Yielding ground

Changing land use patterns threaten the livelihood of female crab collectors in Merauke, Papua, Indonesia

By **Ria Fitriana** (rfitriana@gmail.com), Independent Consultant, Coastal and Marine Resource Management, Jakarta, Indonesia, and **Maria Kurupat** (mariakurupat68@gmail.com) Gender Empowerment Activist, Merauke, Papua, Indonesia

Ria Fitriana

Maria Kurupat

Over the years, crab collection in mangrove and wetland forests has been a major source of income for women of the indigenous Asmat and Mappi communities of the island of Papua in Indonesia. These women harvest crab along the coastal areas of the Maro River, the main river of Merauke District, which is located in the southern part of Papua in the land of the Marind peoples. The Marind form a majority group and hold traditional claim of ownership over the land in Merauke, including the banks of Maro River. Apart from the Marind, other ethnic groups such as Bovendigul, Mappi and Asmat also live in the area and have ha anim rights to access resources for subsistence living. Ha anim rights accrue from a collective agreement among certain indigenous communities, granting them entitlement over resources from mangrove and wetland forests along the river, allowing for hunting, gathering of food and medicinal plants, and the collection of fibres and other materials for crafts such as noken or traditional bag weaving. Outsiders and even other ethnic communities residing in the area, such as the fishers of Sulawesi descent or North Papuans living in Merauki, require explicit consent from the customary land owners, and, in addition, must pay a mutually agreed sum in order to utilise these resources.

Mud crabs are harvested in a ten kilometre region along the mangrove forest and banks of the Maro river. The Asmat and Mappi people have their own territory for crab collection. There are several ways to reach the crab nesting zones. For the Asmat women, it takes two to three hours on foot to reach, while it is an even longer walk, up to four to five hours long, for the women from the Mappi community. Apart from walking, another option is to rent a pick up car or boat, at a cost of about USD 15.50 per trip.

Although crab collection is a daytime activity, sometimes the collectors need to camp overnight in the forest, for example, during unfavourable tidal conditions. The crab collectors usually go to the forest and look for holes in muddy areas that typically indicate a crab's nest. Once a hole is found, they stick an iron crowbar to catch and pull the crab out of the hole, using water from the river to clean the catch. The crab is then placed on banana tree sheaths and tied using ropes cut from trees. Though crabs are usually bigger in size and more in number during the rainy season and high tide, the nesting grounds are harder to access during such conditions. The cleaned and tied crabs are stored in a sack and brought to traders in Merauke city or sold directly to customers on the road.

The price of the catch depends on a number of factors: the size of the crab, whether the claws are intact, and whether the crabs are alive or dead. The price of small and medium sized crabs is about USD1.2 per kg, while the big sized ones are priced at USD 2.30 to 3.80 per crab – those with claws intact fetching USD 3.80 apiece and broken ones fetching USD 2.30 apiece. The catch usually includes many crabs with broken claws, as well as small sized and dead ones. Crabs tied with banana leaf can be kept alive for up to three days outside water-important traditional knowledge, which the women use to increase the value of their catch. The average earnings per trip, for a trip of two to three days duration, were found to be around USD 23 to 30.

The income from selling crabs is used to meet food and transportation costs. Rice, eggs, salt, sugar, coffee, fried oil, betel nuts and drinking water are commonly bought items. Food expenses alone may amount to USD 4 to 7 per day. During periods of no income, the crab collectors borrow money from kiosks near their homes, which is paid back later.

Unfortunately, changes in land use have alienated these communities from their main livelihood sources. The area available for crab collection has shrunk or moved further away, increasing overall costs. The area covered by primary mangrove and wetland forests in Merauke has steadily decreased in the decades from 1990 to 2000 and 2010. The rate of conversion of these lands for plantation and city development threatens the mangroves, which are changing from being net sinks to net sources of carbon. These land use changes generate problems for the global and local community. According to the female crab collectors, there was a time when the crab collection area was fairly close to their homes but now involves a long and circuitous walk with access routes often restricted by the new titleholders of the land.

MARIA KURUPAT

A woman catching crab in mangrove, Merauke, Indonesia. Although crab collection is a daytime activity, sometimes the collectors need to camp overnight in the forest.

Participative mapping revealed that over the years 20 ha of crab collection area have changed to private sea port and boat anchorage zones. Not only was the 'new area' restricted but the mangrove forests were destroyed for development, leading to livelihood loss. This form of development disregards food security and poverty among marginalised communities. In Papua, food security and nutrition are a major concern. Loss of food and nutrition will further weaken the ability of communities to deal with the issues they face. The situation becomes more difficult for female crab collectors because they access and use communal lands without the power to control the resources they need.

RIA FITRIANA

The cleaned and tied crabs are stored in a sack and brought to traders in Merauke city or sold directly to customers on the road. The average earnings per trip, for a trip of two to three days duration, were found to be around USD 23 to 30

The food security of the Asmat and Mappi people depends on their livelihoods derived from a communal resource in a situation where no attention is given to protect such common resources as a means to secure the wellbeing of the people. There is no acknowledgement of use rights in land use changes and no involvement of women in discussions pertaining to resources.

