

Yemaya

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ICSF's NEWSLETTER ON GENDER AND FISHERIES

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From the Editor

Dear Friends,

Greetings from ICSF! And welcome to another issue of *Yemaya*! This time we have quite an interesting assortment of articles, starting with an interview with Margaret Nakato, a leader of the Katosi Women Fishing and Development Association (KWFDA) in Uganda. She recently toured France and interacted with fisherfolk and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in Breton, during screenings of the widely discussed and acclaimed documentary film on the Nile Perch fisheries in Kenya, *Darwin's Nightmare*.

In another article from KWFDA, Caroline E. Nabalema writes about how the women from fishing villages such as Katosi and Kalangala look up to the organization to not only promote their participation in the fisheries but also to generally raise the standard of living of the rural communities they are part of.

From Pakistan comes a report on a fisherwomen's convention that took place in July 2005, in the form of a large assembly of women from the fishing villages of Sindh. Organized by the Pakistan Fisherfolk Forum (PFF), the convention gave the women an opportunity to highlight their problems innovatively, through tableaux, folk songs and other cultural shows. The convention ended with the adoption of resolutions demanding, among other things, the equal and unfettered participation of women in fishing-related activities, the provision of basic healthcare and maternity facilities, and



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the prevention of pollution of lakes and water bodies.

The “sea women” on Udo Island and Cheju Island, off the southern coast of South Korea, are among the world's most skillful and toughest natural divers. Year round, they plumb the sea bottom with no scuba gear, in one- or two-minute dives that mix “dexterity, desire and death”, as the special piece from the *Udo Journal* graphically describes. Yet, with the population of sea women declining and their existing numbers fast ageing, the future of this way of life remains uncertain.

We also have book reviews on gender and fisheries, as well as one on an award-winning documentary that paints a dramatic picture of the dried fish vendors in Leyte, Philippines, who sell their wares to the rhythm of the songs they sing.

Yemaya seems to be appearing in the least expected of places! Marja Bekendam of the VinVis Women in Fisheries network was strolling down a street in La Laguna, Gran Canaria, Spain, when she spotted a tilework sign outside a shop that said, “Bazar Yemaya”! Read on to see what her explorations led her to!

This issue also carries a readership survey questionnaire, as an insert. Please spare a few minutes to fill it in and return to ICSF at the address given on the last page of the issue. Your valuable responses will help us improve *Yemaya*.

And finally, we would like to wish you the very best for a joyful new year!

Africa / Uganda**Hopes amidst the nightmare**

During a recent tour of France, Margaret Nakato, leader of the Katosi Women Fishing and Development Association (KWFDA) in Uganda, met consumers, Breton fishermen and NGOs as well as Herbert Sauper, who wrote and directed Darwin's Nightmare, the vivid and controversial documentary film on the Nile Perch fisheries in Kenya. In this interview, conducted on 18 October 2005, Margaret discusses the film and the importance of networking among the fishworkers' organizations of the South.

By Alain le Sann of the *Collectif Pêche et Développement*, and a member of ICSF

You have viewed *Darwin's Nightmare* with the members of your co-operative. Would you say it's a true picture of current conditions over there?

Generally, yes. It shows clearly that the wealth generated by the Nile Perch fisheries has not percolated to the local communities. It remains largely in the hands of Europeans, plant owners and the government. In Uganda, the fishing sector is a major contributor to the gross domestic product—accounting for nearly 20 per cent. In Katosi, we catch Nile Perch too, but there is a difference between Katosi and Mwanza in Kenya: here you will not find abandoned children roaming the streets. The incidence of AIDS among fishermen is double the national average. It seems the anti-HIV campaigns have been less successful here.

The film shows that women are particularly marginalized in the development of Nile Perch exports. What do you think?

That's quite true. Before the Nile Perch boom and exports to Europe, women processors would smoke the fish and sell it on the local market and in neighbouring countries like the Congo. That provided food and livelihoods. Today many smoking ovens are idle and more find it difficult to include fish in their



diets. Fishermen prefer to sell to exporters. The spread of the Nile Perch has also reduced the number of species traditionally consumed locally. Women processors have to resort to juvenile species for their trade, and consequently, face penalties from the authorities. That is why we pressed the women to refrain from using undersized fish and turn instead to alternatives activities.

Some European countries are suggesting a boycott of the Nile Perch. What is your view?

That's an important demand, which needs thorough debate. Personally, I'm rather guarded about the move. The Nile Perch remains a major resource for the countries that border Lake Victoria. It would be difficult to suddenly do without it. One should instead aim at a more fair trade that would bring decent returns to the fishermen and allow them to have a bigger say in management matters. If, after proper consideration and debate, the fishermen and their communities decide to call for a boycott, why not?! As long as they ponder over all aspects and options... It's for them to decide their course of action.

