

Equal Work, Unequal Pay

A research study reveals that increasing numbers of women are joining Chile's lucrative salmon industry, doing the same jobs as men but for less pay

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Developing countries like Chile generally have lower labour participation rates for women as compared to developed economies. Women's restricted participation in the labour market is a major reason for low household incomes. Furthermore, when women do secure employment, their incomes are in general lower than for men. This is true also for men and women working in the Chilean export manufacturing sector.

Labour economists have used different factors to explain the decisions of women to participate in the labour force. These include education and experience, the opportunity cost of not taking up employment, income of other salaried workers in the household, the existence of taxes and subsidies, the presence of children in the household, and the family. In addition, factors affecting access to labour markets—for example, the existence of

networking opportunities, and cultural factors such as *machismo*—have also been considered in recent studies.

Can there be territorially-specific factors that influence labour market access? If so, would they have implications for determining territorially-specific and gendered effects of national employment policies? These issues are discussed here in the context of labour participation of women in the salmon industry in Chiloé, Chile.

Between 1990 and 2008, national salmon production increased from 29,000 to 600,000 tons per annum, and Chile became the second largest salmon producer of the world, with exports reaching USD 2.5 billion in 2008. The successful development of the salmon industry was driven by a unique combination of hydro-biological conditions, counter-cyclical production methods, and low costs of production and transportation. Some commentators have also emphasized the comparative advantages of Chile's rather lenient environmental and labour regulations and liberal marine resource allocation regulations. The transformation of the salmon industry in Chiloé led to a rapid increase in women's employment.

PATRICIO MELILLANCA



Former salmon workers from various companies in Puerto Montt, gateway to Chiloé. Many have now left the sector to seek better pay and conditions elsewhere. The increasing rate of women's participation in the labour market in Chiloé could be the result of these changes

Chiloé Island, with an area of 8,394 square kilometers, is the second largest island in Chile, after the Isla Grande de Tierra del Fuego, and the fifth largest in South America. In recent times, increasing numbers of women in Chiloé have been joining the labour force. The increasing rate of women's participation in the labour market in Chiloé could be the result of changes in cultural patterns, temporary migration of men, and the development of agriculture in the absence of male labour. These are not factors taken into account in most studies on women's participation in employment in the region, which have tended to focus only on changes in demand generated by the aquaculture industry.

Our data is obtained from a household survey that was designed and carried out in May and June 2009. The survey covered 856 households in both rural and urban areas. Households were selected using information and maps obtained from the 1992 population census. The survey collected past and current social, economic, and workforce information, as well as opinions of respondents on various topics related to the economic and social dynamics of Chiloé.

The research analysis is based on the assumption that women workers in the salmon industry are familiar with agriculture, fishing, the collection of seafood products and handicrafts. It indicates that factors such as age, number of years of schooling, the presence of children in the household and marital status are all important determinants for women taking up employment in the salmon industry. The analysis also shows the existence of gender-based salary bias within the salmon industry, with average salaries for men of USD 560 per month while female salaries are around USD 360 per month. This difference persists when we control the data by heterogeneity of labour, that is, the wage difference is not dependent on type of labour or different productivity levels between men and women.

The results suggest that in Chiloé, economic growth has not led to a decrease in wage gaps, even in the presence of economic, social, and cultural conditions that facilitate a higher level of participation by women in the salaried labour market. This finding supports the argument for specific, territorially-sensitive policies as being necessary for removing gender-based salary discrimination. ❏

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Gains and challenges

The International Congress of Women in Artisanal Fisheries held in Valparaiso, Chile, highlighted both the gains made by women in the sector and the many difficulties that still lie in their path

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The National Confederation of Artisanal Fishermen of Chile (CONAPACH) organized the International Congress of Women in Artisanal Fisheries in Valparaiso, Chile, from 5-7 June 2013. It was attended by about 150 women of the Chilean artisanal fisheries, numerous male leaders of CONAPACH, government officials, and about 30 others, including fishers as well as technical experts from Brazil, Argentina, Peru, Bolivia, Colombia, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Panama, Honduras, Nicaragua and Kenya. ICSF supported the participation of fisherwomen from Costa Rica and Brazil and other representatives.

The central theme of the meeting was “integration for sustainable development”, and its two focus areas of discussion—“contribution of artisanal fisheries to food security” and “recognition of the rights of use of fishing resources”—ordered the presentations in the plenary session during the mornings of 5 and 6 June. Working groups met during the afternoons and addressed the following issues: productive experiences of fishing; organizational experiences of artisanal fisheries; effectiveness of the development of the rural sector; environmental and social conflicts in artisanal fishing communities; the new fisheries law in Chile through the experiences of women who participated in the parliamentary process; and the empowerment of fisherwomen.

On 5 June, initial speeches by the Chilean government authorities and CONAPACH leaders were followed by several presentations: Alejandro Flores of the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) talked about the ongoing process related to the drafting of the small-scale fisheries (SSF) Guidelines; Alejandro Barrios of IBON International (an international organization that focuses on capacity building of social movements for human rights and democracy), talked about the consequences of globalization for the fishing sector; and Cairo Laguna, representing the Nicaraguan Federation of Fishing and the World Forum of Fish Harvesters and

Fishworkers (WFF) discussed the reorganization of the WFF and its focus on the participation of women, as well as the experiences of fishworkers of Central America participating in the negotiations on FAO’s SSF Guidelines. Barbara Figueroa, president of the Central Unit of Workers of Chile (CUT), pointed out the need to align the organization with fishworkers’ issues. She was critical of the commoditized form of the present pension system and emphasized the need to fight for public policies of salaries and gender equity.

