example, overfishing and destructive fishing methods, to name but a couple.

The idea of raising awareness while collecting information unveils itself as a potentially valuable tool to start addressing small-scale fisheries monitoring, while involving the community, and transferring the sense of ownership and responsibility of the resources to the latter. To achieve this, it was conceived, in a Pacific Island case study, that a module of basic coastal and fisheries ecology be introduced into the science curriculum of schools in coastal communities, and that the students be taught about the various important aspects of coastal resource dynamics and the impacts of human interactions.

As an extension of the theoretical matter, students would collect household information on fishing gear assets, fishing activity and catches, record it in a logbook over a short period of time, and return it to the teacher. The collected information would be evaluated, pooled, fed into a database, and eventually yield a range of indicators describing the fishery in a given geographical area. The indicators obtained in this way are useful to underpin the teaching in class by visualizing the local situation, and, over time, the same indicators yield trends which are central to found the management of the fisheries resources upon.

Study done

In 1999, the FAO Sub-Regional Office in Samoa, in conjunction with the AUSAID Village Fisheries Project and the Samoan Fisheries Department, carried out a study

to explore and document the potential of involving secondary school students in the collection of subsistence fishery data. The study was carried out with the view to detect problems with, and strengths of, the method, and to recommend lines of operation, should the method prove to be useful and practicable.

A coastal community spread across a dozen villages along the East Coast of Samoa's main island, Upolu, was chosen as the study area. There is only one secondary school in this district, with students attending from the villages around. Materials were prepared for the science teachers and the students alike. Teaching support materials included background reading on reef ecology and associated subsistence fisheries, and the solutions to the exercise book handed to the students. The students were provided with a booklet explaining South Pacific fisheries, an exercise book aiming at understanding the logbook, and a logbook (covering a seven-day week) into which to report household information and fishing specifics. Lecturing was left entirely to the discretion of the school.

In order to assess the quality of the information collected by the students, a household survey and a creel census were run in parallel in the same area over the same week. The Extension Division of the Fisheries Department carried out these

two validating surveys. Both questionnaires mirrored the information to be recorded in the student logbook. All collected data were fed into a purpose-built Microsoft Access database, and were statistically evaluated using Microsoft Excel software. Eighty-three Samoan students, mostly between 15 and 17 years of age, participated in the study.

The overall outcome of the study, concerning the usefulness of the method and the quality of the student-collected data, was very positive. For certain types of indicators, very similar or even overlapping values were obtained between the validating household and creel surveys, and the student census. Data collected fall into two broad categories; the socioeconomic data and the capture data. Socioeconomic data included information on household size, main income, seafood consumption and fishing gear assets, while the capture data recorded information on catches with species names, mean lengths and detailed fishing trip information.

Poor match

Although most questions on socioeconomics were well answered (77 per cent rated satisfactory) and could be used for analysis, the data returned by the students matched poorly with the data recorded by the household survey. Students were consistent in reporting more fishing gear, higher per capita

consumption of canned seafood, more income earners per household, almost twice as many fishing households, etc.

The likeliest of reasons for these discrepancies is that the students did not embody a representative cross-section of their community, but arose from an economically advantaged stratum that can afford to keep its children in school at an advanced age, when they would otherwise be fit to take up duties in the running of family business (plantation work/fishing). Statistics to verify this assumption do not exist for rural Samoa, but existing statistics for neighbouring nations, Fiji and Tonga, support this idea. For this reason, it is suggested that age-related schooling statistics be consulted before designing a student census, and picking participating age groups.

A lot of returned questionnaires on daily catches and fishing trips were of poor quality (only 29 per cent rated satisfactory), and many could not be used for evaluation. This was mainly attributed to the relative complexity of the logbook sections recording catches and trips. In contrast to the socioeconomic data, though, the pool of questionnaires that were answered adequately returned results very much in line with the validating surveys. To name but a few indicators for illustration; the student census data established a CPUE of 2.35 kg per trip ($n=23$; $s.e.=0.41$), compared to 2.32 kg per trip ($n=38$; $s.e.=0.2$) obtained from the creel census data. The student census established an average trip duration of 2.77 hours ($n=73$; $s.e.=0.16$), compared to 2.88 hours ($n=61$; $s.e.=0.16$) obtained from the creel census. The student census estimated an average of 4.29 trips per household per week ($n=17$; $s.e.=0.59$), compared to 4.39 trips per household per week ($n=342$; $s.e.=0.19$) estimated from the household survey data. Furthermore, targeting of fishing areas, ranking of fishing gear used, diversity and relative distribution of species in the catch, etc. were all in close agreement between student census and validating surveys.

It has been found that the layout and complexity of the logbook are of central importance in this exercise. The logbook should come in a form that is visual and

easy to understand. The questionnaires must use simple language, and the questions must be straightforward. The amount of returned, useable questionnaires, containing properly answered questions, is inversely proportional to the complexity of the logbook. If the logbook is too involved, asks for too much detail, or is too lengthy, chances are that no coherent use can be made of the returns.

The database to input the collected information into should be constructed in such a way that a validating data quality marker is attached to every single entry (for example, did your household fish today?) or set of related entries (for example, the catch record for a given day), as opposed to having only one quality marker attached to the entire logbook (that is, 'good job' - 'bad job').

The person encoding the data validates or discards the entries by inserting or omitting the related quality marker during data input into the database. It enables maximization of the use of good quality data for given entries or sets of entries, when data are regrouped and filtered during analysis. This is particularly important in situations where overall good quality returns are low, and where the same logbooks have been answered well in some parts, and poorly in others.

A well-designed student census can generate valuable fisheries data for local contexts on a regular basis (for example, year to year). The layout, simplicity and self-explanatory nature of the logbook determine the quality of the returns. Furthermore, simplicity and clarity play an important role in terms of costs.

Modest costs

A well-designed package, consisting of teaching aids, exercise materials and logbooks for a given school, plus the necessary manpower and computing power to handle the generated data, constitute the bulk of the costs to be incurred by the student census. Compared to classic fisheries surveys, expensive in terms of administration, logistics and manpower requirements, these costs should be quite modest, and decrease over time, since the designing of

the materials and the construction of the database is an upfront cost that is incurred only once.


The simplicity demanded by the logbook for the sake of data quality clearly limits the depth of analysis that can be performed on the collected data. The student census is thus limited to collecting rather simple types of fisheries information. Also, the scope for comparison of generated indicators with other studies, where data were collected in a controlled, classic manner, is questionable, since there is no direct way of guaranteeing or controlling nominal student data integrity as such.

Yet, errors inherent to the sampling process do not affect the usefulness of generated indicators for purposes of trend-line generation within the local context. This means that if a consistent source of error throws off an indicator by a certain amount, it still gives rise to a trend comparable to one arisen from data not suffering from the same source of error.

Errors only come to bear when nominal values from different areas, and collected in different ways are compared directly. For that reason, discrepancies this study detected between socioeconomic data collected by the students and the household survey become irrelevant, once such generated indicators are analyzed over time, and used to gauge the local context (while remaining limited to the local context).

The importance of involving youth in this line of work must be emphasized. This is a time in which community management and co-management of small-scale fisheries resources has been embraced as the right way forward by many, and where the feelings of community ownership and involvement have been recognized as the cornerstones for positive action and responsible resource exploitation.

To emulate a programme entailing youth monitoring and understanding fishing activity on their own shores, providing them with a sense that they are contributing substantially to sustainable resource exploitation and conservation,

constitutes a useful and sound step towards community-based management of subsistence and artisanal fisheries. 

This article is by Gilles Hosch (gilles.hosch@fao.org), Marine Resources Information Officer, FAO Sub-Regional Office for the Pacific (SAPA), Samoa

Fishery management

Fishing for democracy

Community-based fishery management has been well developed in Japan, thanks to a legal framework in which fishermen could participate

It is often said that the community-based fishery management system (CBFM) in Japan has been well practised due to the historical development of a fishing right system, which emerged during Japan's feudal era. This is not always correct. Until August 1945, when Japan was defeated in the World War II, Japanese people served the emperor under the military government. In those days, there was no democracy at all. Thereafter, Japan was occupied by the Allied Forces for seven years, until April 1952. During this period, the policy of the Occupied Forces was to make Japan a real democratic country. Within such a fundamental policy, the contents of Japan's fishery law was thoroughly redrafted in order to entitle fishermen to participate in planning the use of fishing areas and fishery resources through a fishery co-ordination committee in the most democratic manner. This gave the fishermen an ideal circumstance to create their own CBFM.