First, land use changes start as soon as land ownership is transferred. Land ownership transferred on customary land acknowledges traditional claim of ownership. This becomes problematic in the case of Papua because of varied rights over land, which is a mix of ownership and use rights. The owner of a piece of land might not allow the use of the land's resources, even if the local ethnic groups have traditional use rights, since no attention is given to secure the livelihoods of those who with use rights over communal land. We suggest that various rights be taken into consideration in terms of compensation during land transfer. The acknowledgement of use right in land use changes is crucial to protect the source of livelihoods of those with access and use rights. This does not imply that transfer of ownership would necessarily become more complicated. Instead, we suggest that due compensation be given to women to make up for the loss of source of livelihood they face as a consequences of land use changes. The compensation shouldn't be in the form of cash money. It could be in the form of capacity building and alternative livelihoods. The expansion of the range of activities available to female crab collectors is needed to diversify their income. The diversification could strengthen the resilience of female crab collectors in addressing uncertainty. Totally new activities could be introduced or value added to current practices such as fattening small crab. This is one way to ensure that the discussion on land ownership transfer will carefully consider impact on the daily lives of common people and on family-level food security.

Second, women are rarely involved in discussions regarding resources in Papua. In the Papuan tradition, the female is considered an outsider in a family, since she will follow her husband after marriage. Women usually access resources through inheritance from their families, similar to men. After marriage, the norms of their husband's community determines their access to resources. Women's roles are in domestic matters – taking care of the family, raising children, and being responsible for the family's food security. Most of these activities take place on communal lands as among the Asmat and Mappi female in Merauke. The woman's role in the domestic sphere is important for a family but not valued. When it comes to rights transfer and land access restriction, women are not involved in the discussion, especially in customary institutions. The representative in the customary board or the leader of a customary institution is male since men are the heads of families. The woman's position may derive from her husband's role - as the wife of the customary leader, supporting him domestic matters and providing inputs. Females have no formal place in a customary institution.

There is a need to bring the voices of women into discussions and decision making processes related to resource use and access in all customary institutions.

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Coping with COVID

The rapid spread of COVID-19 has introduced multiple challenges in the lives of small-scale fishers in Indonesia

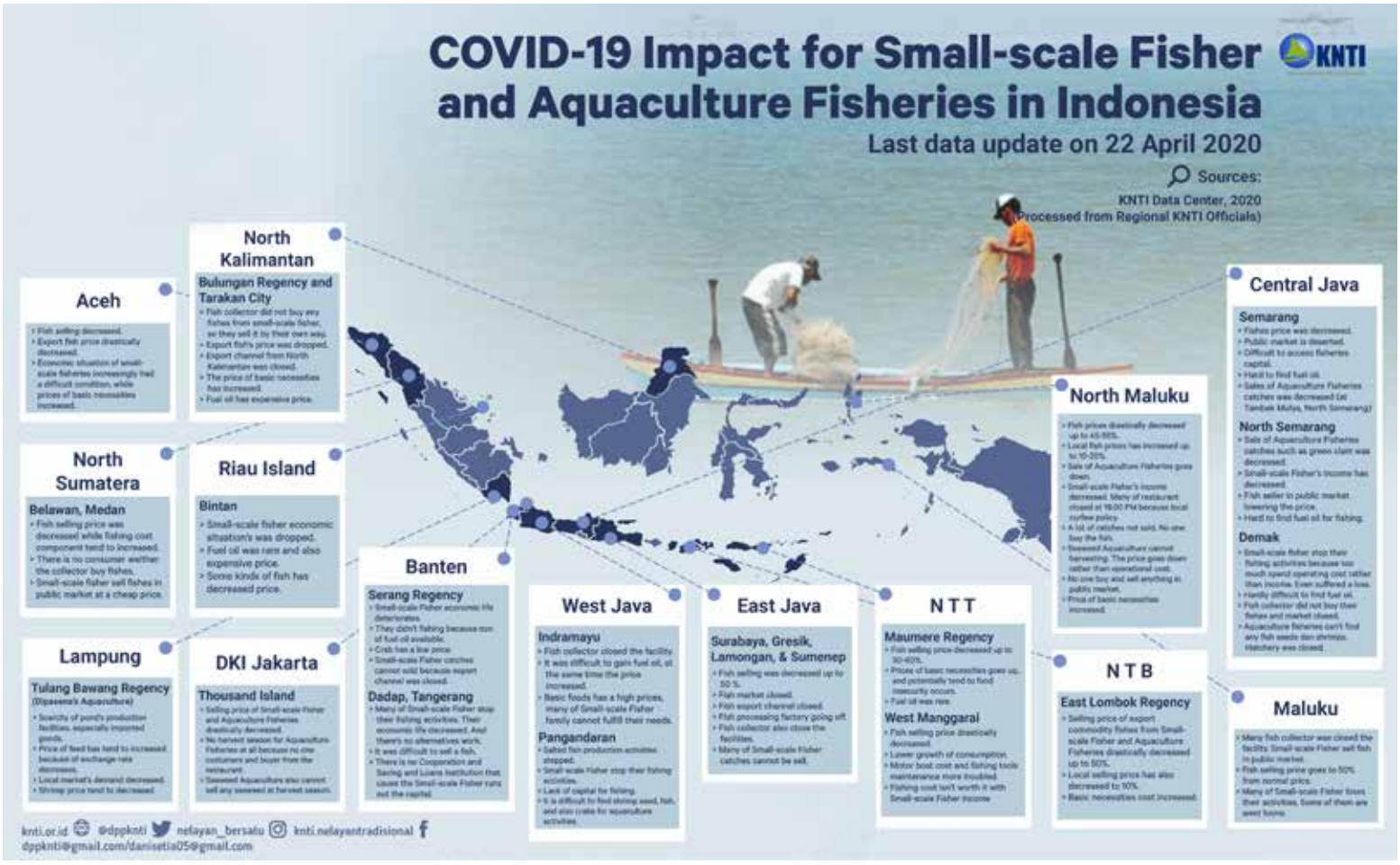
By **Dedi Supriadi Adhuri** (dediadhuri@hotmail.com), Researcher, Research Centre for Society and Culture, Indonesian Institute of Sciences, Indonesia