Stephan Gelcich, professor at the Pontifical Catholic University of Chile, in his presentation titled “Gender and fisheries: challenges in the first mile”, addressed the role of women in Chilean fisheries, especially in the Management and Exploitation Areas for Benthic Resources—marine areas restricted to fisherfolk organizations through the regularization process. An important aspect has been the growth of organizations formed exclusively by women, which, according to Stephan, had an increase of 1200 per cent between 2004 and 2012, emphasizing that women have been actively seeking out the concessions provided for these areas. Among the many issues highlighted in the presentation were the possibilities for income generation for women through adding value to the product and the possibilities of enhancing biodiversity conservation through these initiatives.

The presentation titled “Seafood diet, vulnerability and challenges of the human brain”, made by Victor Gutierrez of the University of Santiago, expounded upon the importance of fish in the human diet for brain development, particularly during pregnancy.

During the afternoon sessions, working groups across different countries met to discuss the productive experiences of artisanal fisheries (Chile, Peru and Guatemala) and the organizational experiences of fishworkers (Costa Rica, Chile and Argentina). This was followed by debates as well as a presentation on the effectiveness of rural sector development.

The plenary session of the morning of 6 June was marked by a long discussion on the new Chilean fisheries law, passed in 2012, which, critics claim, has granted monopolistic privileges to industrial fishing companies, facilitated the transnationalization of fishery resources, established greater control of artisanal fisheries and excluded the indigenous peoples’ access to them. On the one hand, members of the government talked about



There were 150 women members from CONAPACH at the International Congress of Women in Artisanal Fisheries held in Valparaiso, Chile from 5-7 June 2013

the main changes introduced by the law in general, and for the benthic sector in particular, since most of the women's activities are focused on benthic resources. On the other hand, CONAPACH leaders addressed their organization's priority areas during the discussion of the law, highlighting the access regime of the artisanal sector, the records of the fishermen, the exclusive access for artisanal fisheries in the five-mile zone and the rules of the management areas, in particular those referring to the development of small-scale aquaculture.

Scheduled for the afternoon of 6 June were two presentations on the social organization and political role of fisherwomen, one representing Ecuador and the other, Brazil, as well as a presentation by the Peoples Coalition for Food Sovereignty (PCFS). Unfortunately, the presentation of Ecuador did not take place. The case of Brazil was presented by Maria Eliene Pereira do Vale (Maninha), leader of the National Articulation of Fisherwomen (ANP), along with Natalia Tavares, who reported on the experiences of the fisherwomen's organization nationwide, including the advances in their demands, their integration with the Movement of Fishermen and Fisherwomen of Brazil (MPP), and the current struggle of these movements for the regularization of fishing territories. Finally, Pedro Guzmán made a presentation on behalf of PCFS, a network of peasants' organizations, family farmers and fishermen, which originated in Asia and Africa and is now seeking to establish itself in Latin America, with the aim of guiding the discussion on food sovereignty from the perspective of the Southern countries and food producers' communities.

In the few days that it met, the International Congress of Women in Artisanal Fisheries spent considerable time addressing issues of fishing in general, such as legislation and regulatory measures of management, labour and social security, credit and grants policies, as well as environmental problems faced by fishing communities, such as the impact of thermoelectric plants and mining. Unfortunately however, in our opinion, not enough time and focus was devoted to the condition of women in the fishing sector. While it is true that many of the issues in fisheries are, in fact, common to men and women, the form that they take and their impacts are often different and women often pay a greater price.

Discussions on the role of women took place mainly outside the plenary sessions, in the working groups, which discussed the social organization of women linked to production practices, or, in other words, how women have organized themselves for the production and processing of fish, and the difficulties and limitations they face both in general, as well as in relation to men.

The most discussed case regarding women was that of Chile, where it was claimed that men do not let women participate in the meetings of the unions, reporting expulsions and expressing derision during their speeches and in reaction to their demands. Chilean fisherwomen particularly denounced the discrimination they face in gaining access to the Management and Exploitation Areas for Benthic Resources, the main resources they exploit. For instance, Sara Garrido from the Union of Fisherwomen and Seaweed Gatherers of Caleta Coliumo reported the struggle of her union to obtain such a Management Area. The struggle began in 2002 and materialized only in 2008—the delay being due to the prevailing machismo. Such attitudes were seen as an obstacle to women's participation in organizations and the process of gaining approval. Chilean women thus favour an integrated agenda with men and demand the right to participation, inclusion and equal access in fisherfolk organizations.

A striking point in the discussion was that the fisherwomen from Chile were keen to assert that they are not feminists, suggesting thus that feminism was something negative with which they do not want to be identified. This casting of feminism as reverse sexism, as an idea of "paying back with the same coin" or as putting women in a position of superiority and domination over men is, in our opinion, an unfortunate and common misconception, stemming from the lack of

awareness of what feminism really is—the struggle for equal rights and for the end of unequal power relations between the sexes.

In conclusion, while this Congress was, undoubtedly, a valuable initiative of CONAPACH and presented a welcome opportunity for prominent persons, fisherwomen and technicians from other countries to meet and share experiences and knowledge, its chief limitation of inadequate time and energy spent on the question of women perhaps points to the need for more specific and autonomous organization of fisherwomen. For women in the artisanal fisheries, the Congress perhaps reaffirmed the understanding that to defend their rights is to fight against the domination

of men in every space and instance: families, communities, class organizations, governmental institutions and other spheres of society. The Congress, in our opinion, also demonstrated that women in the sector need more information and a better understanding about contemporary women's struggles so as to perceive their own fight (contrary to the view that many fisherwomen currently hold) as truly and genuinely feminist, thus enabling them to learn from the invaluable experiences of others and to integrate their struggles with broader societal struggles. The multiple limits that sexism imposes on fisherwomen weaken both the artisanal fisheries and fishing communities. To overcome this is essential for their defence. ❏

Discussions on the role of women took place mainly outside the plenary sessions...