Fishery management in Japan has been developed in two ways. One is the CBFM, which has been developed with the initiative of fishermen and is applied to the coastal small-scale fishery. The other is the total allowable catch (TAC) system, which has been developed based on the UN Law of Sea and is mainly applied to migratory species such as Saury pike, Alaska pollack, horse mackerel, pilchard, mackerels and Tanner crab. This article describes how the CBFM was developed for the coastal small-scale fishery, which is the mainstay of Japanese fisheries.

With the end of the World War II, in August 1945, for seven years Japan was under the control of the Occupied Forces, whose basic policy during this period was to make Japan a democratic country. Thus, Japan changed its administrative

status completely from a country under a military government to democracy. Under such a radical change in her administrative status, a land reform was carried out by order of the Occupied Forces. However, in its implementation, there was no political and methodological difficulty at all, as the idea of land reform was already in existence even in the pre-War days. The success of the land reform eliminated landless farmers.

In November 1946, the Allied Forces requested the Japanese government to renovate its fishery institution in a democratic manner. However, neither the Occupied Forces nor the Japanese government had an exact idea what to do on this crucial subject.

In such circumstances, Takashi Hisamune devoted every effort, along with his colleagues, to democratise the use of fishing areas and fishery resources. Until the final bill of a new fishery law was approved by the national assembly in October 1949, there were many twists and turns, due to different views among the Occupied Forces, political parties and fishermen's organizations. In such a confused situation, Hisamune remembered that the fishery law for the future must be for the benefit of fishermen, who actually engage in the coastal small-scale fishery.

Rich resources

Japan is an island country and is located in a temperate zone, with *Kuroshio*, which is a warm current running up from the area of the equator, and *Oyashio*, which is a cold current running down from the North Pacific Ocean. For these reasons, fishery resources in the coastal waters of Japan are rich, particularly in terms of the variety of species. Due to the traditional preference of Japanese people for any sea

product, fishermen fish any aquatic animal and plant, as long as it is edible.

Thus, even in one fishing area, it was possible to develop a variety of fisheries using different gear, targeting different species. However, in the past, there was no plan to make synthetic use of these different fisheries resources. As a result, a number of severe conflicts happened among different groups of fishermen, which resulted in overfishing. In the worst cases, fishermen killed each other on the sea.

To reduce conflicts among fishermen, to make harmonious use of fisheries resources among them and to improve their productivity, in 1935, Kanichi Nomura, who was a chief for coastal fishery at the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, proposed and tried to establish a fishery co-ordination committee with the participation of fishermen, but little was achieved due to the intensification of the war.

With the enactment of the 1901 Fishery Law, which was the first fishery law in Japan, four different types of fishing rights, valid for 10 or 20 years, were granted to fishery societies (80 per cent of the total rights) or to individuals (20 per cent). In addition, with the development, after 1901, of new coastal fisheries, new fishing rights were also granted. In 1910, with the introduction of trawl fishery,

which was an offshore fishery, a fishing licence system was added to the 1901 fishery law. The fishing licence was issued to individuals, limiting the number, the size of the fishing boat and gear in use, fishing area, fishing season, etc. An advantage of the 1901 Fishery Law was that it gave a motive to all fishermen to organize themselves into fishery societies (FSS), which later on developed into fishery co-operative associations (FCAS).

Of the four types of fishing rights in the 1901 Law, an exclusive fishing right was the mainstay, which was granted to the entire sea area of a FS and entitled it to fish both migratory and sedentary resources. In time, migratory fishery resources, which were included in the exclusive fishing right, disappeared due to oceanic changes or for other reasons. It became meaningless to maintain them within the fishing right. In contrast, sedentary resources had remained unchanged, but gathering such non-migratory resources as abalone, lobster, etc. were apt to be monopolized. Thus, it was necessary to democratically redistribute such sedentary resources to actual fishermen.

Severe conflicts

Motorization of coastal small boats began in the latter half of the 1920s. By 1930, the majority of small fishing boats had already been mechanized, resulting in the overuse of coastal resources, and severe conflict among different groups of

fishermen. Toward the end of World War II, the number of trawlers operating in the sea area around Japan's islands increased. This also resulted in overfishing of resources and severe conflicts with coastal fishermen. Thus, after World War II, one of the problems of Japan's marine fishery was to rejuvenate resources and increase the productivity of coastal fishermen.

The 1901 Fishery Law was thoroughly redrafted with the enormous effort of Takashi Hisamune, who was a lawyer and the Chief of the Planning Division of the Bureau of Fishery, Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, from 1947 to 1950. In redrafting the fishery law, he tried to make it as democratic as possible to establish a Fishery Co-ordination Committee which was actually the one proposed by Kanich Nomura.

The 1949 Fishery Law is composed of nine chapters, with 138 Articles. However, the core of the law was the establishment of a fishery co-ordination committee to make democratic and optimum use of fishery resources.

Administratively, Japan is divided into 47 prefectures. A fishery co-ordination committee (FCC) is established for each prefecture, with 15 members, of whom nine are elected from among fishermen. Of the remaining six, four are men of learning and experience, who are acquainted with fishery and fishery resources in the area, and two represent the interests of the public.

These two groups of the FCC members are nominated by the prefecture governor. The FCC is a legal organization, established by the 1949 Fishery Law, and interfacing between the prefecture government and fishermen, with the following functions:

- to formulate "a plan to make synthetic use of all fishery resources available in a sea area right off a prefecture on behalf of fishermen, taking into account the conservation of fishery resources". A fishing right and a fishing licence are the basic tools;
- to organize a public hearing to listen to the voices of fishermen;

- to allow the prefecture governor to issue fishing rights and licences, based on the recommendations;
- to issue orders to regulate fishing operations, whenever necessary; and
- to amend or adjust the plan in accordance with natural changes in the type and size of the fishery resources. This is done particularly at the time of the renewal of fishing rights and licences, at an interval of 5 or 10 years.

In addition to a FCC at the prefecture level, another FCC, with more or less similar functions, was established at the regional level, whenever the same resources are fished by fishermen from two or more neighboring prefectures. Apart from these FCCs, there is a national council, which examines the size and operational conditions of industrial fisheries, which have been specified by the minister who is responsible for fishery.

All the fishing rights granted on the basis of the 1901 Fishery Law became invalid when the new Fishery Law came into operation on 1 March 1950. The first election to the FCC took place on 15 August 1950, which means that the actual activity of the FCC started in the fall of 1950. To compensate the abolishment of old fishing rights, the government paid a sum of 18 billion yen to all the owners of fishing rights granted on the basis of the 1901 Law, who had to post a bond, repayable in 25 years. Later on, the bonds were encashed for the economic rehabilitation of FCAS.

With a few exceptions, a fishing right is granted by a prefecture governor to a FCA. There are three types of fishing rights:

Common fishing right: This is the fishing right that is commonly granted to every FCA. It covers the coastal sea area off the entire coast of a FCA. The distance from the coast varies according to the availability of resources and gear. The right is valid for sedentary resources such as abalone, turban shell, lobster, scallop and seaweeds, and non-mobile gear such as set gill-nets, boat and beach-seines, portable

trap and small set-net. The right is valid for 10 years. (Unlike in the 1901 Law, migratory resources were excluded from the 1949 common fishing rights.)

Aquaculture right: This right is established for a sea area suitable for aquaculture, for five years.

Right for large set-net: This is a right to set a large set-net, at over 27 m depth, to catch migratory fish in an area specified on a map. The validity is for five years.

Fishing licences are issued to either an individual fisherman or a fishing company. There are two types of fishing licences:

Fishing licence issued by the governor of the prefecture: This licence is issued to the owner of the fishing boat, who operates within the prefecture sea area. The validity is for five years.

Fishing licence issued by the minister responsible for fishery: This is issued to the owner of a fishing boat who operates in the sea area off two or more neighboring prefectures or on the high seas.

The grant of fishing rights and licenses based on the plan drawn by the FCC brought about the ideal circumstance for fishermen to create their own Community-based Fishery Management

system (CBFM). Such a situation was further accelerated by two facts: (a) The fishing rights granted based on the 1901 Law had already been nullified; and (b) fishermen's organization, such as the FCAs, which could be made responsible for the CBFM, was already available.

According to the Fishery Censuses, the total number of fishermen's organizations (FMOs) in Japan in 1952 was only 359, which increased to 1,339 in 1988, 1,524 in 1993 and 1,734 in 1998. Since the total number of FCAs in 1998 was 1,890, on average, one FMO has been developed in almost every FCA. Of the 1,734 FMOs in 1998, 460 (27 per cent of the total) were proper FCAs, 106 (6 per cent) were those that had been established by two or more neighboring FCAs, 742 (43 per cent) were fishermen's groups, which had been formed within a FCA, and 90 (5 per cent) were those that did not fall into any of these categories.