Dedi Supriadi Adhuri

The COVID-19 pandemic that affected Indonesia in early March 2020 has impacted coastal communities, fisher households and fisher women. Information collected by women fisher activists in 12 provinces revealed that the pandemic has dealt a serious blow to fishing activities. It started with significant decreases in demand followed by significant decreases in fish prices. Reports from various provinces found that the price of fish dropped as low as 50 percent. In fact, in some cases no one was buying the fish at all. With this, there was no incentive for fishers to go fishing as the risk was too high. Additionally, since their savings were used for daily consumption, at the end of the day, fishers were left with no capital to go fishing anymore.

For fisher women, the sale of value added products, such as fish crackers, shrimp paste and other fish products through outlets such as gift shops in tourist areas, stopped. The government's strict prohibition of travel to mitigate the spread of COVID-19, has almost entirely wiped out the tourism and travel industry. A report produced by the Indonesian Traditional Fishers' Association confirmed these impacts were occurring in fishing communities all over Indonesia.

The Persaudaraan Perempuan Nelayan Indonesia (PPNI or Indonesian Fisher Women Sisterhood) has noted that these problems have created a double burden for fisher women. First, because COVID-19 has stopped both fishing activities and post-harvest related business, it



DEDI SUPRIADI ADHURI

Women fishers, Indonesia. Information collected by women fisher activists in twelve provinces revealed that the pandemic has dealt a serious blow to fishing activities. It started with significant decreases in demand followed by significant decreases in fish prices.

has, in effect, closed two sources of income for fishing households. Second, the responsibility of putting food on the table rests in the hands of women. So, it has become the responsibility of women to meet all basic household needs.

In response to these problems, PPNI developed some activities to both minimise the spread of COVID-19 in coastal communities and support the basic needs of severely impacted households. Supported by some NGOs and independent activist, PPNI started the distribution of mask and foods. By the end of May, 5,000 masks and 3,000 packages of food such as rice, cooking oil, sugar and instant noodles had been distributed. This was an important source of support for fisher households. Significantly, the food was distributed at the end of the fasting month of Ramadhan marked by the Idul Fitri celebration.

In another round, PPNI distributed an additional 300 packages of food and 5000 masks in the second week of July. So far, given the volume of donations received, the distribution of masks and food packages has been limited to coastal communities in the districts of Demak, Jepara, Rembang and Kendal in Central Jawa, and Surabaya in West Jawa provinces.

COVID-19 in Indonesia is still a serious threat and the curve of infected cases is still rising. Although, for economic reasons, the Indonesian government has partially lifted travel restrictions, and economic activities have resumed, it seems that the pandemic will remain a threat for some time. People still need help to get back on to their own feet. The Indonesian government has introduced a new term to deal with this circumstance – the New Normal, which implies that people have to learn to live with the potential threat of COVID-19.

PPNI is planning to continue supporting needy fisher households during the New Normal era. Under these circumstances, apart from collecting additional funds for food distribution, PPNI has now turned its attention to helping women fishers prepare to face the new normality. In this regard, PPNI started to expand initiatives toward more long-term empowerment. These include support for small-scale or home based fresh water fish aquaculture using waterproof plastic ponds, and metal or plastic containers.

PPNI also continues to support small-scale women-run businesses by connecting them to government funding sources or training activities. Some support to upgrade the packaging of women-produced, value added fisheries products has also been extended.

To increase market access, the PPNI is now trying to develop an online marketing scheme, and encouraging the use of Tokopedia, the online marketing platform. Although these initiatives depend on phone and internet access, it is important to recognise them as small steps in the right direction.

COVID-19 has dealt a serious blow to fishing activities

PROFILE

Nasrita: Saving Marine Resources

Nasrita, Head of the Marine and Fisheries office (DKP) in Indonesia's Aceh Barat, carries out significant work to improve fisheries management

By **Yunita Ningsih** (y.ningsih@gmail.com), Information Officer of the FAO/ARC Project in Banda Aceh, Indonesia

"The sea is not ours; we borrow it from our children and grandchildren. Therefore, we must preserve it for their future. It doesn't matter how hard that will be."

For years, Nasrita, head of the Marine and Fisheries Office (DKP) in Aceh Barat, has held these words close to her heart. They have inspired her to carry out significant work towards ecological conservation and preservation of the fisheries.

In December 2004, when the tsunami ripped through the Indonesian coast, Aceh Barat in Aceh province bore the brunt of the devastation. During her first year of heading the Marine and Fisheries Office, Nasrita realized that not only had the tsunami destroyed most of the coral reefs on the coast but that whatever remained was being fast depleted by the mini-trawlers used by local fishermen. Nasrita knew that the coral reefs sustained the livelihoods of nearly 1800 fishers in the district and that their continued destruction would mean the destruction of the community.