Mapuche: People of the Land and Sea

Chile's indigenous fisherpeoples, struggling to protect their livelihoods, find that laws protecting their customary rights are in direct conflict with sectoral laws that seek to open up the natural resource base to commercial exploitation

By **Patricio Igor Melillanca** (patricio@ecoceanos.cl), from Ecoceanos, Chile. This article is based on an interview conducted for the Voice of Fishers Project of the FAO

The Bay of Mehuín in the southeast Pacific region, 800 km south of Santiago, Chile, has been home to fishing communities and deep-sea divers for hundreds of years. The Mapuche-Lafkenche is one such community that lives along the bay in the Region de Los Ríos in south Chile, meeting its livelihood through fishing, harvesting shellfish and farming benthonic resources.

The Mapuche-Lafkenche people have a complex relationship with their land and marine environment. The natural resources which sustain them physically and economically in the form of food and material resources also sustain their cultural, religious and spiritual lives. Vital ingredients for medicines and health are extracted from the natural resources they harvest. Sea water, for instance, is used as a Mapuche medicine at certain times of the year. Seaweeds like *cochayuyo* (bull kelp) and *luga* (a type of seaweed) are used to treat not just human beings but also animals. The traditional doctors and *machis* (shamans) use a large variety of plants found along the coastal strip as cures. In the words of Boris Hualme Millanao, a leader of the Mapuche-Lafkenche community and spokesperson for the Marine Defence Committee of the Mehuín

community: "These natural products give us our life, our food and our economy."

These natural resources also allow the community to practise barter and commerce (*trafkintun*). Although barter may no longer be the sole means of exchange, it is still practised by the community at a time when Chilean society increasingly calculates value only in terms of money, ignoring collective interests or customary rights.

Customary rights to the use of their ancestral land and water resources have supported the traditional livelihood forms of the Mapuche-Lafkenche community for generations. Of primary importance today is that these rights be secured through legislation. Two specific advances for customary rights have been the 1989 International Labour Organization (ILO) Convention 169 at the international level, and the Law No.20.249 (passed in November 2007), better known as the "Lafkenche Law". The struggle now is to seek interpretation of this legislation in ways that reinforce customary rights. The legislation, however, is in direct conflict with sectoral laws relating to natural resources. There is the mining law, which takes precedence over almost all other laws, not only the indigenous one. Further pieces of legislation being drafted are the Water Code, the Law on Native Woodlands, and the Fisheries Law. These sectoral laws specifically seek to open up natural resources to exploitation by various economic interests.

An example of this struggle with private economic interests is the 15-year-old conflict with Celulosa Arauco y Constitución (CELCO), for alleged human-rights violations. The Valdivia pulp mill, one of several owned by CELCO, is located 500 m from the south bank of the Cruces River in the Los Ríos region, upstream from the nature sanctuary and 40 km from the Bay of Mehuín, where the Mapuche-Lafkenche and other indigenous fishing communities live. The pulp mill produces 550,000 tonnes of pulp a year for export. Pulp production is a highly polluting process and expels large amounts of toxic chemical effluents. The company plans to lay a 40-km waste pipeline from the pulp mill to Mehuín, with a 2-km undersea extension, through which the plant's effluents can be discharged directly into the ocean at a depth of 18 m.

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Mapuche Lafkenche leaders gathering in the Bio Bio region, Chile. Customary rights to use their ancestral land and water resources has supported traditional livelihood

The law describes the Mapuche-Lafkenche as 'People of the Land', a position that leaves the community without any customary rights over the sea and coastal resources.

CELCO was granted permission to build the waste pipeline on 24 February 2010 by the Regional Commission for the Environment (COREMA). The pipeline is expected to be completed in two years' time. The population that will be affected by the project includes 20 coastal communities of Lafkenche people and the traditional fishing communities of Mehuín, Cheuque, La Barra and Mississipi. Another 20 native communities further south, and associations of fishing communities with nearly 1,000 members in neighbouring bays and inland areas could also be negatively impacted. The Defence of the Sea Committee (Comite de Defensa del Mar) appealed to the courts against the environmental permit granted to the company, and demanded that the lives of indigenous people as well as their right to live on the coast, which is guaranteed under Chilean law, be protected. But the appeal was rejected by the Supreme Court in Chile. Denied justice, the Defence of the Sea Committee took its case to the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR), seeking urgent precautionary measures and a restraining order against pipeline construction.

Today the challenge before the Mapuche-Lafkenche community is to be able to build a movement to defend its customary rights and to demand the implementation of legislation that defends these rights against predatory private interests. Critical to this would be

the sharing of experiences between local communities, and studying the new legislation in order to interpret it in ways that protect Lafkenche interests. Studying the Lafkenche Law, however, throws up several basic questions starting with how the law defines the Mapuche-Lafkenche people.

Boris Hualme Millanao, a Mapuche leader, explains: "The Chilean State describes the Mapuche-Lafkenche as 'people of the land'. This position leaves the community without any customary rights over the sea and coastal resources. This justification is sought to be imposed through anthropology and the educational system, fooling the Lafkenche society into believing that the law only applies to the land. This interpretation has to be challenged, not only with the State and private economic interests, but also within the community itself, in order to reclaim our traditional rights. This is the biggest challenge before the community leaders."