As for us, we try to make families less dependent on fishing by encouraging the women to venture into new areas such as handicrafts, agriculture and trading. The level of pollution in the lake is already high and its

resources may well decline further. To diversify occupations, we need adequate funding and support. The European Union is providing some help to upgrade the processing plants to EU standards. Why not also help the fishermen and their families to improve their lot?

Tell us about the actions undertaken by your organization.

We have established credit schemes to start revenue-generating activities. We currently have a membership of 198 women. We were operating several boats, but because of low returns from fishing, we now have only two. We now promote cattle rearing and vanilla cultivation. We would like to expand aquaculture and we have constructed tanks to distribute clean water, for which people pay a small fee.

You are the vice-president of the World Forum of Fishworkers. Does that serve you in the field?

Yes, of course. To organize our people to compete with processors, we have to be informed about fish prices and distribution networks, about WTO and EU regulations. We have to exchange notes with fisherfolk from other countries. We have to be active stakeholders in resource management, and in the programmes set up by the government, for example, the beach management units.

Today the threat of privatization of the resource is looming. Fisherfolk all over the world face such problems. Thanks to our international network, we were able to view *Darwin's Nightmare* and show it to members of our group. There are questions asked about the Nile Perch chain, here in Europe and at home in Africa. It is important that fishworkers around Lake Victoria can react and express their views. They have done that in the video we made after together viewing *Darwin's Nightmare*.

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Africa / Uganda

The first of its kind...

A report of a fisheries stakeholders' dialogue meeting held in Uganda in June 2005

By Caroline E. Nabalema, Katosi Women Fishing and Development Association (KWFDA)

A fisheries dialogue meeting organized by Action Aid–Uganda in June 2005 brought together fisherfolk from landing sites as well as beach management unit representatives. The meeting also involved district fisheries officials around Lake Victoria, the Uganda Fisheries and Fish Conservation Association (UFFCA) and the Ministry of Fisheries.

Women were also included in the dialogue, through women's community-based organizations. The Katosi Women Fishing and Development Association (KWFDA) is one such organization that promotes women's participation in the fishing sector so as to improve the general quality of rural women's lives.

As the first of its kind for the grassroots fisher communities, the meeting sought to enable all fisherfolk directly engaged in fishing activities—even those at the lowest rung of the production process—to voice their problems and participate in finding solutions.

The main problem was the restriction on fishing in some areas of the lake. The fisherfolk claimed the government had “sold off” parts of the lake to foreign investors who restricted fishing in those parts of the lake. The fishing communities also complained about the introduction of the Nile Perch, a predator that has wiped out the other species of fish such as tilapia and *mukene*. The communities now cannot depend on the lake to add nutritional value to their diets.

Participants also complained about ignorance of national fisheries policies, which were framed without consulting them. This was unfair as they were supposed to actually implement the rules and policies.

There were also complaints about price fluctuations, unfair terms of trade with the industrial processing companies and government failure to protect the

fishermen. The industrial sector was said to directly exploit the fishermen by fixing prices without involving them in price meetings. The dwindling fish stocks in the lake encouraged the capture of immature fish as well as destructive fishing techniques.

The law enforcement strategy has been very harsh and corrupt, the fishermen allege. The officials supposed to patrol the lake are always bribed and, consequently, no lawbreakers are arrested. The communities demanded participatory planning with other stakeholders to frame policy and rules, fix fish prices and disseminate policies in the fishing sector, including restocking the lake, curbing corruption, identifying alternative marketing opportunities for the fishermen, educating local fishermen on global fish trade, and affording government protection against exploitation by middlemen.

It is not, however, clear who will carry out the struggles to change the lives of the fisherfolk. While the participants from Katosi looked up to KWFDA, their sole intermediary in the dialogue, KWFDA, is, in turn, looking up to Action Aid—Uganda for follow-up. Thus, there is likely to be a delay before positive action occurs to improve the status of the fisherfolk. In the worst-case scenario, change may never be realized.

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Asia / Pakistan

Ready for the struggle

Pakistan's first-ever fisherwomen's convention took place in July 2005, as a large assembly of women from the fishing villages of Sindh

By the Pakistan Fisherfolk Forum (PFF)

On 10 July 2005 the Karachi Press Club witnessed a large assembly of women working in the fishing sector, at the first-ever Fisherwomen's Convention organized by the Pakistan Fisherfolk Forum (PFF). Representatives of various civil society organizations, including women members of parliament (MPs), attended. The fisherwomen, who came from fishing

villages of the coastal and inland fishing areas, highlighted their problems through tableaux, folk songs and other cultural shows that simultaneously provided entertainment.