The first step Nasrita took, therefore, was to issue a ban on the use of mini-trawlers in the reef areas. "Many fishermen were complaining about the low volume of catch", she says. "For that reason, I approached them with the idea that in order to protect marine resources, it was vital to adopt environment-friendly fishing practices."

In a move that strengthened the work started by Nasrita, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) initiated co-management practices along with other local agencies such as the *Panglima Laot*, the police department, and local governments in conserving marine resources. The fisheries co-management activities are part of the programme of fisheries rehabilitation and reconstruction for tsunami-affected communities in Aceh province. The programme started in 2007 and is funded by the American Red Cross.

"In carrying out my work, I have never faced significant obstacles," says Nasrita. "I only need to be more patient in dealing with the fishermen. Generally speaking, I have received support even though the work environment is dominated by men. In fact, my negotiations sometimes become easier because the fishermen pay more respect to me as a woman."

Nasrita also made mandatory the replacement of illegal fishing gear with standard gear. She did not negotiate with vessel owners who had repeatedly breached the law; instead, she arrested them and revoked the operational license of their vessels. Eight vessels were booked in 2009.

Within a year, marine conservation efforts have begun to show positive results in Aceh Barat, where trawling or using explosives to kill fish are today banned activities. "Thank God!" says a relieved Nasrita, "I am pleased that both the government and the community have begun to realize their roles and responsibilities towards co-management".

Nasrita hopes that soon marine fisheries in Aceh Barat will be free from mini-trawling and other illegal fishing practices and that the initiative will spread throughout the other districts of Aceh.

The Food Guardians of Lamalera

A recent workshop in Indonesia brought together customary institutions in fisheries

By **Lily Noviani Batara,** (lily_noviani@yahoo.com), of Bina Desa, an NGO working for empowerment of farmers, fisherfolk and women of rural and coastal Indonesia

"O Gods in the Highest Place, O the Spirit of Ancestors
Let the fishes in the sea lose their way. Lead them to us.
So that we can catch them, to feed our widows and fatherless children
Who cry out for a meal they have not."

This prayer of the elderly of Lamalera, a fishing community from Lembata Island in Nusa Tenggara Timur, Indonesia, captures the essence of the discussions held during a recent workshop in Indonesia. The workshop, which took place from 2 to 5 August 2009 in the city of Lombok in Nusa Tenggara Barat, Indonesia, was titled: "Customary Institutions in Indonesia: Do They Have a Role in Fisheries and Coastal Area Management?".

The workshop provided an excellent platform for representatives of customary institutions and communities in Indonesia to share their experiences on how they have sustainably managed fisheries and other coastal resources, based on age-old local wisdom and customs.

Representatives from the Lamalera community said that the sea was a key part of their livelihood and culture. It provided them with food. It also provided a context for the shared learning of values—moral and ethical, educational, or even the value of safety. For the Lamalera community, who hunt whales during certain seasons, not all whales in the sea can be killed. Pregnant female whales, courting whales, or breastfeeding females must be left alone. The sustainability of the sea mammal is also the sustainability of the Lamalera.

KAREL BATAONA AND WILLY KERAF

Women traditionally observe the ceremony of *tobu nama fat*, a special ritual for the safety of the fishermen

Similar principles were shared by the Haruku community of the Maluku Islands, where the *sasi* system is observed. There are traditional ways to regulate and conserve fish resources, for example, observing open and closed seasons. Representatives of a fishing community from North Sulawesi described the *mane'e* customs they observe. Fish can only be caught, for example, for some months in a year, at selected locations. The community from North Lombok shared the way in which the *awig-awig* system has been revived. Under this, the use of explosives and poison has been prohibited, and fishing in certain zones and with certain gear is regulated.

Although the workshop discussed several issues related to the life and livelihood of fishing communities, one aspect that was not adequately represented was the role of women in the communities. Fishing is a male-dominated activity and many cultures define 'fishing' as an exclusively male occupation. However, as one of the workshop participants from Bina Desa, an NGO that has worked for many years with rural and coastal communities, pointed out, women of fishing communities may not go out into the open sea but they do play vital supportive roles. They help prepare for fishing trips by cooking meals, carrying out safety rituals, and even making and repairing fishing boats and nets. While planning the logistics of the voyage, women sometimes negotiate deals with the local trader in order to secure a loan, to be repaid once the catch is sold. When the men are at sea, women work to support the family. They weave mats, trade in domestic products, collect leftover fish from boats, collect edible molluscs, and so on. Once the men come home with the catch, women are responsible for sorting out the fish, salting, drying and selling it.

In the traditional fishing *kampong* (village) of the Lamalera, much before men go fishing, the women collect and prepare raw material to make a special rope called the *tale* or *leo*. This rope, made of several locally-available

fibres—cotton, the *waru* tree bark and *gebang* leaves—is used to catch whales and other types of fish. Closer to the fishing season, women traditionally observe the *tobu nama fat*, a special ritual for the safety of the fishermen. Once the whale is on the beach, women cut, clean, dry, and prepare the meat for domestic consumption as well as for marketing. Dried whale meat is commonly bartered with other food staples such as nuts, fruits, vegetables and corn. Often, Lamalera women walk long distances inland with baskets of whale meat, and other products such as dried fish, salt, *kapur-sirih* and the meat of pig, goat or dog. These are traded with food staples produced by the inland community. Such trips could involve more than a day of walking, and sometimes women have to stay out overnight before heading back home.