This will not be an easy struggle. As Boris Hualme Millanao says, "We know that this will come at a high cost. They will imprison us, apply the Anti-terrorist Law to stop us, and create many other difficulties. But what is clear is that we must not get distracted by this or that small project, or by a government that brings us suitcases full of money to buy our co-operation. To be true to our way of life and to defend our rights, we must never give up." ❏

The Seaweed Harvesters of Alao

While archaeological evidence confirms that inhabitants of the Chiloe archipelago used sea-plants for food and medicine, today's islanders sell off all the harvest. A fun workshop brings back to the island its ancient practices

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In February 2011, I travelled from Prince Edward Island, Canada, where I live, to the archipelago of Chiloe, off the southern coast of Chile. As the Director of the Institute of Island Studies at the University of Prince Edward Island (<http://www.islandstudies.com>), my purpose was to meet with representatives of the ARCIS Patagonia University as well as an indigenous tribal council, the Williche Council of Chiefs, who have been our partners in research projects since 2005. I was taken to the Quinchao group of islands, which lie along the eastern flank of Chiloe, to visit the tiny island of Alao. Alao is home to only a few hundred people, many of whom are considered to be poor; they often rely on harvesting seaweeds for cash income.

On arrival at the wharf in Alao we were greeted by the sight of a local farmer-fisherman driving a pair of oxen. Pigs and chickens and an assortment of dogs roamed through the hamlet next to the wharf where the island's school, the medical clinic, a dilapidated church and a small number of houses were located. Our boat had brought to Alao its paramedic, who looks after the clinic. From the wharf that we had alighted, a ferry boat transports the people of Alao to other islands nearby. There is only one tiny shop on the island selling a few basic supplies such as cooking oil, rice and sugar, but a wider selection is available on the other islands.

The dominant sea-plant harvested on Alao is the large, fleshy, red *luga* (*Gigartina scottsbergii*). *Luga* is dried on the beach, stuffed into bags and transported to the mainland to be sold to factories that extract carrageenan. Carrageenan is used in a wide variety of food

processing and pharmaceutical applications. It is the natural gum that, among other things, holds the chocolate in suspension in chocolate milk and keeps the medicine together in pills. It also makes ice cream creamy and factory chickens juicy. Another sea-plant, which is cultivated for commercial sale on Alao, is *pelillo* (*Gracilaria chilensis*). This is valued for its agar content and is also sold to factories that extract the agar for use in a variety of industries.

Seaweed harvesting was not always such a dominant feature of Alao's local economy. Twenty years ago a visitor would have seen many small fishing boats actively catching a wide variety of fish. But then, say the locals, dragger boats came from the mainland, tore up the bottom and caught all sorts of fish indiscriminately and in large quantities. Today, fishers report that there is no fish stock left that is worth the effort of fishing commercially. A few boats still go out to sea, but only to catch a few fish to feed their families, and only when there is nothing else to do.

On Alao, it seems there is always something important to do to support a family. There are vegetable gardens to tend, which produce the small red, white, yellow and blue native potatoes and the giant bulbs of garlic for which Chiloe is famous. There are pastures with livestock, especially beef cattle and the oxen and ponies that are called on to transport

IRENE NOVACZEK



The training workshop for the people of Alao demonstrated the use of seaweeds for food and medicine

The fishing families involved often suffer from poor health and food insecurity because of their marginal incomes, so it is important for them to understand how to maximize the benefits from the seaweeds they harvest.

goods from place to place—there being only one truck and no cars on the island. And of course there is seaweed to pick, especially on the rocky north shore where *luga* is abundant. On this shore, there are also ancient *corrales de pesca*, or fish traps built of stone, which the aboriginal people used for fishing thousands of years ago.

Because I have expertise in marine botany and run a small business making and selling sea-plant products on Prince Edward Island, I was asked to provide a training workshop for the people of Alao on how to use seaweeds for food and medicine. This is something I have done on many small islands of the world where people are engaged in harvesting sea-plants for sale to international corporations because often, the harvesters do not recognize that these same plants can be used in other ways to support the health, nutrition and income of their families. The harvesting, drying and transporting of seaweeds is back-breaking labour, which usually earns very little money. The fishing families involved often suffer from poor health and food insecurity because of their marginal incomes, so it is important for them to understand how to maximize the benefits from the seaweeds they harvest.

On Alao, as in Chiloe generally, people commonly eat only two seaweeds. *Cochayuyo* (*Durvillea antarctica*) is a large, brown, leathery sea-plant, harvested from the cold waters of the Pacific coast, and can be found in many traditional soups and stews. *Luche* (*Porphyra columbina*) appears as small, translucent blades in shallow, sheltered waters and is a common feature in shellfish soup. Many rural people also remember how some other species were used by their ancestors. For example, the green sea lettuce, called *lamilla* (*Ulva lactuca*) was traditionally used as fertilizer for growing potatoes but is now a neglected resource since most farmers have shifted from organic to chemical methods. *Llapin* (*Nothogenia fastigiata*), another red algae containing carrageenan, is still sometimes used by farmers to feed young pigs who are not growing well. Finally, there is a kelp called *sargazo* (*Macrocystis pyrifera*) that the aboriginal Williche people would use to heal broken bones. Modern science and the rapidly growing health food movement recognize that all these species and many more that can be seen on the shores of Alao are edible and/or medicinal, yet most of these resources are either entirely ignored or used in a very limited way. Recent research on Chiloe suggests that the tradition of using sea-plants is a cultural asset that is in danger of fading away.

I found that on Alao the use of sea-plants for food or agriculture is rare, and medicinal uses are non-existent. No one makes any use of the *luga* and *pellilo* that they harvest for

sale. This is a pattern I have noted among seaweed harvesters in many small islands of the world, but it is perhaps more surprising in the Chiloe archipelago when one considers the archaeological evidence of seaweed use over thousands of years. In 2008 it was reported that nine species of marine algae were recovered from hearths and storage spaces of ancient homes unearthed at Monte Verde II, on the mainland of Chile close to the Chiloe archipelago. These remains were dated to be from between 14,220 and 13,980 years before the present, indicating the use of seaweeds by the people who lived at the site at that time. The seaweeds were mixed together with medicinal herbs in half chewed cuds, leading the archaeologists to conclude that they were used for both food and medicine. It is most likely that the original occupants of the Chiloe archipelago shared the sea-plant knowledge and practices in evidence at near-by Monte Verde. Yet today, people are unaware that many of those species found at Monte Verde, including *luga*, have any potential use as food or medicine.