In his presidential address, Haji Shafi Jamote, Director, Fishermen Co-operative Society (FCS), underlined the need for fisherfolk communities to be provided their due share and the recognition that only fishermen have the right to catch fish without any interference. He opposed the contract system, which exploits poor fishermen. He appreciated the struggle of PFF against the contract system and lauded the leadership role of PFF Chairman, Mohammad Ali Shah.

The chief guest of the convention, Vice Chairperson of the First Women's Bank, Shafqat Sultana, appreciated the PFF for organizing such a big gathering of women to discuss their problems. She said that her bank provides easy loans to small entrepreneur women for running businesses. She pledged to assist PFF members in getting loans for purchasing sewing machines and so on.

In their speeches, the women MPs paid rich tributes to fisherwomen for waging a war against exploitation of their rights. They particularly appreciated the role of fisherwomen in fully participating in rallies and hunger strikes in the struggle against the contract system in fisheries.

Sassui Palejo said that in this 21st century, when the world has achieved a lot of progress, the fisherwomen in Sindh are living miserable lives. They do not even have basic facilities like drinking water, education and healthcare. She regretted that the government has not taken any steps to bring positive changes in the lives of fisherwomen. She said the rulers are only concerned about the development of the cities of Karachi, Lahore and Islamabad; they do not have any concern about Ketri Bandar, Ibrahim Haidri, Shah Bandar and other coastal villages of Sindh. Are these not part of Pakistan, she asked.

Shazia Atta Mari pointed out that over one million women of Sindh are living below the poverty line. She said the women in rural areas do not enjoy any basic rights. The conditions of fisherwomen are even more deplorable, she added.

Muttahida Majlis-e-Ammal Mohammad Hussain Mehnati said that PFF has always highlighted the issues of poor people. He assured his full co-operation in solving the fisherfolk's problems.

Addressing the participants of the convention, the PFF Chairman, Mohammad Ali Shah, congratulated the fishermen for their successful struggle against the contract system. He said that due to the continuous struggle by PFF, the Sindh government has been forced to withdraw the contract system.

Mohammad Ali Shah reiterated that the PFF would not sit silently, as the government has still not issued a notification regarding the contract system. Moreover, he said the PFF wanted a permanent solution of the problem through legislations. He said PFF would organize a Mallah Convention against the contract system in Hyderabad, in which thousands of fishermen from all over Sindh would participate. He said that this convention too would celebrate the success of the struggle against the contract system.

The PFF Chairman regretted that hundreds of thousands of fisherwomen in Sindh are living their lives like animals. He said that even though the male members of the fishing communities are also leading inhuman lives, the condition of women is much more miserable. The women not only have to work in their homes and raise their children, but also have to share with their male partners the work in fishing-related activities.

He paid rich tributes to the fisherwomen for making the campaign against the contract system a success. He said the fisherwomen have now found a way to solve their problems and are inviting their friends and colleagues to organize themselves around one united platform to save their livelihoods.

Mohammad Ali Shah said the participation of such a large number of women at the convention indicates that fisherwomen have now woken up to their rights and are ready for the struggle against every injustice.

In her welcome address, the chief of PFF's Women's Wing, Tahira Ali, said that fisherwomen have proved themselves an equally strong force within PFF. She spoke about the problems of the fisherwomen. They have to take equal part in fishing activities like rowing



boats, pulling in nets, carrying fish catches and selling the fish in the market. At home, they have to collect wood for fuel, fetch water, clean the homes and cook food, she added. Apart from such difficult schedules, they lack proper medical facilities, and many lose their lives during childbirth. The women of Sindh are working like machines, she remarked.

Tahira Ali pointed out that women members of PFF have fully taken part in every movement for the rights of fisherfolk, and the recent success in the campaign against the contract system is due to the total participation of the women. She pointed out that it was for the first time in the history of Pakistan that PFF was organizing a convention for fisherwomen.

The General Secretary of PFF, Saeed Balcoh, said that without fisherwomen, the PFF is incomplete. He said that the female members are effectively performing their duties in the activities of PFF. He pointed to how at this meeting, thousands of women demanded the abolition of the contract system once and for all and the introduction, in its place, of a licensing system.

At the end of the convention, the following resolutions were passed:

- The historical rights of fishermen to the fishing grounds should be recognized by removing the contract system and granting them licences, so that they can freely fish in all the lakes, rivers, ponds and coastal areas.