It is important to note that these FMOs appeared only after 1950, when the present fishery law was enacted. There was no FMO at all before 1945, when Japan was not a democratic country. In terms of fisheries management, there is no standard CBFM. They vary to a great extent, from very simple ones to sophisticated ones, as the ideas and ways of conserving fishery resources are, in many instances, created by the fishermen themselves.

Unrestricted fishing operations may result in excess of effort, wasteful operational costs and oversupply of fish, which will, in turn, lower the price of fish. To overcome such situations, a pool system has been developed for some fisheries, under the leadership of an experienced fisherman, who decides the days for fishing.

Only on those days do the fishermen go fishing. The size of the catch may vary among the fishermen, but the sale—and fuel expense—of every boat is pooled. The profit is then equally distributed among all the fishermen. This system greatly reduces the fishing effort. Catch limits have also been developed, whenever a fishery's experimental station is capable of providing the size of MSY to fishermen.

In recent years, with the enhancement of marine ranching, FMOs to cover the entire coast of a prefecture are being developed in several prefectures. The FMO developed for the entire coast of Fukushima Prefecture for an increased production of Bastard halibut (*Hirame*) is a typical example. In Akita Prefecture, an FMO was developed for the recovery of sand fish (*Hatahata*).

With the advent of the regime of the 200-mile economic zone, Professors Yutaka Hirasawa and Akira Hasegawa of the Tokyo University of Fishery did a

nationwide campaign to encourage fishermen to develop their own self management, using, as a synonym for CBFM, the term '*Resources Management Fishery*', which is now commonly used whenever fishery management is discussed among Japanese people.

In 1950, when the present fishery law was enforced, no one had thought that it would be so effective in developing CBFM. Even Hisamune, who drafted the 1949 Fishery Law, had never intended his law to be the base for CBFM. The reason for its success in Japan is thought to be the existence of a legal framework in the fishery law, namely, the establishment of a fishery co-ordination committee, by which fishermen were fully allowed to participate in the formation of a fishery management plan. 3

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Books or motors?

The case of the little fishing village of Jaleshwar in Gujarat, India throws up questions about the payoffs involved in 'growth' and 'development'

Adjacent to the western end of the Veraval marine drive and just behind the famous Birla temple lies the little Indian fishing community of Jaleshwar. Veraval is today one of the largest fishing harbours in the State of Gujarat. To people in fisheries, Jaleshwar was known in the 1970s as a prosperous fishing village, where the outboard motors (OBMs) had become part and parcel of the artisanal fishery. Visiting the village 30 years later, one notices that it still looks the same; children run around happily, looking scruffy and dirty; the adults go about their business as usual; and besides the new-looking fibreglass canoes on the shore, everything else in the community seems to have remained just the same.

Talking to a group of men in October of 2000, generally a peak fishing time, one realized that the season has not been as good as it should have been, but they are surviving because they had had a surprise catch of whale shark (*Rincodone*). The little community of around 400 families caught 70 large sharks. The large ones fetched Rs125,000 (Rs46.76 = US\$1) each and the smallest ones, Rs75,000. So that was like a windfall.

Mora Arab, now 70 and the first to have tried the OBM, narrates the story of their village. Their forefathers belonged to Patan, the *panchayat* (local council) adjoining the eastern end of the old Veraval municipality. They were cast-net fishermen who went to Hirakote or Sutrapada to fish in good seasons.

But as they did not get good prices for their fish there, 20-25 of Arab's father's generation decided to settle in Veraval so that they could have access to the Veraval market. This was in the 1940s. But, being Muslim, they were denied access to the jetty at Veraval, and so they decided to

settle illegally at the western end of the town, in this unoccupied, sandy space, where a tiny stream flows into the sea at Jaleshwar.

There are still unauthorized settlers today, accounting for around 1,600 votes in an otherwise Hindu-dominated ward of the municipality. The electricity line enters the village and so the houses have unauthorized electric connections, but little else of other infrastructure, like water, sanitation, roads, etc. Everyone buys water on an individual basis from private tankers. But the community has grown in numbers and the fishing too has developed.

The first big change was when the cast-nets were replaced by gill-nets, and the good pomfret catches increased incomes. This community attracted the attention of the government's fisheries officer in 1956, when the fisheries department had received six 4-hp British Anjani OBMs for trial fishing.

The established Kharva Hindu fishermen had refused these engines as they were skilled sailors and their catches were good. The fisheries officer was able to talk a few of these Machiyaras (the caste of Muslim fishermen) into trying the OBM as, for the most part, they were still rowing themselves to the fishing grounds or using very primitive sails.

First trials

"We were reluctant to use the motors at the start because we thought the noise of the motors would scare the fish away," says Arab. But the first trials came back with good catches. The fishermen realized that they were able to go to fishing grounds beyond the 15 fathoms where they normally fished. Encouraged by the catches but still untrained, others went in



for the motors, letting the new contraption run as long as the fuel permitted, afraid to touch it, lest it hit back.

Once the trials proved successful, the fishermen were ready to buy the OBMs and the more daring ones made a down payment of Rs500 for a 5-hp Evinrude motor. Evinrude's technician was on the spot to train them in the proper use of the engine and, from then on, there was no return. The fishermen soon needed one, two and three motors to keep them fishing regularly. Very soon, the Johnson 5-hp, Yamaha Aircool 8-hp and, finally, the Mariner 8-hp made their entries. Today, it is the Mariner 8-hp OBM that is the most popular because of its 365-degree rotation feature.

It was not only the motor but also the craft and gear that were gradually transformed. The cotton gill-nets were replaced by nylon ones in the early 1960s and, in the early 1980s, these were replaced or accompanied by plastic rope-nets and, in the mid-1990s, came the much lighter monofilament nets. So while the gear remained mainly gill-nets, their size did change. The number of pieces remained the usual 50-60, but the number of meshes increased. This meant that each piece got longer. Each fisherman utilized three or four different mesh-sized gill-nets to target pomfret, horse mackerel, seer fish and *hilsa*. Over the years, the width of the net also increased and being fixed

gill-nets, they targeted a larger variety of column fish.

These fishermen are also skilled shark fishers. They actually hunt shark in April and May with large spear-like devices with hooks at their ends. The operation can last for two to three days, during which a couple of boats encircle the shark, hook it and leave it to weaken, while they make sure that it remains afloat with buoys attached to the hook-line.

When they see the shark tire, they draw it nearer and then knock it on the head before hauling it in. One really wonders how they do this from their small boats, as the sharks they target are only the really large ones. But the fishermen do not recall any accidents at sea.

Fishing seasons

During the good fishing season, all the fishermen stay in the village, and a normal fishing trip starts around 4 a.m and ends by 9 a.m. In poorer fishing months, many of the fishermen are accustomed to migrate, with their equipment and family, to other fishing locations, generally to Shill, about 50 km west, where they live for about three or sometimes five, months. They sell their fish to local merchants there. With the introduction of the fibre reinforced plastic (FRP) boats in the mid-1970s, which were fitted with ice boxes, the fishermen were able to go for two-day fishing trips to 50-fathom depths.

In Jaleshwar, Muslim fish merchants from Veraval advance the fishermen money for their high-value fish. So, although they are assured of a market, they do not get the best prices because of the merchants' control. Although many of the fishermen are indebted to the merchants, they generally clear their debts during each season.

The fish catches have decreased since the mid-1990s. Veraval, where the fishery was modernized with huge landing and berthing facilities as part of a World Bank project, is home to 2,000 trawlers of 32-55 ft length, and 800 FRPs. Veraval has seen the boom-and-bust of the fishery between 1980 and 1996, with 50 per cent of its fleet out of operation in 2000. But this little community of Jaleshwar, which is still an illegal settlement, has continued to remain operative, adding between three to eight craft to its fleet annually. As the growth of this community has been from within, with no in-migration, over time, the labour to haul the craft and their large nets on shore has decreased, and, for the last two years, oil-operated winches have been used to haul the boats on shore.

So, from all technical points of view, this fishery has modernized, while remaining sustainable. But, then, we may ask how we assess sustainability if the living standards in the community have not 'improved'. While the houses have a more permanent look, they appear more like patched-up structures, growing as and when money becomes available. But, except for a couple of houses at the entrance of the village, few have a new look. Families have remained largely joint and, being Muslim, some of the fishermen have a second wife, a peaceful and regulated system of polygamy, with the first wife managing the common household. So households are large and the age of marriage very young, between 14-15 years, for both boys and girls. Interestingly, all deliveries take place at home, and the younger generation increasingly practices family planning, with the result that a young woman, before 18 years of age, has had two kids and has also undergone laproscopy.