We started our work on Alao by moving about meeting women and inviting them to a workshop to be held the following day. When we learned that there was already a workshop on how to build a greenhouse scheduled for the afternoon, we decided to start our workshop mid-morning with the intention of preparing a lunch featuring a variety of seaweed dishes for all of the workshop participants. Participants were invited to show up at 10 am and bring some food to share—either a few vegetables, some shellfish or smoked fish. Then we went out to the beach to harvest some of the most commonly available edible and medicinal sea-plants. In no time we had bags of *luga*, *llapin*, *lamella*, *luche* and *sargazo*, which we carefully washed to remove all sand and bits of debris, and then laid out to dry. The larger plants were pegged onto clotheslines, to the bemusement of the locals. The smaller ones were spread on clean newspapers on top of chairs and tables in the clinic, where we were to spend the night. That evening we perched our teacups in the small spaces between fronds of seaweed on the desk we were using as a dining table.

The next morning we took over the kitchen of the school, which opened into a dining room with long wooden tables perfect for displaying our marine treasures. As participants filtered in, they were set to work washing, peeling and chopping vegetables and seafood, and preparing bread dough. Once the room was full, we started talking about the different seaweeds, how they could be used, their nutritional value and medicinal properties. Recipes for the day were written on craft paper

and hung on the wall so that everyone could make their own copies. I told stories about seaweeds from other islands, including the one about Jamaica where young men believe that the seaweeds containing jelly have aphrodisiac properties. That's always a good one for breaking the ice!

First we oven dried three different sea-plants—one red, one green and one brown—to make them crispy, after which some of our child participants gleefully crumbled them into small flakes using a rolling pin. These flakes were sprinkled into the bread dough to make vitamin-and mineral-enriched rolls. Then we tossed *luga* and *llapin* into pots of hot milk and cooked them until they disappeared and the milk became very thick. Half of the milk jelly was mixed with honey and vanilla and poured into a pan to cool into a delicious pudding. The other pot of thickened milk was mixed with smoked fish, smoked mussels, sautéed onion and garlic and a handful of

crushed smoked chillies. This was also poured into a pan to cool and set into a jelly. Finally, we boiled up a huge pot of fish and vegetables and tossed in every sort of seaweed available. The results were delicious and we were especially happy to hear the women asking if they could use milk from their cows to make the pudding. Of course they can, and we hope they will, because at this point no one on Alao milks their cows. They claim that the children don't like milk so they get very sugary tea or Nescafe instead, together with white bread—the standard meal on Alao. But the kids at our workshop certainly did not object to the *luga* pudding!

One mother had a child with a nasty case of herpes on his face. Because carrageenan is anti-viral against herpes, we took time to whip up a *luga*-based skin cream, which everyone enjoyed slathering themselves with. All in all, a wonderfully fun and productive day. Thanks, Alao! 🍷

Under a Salmon Dictatorship

Crippled by outbreaks of infectious disease, Chile's multinational-dominated salmon industry has dipped in productivity, leaving women with little protection

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Gladys, 33, expecting her fourth child, lives in the coastal city of Calbuco, in an archipelago of 15 small islands in the south of Chile. For almost ten years she has worked in various jobs in national and multinational companies that rear, process and export salmon to Japan, the United States and the European Union.

In less than two decades, the industrial monoculture of salmon, started in the 1980s by Norwegian, Spanish and Japanese multinationals, has transformed this South American country into the second-largest producer of salmon in the world, providing 37 per cent of the global supplies, behind Norway, which leads with 42 per cent. Salmon is an exotic species introduced into the waters of the southern regions of Chile.

Today, one in four farmed salmon fillets consumed worldwide comes from the cold regions where Gladys and her colleagues work for up to ten to 12 hours a day.

In 1990, the salmon industry in Chile exported 24,000 tonnes of trout and salmon, worth US\$116 mn. By 1999, exports had increased to over 200,000 tonnes, worth US\$810 mn, and by 2007, just before the outbreak of the current infectious salmon anaemia (ISA) virus disease, production rose to 665,000 tonnes, valued at US\$2,400 mn.

To reach such levels of production, salmon companies employed around 35,000 workers who came from the regions of Chiloé, Aysén and Magallanes, in addition to migrant workers from other regions of the country.

The fish-processing plants, installed mainly in Puerto Montt, employ a workforce that is around 70 per cent female, who work eight-hour shifts in the Norwegian company, Mainstream/Cermaq. Three shifts are normally operated: one from 8 am to 4 pm, the second from 4 pm until midnight, and the third, throughout the night and early morning.

Many of the women workers in Mainstream/Cermaq, in which the Norwegian State owns a 43 per cent share, are not formally educated. Says Vanesa Ojeda, a worker and union leader: "Previously, they used to have courses for women who were on long-term contracts to help them complete their education. But for the past two years these courses are no longer being provided."

In 2007, Chile's salmon industry faced its first major crisis, as a result of two decades of poor environmental and sanitary practices, triggered by the complicity of government officials, weak legislation and a lack of political will.

At the start of 2009, there was an infestation of sea lice (*Caligulus spp*), an ectoparasite found naturally, to a small degree, in native fish species. However, the high densities of salmon in the floating cages, above the maximum permitted levels, combined with the concentrations of rearing centres and the irresponsible use of chemicals, caused this parasite to proliferate, resulting in the loss of up to 30 per cent of the biomass in the salmon centres.