The Lamalera recognize at least seven different seasons. *Musi Lerâ* is the dry season—the right time to go out fishing to sea. It normally lasts from May to September. During other seasons, unfavourable for fishing, the Lamalera fishermen usually find other things to do. During the non-fishing months women traditionally take over the role of breadwinner. In addition to weaving and making rope, they process salt and burn limestone collected from the sea to be traded with inland populations. Such activities have helped the Lamalera community tide over difficult times.

The hard labour of women in the Lamalera community benefits not only their families, but the whole community. Although the Nusa Tenggara Timur province is one of the poorest in Indonesia, the Lamalera community has never experienced famine or widespread hunger. All thanks to the Lamalera women!

Asia/ Indonesia

Getting together

A profile of Kopus, a new organization for shrimp peelers of Sei Bilah village, Langkat Regency, North Sumatra Province

By Noor Aida, Co-ordinator of the Women's Division of JALA, North Sumatra

It takes two to three hours by road to reach Sei Bilah village located in Pangkalan Brandan municipality, Regency of Langkat, North Sumatra Province. Most people in this village are Malays, who live in poor conditions. The fishers in the village cannot increase their catches due to competition from local trawlers as well as trawlers from Thailand. Besides this, destructive fishing practices and poaching affect their livelihoods too, driving many fishers into unemployment. So dependent are they on the sea that they cannot work other jobs.

Most of the women of the village are engaged in domestic household work. When their husbands return from the sea with shells, shrimp and crab, they help process the products. Shrimp peeling is the main activity of the women in Sei Bilah. Shelling crab is the second activity of choice. Two kinds of shrimp are caught here—white shrimp and *kurik* shrimp. These fetch different prices in the market. The *kurik* shrimp, which is larger, is more expensive. Two kilos of raw shrimp yield one kg of peeled shrimp. The women source the shrimp individually from fishermen or from a *taukay* (shrimp collector), to whom they also sell the shelled shrimp. Women also shell the shrimp for the *taukay* for wages. Their incomes vary with the shrimp catches, which, in turn, are affected by the operations of trawlers in inshore areas.

In order to tackle some of their problems, the women shrimp peelers of Sei Bilah got together to form a group called 'Kopus', with Zainab as their leader. Though the group is very new, the women hope it will inspire other women fishworkers in the village to join up or form similar groups. Now there are 30 members in the group, which is trying to raise money through loans to buy shrimp and build a place for storage and processing.

As a new organization, Kopus is seeking the support of other organizations. JALA, the advocacy network for North Sumatra fisherfolk, has pledged to support the group by sharing information, introducing it to a larger network of organizations and involving it in any discussions and meetings. Among the most important imperatives now is to raise the awareness of women on the need to organize themselves into associations and groups. Only through organization, sharing and solidarity can the bargaining position of women fishers be strengthened, especially in a rural setting, where women have been traditionally subordinate to the men. With experience, Kopus can expect to mature into a strong and purposeful organization.

Noor Aida can be contacted at jalanet@indosat.net.id

Asia/ Indonesia

"Pay for it"

People in Buyat Bay, North Sulawesi, Indonesia, have been affected by the mining operations of PT. Newmont Minahasa Raya, a subsidiary of Newmont Mining Corporation, based in Denver, Colorado, USA

By Suwiryo Ismail, an activist working on issues of environment and human rights in Indonesia.

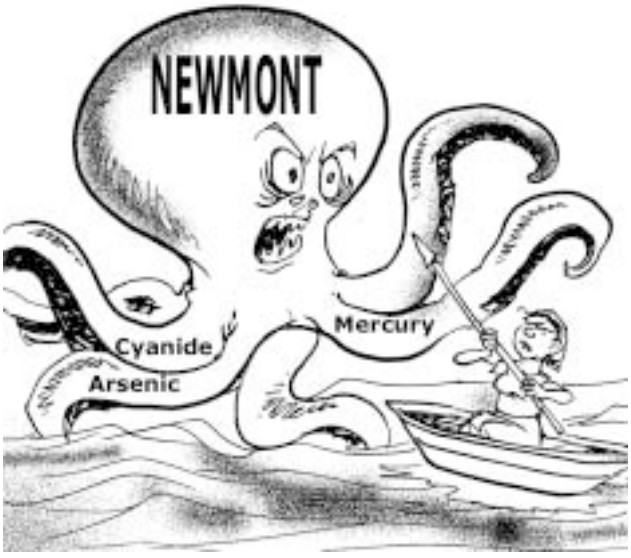
Surtini Paputungan is a 40-year-old cookie-and-fish-seller living in Buyat, a small village at the Buyat Bay, in a remote region of Indonesia. From Jakarta, the capital city of Indonesia, it takes four hours by plane and then around three hours by bus to get there.

Surtini is married and has four children. She is poor, like other villagers in her community. Her family's life depends on a small boat without motor, simple fish hooks and a net. Such tools can only be used for short-distance fishing, when the sea is calm, during October to February. The sea used to be rich with coral fish. Buyat Bay provided coral fish as living resources for its neighbouring villages.

At the peak fishing season, Surtini sells in the village market fish caught by her husband. When there were strong winds, no one goes fishing, and Surtini then sells home-baked cookies. Her earnings are only enough for a simple living. Sometimes, the family had to borrow money from neighbours and buy food on credit at the village's small store, all to be repaid, with luck, from the earnings of the next catch.