- Fisherwomen should be allowed to participate equally in fishing activities. They engage in fishing-related activities, along with male members, in catching fish, weaving nets, repairing boats, drying fish and selling the catch in the market. With the commercialization of fishing, several of the women have been marginalized. The government should provide them some alternative employment opportunities and compensations.
- Many women suffer from lack of medical care in the fishing villages. To save precious human lives, basic healthcare units and maternity homes should be set up in the villages. These should be apart from other basic amenities and facilities.
- Due to shortage of water in fishing villages, fisherwomen have to draw water from sources situated many miles from their homes. Water supply schemes should be initiated in fishing villages to solve the water problem in those settlements.
- Electricity and gas facilities should be provided to fishing villages spread in far-flung areas along banks of rivers, canals, lakes and coastal areas, so that women can be spared the tiresome labour of cutting fuelwood.
- Handicraft and vocational training centres should be established in fishing villages to provide alternative employment opportunities for fisherwomen.
- A ban on destructive nets and fishing techniques should be strictly enforced, and deep-sea fishing trawlers should be banned as well.
- Primary and secondary schools should be established to provide education to fisherwomen.
- Over two million acres of land in the Indus delta area has been claimed by the sea due to the lack of flow in the downstream Indus river. Due to this situation, the older settlements of the delta area have been ruined, and that has affected the women and children, who are faced with migration, unemployment and various diseases. This convention demands that the required water should be released in the downstream Kotri barrage to stop the sea intrusion and to rehabilitate the fisherfolk.
- The poisonous water of the Right Bank Outfall Drain (RBOD) project is being discharged into the Manchhar lake, which has become highly polluted, affecting the environment and livelihood resources of the people of the area. The government should immediately stop the poisonous and polluted discharge of RBOD into the Manchhar lake. The affected families should be provided adequate compensation.
- The convention also demands the withdrawal of plans to dispose of RBOD's polluted water into the sea through the Gharo creek. The participants were of the opinion that every city and province is responsible for treating all its sewerage water, and disposing polluted water from one city or province into another should be stopped forthwith.

Asia / South Korea

'Sea women' trap prey, turn tables

The sea women off the southern coast of South Korea are among the world's most skilful and toughest natural divers

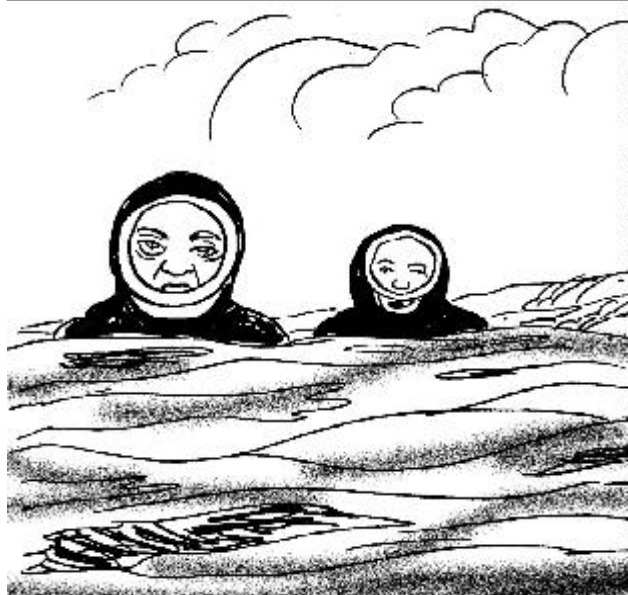
This Special Contribution in *Udo Journal* is by Norimitsu Onishi

UDO ISLAND, South Korea—On a cold, rainy morning, the sea women of this islet donned their black wetsuits, strapped on their goggles and swam out into the waves.

Over several hours, they dived to reach the sea bottom, holding their breath for about a minute before bobbing up to the surface. Sometimes, several dove in unison, their flippers jutting out together for a split second, looking like synchronized swimmers.

That illusion lasted until they resurfaced, one clutching an octopus, another a sea urchin, and until a closer look at the sunburned, leathery faces behind the goggles revealed women in their 50s, 60s and older.

The sea women here and on larger Cheju Island, off the southern coast of South Korea, are among the world's most skillful and toughest natural divers. Year round, they plumb the sea bottom with no scuba gear, in one- or two-minute dives that mix dexterity, desire and death.



“Every time I go in,” said Yang Jung Sun, 75, “I feel as if I am going to the other side of the world. When I see something I could sell, I push myself in toward it. When I get out of breath, I push myself out of the water. It is all black in front of me. My lungs are throbbing. At that moment, I feel I am dead. It happens every time. Every time. I tell myself I am not going to do that again. I always tell myself that. But greed makes me go back again.”

Since the late 1970s, exports of sea products to Japan have made the sea women richer than they had ever imagined, allowing them to fix their houses, build new ones in Cheju City and send their daughters to college.

Some of the best divers, like Yang Hwa Soon, 67, not related to the older Ms. Yang, now make about \$30,000 a year. Most dive 10 days each month but also work the fields. With tourism also popular here, many sea woman run restaurants and inns.