Added to that, in June 2009, the spread of ISA from eggs imported from Norway devastated the Atlantic salmon-rearing centres, and there was a 50 per cent fall in the overall production of the industry, triggering the layoff of almost 40 per cent of the industry's workforce.

In response to this crisis, the salmon companies, which only last year made public their enormous debts—around ten times their investment—are asking the State for new loans. They are also lobbying for a bill that will allow them to become owners in perpetuity of aquaculture concessions, provided free

MAINSTREAM TRADE UNION



Pregnant women during a break in the factory canteen of the multinational, Mainstream/Cermaq, at Calbuco, Chile

“All these women have scarce means. Most of them are single mothers with no social protection.”

of charge by the State, for mortgages. The companies owe Chilean and foreign banks more than US\$2,500 mn.

Prior to 2007, salmon workers earned average monthly salaries of 250,000 pesos (around US\$470). Their salaries were based on the legal minimum wage of 159,000 pesos (around US\$300). The remainder was made up from various bonuses related to production and time at work, calculated both on a collective and individual basis.

Today, however, in the middle of the ISA crisis, there is no production bonus, and salaries in the salmon industry have been halved. In Mainstream/Cermaq “the salaries are now only the legal minimum as no fish is coming in for processing”, affirms William Rebolledo, the president of the trade union. Says Vanessa Ojeda: “We always used to earn the minimum salary plus production bonuses. But now with no salmon in the plant, they are asking us to do cleaning work for not a single extra peso.”

In the first three months of 2009 alone, Mainstream/Cermaq had net earnings, before tax, of US\$25 mn, as reported by the Chief Executive Officer, Geir Isaksen. Workers fear that the current crisis is serving as an opportunity for the company to get rid of its regular, organized workforce. “No salmon is coming to Mainstream/Cermaq but we believe that it’s being taken to other processing plants, because they want to close this plant, lay off everyone, and then contract in workers who are neither organized nor have a trade union,” says Vanessa Ojeda.

These fears are not baseless. Recently, along with Gladys, 15 other pregnant workers were fired illegally from Cermaq/Mainstream. Layoffs of pregnant women are common in several salmon companies, despite labour laws that protect trade union leaders and pregnant women. To circumvent the law, several companies make women undergo pregnancy tests before hiring them. According to a study carried out by the National Labour Directorate, “in the specific case of women, some trade union leaders indicate that the companies prefer ‘young women, but not too young,’ so that their reproductive age is not incidental to their entry and exit from the labour market.”

“It’s disgusting that a fillet of salmon should be worth more than a pregnant woman”, says William Rebolledo. “All these women have scarce means. Most of them are single mothers with no social protection. Some have told us that they

have been victims of sexual harassment, but have chosen not to complain for fear of being dismissed and left jobless”, he adds.

The workers brought the layoffs to the attention of the Labour Ministry’s Inspectorate of Work and, on 13 May 2009, inspection officials visiting Mainstream/Cermaq found that a “legal separation of functions” applied to pregnant workers. For this, the salmon company was fined 7.7 mn pesos (US\$13,110). An additional fine of 2.2 mn pesos (US\$4,120) was imposed for “not providing work as contracted”.

The company reacted by taking the 15 pregnant salmon workers to court in an attempt to lay them off legally, demanding, in addition, withholding of salaries for the duration of the case. However it lost the legal battle in the Calbuco Tribunal. It then appealed to the Puerto Montt Appeals Court, which reviewed two cases but ruled in favour of the workers.

Unable to lay off the pregnant workers, the company increased harassment levels. Gladys says that on various occasions, but especially in the last month, “all the pregnant women at Mainstream/Cermaq were sent to work in the packing section, where temperatures are below freezing.”

“Now that there was no production, the bosses were sending the pregnant women, whom they had not been able to lay off, to the toilets section to wash the equipment with chlorine”, recounts Vanessa Ojeda. The pregnant women were provided neither gloves nor masks. Many refused but some women, cowed down by an abusive middle management, worked without any protection.

Union leaders allege that the conditions of work have caused an increase in spontaneous abortions. The acclaimed documentary on intensive salmon-farming in Chile, “Ovas de Oro” (Golden Eggs), records the case of a woman worker who suffered an abortion from having to do heavy work in below-freezing temperatures.

Another woman worker in Mainstream/Cermaq, Claudia, had a spontaneous abortion when she was hit by heavy salmon being offloaded onto a table. “At the end of December 2007, I was working in the classified area where salmon of between 4 and 9 kg were being dumped on a large table. These salmon rebounded and several of them hit me in the belly. I felt a lot of pain and had to go home”, she recounted. Throughout January 2008 Claudia had symptoms of miscarriage, suffering

such losses of blood during night shifts that she had to retire from work. The abortion took place in early February at the regional hospital at Puerto Montt; Claudia received blood transfusions.

Puerto Montt's women salmon workers are today united in calling for an end to anti-union practices, double standards, low salaries, heavy workloads, as well as the systematic violation of labour, environmental and sanitary laws. ❏

Not just the cherry on the cake

Gender mainstreaming and anti-discrimination measures form central planks in President Michelle Bachelet's policies for Chile. This article discusses how Chilean women in fisheries are benefiting from the new measures

This article has been compiled by **Brian O'Riordan** (briano@scarlet.be), Secretary, ICSF Belgium Office, from various sources, including Conapach (www.conapach.cl), Tribuna del Bío Bío (www.tribunadelbiobio.cl) and Subpesca (www.subpesca.cl)

Elected in January 2006, Michelle Bachelet is Chile's first woman President. Her election marked a milestone in the process of national reform, from dictatorship under the brutal Pinochet regime to democracy. Her father was tortured to death by Pinochet's secret police. She and her mother were also imprisoned, but managed to escape rape, torture and murder, unlike thousands of less fortunate women.