The lives of that poor fisher community with 53 households—around 240 persons—took a turn for the worse as a gold mining company, PT. Newmont Minahasa Raya, a subsidiary of Newmont Mining Corporation, based in Denver, Colorado, USA, the fifth largest mining company in the world, got a mining license from the Indonesian government in 1994 for around 500 hectares of land. Newmont started to operate an open-pit mine in 1996 and daily disposed around 2,000 tonnes of tailings (mining waste) directly into the Buyat Bay. It used a technology called 'Submarine Tailing Disposal' (STD), only about 82 m below sea level. Leaks of the pipe have occurred several times. Some studies by researchers from the university in North Sulawesi, Agriculture Institute in Bogor and the Indonesian government environmental impact monitoring agency, showed that Buyat Bay is now polluted by heavy metals such as arsenic, cadmium and mercury.

The only sources of livelihood of the community are polluted and destroyed, coral reefs are damaged, and many fish have been found rotten on the beach. It is now more difficult to get fish. Even when they are caught, nobody wants to buy the fish because they are afraid to eat poisoned fish. The life of Surtini and her family became more difficult because her husband could not afford a motorboat to go farther from the bay to the still unpolluted fishing grounds. Surtini stopped baking and selling cookies in 1998, as she started to suffer pain in all her joints. Her whole body became numb, and she suffered headaches, myopia, hearing disorder and speech difficulties. The worst was in 1999, when she became paralyzed for about three months. Even touching her hair became very painful. The village clinic could not explain what was wrong with her. The doctor provided by Newmont stated that nothing had happened to her, though a couple of weeks later a team from Newmont came to take blood samples of Surtini and other villagers.



A year later, following pressure from national and international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to disclose the result of that blood examination in a laboratory in Santa Monica in USA, Newmont admitted that the blood of the villagers was contaminated with arsenic, mercury and cyanide.

Surtini stopped eating fish from Buyat Bay because she realized that her health was getting worse when she consumed it. She eventually overcame the paralysis

and got better. The pain in her joints and headaches often returned, in particular after eating fish from Buyat Bay, which could not be avoided as she had no other alternative food. In October 2001, Surtini was brought to Jakarta by NGOs to have a medical check-up, and she stayed for one week in hospital. Doctors could not explain her sickness. This also showed how difficult it is to deal with illness from contamination by heavy metals. No hospital in Indonesia can deal with it. When Surtini gave birth to her fourth child in September 2002, her condition was so weak that she couldn't produce milk, and she had no money to buy milk for the baby. She merely suckled her baby to calm her, giving her tea and water instead. In June 2002, Surtini met two forensic doctors who informed her that her illness was a symptom of arsenic poisoning.Surtini is not the only case in Buyat. Fifty-one other villagers—80 per cent among them women—have suffered the same symptoms as Surtini: constant headaches, pain in the joints, lumps spread on the body and itchiness. A blood examination of 19 villagers by two Indonesian environmental networks (Walhi and Jatam) showed a high accumulation of arsenic and mercury in their blood.

"Tailings is the worst crime to me, my children and my community," stated Surtini in her testimony in a workshop on Women and Globalization during the People's Forum in June 2002 in Bali prior to the Preparatory Committee Meeting of the UN World Summit on Sustainable Development. Since 1997, Surtini has been part of the movement in her village against Newmont. She was in the villagers' delegation to the local and provincial government and provincial parliament to submit complaints. She delivered testimonies in various meetings and conferences on mining and submarine tailing disposal.

All efforts have so far been fruitless. The provincial government of North Sulawesi and Newmont always insist that the tailings are safely piled on the sea floor, and that there is no pollution. They have branded villagers as subversive agents against foreign investment. Moreover, international NGO campaigns, including an intervention in the shareholder meeting of Newmont in Denver, USA in 1999, led to more oppression of villagers.

The Indonesian government fully supports foreign investment by, among other thing, providing military, police and civil bureaucracy to oppress people in safeguarding the projects. USAID has threatened environmental NGOs that it will stop its funds if they campaign against Newmont, and will not fund NGOs working against the operation of US companies in Indonesia.

Surtini and many villagers who joined the struggle suffered, on the one hand, by intimidation by the local government, and, on the other, by hatred from villagers who embraced the community development programme provided by Newmont. The programme has successfully divided the struggle.Surtini's take on globalization during the abovementioned workshop is illuminating: "It is a conspiracy between multinational corporations and our government in Jakarta, in Menado, and in the regency up to the village. Our lives are determined by Newmont, because government serves only its operation, and does what Newmont says. This conspiracy has caused suffering to us: women, children and men. We have lost everything—our livelihood, food, health, bay and land. Our children have no future. And women are the most victimized by Newmont because more women are affected by the pollution."

This awareness encouraged Surtini to mobilize women in her village to discuss their situation, attend advocacy training by women NGOs, and take part in seminars and conferences where they delivered their testimonies, telling other people their experiences.

During the medical check-up in 2001 in Jakarta, Surtini visited several women's groups and asked for solidarity. She gave all her testimonies while suffering severe headaches. Surtini and other women pleaded with the other villagers to reject the community development programme offered by Newmont in the awareness that the struggle against the mining giant should be started by rejecting everything offered by Newmont.

Right now, Surtini and villagers of the Buyat Bay are conducting an assessment to identify what they have lost economically, socially, culturally and environmentally due to the presence of Newmont, which will stop operation in North Sulawesi in 2004. She says, "They cannot just go away leaving the damage with us. They have to pay for it".