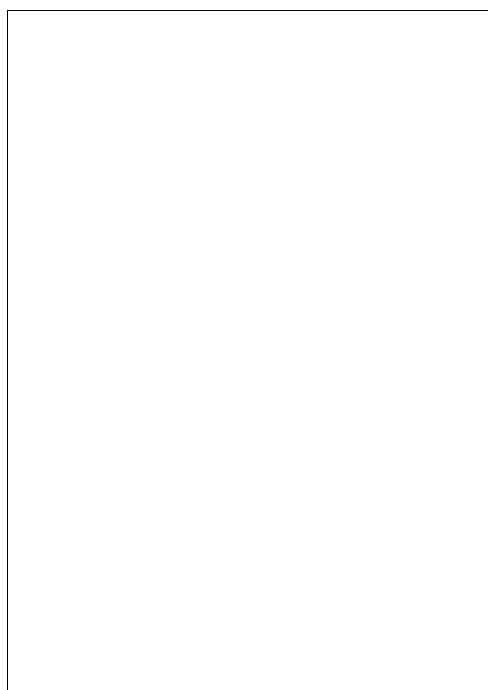
All the women get involved in the fishing activity, as the village is right on the beach.

They are at the shore at landing time, helping in the unloading, sorting fish, if necessary, and retailing the lower-valued species and drying the surplus. Once they cross the 35-year age limit, they seem to have greater freedom of movement and often take off on pilgrimages to holy places in all-women's groups. A few of the older ones have even accompanied their husbands to Mecca. Religious practice gives them their sense of identity and sanctions social behaviour, and the women are convinced that Allah takes care of them. In fact, all marriages take place within the community and between close relatives, but people do not report of many physically deformed or mentally handicapped children.

Though it is situated not even a kilometre away from the busy and bustling city of Veraval, not a single person from Jaleshwar seeks employment in the city. "We all live on the fishery and, in any case, how will we get employment without education?" asks Arab. Besides basic primary education for a small proportion of the youth, the majority in the village are still illiterate. Only one young man has studied up to the high school level. Being Muslim, the men do not drink; so where do all their excess earnings go? They say that the extra earnings have only helped them continue fishing. They need new motors almost every other year, for which they now pay Rs52,000. Although the monofilament nets are lighter, they have to be replaced every almost season. The fishermen continue to use plastic and nylon nets, replacing which is expensive. They get the kerosene for their motors at a subsidized rate, but they still require Rs5,000 or more for kerosene every four months, for each boat. The FRP boats are lighter than the wooden ones and require less maintenance, but their quality is running down too. The fishermen pay Rs52,000 a boat, which needs to be replaced once in five or six years, although their actual life may be from between 10 to 15 years. Together with the subsidies that they received in the initial stages from the Fisheries Department, the fishermen's earnings just manage to keep them afloat.

No wild ambitions

As a community, they do not seem to have any wild ambitions. They all work hard, do not starve and have a basic community



life. Ismail Arab is the community *Patel* (head), together with five other elected elders, who sort out intra-family disputes and represent the community when needed.

But they obviously have very little political clout and suffer caste discrimination even from their better-off Muslim brethren, who belong to the old business community of Veraval. This social 'backwardness' is not surprising in a State like Gujarat. Though Gujarat is productive and rich, the State has not felt the need to develop social infrastructure in the rural areas. With the State abdicating its responsibility to safeguard citizens' social and economic rights, it is no wonder that in this era of liberalization and globalization, Gujarat ranks highest in the development of private investment in infrastructure, according to the most recent World Bank report.

In the context of a search for a sustainable fishery in an otherwise 'growth'-oriented development paradigm, the reality of Jaleshwar raises several questions. The community has adopted modern technology to remain afloat. The investments in the fishery are large and, therefore, the fishing assets are substantial. This actually means that the greatest advantage from the fishery is taken by the companies that supply the fishermen with inputs. The excess

earnings have not been siphoned away for 'social development', like better education and habitation. The fishermen, for their part, have not desired to get bigger and more aggressive in their fishing, despite the trawler threat.

Comparing Jaleshwar to the little fishing village of Marianad in Kerala brings up an interesting contrast. Marianad was where a community development experiment was initiated, which became famous for the people's fish marketing co-operative that provided a case in favour of the artisanal fishery. In 1974, when fishermen from Marianad visited Jaleshwar to see how the OBM was faring, they returned saying, "Fine, the OBMs have helped them catch more fish, but they are still 'uncultured'." Since then, the fishermen of Marianad have motorized too and are not only using 25-hp motors, but also devices like global positioning systems to help locate the fishing grounds. Artificial reefs and more efficient nets have become common too. The village has grown, both internally and due to in-migration, and one can visibly see the developments in housing, infrastructure, allied businesses and material prosperity. The children of the fishermen now go to college and there are even a couple of doctors, engineers, M. Phils., teachers, nurses, priests and several graduates in the village. The fishery is still very vibrant, but indebtedness and wasteful consumerist expenditure is also very high. Violence in the village—both interpersonal and against women—is on the increase. The percentage of suicides and murders in the population is also high. So one wonders about the payoffs. Has competitiveness and aggression at sea led to greater competition and violence on land? Only a deeper study will throw more light on assessing 'growth' and 'development' in the context of the artisanal fishery. ♣

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Cooked or roasted?

A new bill, the first step towards privatization in the fisheries sector, threatens to split Chile's artisanal fishery sector

For several months now, the Chilean government has been preparing a new version of a bill to modify the 1991 General Law on Fisheries and Aquaculture. Following weeks of governmental indecision, violent fishworker protests, and controversy, on 6 December, a watered-down version was finally approved by the Chilean parliament. The project of 'Maximum Catch Limits for Fishery Enterprises', as approved by the parliament, includes three of the main industrial fisheries—jack mackerel, anchovy and sardine. Together, these account for 70 per cent of the total Chilean fish catch. Excluded from the bill are the Northern Regions I and II. Starting in Region III, the new bill will apply to all Regions south of Region II, for an initial period of two years. This article looks at the events immediately preceding the approval of this controversial bill, and some related issues.

On 15 November, only hours before it was due to be presented to parliament, the new draft bill was withdrawn, despite receiving the approval of a special parliamentary committee only a week earlier. It seems the government was highly nervous about the possibility of the bill being rejected. It would appear that they have a lot riding on it. If the bill is not passed in this calendar year, the government will not be able to propose another law for a further year.

The National Fisheries Society (SONAPESCA), the fishing industry body, has been pushing for this bill very strongly. According to CONAPACH (representing some 60,000 artisanal fishermen) its approval will effectively hand over Chile's marine resources, free of charge and in perpetuity, to the fishing industry. In its current form, the bill will effectively privatize up to 70 per cent of

the fish catch for the benefit of the industrial sector.

On 8 November, amid violent scenes outside the Chilean parliament, the Agriculture and Fisheries Committee approved the idea of passing the new transitory bill to modify the Fisheries Law. At the heart of the new bill is a proposal to introduce a new 'administrative tool' for allocating fishing quotas, using a system of 'maximum catch limits for fishery enterprises.' In other words, the new bill proposes to introduce a system of individual catch quotas. This is the fourth time in two years that such a bill has been placed before the Chilean parliament by the fisheries administration.

In the early hours of the morning of 8 November, around 900 workers from the industrial processing plants and industrial fishing fleet took up positions in front of the main entrance to the parliament. They strongly supported the bill, as it proposed to allocate quotas to specific fishing companies. They felt that this would make their jobs more secure.

Meanwhile, on the other side of the building, around 300 artisanal fishermen had gathered to protest against the new bill. They saw it as a further threat to their livelihoods, introducing allocation mechanisms that would privatize marine resource access rights, giving an even greater share to the industrial sector (See *The Other Side*, SAMUDRA Report 22, April 1999, pp 44-49).

Government criticized

The President of the Agriculture and Fisheries Commission, Deputy Guillermo Ceroni, criticized the government for not achieving sufficient consensus within the sector before putting the new bill before parliament. He said that this would

complicate the task of the parliamentarians, and had caused a regrettable split amongst the workers associated with the fishery sector.