On being elected, she pledged to bridge the gap between rich and poor and to give women and indigenous people a greater voice in Chile. Central policy planks of President Bachelet's programme include gender mainstreaming and antidiscrimination. Eighteen months since she took over, and 12 months before a new round of Presidential elections, these policies are being implemented in the fisheries sector.

At a conference in Valparaiso in November 2007, an initiative was launched to establish a network of women in fisheries in Chile: the National Network of Women in Artisanal Fisheries and Small-scale Aquaculture. The conference, the First International Meeting of Women in Artisanal Fishing and Small-scale Aquaculture, was co-organized by the Fisheries Sub-Secretariat and the Federation of Artisanal Fishing and Seafarers, FEPAMAR, from Region VIII.

Maria Torres, General Secretary of FEPAMAR, explains: "Around 12 international women fisher leaders were present at the Conference, joining some 80 women leaders from Chile. We found that, six years after our last meeting, some organizations had disappeared, while others were doing well". Apart from providing a forum for exchange of experiences, the purpose of the meeting was, in Torres' words, to "get the public services involved with artisanal fisheries, to become more engaged with the sector", highlighting that "women are not behind artisanal fishermen, but at their side, helping with fisheries activities as much on land as at sea."

According to Maria Torres: "Traditionally Latin American societies have been organized

along patriarchal lines. This has come about as a consequence of male dominance in the public spaces that govern the economy, policies and society, with women being relegated to private domestic life. In the work place too, women's work is often seen as mere support activity, which conceals its real importance. Women fail to be taken into account in national statistics or research, which has meant their exclusion from government plans and public policies. This has resulted in inequitable policies, and what is more, insufficient attention to issues of great priority for the artisanal fishery and their communities".

On 5 August 2008, in Valparaiso, a co-operation agreement was signed between the Service for Women's Affairs (SERNAM), the Fisheries Sub-Secretariat (SUBPESCA), and the Fisheries Service (SERNAPESCA). Present at the signing ceremony were women representatives from the artisanal fishing sector. These included the President of Conapach, Zoila Bustamente, Maria Torres, the Secretary of FEPAMAR from the VIII Region, and Gladis Alvarado from the Hualaihué Syndicate from Region VIII.

This agreement aims to disseminate information and provide training on the issue of women's rights. It envisages direct contact between men and women stakeholders in the fisheries and aquaculture sectors, with particular attention to consultations with women associated with fishery and aquaculture activities.

According to Maria Torres: "As far as the integration of women within the artisanal fisheries sector is concerned, while in the North there continues to be much *machismo*, in the Central zone women are more prominent due to their presence at sea as seaweed gatherers and fishers. Towards the South, women are even more visible, sailing and handling their own vessels, setting out to sea for up to 15 days, with risky weather conditions and the inherent problems that fishing conditions present daily."

The agreement, according to Torres, is an important landmark. "In less than a year, thanks to our persistent demands, SUBPESCA, SERNAM and SERNAPESCA have signed an agreement through which they will attempt to fulfill the Presidential mandate of reaching out to the people, instead of forcing the people to go to them. This will help the large number of rural *caletas*, from where women travel for many hours to reach the offices of SERNAPESCA and other government agencies. Women from the



“The Fisheries Sub-Secretariat has heard the call of the President of the Republic, and has established, as a strategic priority, the inclusion and strengthening of the gender perspective as a central part of its policies and institutional tasks”.

islands too face problems in accessing public services. So if public services go to them, it is a great achievement.”

On 30 October 2008, in Valparaiso, an anti-discrimination initiative in the fisheries sector was launched. The General Sub-Secretariat of the Chilean Government and the Sub-Secretariat of Fisheries signed a co-operation agreement to implement a plan of action to promote respect for diversity, tolerance and nondiscrimination in both the fisheries and aquaculture sectors, as well as in technical teams and in the public sector.

One of the programmes to be implemented is the *Subpesca en Terreno* (Subpesca on the Ground), which will address the demands for information and training of stakeholders all over Chile.

The Chilean Government views gender discrimination as being the result of violence and poverty. For this reason, says Torres: “the President of the Republic has given top priority to the social agenda for making the country more humane and more inclusive”.

In her speech during the signing ceremony, Zoila Bustamante, the President of Conapach,

highlighted the importance of the issues to be addressed through the agreement, and called on the Government to ensure that in future, artisanal fishers are invited in their own right and “not just as the cherry on the cake”. Said Bustamante: “What we are hoping for is that from tomorrow onwards, when we work with the government, with the Fisheries Sub-Secretariat, we do it because we want to conserve the resources in the sea, so that in future we don’t have to survive on handouts; so that we can continue fishing and working, not waiting at home to be told that they will give us our basic needs”.

In her closing remarks, the representative of the Fisheries Sub-Secretariat, María Angela Barbieri, said: “The Fisheries Sub-Secretariat has heard the call of the President of the Republic, and has established, as a strategic priority, the inclusion and strengthening of the gender perspective as a central part of its policies and institutional tasks”. It is vital, she said, for the constitution of a country to stimulate leadership capacities and self determination, not just for men, but also for women.

For Maria Torres, these agreements are an important step towards getting the National Network of Women in Artisanal Fisheries and Small-scale Aquaculture off the ground. Says Torres: “They will help to strengthen organizations of women and to train leaders; to generate new collaboration agreements with public and private bodies, and launch other initiatives. Plans are in hand to organize regional meetings, where women can get to know each other and through undertaking participative regional analysis, to articulate their concerns and proposals in various spheres.”

