

SAMUDRA

for Bangkok

INTERNATIONAL COLLECTIVE IN SUPPORT OF FISHERWORKERS



WHAT'S ON TODAY

- Workshop Statement
- Monitoring the implementation of the SSF Guidelines

Side note

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

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

For more information, write to icsf@icsf.net



Voices of women

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

INSIDE

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

Why we need gender equality in fisheries

by **Kyoko Kusakabe**

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

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

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

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

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

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

Workshop photo album

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

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

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

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

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





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

Overheard

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Sou sou! Slogans to beat the blues

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

Bangladesh: *Heyo beyo* (To Motivate People)

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

India: Long Live Fishworkers' Rights!

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

Pakistan: Long Live the Fishers' Alliance!

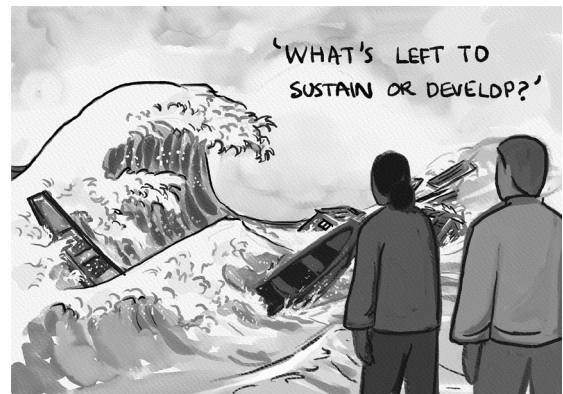
Vietnam: *Quyết Tâm* (The Struggle Goes On!)



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

An island in distress

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

MEL Framework for the SSF Guidelines

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

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

Participant profiles!

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

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

Workshop Statement

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

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

Read the Statement on the ICSF Asia Workshop web page:

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