But their very success means that, within a decade or two, with the daughters choosing to work in the island’s tourism industry or in the big cities, the 1,700-year history of Cheju’s sea women will probably end. In 2003, 5,650 sea women were registered in Cheju, of whom 85 per cent were over 50 years old. Only two were under 30.

“We are the end,” Ms. Yang Jung Sun said, satisfaction spreading across her face. “I told my daughter not to do this. It’s too difficult.”

Men dived until the 19th century but found the job unprofitable because they, unlike women, had to pay heavy taxes, said Ko Chang Hoon, a professor at Cheju

National University. So the women took over what was considered the lowest of jobs and became the main breadwinners.

This clashed with Korea’s Confucian culture, in which women have traditionally been treated as inferior, leading administrators from Seoul to bar the women from diving, ostensibly because they exposed bare skin while at sea. “The central government forbade the women from diving, but the women just gave them some abalone to look away,” said Professor Ko, whose mother and grandmother were sea women.

Not surprisingly, the sea women’s power was greatest in villages that relied more on sea products than on farming. On Mara Island, where sea products accounted for almost all sources of revenue until tourism became popular in recent years, sex roles were entirely reversed.

In a study of Mara Island, Seo Kyung Lim, a professor at Cheju National University whose mother was a sea woman, found that men took care of the children, shopping and feeding the pigs. Women ruled their households and their community. If their husbands cheated on them, Professor Seo said, “they could simply tell them to get out of the house.”

On Cheju, market forces prevailed over the Confucian preference for boys. “If people had a boy, they didn’t celebrate,” Professor Ko said. “If it was a girl, they celebrated, because they knew that the girl would dive and bring money to the family.”

On Udo, though farming traditionally made up a third of revenues, with sea products accounting for the rest, women’s status was also high. “We always made more money than the men,” Yang Jung Sun said. “They just made enough to feed themselves. We paid for fuel and education. Everything.”

Perhaps realizing that men, including the head of a local fishing association, sat within earshot, Ms. Yang added, with a smile that bridged the gap between her words and the reality: “How can women have more power at home? There’s only one captain in a house and that’s clearly the father.”

The girls begin going to sea at age 8 or 10, first picking up seaweed near the shore. The best divers can plunge 40 feet deep and hold their breath for over two minutes. (To avoid overfishing, scuba gear remains illegal.)

With a flat tool attached to one wrist, the sea women try to dislodge abalone from under rocks. Occasionally, though, the abalone clamp down on the tool and trap one of them underwater. At least one sea woman dies every year while diving.

With the number of sea women declining, and with tourism giving Cheju men more opportunities, it is unclear what will happen to their daughters' status in their communities and home. What is clear, though, is the pervasive sense that the end of something is near.

“When I wanted to go deeper, until last year I would push myself to go deeper,” Yang Hwa Soon said. “Now I feel I’m aging. When I want to go deeper, instead of pushing myself, I usually decide not to go. I started feeling older last year, after I turned 65.”

This article from the New York Times was reproduced in the Seoul Times of 20 October 2005 (<http://theseoultimes.com/ST/?url=/ST/db/read.php?idx=1495>)

Book Review/ Globalization

Changing Tides: Gender, Fisheries and Globalization.

Edited by Barbara Neis, Marian Brinkley, Siri Gerrard and Maria Cristina Maneschy. Halifax: Fernwood Publishing, 2005, 307 pages.

Reviewed by Jackie Sunde, a researcher with the Masifundise Development Trust, Cape Town, South Africa

Changing Tides: Gender, Fisheries and Globalization is an exceptional collection of research articles, case studies, reports and brief commentaries spanning 18 countries and including women fishworkers, community activists, researchers and academics from the South and the North. This book captures the work of a unique, ongoing research and development process, originating in Canada, that explores the way in which globalization is impacting on women's lives and gender relations within fisheries. The perspective of the book is clearly stated—it adopts “a feminist approach that seeks to be global, critical, holistic and integrative”. The editors must be highly commended for bringing together a very vast sea of

literature on each of the aspects—gender, globalization and fisheries—and for challenging the boundaries of conventional methodologies by documenting and collating such diverse contributions in a most useful and creative way.

The book itself reflects the very nature of this project—reflective, dense, integrative, detailed and diverse. Continually challenging the reader to move from women's grounded experiences to theory and back to locality, it does take considerable time to read and digest. In thinking about the readership, I was struck by the possibility that this book will not be easily accessible to some of the participants in this project—and yet it is an important part of the process in and of itself. Several of the articles draw rather heavily on the language of taken-for-granted conceptual frameworks of feminism, poststructuralism and deconstruction in their understandings of globalization, race and gendered identities, whilst others, most notably the authors of the article on *Changes in Icelandic Fisheries*, are particularly good at weaving explanations of these theoretical tools throughout their discussion, thereby extending the reader's own understanding of how we can make linkages as we move through information of this kind.