The new bill not only creates divisions between industrial fishery workers and the artisanal sector, but also highlights a growing split within the artisanal sector itself. On the one hand, the National Confederation of Chilean Artisanal Fishermen (CONAPACH) strongly rejects any changes to the law that will lead to privatization of access rights. On the other, a recently formed alternative confederation, CONFEPACH (the National Confederation of Federations of Chilean Artisanal Fishermen), is prepared to negotiate with the government on the new bill. Not surprisingly, it is CONFEPACH, and not CONAPACH, which is represented on the government's National Fisheries Advisory Council.

This split reflects growing differences in approaches within the artisanal sector. On the one hand, CONAPACH considers coastal communities and artisanal fishermen to have basic and inalienable access rights, and marine resources as the common property of all Chilean citizens. In 1991, these rights were formally recognized in the General Law on Fisheries and Aquaculture, which established an 'Artisanal Reserve' in the 5-mile zone, where artisanal fisheries

were given exclusive access rights. However, since 1991, the Reserve Zone has been implemented more by exception than by the letter of the law. This has created significant distrust, and is the cause of growing conflicts between CONAPACH and the national fisheries administration.

In the case of CONFEPACH, it would seem that the leaders are much more commercial in their approach. They essentially represent the small enterprise sectors that have prospered in recent years. They see no contradiction in forming alliances with other sectors in the fishery, or with negotiating with the government. They also feel that the new law gives sufficient legal protection to their rights in the 5-mile zone. In their case, it is not so much that they feel threatened by the new catch quotas, or that they disagree with privatization *per se*. Rather, they see opportunities for strengthening their negotiating position by signing up to the new bill, warts and all. Theirs would seem to be a "we'll-scratch-your-back-if-you-scratch-ours" kind of approach.

Mistrust remains

The mistrust of CONAPACH is also based on the close associations that exist between the fisheries administration and the industrial fishery. In the new administration, Daniel Albarrán, the incumbent Fisheries Subsecretary, is a

businessman with extensive interests in salmon aquaculture. Together with a number of other groups, CONAPACH has made a formal request to the Ombudsman General of the Republic to investigate their allegations concerning 'grave irregularities' and 'conflict of interests'.

Juan Carlos Cardenas of ECOCEANOS recently pointed out, "It is an extremely delicate matter that whilst a proposal to modify the General Fisheries Law to privatize Chile's marine resources is being debated in parliament, the Fisheries Subsecretariat is being directed by a businessman like Daniel Albarrán Ruiz-Calvajo, a man who has obvious interests in the sector, and who is also one of the main advocates of changing the law."

According to ECOCEANOS News, Albarrán's aquaculture business interests disqualify him from public office. In Chilean law (The Law on Administrative Probity), "It is incompatible with the carrying out of public duties for authorities or functionaries to have private interests linked to the specific aspects (of their work) or to concrete cases, which must be analyzed, researched, or dealt by them or by the department or public service to which they belong."

A statement released by the Fisheries Subsecretariat, confirmed that Albarrán was the "owner of two aquaculture concessions, which came under the administrative control of the National Fisheries Service in November 1996, and which were dealt with by the Fisheries Subsecretariat on 29 October 1999 and 30 December 1999. Processing within the Marine Subsecretariat was completed on 20 December 1999 and on the 25 February 2000."

The official statement went on to point out that since taking up the office of Subsecretary, on 13 March 2000, Albarrán had not benefited from any decision of either the Marine or Fisheries Subsecretariats.

Before being selected for the post of Fisheries Subsecretary in the new government, Albarrán was the chairman of the Salmon and Trout Producers' Trade Association, a post he held for five years.

Albarrán is also currently the owner of a 3.3 per cent stake in the salmon culture enterprise, Antarfish.

Despite official reassurances that Albarrán has disposed of all his business interests in aquaculture, CONAPACH and other fishery-dependent interest groups are highly concerned about the links between government officials and private business interests. They have asserted that the government officials responsible for drafting and promoting the modifications to the law are not impartial. Due to their links with, and interests in, the commercial aquaculture and industrial fisheries sectors, such officials are both 'judge and party', and, therefore, not impartial. They cite Albarrán as a prime example.

CONAPACH, representing fishermen, divers and shellfish collectors, is highly critical of Albarrán. According to it, concessions such as these have an average market value of around 200 million pesos (around US \$350,000). They feel that the extent of Albarrán's interests in the fishery sector disqualify him from the post of Subsecretary. As Subsecretary, it is his job to push for fishery privatization, and to accelerate the handing over of 2,700 aquaculture concessions in the south of Chile. As a businessman with investments in the fisheries sector, Albarrán is likely to benefit, both directly and indirectly, from the proposed changes in the fisheries law. In Chile, many reports have highlighted the destructive impact of industrial salmon aquaculture on environmental sustainability and social equity. In this respect, Albarrán's business interests conflict with the wider interests of Chilean society, and the longer-term interest of sustainable social and environmental development.

Three drafts

Under the previous government of Eduardo Frei, three similar draft bills to modify the General Fisheries Law were placed before the Chilean parliament. One by one, all three were rejected. They all proposed the introduction of individual transferable quotas (ITQs), to be implemented through an allocation system based on historical catch records. According to CONAPACH, this would effectively transfer the ownership of more

than 90 per cent of Chile's fishery resources, free of charge and in perpetuity, to the very people responsible for degrading Chile's fishery resources.

The new proposal, described as a 'Transitory Bill', sets out to establish 'Maximum Catch Limits for Fishery Enterprises' for an interim period of two years. Although it is a transitory measure, it is regarded as the thin edge of a privatization wedge; it is feared that these maximum catch limits will become fullblown ITQs after two years.

The new bill consists of three main parts. The first part proposes the introduction of a new administrative tool, described as the maximum catch limit for boatowners; the second part proposes that the artisanal fisheries registry be regularized; while the third part contains various provisions.

In a five-page denunciation, CONAPACH calls on the Chilean parliament to reject this new bill on the grounds of "the common good, justice, equity and, above all, to preserve fishery resources as an integral part of the national heritage."

According to Cosme Caracciolo, the new president of CONAPACH, this new draft bill "undermines the constitutional guarantee that everyone has the right to be treated equally by the law. It establishes discretionary ways of assigning fishery

resources to specific individuals, resources which, up to now, have belonged to Chilean society at large. In some instances, allocation may be based on historic catch records of boatowners; in other cases, according to the longitude of the authorized fishing area or the hold capacity of the vessels belonging to the recipient enterprises."

Caracciolo points out that, for large national and transnational companies, this project is truly the "means to the end". "This bill will result in the suspension of a number of regulatory measures of an environmental nature, as well as violating the constitutional rights of artisanal fishworkers to fish freely, undermining Article 19, No. 24 of the Constitution."

According to several parliamentarians and organizations such as CONAPACH, the draft bill represents a basic corruption of the constitution, as it assumes that fishery resources are '*res nullis*', that is to say 'belonging to no one', denying that they form part of the national heritage in Chile's Exclusive Economic Zone.

Serious threat

Juan Carlos Cardenas emphasizes, "As citizens, we would like to remind Ricardo Lagos that he is president of the whole of Chile, and not only of the Angelini Fishing Group and the salmon exporters. The current situation is a serious threat to the conservation of resources, national

marine ecosystems, national food security and the economic, social and cultural aspects of coastal community life”

Humberto Mella, the former president of CONAPACH, has announced that the organization is planning a programme of countrywide strikes and demonstrations. “If the government really wants trouble, they will be able to find it in every *caleta*,” he says.

As the Chilean summer approaches, and amid health warnings on the radiation caused by ozone depletion in the Southern hemisphere, it looks as if political temperatures will be soaring in the next few weeks. But hot enough to cook or roast the new fisheries bill? 🐙

Chile

This piece by Brian O’Riordan (icsfbrussels@yucom.be) has been compiled from ECOCEANOS News, CONAPACH documents, and other sources provided by Juan Carlos Cardenas of ECOCEANOS and CONAPACH

SAMUDRA editorial

Shooting for accountability

Another response to the SAMUDRA Report editorial
on the Seattle protests against the World Trade Organization

As a regular reader of SAMUDRA Report, I felt encouraged to write this letter by Nalini Nayak's and Anna-Rosa Martinez's calls for a debate on the WTO in their responses to your editorial comment of December 1999.

Anna-Rosa Martinez, in her response, made some of the key points necessary to any debate on the WTO—the subjugation of all areas of human development to the demands of trade, the contested legitimacy of the institution itself, and the shortsightedness of any development strategy that relies on export at the expense of food security, environmental conservation, and nurturing young people for a better future. A serious debate on the subject requires that these areas be explored in more detail, and the specific impact of multilateral trade agreements on various types of fishery and fishing communities be studied and evaluated carefully. Members of the ICSF are better qualified than I to undertake this kind of informed scrutiny, but I do believe the following general political points might be useful to keep in mind when doing so.