[This article was earlier carried in People's Voices (Preliminary Volume), Asian Social Forum 2003]

Suwiryo Ismail can be contacted at claras@mailcity.com

Asia/ Indonesia

Share our fare

The following demands were put forward by the Buyat Bay Fisher communities to the shareholders of PT Newmont Minahasa Raya and Newmont on 11 May 2002

Based on the various sufferings that we have experienced, we, the Buyat Bay Fisher Community, residing in Kotabunan Sub-district, Bolaang Mongondow Regency, North Sulawesi, submit the following calls for immediate action by PT Newmont Minahasa Raya and Newmont Shareholders:

1. PT. Newmont Minahasa Raya (PT NMR) must immediately stop dumping waste into the Buyat Bay and must immediately rehabilitate the environment after the company has finished their operations.
2. All forms of pollution in the Buyat River must immediately be recovered/rehabilitated to sanitary conditions for the Buyat Bay community.
3. Compensation must be paid to the community who has experienced a decline in their fish catch since PT NMR began dumping wastes into the ocean. This compensation must be based on the average fish catch decline amount (50 per cent) from Rp. 500,000, the income of fisher folks per year for each family head and then must be multiplied three times for each year of PT Newmont Minahasa Raya's production.
4. The company must make available permanent facilities of clean water to the public and lamp poles in the Buyat Bay fisher community village.
5. Health check-ups and services for the community and the payment of all medicinal costs for ailments caused by the activities of PT Newmont Minahasa Raya must be provided.
6. Roads starting from the bridge at the Buyat-Ratatotok Village border to the Buyat Bay fisher village must be immediately improved and paved.
7. Losses and destruction of fisher community tools, including fisher nets and boats that have been rendered unusable up until now because the fishing grounds have become further away as a result of the dumping of mine waste into the Buyat Bay must be compensated.
8. Marshlands located behind the Buyat Bay community settlement must be immediately reclaimed. These lands have become mudholes as a result of water overflow and flooding that occurs with heavy rains.
9. Once PT Newmont Minahasa Raya's production/operation has ended or during the post-mining period, all post-mining activities must be transparent and involve the Ratatotok and Buyat Bay fisher communities.

We bring forth these demands based on what has occurred in our local community and what has been experienced and felt by the community.

These demands are expected to be answered by the head of PT Newmont Minahasa Raya and its shareholders.

Asia/ Indonesia

The Sun Rises at Kampung Laut

The* apong *fishers of Kampung Laut risk losing their source of livelihood amidst government plans to develop the area

by Uly Mulyandari of the Coalition of Indonesian Women

Kampung Laut is a *kampung* (village) on some *aanslibbings*, land that rose from the sea as a result of sedimentation. It lies in the middle of Segara Anakan, the sea in front of Cilacap bay, across which is a small island named Nusa Kambangan.

Cilacap is a small town in the southern part of central Java. During the Dutch occupation of Indonesia, it was an important port for international trade. It is from there that VOC, the Dutch trading company, sent java tobacco to Europe. The Nusa Kambangan island is today occupied by the Indonesian Ministry of Law and Justice and used as a jail for those sentenced to more than 10 years in prison.

In 1942, the sea of Segara Anakan was 64,000 ha in area. Today it is 1,000 ha only. The narrowing was caused by serious sedimentation from the Citanduy and Serayu rivers, leading to *aanslibbing* or *tanah timbul*, as locally called. At first, mangroves were grown on the *aanslibbing*. As the land became harder, people started to build houses on it. Over time, the mangrove forests have almost disappeared, even as several villagers have died of fever epidemic.

As the *aanslibbing* gets wider and wider, the sea gets narrower and narrower, causing fishers to lose their source of fish. The fishers of Kampung Laut use a traditional catching method called *apong*, a net that is placed under the sea surface. Each fisher family has a certain place to put their *apong* nets. For them, the *apong* site is like land for farmers. Their lives depend on the *apong*. Ownership of an *apong* is recognized by a deed signed by the chief of the village. Called *Surat Tanda Milik Tanah Air* (letter of ownership of land and water), this letter is not recognized by the national government, whose agrarian laws follow the domain principle. Villagers can legally own a piece of land only if they have been living on it for at least 20 years and if no other person lays claim to be its legal owner, nor does the State need the land for public utilities.

When the first rains start to fall after summer, fishers take in the *apong* and the fish in it. The number of fish caught depends on how deep the net is placed.As Segara Anakan gets narrower and narrower, fishers around Ujung Alang and Ujung Gagak villages say they get fewer and fewer fish. This is not only a concern of the fishermen but also of their wives, who are in charge of handling and selling the catch, apart from being responsible for food for the family.

More and more people are coming to Kampung Laut in search of a new livelihood by opening up the forest. Usually they are farmers who have lost their lands and have been evicted by the landowners. With decreasing forest cover, the newcomers and the older fishers have begun to fight among themselves, even as the mangrove ecosystem gets destroyed and the danger of fever looms large.

According to a newspaper report, the local government, with the support of the Asian Development Bank (ADB), has started a conservation project at Segara Anakan. Without taking the local fishers of Kampung Laut into confidence, a body called 'Badan Pengelola Konservasi Segara Anakan' (BPKSA, the Segara Anakan Conservation Body) decided to remove all the *apong* nets in the area. According to BPKSA, this was done because (a) *apong* nets are a disturbance to water transportation; (b) they accelerate sedimentation and lead to the narrowing of Segara Anakan; and (c) they cause the loss of a natural habitat for fish.