The editors have tried to assist the reader by structuring the book in such a way that the reader is able to assimilate the depth and complexity of the task of linking these broad topics. The introduction by Barbara Neis maps out the rationale for the structure of the book, providing an overview of the development of knowledge in the fields of gender, globalization and fisheries, and locating the book within the broader framework of the research initiatives that have shaped the contributions. The book is divided into six sections. The first two chapters provide an overview of the key issues. Most helpful is Martha MacDonald's chapter on *Building a Framework for Analyzing the Relationships Between Gender, Globalization and Fisheries*, which begins to “map linkages” and guides the reader to some of the questions that might be asked “from trawl” right through the production and consumption line to “the table”.

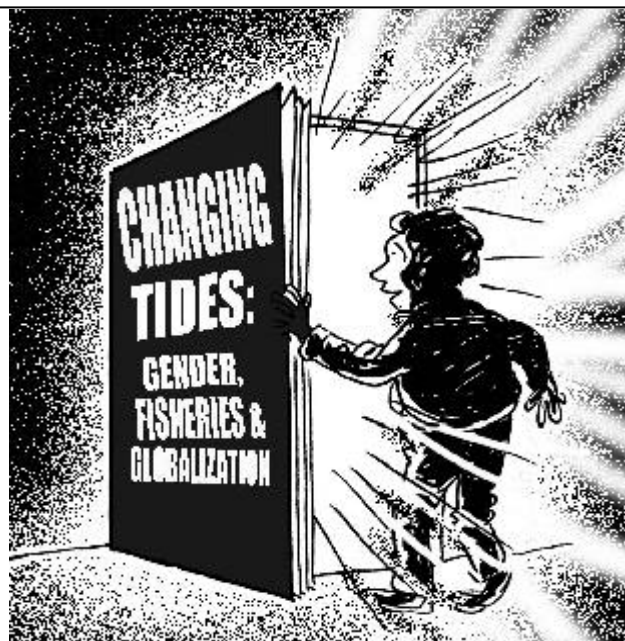
The book is simultaneously a journey of mapping the linkages for the reader as well as stretching conventional understandings and conceptual maps for understanding gender and globalization. As MacDonald

notes, fisheries provides “an excellent vantage point for exploring the processes of capital accumulation and relations of class and gender.” It is as if the addition of ‘fisheries’ to globalization takes one on a deeper voyage, enables one to extend the depth and range of knowledge of women’s lived experiences and hear previously unheard voices.

In the second and third sections, the interweaving of regional and local case studies with theoretical reflections on issues of women’s identities, roles, rights, race and class has the effect of successfully keeping the book grounded in women’s lived experiences of fisheries, and maps the geography of household and community at the centre of a global frame. The result is that as one reads these local stories, and then re-reads them through a conceptual lens in a following section, one sees the linkages between the lives of women living on the east coast of Canada with those of women dependent on fisheries in villages on the south coast of India.

Section Four comprises a wide range of reflections on the ways in which the impact of globalization on fisheries management issues is mediated by gender, class, cultural and national identities. The contributions highlight the way in which globalization and gender discrimination combine to shape women’s access to marine resources within marine conservation systems in Mexico, threaten women’s occupational health in Chile as well as limits their participation in specific approaches to management systems such as quality control systems introduced in Norway. The destructive impact of greedy, accumulative, gender-blind fisheries management systems is highlighted by the article on the impact of the individual quota system on communities in Iceland. The fact that women are not passive victims of these impacts is illuminated by the article on the use of trawler bycatch in Ghana, where class status enables certain women to enhance their entrepreneurial power in a globalizing fisheries context.

In Section Five, the authors pose critical questions regarding the nature of information gathering and warn against the dangers of “intellectual imperialism” mirroring the exploitative nature of globalization through one-sided research processes. Siri Gerrard’s article suggests that feminist approaches to research provide a range of methodologies that can mitigate against unequal relations in a context in which access to



information shapes power relations. The need for researchers in the North to learn from the insights of frameworks developed in the South as well as for inter-sectoral, multi-disciplinary approaches is motivated by two Canadian academics who have transferred a conceptual framework developed by Indian feminist Bina Agarwal for understanding the materialist basis of gendered aspects of resource degradation in India, to a fisheries context in Newfoundland, Canada.

In the final section, the impact of the intersections of a neoliberal, capitalist global system with unequal relations of power along gender, race, class, cultural and geographical lines is underscored both through the statement from the Gender, Globalization and Fisheries Network Workshop from which the initiative for this book arose as well as in the “last words” presented by Barbara Neis and Maria Cristina Maneschky. The authors of this section provide a very useful overview of the key themes that emerge in the book as well as identifying a research agenda for the future.