First, it might be helpful to clarify the various constituencies and their interests. Do they relate to fisher people only as *producers* whose interests will be best served by increased individual incomes through export? Are they not also *citizens* who share with others an interest in having an accountable and well-endowed government that will ensure basic needs, job creation, etc.; *women and men* who may benefit unequally from trade; *children and youth* who may have aspirations other than to follow in the footsteps of their parents (out of a lack of choice)?

Keeping these broader identities in mind, the following questions need to be asked: Will trade generate enough earnings for

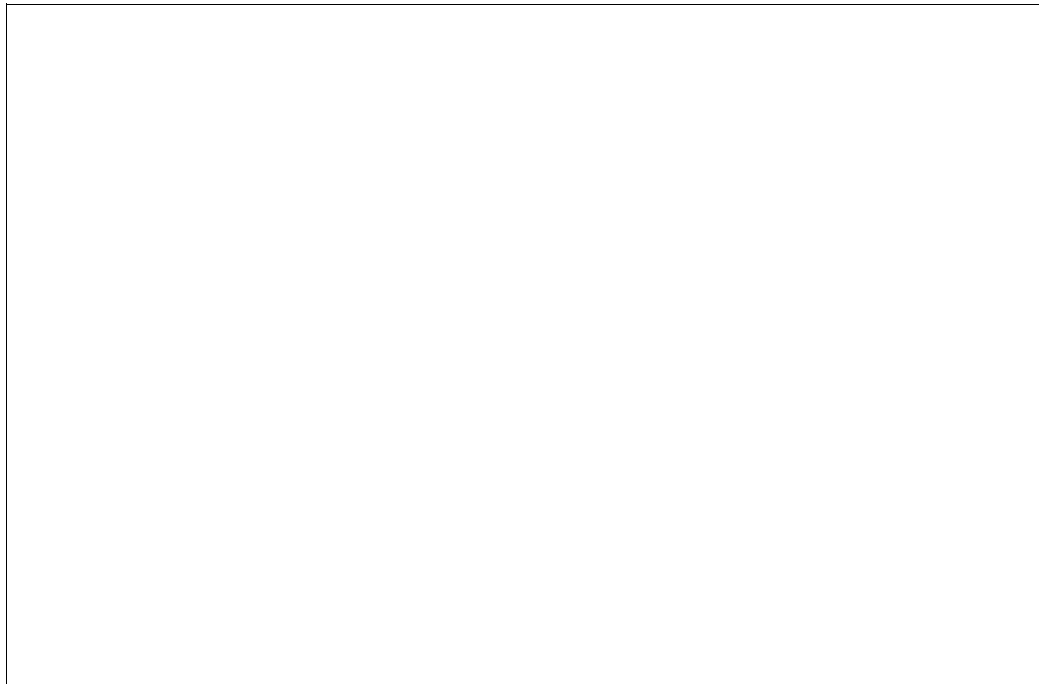
individuals to replace the need for public provision of education, healthcare, etc.? Alternatively, will the multilateral trade agreements permit the State to raise revenues and invest them in these areas? Or will they, instead, constrain government action in this area as being detrimental to 'competitiveness'? Will earnings through trade accrue equally to all members of the community? If not, will public institutions have the means to redress this imbalance? Or will these means be undermined by clauses in the trade agreements? A balanced evaluation of the WTO would require answering these questions, as well as those related to terms of trade.

A second broad point has to do with the methods chosen: whether to protest outside the WTO for its dismantling, or, at least, for greater accountability; or work within it to win concessions for the constituency it represents.

As Anna-Rosa Martinez pointed out, the protesters at Seattle came from a variety of backgrounds, with very different interests and analyses. The one thing they agreed on was the illegitimacy of having a trade organization determine so many vital areas of their lives. But even if one were convinced of the illegitimacy of the WTO as a forum (non-representative, non-accountable and premised on the priority of trade), one may see the usefulness of acting within it to shift its presumptions and make it more accountable.

Internal space

It would be a mistake to completely abandon the internal space, rather than continue to exploit it. However, to set oneself against the protesters outside is to take a clear political stance on the side of capital, governments and 'experts' and



against those whose exclusion from power structures allows them few other forums but the street. This, as Nalini Nayak rightly points out, cannot be justified by anyone who has in mind the interests of the historically marginalized fishing communities of the world. ❧

This Letter to the Editor comes from Aparna Sundar (asunder@chass.utoronto.ca), a Ph.D. student in political science at the University of Toronto, Canada

Social research

Abandoning the ivory tower

The role of researchers in coastal communities needs to be critically examined to foster a responsive and collaborative approach

How do we make community needs and visions central to government fisheries policy, fisheries management and international agreements? This is a central question that plagues activists and their supporters in coastal communities all over the world. To have some chance of being heard and respected, and to make convincing policy arguments, we need to understand the facts of any issue, the linkages attached to it, and the probable results of various policy directions. For this, we need focused research that is carried out by competent researchers who have the best interests of the community in mind, and who are responsive to community information needs.

When women fishworkers, community organizers and researchers met in Newfoundland for the *Gender, Globalization and Fisheries* conference in June 2000, we looked at some of the ways in which researchers have worked in, and with, coastal communities in the past. This issue was raised by various researchers who were concerned about some of the intrusive methods currently in use in the social sciences, and also by a shellfisher whose experience as a subject of government research had been frustrating and distressing.

We also dreamed about how it could be, and developed lists of urgent research topics for the Atlantic Provinces of Canada. Many of those issues have been reflected in the recent special edition of *Yemaya*. In this article, I will share some key points arising from our discussions on the role of the researcher.

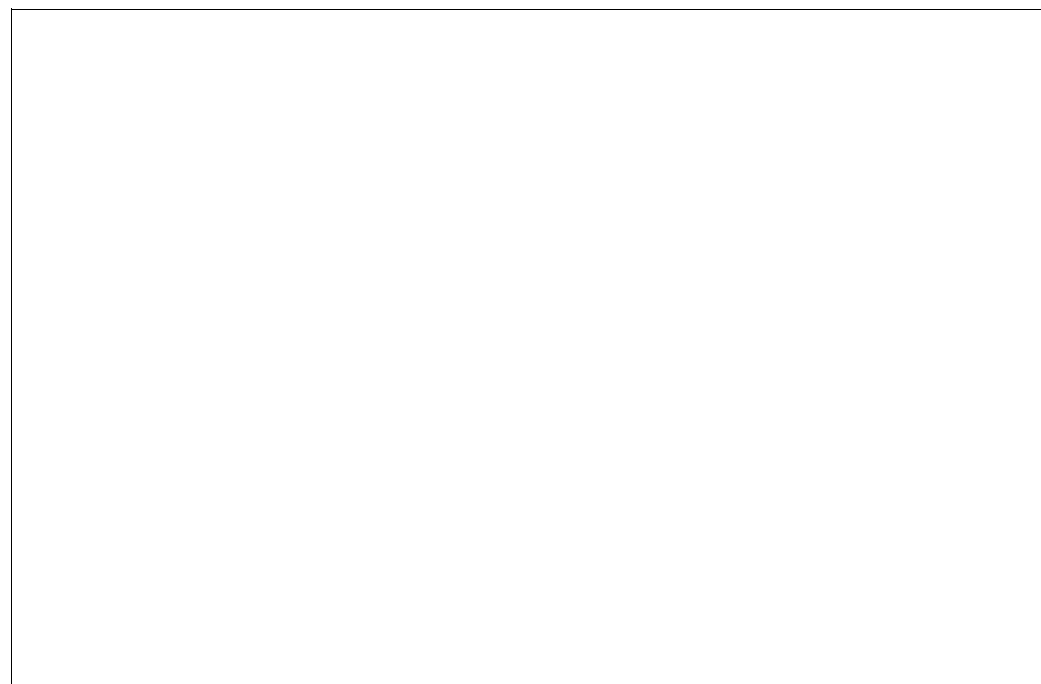
Unfortunately, almost everyone who has had some experience of research in coastal communities can remember when arrogance, poor communication and

inappropriate methods caused problems, and there are all too many examples of academics stripping information out of communities and then disappearing to build their reputations through publications, without returning any benefit to the community. Happily, there are also researchers whose work is an example of how to do things well, in respectful collaboration with fishworkers.