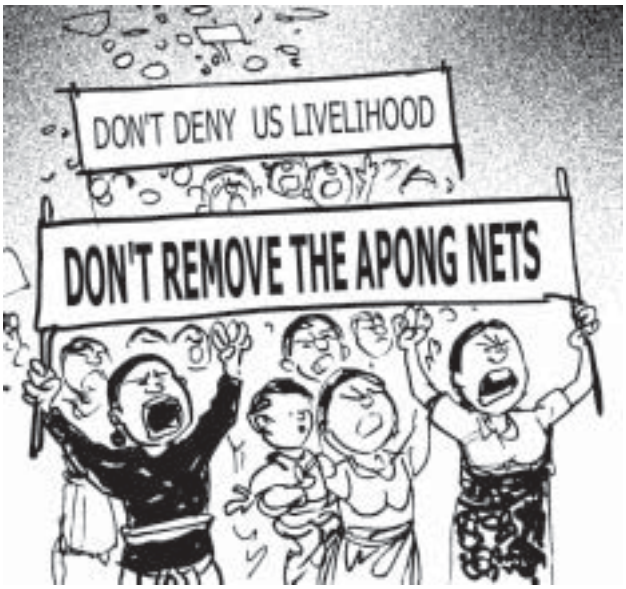
According to BPKSA clearing of *apong* nets from Segara Anakan is a precondition set by the ADB for supporting the conservation project. Though the BPKSA says it does not have any money to compensate the fishers for the loss of their *apong* nets, it plans to buy a longliner. The fishers can work on the ship, to be operated by BPKSA, as crew to catch tuna in the deep seas.

The women of the community soon got together to disseminate information to the men about the impact of the removal of *apong* nets on their families. Community meetings began to discuss the problem regularly.

During these discussions, fishers expressed fears about becoming workers on the longline ship, where they would have no control over their work. They prefer to manage a piece of land and stay close to their families. Losing their nets means losing their independence. Also, there are not enough ships to employ all the fishers

they feel.

According to the fishers, no one in Kampung Laut has ever complained about the *apong* nets as a disturbance for water transportation. According to them, sedimentation, which is the result of poor management, is the main problem. This is compounded by illegal logging in the forest around the Kawunganten-Jeruklegi area. The local government has never done anything serious to handle it.



Today there are regular monthly meetings of women (called *Balai Perempuan*, an Indonesian word in bahasa meaning "Forum of women"*)* at the three sub-villages (*dukuh*) of Ujung Alang Selatan, Ujung Alang Utara and Bondan to monitor the activity of BPKSA. The women hope these meetings will make BPKSA start consulting the local residents before making decisions. The village government has also begun to see how important it is to consult with the people. The chief of the village sometime finds time to sit with the women in meetings.

The organization Koalisi Perempuan Indonesia is conducting training programmes to impart knowledge and leadership skills to the over 300 of the *Balai Perempuan* members. It also communicates with other parties, like village government officials, NGOs and the BPKSA.

Last April, invited by *Balai Perempuan*, NGOs and mass organizations came together to set up a network to: (a) disseminate information about the problems of Kampung Laut and Segara Anakan; (b) collect information about the government-BPKSA plans for the Segara Anakan; and (c) support the plans of *Balai Perempuan* to set up a meeting between the government at the district level and the people of Kampung Laut and BPKSA, to discuss conservation plans for Segara Anakan and its ecosystem.

Uly Mulyandari can be contacted at koalisip@uninet.net.id

From Asia/ Indonesia

Skirting the ban

Illegal trawling takes a heavy toll on fishing communities in North Sumatra

by Chandrika Sharma, Programme Associate, ICSF, Chennai

I met Lely Zailani recently, during a meeting in Thailand. She spoke of the problems facing fishworkers in the region she comes from: North Sumatra in Indonesia. The most important problem, she said, is the negative impact of trawling, both on the coastal environment and on the livelihood of local fishing communities.

What she said was surprising because it is commonly known that there is a complete ban on trawling in Indonesia. In fact, the government was forced to implement the trawl ban in the 1980s as a result of the pressure from artisanal fishworkers. To the outside world, Indonesia has always been held up as an example of a country that has successfully banned trawling activities in its waters.

However, talking to Lely, it became clear that the situation 'on the sea' is quite different. It appears that trawling continues due to poor enforcement, as well as the nexus between trawler owners and enforcement officials. Traditional fishermen in North Sumatra have been badly affected. They have tried to draw the attention of local officials to illegal trawling. They have even 'arrested' trawlers and handed them over to officials, only to find that they are released the very next day.

The conflict between local gillnet fishermen and trawlers has even turned violent on several occasions, and several artisanal fisherm n have lost their lives as a consequence. Between 1993 and 1998, in the district of Teluk Mengkudu, Deli Serdang Region (North Sumatra) alone, 31 fishermen were killed. Several other unrecorded incidents took place in other regions, such as in Langkat, Asahan and Belawan. Obviously, the impact of this conflict on fishermen's wives has been high, as many of them have lost their husbands in it.

In 1998, fishworkers from three regions in North Sumatra—Langkat, Asahan Deli and Serdang—came together to form the *Sarekat Nelayan Sumatera Utara* (SNSU) or North Sumatran Fishers Union. Women are active members in this union. The aim of the organization is to draw the attention of the government to the problems of artisanal fishermen, especially the problems from illegal trawling, and to make a case for technologies that do not destroy the coastal environment.