The fact that globalization processes are “fundamentally gendered” is strongly illuminated through the ‘fisheries’ and ‘gender’ lenses used in this book. The work presented here deepens our understanding of the very destructive impacts of these processes by mapping the interstices of these systems of power relations at all levels of our lives. However, whilst mapping these destructive forces, it simultaneously highlights the strength of women’s resistance and the way in which feminist perspectives point to alternative ways of living and interacting with our fisheries and other natural

resources. Early on in the book, Indian feminist activist Nalini Nayak reminds us that feminist approaches to working within the fisheries sector have long emphasized the need for an alternative development paradigm and a more sustainable way of living that is based on “fisheries for need not greed”.

This collection suggests that creative research and development projects such as that of the one through which this book was produced, which draw on the critical insights of gendered analyses whilst also strengthening networks for transformation across the globe, might enable us to begin to “*imagine and fight for alternatives...more likely to sustain life and enhance justice*” (McMahon, 2002).

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Book Abstract / Gender and Fisheries

Gender, Fisheries and Aquaculture: Social Capital and Knowledge for the Transition towards Sustainable use of Aquatic Ecosystems

By Stella B. Williams, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile Ife, Nigeria; Anne-Marie Hocht-Kibongui, Cultures Croisées, Paris, France; and Cornelia E. Nauen, International S&T Co-operation, EC, Brussels, Belgium. ACP-EU Fisheries Research Report Number 16, June 2005

The context of massive aquatic ecosystem degradation, engendered largely by the fisheries sector with associated socioeconomic challenges, and mixed signals from aquaculture, which shows high growth rates, but has some unsustainable segments, raises the question of how women in fisheries and aquaculture can contribute to the transition towards sustainability through restoration of lost productivity. Empirical evidence of women’s roles in all continents shows patterns of unrecognized, unpaid labour that clouds the economic signals of increasing resource rarefaction. Historically, women have been associated with resource conservation embedded in traditional belief systems, which have been progressively eroded. Where social recognition is achieved through, for example, enforcement of modern equal opportunity legislation—

especially when combined with access to formal education and training—women regain capabilities for enhanced social organization and leadership. This can lead to significant contributions to restoration of natural resources. A participatory method is proposed to render women’s role visible and enable development of socioeconomic organization supportive of social justice and sustainable resource use. Further reading and selected web resources are intended to further help readers to take practical follow-up action. Copies of the book are available free of charge upon request from the Information Desk of the Directorate General for Research, International Relations, 8 Square de Meeûs, B-1049, Brussels, Belgium; e-mail: inco@cec.eu.int. The report and a selection of longer individual contributions to the workshop can also be downloaded in PDF format from the Cordis website at http://www.cordis.lu/inco2/src/docs_pub.htm.

Film / Philippines

Selling Songs of Leyte

An award-winning documentary tells the tales of the dried fish vendors in Leyte, Philippines, who sell their wares to the rhythm of the songs they sing

Tacloban City (15 October)—*Selling Songs of Leyte*, a 14-minute documentary on the dried fish vendors in Leyte who sell their wares to the rhythm of the songs they sing, won the Best Foreign Short Documentary in the recently held New York International Independent Film and Video Festival. The documentary was made by Eli Africa, 41, who lives in San Pablo, California and whose mother is from Alangalang, Leyte and whose father is from Nueva Ecija.

The festival, the largest of its kind in the world, is held several times a year in different cities of the United States, including New York, Miami and Los Angeles. It is covered by national and international media and popular among struggling but promising independent filmmakers.

Eli revealed that the idea for the video came by accident, when he heard about these vendors from

Leyte who sold dried fish by singing to their customers. He was so intrigued that he asked his niece to investigate. With the information from his niece, he flew to Tacloban, visiting towns like Palo, Tanauan and Carigara during *tabo* or market day, filming and interviewing the singing vendors.

Eli said that he learned that the dried fish vendors of Leyte sang because it helped them keep track of how many fish they had sold. They also claimed their singing attracted customers.



Little is known about how and when the tradition started. Most of the townspeople in North Leyte are not even aware of the dried fish vendors who sing. Afrika believes it could be related to the rich musical heritage of the Leyte-Samar region.

With more vendors selling fish, and fewer of them singing, the dried fish vendors of Leyte who sang to sell their wares is a dying breed. Thanks to the love of country of a Filipino who was born and lives in California, this dying tradition will now continue to live and be known by future generations.

Encouraged by the positive response to his *Selling Songs of Leyte*, even from non-Filipinos, Eli wants to make more films that capture the Filipino experience and culture. Already, he is toying with the idea of making a documentary on the “Tree of Life”. What deters him from doing so is the lack of logistics support.