Community activists and advocates are often battling entrenched government policy, embodied in an inflexible bureaucracy. Frequently, they are trying to deal with factors that are beyond local control. Sometimes, there is no other option than to resort to court action. Whether the fight is for fair access to local marine resources, healthy working conditions, restrictions on destructive gear types or rational federal policy on joint-venture agreements, people in coastal communities often need outside support. Academic researchers who have established credentials bring legitimacy, in the eyes of bureaucrats, when they decide to work with community activists. They have the power to bring information from the outside and the skills to excavate information from within the community. As an outsider, a researcher can trigger deeper analysis and challenge local assumptions. Also, researchers have tools and methods that, if transferred, can be useful for local activists.

Ethical approach

To realize her/his potential, a researcher must have an ethical and thoughtful approach, a commitment to work with people for social change, and a willingness to take the time needed to develop trust. Establishing trust can take a long time and be hard work. In most cases, it requires the researcher to actually live in the community.



The researcher should be aware of her own assets and strengths, and offer them to the community, rather than coming in with a pre-set agenda. Community people need to know why, and for whom, the research is being done. It is vital to ask the 'right' question, or at least one that has practical significance for the community. Project design is critical. A project must include / accommodate a process through which local control or at least real input is possible at the design stage. The design must also include a realistic budget and time allowance for returning information to the community in user-friendly forms.

The design should be conscious of gender inequities. While it is important to respect local culture and tradition, the researcher must also be ready to find creative ways to break down traditional barriers to participation of marginalized groups. A community is rarely homogeneous. There are many voices and perspectives, and it is the role of the researcher to ensure that marginalized and minority views are uncovered and considered.

Sometimes, researchers act as if the data they collect belongs to them or to their institution. In fact, information drawn from the community belongs to the community. Information concerning natural resources or traditional knowledge should be treated as confidential, and released to the public

only with permission. Primary information, especially maps, should be handed over to a local institution (museum, library, council office).

Optimally, research is nested in a larger programme of community development, and there are linkages to local leaders and institutions. Many community activists have found that participatory analysis, involving a wide range of societal groups, is most fruitful. It is also important to transfer tools and information that allow or promote follow-up activity by community-based activists.

It is important that the research does not make excessive demands of the community or disturb livelihoods. Gathering research data as quickly as possible may seem like the most important task in the eyes of a researcher with a deadline to meet. However, if the participants in workshops, mapping exercises, interviews, etc. feel bullied or stressed, they are unlikely to provide the quality of information that is required.

Assumptions challenged

Above all, a researcher entering a community must be humble, willing to challenge her own assumptions, and willing to change them! Listening is a key skill. It is also important to watch out for unexpected impacts of the research process. Are you opening wounds or sparking conflicts? If a sensitive topic is

opened up, there must be a process for closure and healing. Some methodologies that can be found in books simply do not work in many situations. Intrusive and potentially degrading methods, such as wealth ranking, should be avoided, unless there is some compelling need as well as informed participant consent.

Another area where researchers often trip up is in their use of language. Plain language works best, and is essential in all reports returned to the community for future use. When designing a research or development project, build on the community's strengths, don't dwell on the problems. If a researcher recognizes and supports community capacity, the process will be easier and the outcome will be enriched.

Nobody is perfect, and often a researcher will make mistakes in spite of having good intentions. We need to learn from our mistakes, as well as build upon our successes. For this to work, researchers must take time to share information and experiences with other researchers, and open themselves and their work up to critical evaluation. Performing collaborative and comparative research is fruitful, because then you can uncover linkages and find common ground among coastal communities that struggle with similar or related issues.

Having personal and profession integrity is very important. It does no good if, at the end of a fruitful project, the researcher bows to political pressure or is swayed by the prospect of future financial benefit, and allows research reports to be changed or misrepresented by other parties.

The issues facing coastal communities are so critically important, there is no justification for frivolous or strictly academic research. Nor can research results simply be produced and then left unused. Researchers should have a concrete plan for using their results to develop policy recommendations that will then be sent to government and to the media.

Researchers who hold positions in wealthy Western academic institutions have an added opportunity and responsibility to facilitate the work of

community activists, junior researchers and colleagues based in developing countries. There is room for more university-sponsored training programmes for community researchers and activists. In many cases, fishworkers and activists are not made to feel welcome in academic circles, and universities have no clear mandate and mechanism for community service. It will take time, but academic staff can help to develop long-term and responsive links between the university and communities. One approach is to demand that fishworkers and community facilitators participate in committees that develop university programmes. Where there are Women's Centres, rural women should be invited to the Board of Directors. There should also be a place for Southern researchers on Northern campuses, and especially in university funding and development committees. Academic institutions must be challenged to develop and follow a code of ethics that supports respectful collaboration and community-led, participatory research.

Even the most committed and careful of researchers face hurdles that can make it difficult or impossible to design and carry out fully collaborative research programmes. One obstacle is the general lack of funding for proactive or preventative activity. Funding often becomes available only at times of crisis, and, therefore, the research responds to problems, instead of helping to avoid them. Even if there is access to timely funding, the money may have strings attached.

Other obstacles

Funders often try to dictate priorities and research questions, and they frequently have unrealistic deadlines that do not allow time for developing respectful relationships, performing participatory exercises or developing reports in the local language. Other obstacles may be thrown up by the community itself. For instance, women tend to get split along class lines, and they are often not recognized as legitimate fishworkers. The media can also interfere with progress, as it generally wants to focus on only negative news. This creates unnecessary stress and can inflame conflicts, just when the community needs to pull together.

Government policies are frequently anti-female and work against healthy family and community life. For example, there is little recognition among government staff or by medical and other professionals, of work-related illness prevalent among female fishworkers. This sort of ignorance among people who should offer assistance, can make it difficult to argue for the need for research, attract funding and promote positive change.

Despite the obstacles and demands, productive, collaborative research that can help communities deal with urgent coastal and fisheries issues is possible, and it is very important that researchers rise to this challenge. Gaining strength through networking and partnerships is an important piece of the process. Participants in the *Gender, Globalization and Fisheries* conference have made an important start, and continue to grasp hands across the expanse of continents and oceans, via the Internet and through publications such as *Yemaya* and SAMUDRA Report.

This piece is by Irene Novaczek (inova@isn.net), an independent fisheries consultant based in Prince Edward Island, Canada

Fishery co-operatives

Three birds with one stone

This seventh instalment from the pioneer of Japan's co-operative movement talks of negotiating to maintain the fishing rights of the co-operatives

For several years after the war, distribution of rice was often delayed, and the people in the fishing villages often went hungry. Therefore, I devoted my efforts to procuring rice for these fishing villages. Although rice sales were controlled by the central government, I negotiated directly with the Agricultural Organization of Fukushima Prefecture, a rice-growing area.

There was a severe shortage of food, particularly in Hokkaido, where not much rice was grown, but the residents of Hokkaido managed to get by on potatoes, corn, pumpkins and other such food. The fishermen, however, needed rice in order to remain healthy enough to do their work.

I then told the Agricultural Organization how we had exchanged one 90-kg bag of fishmeal for each 60-kg bag of rice, and that I considered that rate unsatisfactory. If we could have dealt with Niigata Prefecture, which had the highest rice production level in Japan, we could have received one-and-a-half bags, or 90 kg, of rice for 90 kg of fishmeal.

I requested that the government allow us to trade officially with Niigata. After much discussion, I promised that we would each give an extra half-bag of rice (30 kg) to the government if it approved such an exchange. The government realized that it would then have more rice to distribute equally throughout the nation, and we received official approval to trade with Niigata.

We called this the Rice-Link-Trade System, and we continued to deal in this system until the government relinquished its control of food distribution in 1949. The fishermen in Hokkaido were thus able to

work harder and increase fishery production; the rice farmers were able to increase their production levels 20 per cent every year by using the fertilizer we supplied; and the government had more rice, which it could distribute to the citizens.

You may know the saying, "Kill two birds with one stone." In this case, I was very pleased to say that we had killed three birds with one stone.

Eventually, we began to trade sardine fishmeal as well, and the peak amount of fishmeal production reached 50,000 bags annually. As the processing of fishmeal required much labour in those days, I sent many fishermen to other areas to make fishmeal during the kelp off-season to ensure that a sufficient amount of fishmeal could be produced.

The manner in which we did all our work was based on the co-operative ideal. I think we succeeded, since the farmers and fishermen came to understand the spirit of co-operatives, and they all worked together for their mutual benefit.

I should add that one of the biggest problems we faced was how to deal with the policy of the General Headquarters (GHQ) of the occupation forces, which ruled Japan under General McArthur, after the Second World War. The GHQ purged not only the military leaders, but also many leaders of industries, for war crimes. Furthermore, the GHQ threatened to dissolve many associations that had been organized by the government.