This piece is based on a Philippines Information Agency (PIA) press release.

News/ Malawi

Even women can fish

Women around Lake Malawi are learning how to fish

Excerpted from an article by Marcus Muhariwa on 15 November 2005 in The Daily Times, a newspaper from Malawi

Some statistics years back indicated that fish is the relish that dominates meals in most households of Malawi regardless of their status or economic stand. When Malawians step into the market place, chances are that, at least, twice in a week they would go back home with some fish. It could be *matemba*, *utaka* or the internationally recognized and locally respected *chambo*.

But as the fish is being eaten in these households, how many Malawians think about who caught it? It is likely that nobody does and if they do, which would be once in a long while, none would countenance a thought that it was a woman who caught the fish. Yes, women. They venture into the lake on a boat in the wee hours of the morning and catch fish just like the men do.

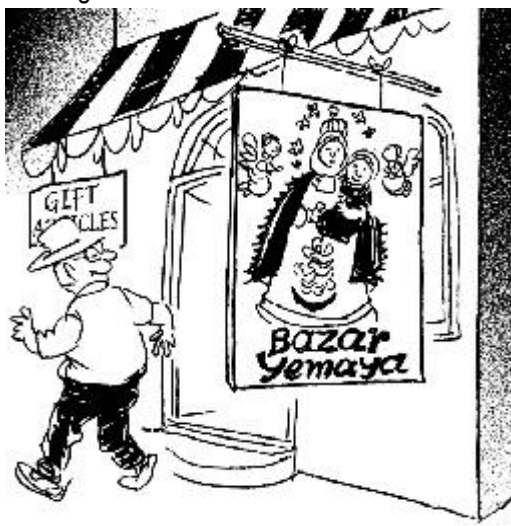
Mangochi is the most popular lakeshore district of Malawi and almost everyone knows that most boys in the district are brought up to be fishermen and what talented, creative and respected fishermen they are. Just as the district is known for the fishermen, the women in the district are trying to break this hegemony, not as the best fishermen’s wives or the best cooks of fish but as fisherwomen. Spurred by the doctrines of gender equality and pampered by stories of urban women who have taken the challenge to wear boots and do men’s work, women here have started going into Lake Malawi—not to draw water but to fish.

“We had a visit from some officials from the National Initiative for Civic Education (Nice) who told us that we could also do jobs that men do like building houses and fishing,” said Jennifer Banda, secretary for the Kwalole Women’s Fishing Club in Sub-Traditional Authority Namavi’s area. “Men and some boys in our villages started teaching us how to row boats and going into the lake to cast nets. It was very difficult at first because the job is very physical, but we started getting used to it,” Banda said.

www.dailytimes.bppmw.com/section.asp?sectionID=7

Offbeat/ Bazar Yemaya**Yemaya turns up at the unlikeliest of places**

Marja Bekendam of the VinVis Women in Fisheries network was strolling along the streets of La Laguna, Spain, when she spotted a sign on a piece of tilework outside a little shop. The sign said, "Bazar Yemaya". Marja was struck by the name, which she recognized as the title of ICSF's Gender in Fisheries newsletter. She knew that *Yemaya* was the African name for the goddess of the ocean but she had no idea how the name came to be painted outside a shop in La Laguna. Intrigued, she sent the picture to Dr. Jose J. Pascual-Fernandez of the Instituto Universitario de Ciencias Políticas y Sociales, Universidad de La Laguna, who did some investigation of his own.



"Bazar" is Spanish for "bazaar", a market or shop, and the sign was, in fact, the name of a little shop that sells religious images, prints and curios, as well as esoteric folk medicines of Cuban origin (called "*santeria*"), discovered Dr Jose. Located on the Tabares de Cala street in the centre of La Laguna, Bazar Yemaya was founded in 1994 by a Canarian women (at a different spot nearby) and now she and her husband, who was born in Cuba, run the shop. The image on the nameplate is actually that of the "Virgen of Regla", one of the virgin saints worshipped in the Canary Islands. While it is not exactly an image of the ocean goddess *Yemaya*, we are glad that it resulted in some delightful serendipity!

YEMAYA

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Please do send us comments and suggestions to make the newsletter more relevant. We would also like names of other people who could be interested in being part of this initiative. We look forward to hearing from you and to receiving regular write-ups for the newsletter.

Writers and potential contributors to *YEMAYA*, please note that write-ups should be brief, about 500 words. They could deal with issues that are of direct relevance to women and men of fishing communities. They could also focus on recent research or on meetings and workshops that have raised gender issues in fisheries. Also welcome are life stories of women and men of fishing communities working towards a sustainable fishery or for a recognition of their work within the fishery. Please also include a one-line biographical note on the writer.