No exception

The fisheries associations were no exception. The National Federation of Fisheries (Zengyoren) had been dissolved in 1947, and the Hokkaido fisheries

industry organization (previously, Dogyoren) was also targeted for dissolution.

At that time, Demachi was re-elected as President of Dogyoren. As I mentioned before, I did not get along with him very well, but he urged me to accept the post of managing director. I finally accepted his offer on the condition that he would never speak ill of any of the excellent staff members, and that he would consult with me prior to making any decisions about personnel.

He was often misunderstood by others because of his strong personality, but it worked to our advantage in his negotiations with the GHQ. He showed himself to be a tough negotiator, and he was instrumental in retaining the fishing rights of the FCAs. The GHQ had originally tried to establish another organization, apart from the FCAs, to govern fishing rights. We invited a certain colonel of the GHQ, who was in charge of restructuring the FCAs, in order that he might understand the situation in Hokkaido.

Demachi suggested that the FCAs economic functions not be separated from the management of the fishing rights. I then took the colonel on a tour of the Noboribetsu FCA area. I explained that the fishermen had joint ownership of the fishery rights, and that these rights were

exercised democratically, not in a communist fashion. In this way, the FCAs in Japan were unlike co-operatives in other countries.

I also told him that I believed agricultural co-operatives should have control of the land, and that the farmers should be allowed to use the land freely. If the co-operatives did not have these rights, there was a chance that many farms would be taken over by a few rich farmers.

I asked him to consider this matter seriously, and he nodded in agreement, as we parted. A short while later, GHQ decided that the FCAs could retain their fishing rights. ❧

This is excerpted from the *Autobiography of Takatoshi Ando*, translated by Naoyuki Tao and James Colyn

News Round-up

Galloping off

Around 900 protesting fishermen recently vacated research stations they had seized in the Galapagos Islands in **Ecuador**, after the government met their demands and loosened limits on lobster trapping.

The fishermen had taken control of the Charles Darwin Foundation's research facilities to protest a government-imposed limit on their catches. In October, the Galapagos fishing commission established a seasonal limit, giving fishermen up to three months to harvest no more than 50 tonnes of lobster. But the weight limit was exceeded after only two months, and 939 fishermen—almost double the number registered in 1999—were demanding an extension.

The Galapagos archipelago is 600 miles west of the

Ecuadorean mainland in the Pacific Ocean and is Ecuador's main tourist attraction. Its species of plants and animals, found nowhere else in the world, have unique characteristics that helped Charles Darwin develop his theory of evolution.

No suicide

Morocco is not keen on entering into a 'suicidal' agreement with the European Union (EU) on fisheries, according to the kingdom's sea-fishery minister, Said Chbaatou.

The EU answer to the kingdom's proposals does not take into account mutual commitment for a 'renovated' and 'balanced' partnership, Chbaatou said. He deplored the EU response as a mere duplicate of the last fishing agreement (1995-99). He also insisted Morocco was

sovereign on its resources and keen to make the most of relations with

Brussels in every field, including fisheries.

The Moroccan proposals call for a reduction of duration of the agreement and number of European fishing boats, and limitation of catches and their landing in Moroccan ports. Morocco also wants exclusive fishing zones for nationals, satellite monitoring and boarding of local fishermen on European trawlers.

Wan no more

With its recent entry into the Convention on Conservation and Management of Highly Migratory Fish Stocks in the Central and Western Pacific Ocean, a government-to-government international fishery organization, the **Republic of China** (ROC, Taiwan) has raised its profile.

According to fishery administration officials, this is the first time since the ROC's expulsion from the UN in 1971 that **Taiwan** has managed to fully participate in a multilateral international organization. They said that Taiwan joined the commission as a 'fishing entity' under the name of 'Chinese

Taipei' and the ROC, as a fishing entity in the executive commission, will enjoy almost the same rights and obligations of the convention's 'contracting parties'.

Observers said Taiwan's enormous clout in the deep-sea fishing industry is the major reason behind its success in breaking Beijing's diplomatic embargo and taking part in all six rounds of negotiations for the formation of the body. The ROC ranks among the world's six largest deep-sea fishing countries, according to official UN tallies.

Yanks poached

Russia has decided to confiscate a US fishing vessel for poaching. The city court in Petropavlovsk-

Kamchatskiy passed a ruling on 8 November to confiscate the M-Grey Shadow fishing schooner, belonging to the US Arctic Sea Corporation. The schooner poached in the Sea of Okhotsk off the Kamchatka western coast, concealing its name and registration. The schooner had reportedly started

escaping to the high seas on 11 October, when the Russian Pagella coastguard ship tried to stop it for inspection. Only after being fired upon by a coastguard plane did the vessel stop. The schooner was flying the Honduran flag, and its crew consisted of Russians. The court fined their captain, Yevgeniy Vanin, over R150,000.

Hands off our fish

We need investments alright, but we'd like to keep the fish for ourselves. So seems to be the collective will of **South Africa**. As Europe's fishing fleet, too big for its own waters, wants permission to move into the recently rehabilitated waters off South Africa's coast, the country's government, unions and industry are intent on preventing European fishing boats from casting their nets within 125 miles of the country's coastline.

The government says Spain and Portugal are pushing the EU to press for access to those waters, as the two countries are currently the main buyers of South Africa's lucrative hake exports and both have excess fishing and fish-processing capacity at home.

Pay up or else...

Fishing companies from **Chile** exported

canned and frozen jack mackerel to **Cuba** for a total amount of US\$14.5 million (1.5 million boxes). The amount exported represents 44 per cent of Chile's total exports during the first half of 2000.

However, according to Pesquera Alimentos Marinos (Alimar), Cuba owes a total of US\$18 million to different Chilean fishing companies that have been sending the canned and frozen products to that country.

Apart from Cuba's government, two traders are also responsible for the debt: Tres Lirios and Sur Continente. The capacity of the exports exceeded the ability of these two companies to respond economically.

Cuba negotiated direct credit with some local companies such as Pesquera Coloso. San Jose and Camanchaca, two of the biggest Chilean exporters, are some of the companies whose commercial activities have been affected, since the expected money has not arrived yet. Cuba's debt with Camanchaca, for example, has reached US\$4 million.

Cracked cans

Retailers in **South Africa** have started sending back

Namibian canned fish products, after they discovered cracks in some Namibian fish cans, reports The Namibian. South Africa is the main

importer of Namibian canned fish products. The fish factories said they had not yet quantified losses as a result of the cracked tins but said it would "definitely run into several millions".

South African fish factories use a different type of tin for its fish, which has fewer joints than the tins used by Namibian processors. An independent food scientist, jointly appointed by the Namibian Government and the Geneva-based International Standards Organization, found that the cracks in 425-gm tins of fish among the stored 1998 production was caused by corrosion that increases during storage and handling of the cans.

Shrimp crimped

The collapse of **Indonesia's** economy three years ago has taken its toll on one Indonesian shrimp

farm purported to be the world's largest shrimp processor. The company, Dipasena Citra Darmaja (DCD), once valued at US\$2.5 billion is now worth just US\$400 million at most, says the Indonesian Bank Restructuring Agency.

Most of DCD's 18,000 shrimp ponds have been empty and farmers are refusing to work. Close to 60,000 people rely on the company for their livelihood.

Its operations include hatcheries, feed mills, large-scale grow-out operations, state-of-the art processing and cold-storage plants, two power stations, feed mills, hatcheries, cold-storage facilities, international sales and marketing facilities and two container ships.

The company hopes to add enough ponds by the end of 2001 to

reach US\$1 billion in sales. In its best year, DCD took in revenues of less than US\$200 million and this year it and its affiliates will be lucky to clear US\$100 million, says an article in the Far

A good fisherman is one whose mind works like a compass, who knows exactly where to go, what to do, where the fish will be, and can tell others also. Once such a man has a reputation, others will follow him always. He has a sense of the sea.

— Simon, an Indian fisherman, quoted in
*The Performance of Gender: An Anthropology of
Everyday Life in a South Indian Village*
by Cecilia Busby



ICSF is an international NGO working on issues that concern fishworkers the world over. It is in status with the Economic and Social Council of the UN and is on ILO's Special List of Non-Governmental International Organizations. It also has Liaison Status with FAO. Registered in Geneva, ICSF has offices in Chennai, India and Brussels, Belgium. As a global network of community organizers, teachers, technicians, researchers and scientists, ICSF's activities encompass monitoring and research, exchange and training, campaigns and action, as well as communications. SAMUDRA REPORT invites contributions and responses. Correspondence should be addressed to the Chennai office.

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

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