The first such regional meeting took place in Arica on 20 October 2008, and it is planned that meetings will be organized in 14 of the 15 Regions of the country, culminating on 4 February 2009 in Concepción. ❏

Latin America/ Chile

No Equity without Gender Equity

The Chilean government calls for a gender equity meeting for women in artisanal fisheries

This article has been compiled by Brian O’Riordan using information from the following websites: SERNAPESCA (www.sernapesca.cl) and the Latin American Artisanal Fishing Forum (<http://www.cedepesca.org.ar/foroclaro/>)

The Chilean Fisheries Subsecretariat is organizing a gender equity meeting on November 27 and 28, 2007. Over 80 women, engaged in artisanal fishing from Chile’s Vth Region, are expected to participate.

According to official SERNAPESCA (Chilean Fisheries Service) data, 5,500 women work in the country’s fisheries and aquaculture sectors. Between the years 1990 and 2006, Chile’s Directorate of Port Works (DPW) invested 76,551 million pesos (106 million euro or US \$151 million) in fisheries infrastructure. This benefited 29,515 men and 2,568 women, together comprising 54 per cent of the total workforce.

According to the DPW Director, Sergio Arévalo, since 2003, when a gender focus was formally incorporated into his Directorate’s policies, women’s work, including fish processing, baiting hooks and net repairs, has become more visible. It has led to the improvement of working conditions of women: sunshades and sheds have been constructed; access facilities improved; and hygienic services introduced for the exclusive use of women working in *caletas*.

A report released in October 2007 by SERNAPESCA highlights these issues. Says Dr Inés Montalva, the SERNAPESCA Director: “As part of the programme for modernizing the state, the Government has directed that the gender perspective be incorporated to improve management—the contribution of a “grain of sand” towards increasing equity and equality”.

The end-November meeting will bring together artisanal fishing women from all over Chile as well as some international representatives. It will provide a platform for an exchange of experiences to strengthen equal opportunities and rights.

Since 2002, the Fisheries Subsecretariat has implemented gender equity in the formulation of sectoral policies in alignment with the principles of the Central Government’s Equal Opportunities Programme. The induction of women in the national work force, under conditions of equity and equality, constitutes a central plank of government policy.

The programme includes a code of non-discriminatory working practices, co-ordinated since March 2006 by the National Service for Women’s affairs. The code has four objectives: the State should implement the gender equity programme; the public sector should follow non-discriminatory and equal access work practices; working conditions should provide for a balance between work and personal life, and finally, the quality of work life should be improved.

The code addresses concerns thrown up by the fundamental changes that have taken place in Chile, restructuring gender relations, the family, the workplace and society. Women have joined the workforce in large numbers and increasing numbers of women today head single-parent families. The workplace thus faces the challenge of responding to these changes and accommodating a more flexible, humane and socially inclusive culture.

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Latin America/ Chile

From Challenge to Opportunity

Pisagua achieved notoriety as a prison, torture and death camp during the brutal Pinochet dictatorship (1973-1990). Today fishermen's wives want to give Pisagua another reputation, as a lovely tourist destination boasting tasty seafood

This piece is translated by Brian O'Riordan from an article by Daniela Olivares that appeared in *La Caleta*, Edición 8, No 1. Marzo 2007 (http://www.conapach.cl/revista/la_caleta_8_01.pdf)

On 21 February 2007, a group of 21 women connected with artisanal fishing in the Commune of Huará in Chile's Tarapacá Region I, incorporated themselves into the artisanal fishery by setting up the Co-operative of Women Entrepreneurs and Harvesters of *Caleta* Pisagua, Comuepi. Their aim is to improve the commercialization of seafood produced by fishermen from the *caleta*.

The specific objectives of the co-operative are to engage in the production, purchase, sale, distribution and processing of goods and products, to provide services related to the harvesting of seafood, the export of products and services, and activities that contribute to the improvement of the quality of life of those who carry them out.

According to Solange Alvarez, a member of the co-operative, the idea arose from the needs expressed by several wives of the divers and fishermen of the No.1 Syndicate in Pisagua. They wanted to form an association to jointly commercialize the fishery products caught by the fishermen. Until then each one had bought and sold sea urchin (*erizos*) and abalone (*locos*) on an individual basis in different parts of the region, including Huará, Pozo, Almonte, Iquique and even in the metropolitan region of Santiago.

"We realized that we were heading nowhere; having to travel here and there from this very isolated place meant that each of us was spending a lot of money. On the other hand, organized and united, we can



apply for funding and projects to improve the way our products are presented," Solange explained. "At the moment, we are hoping to be granted some seed capital that will enable us to arrange a processing area where we can bottle and serve our products, and so add value and increase our incomes."

Pisagua has wide notoriety in the region's collective memory. Over three presidential periods, it was used as a detention and torture centre. But it was the discovery of human remains there during the decade of the 1990s that shed light on the brutality of the dictatorship of Augusto Pinochet. Through its association with this dark period of the country's history, the port was inevitably stigmatized.

The co-operative now has enthusiastic plans to blot out this stain and promote Pisagua as a destination for bountiful seafood. The co-operative plans to use one of their member's houses to welcome tourists and offer them tastings of the fishermen's daily catch.

"In this way, through the joint work that we are planning with the artisanal fishermen, we hope to stimulate tourism, so that Pisagua is not just known for past political events", emphasizes Solange.

These wives and mothers from the artisanal fishery hope that their work will allow them to give Pisagua another face, one that is more inviting for people to get to know the *caleta*. Over time, they believe, the fishermen, and especially their sons, will progress along with the community.

The women say: “We don’t want our sons to stay in Iquique when they go to study there. We want them to return as professionals and to join us in our efforts to bring development and education to both our commune and our *caleta*”.

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Latin America/Chile

Sea Martyrs of San Antonio

Out-of-work women encarnadoras (hook baiters) in Chile take up acting and win wide acclaim

This article has been compiled by Brian O’Riordan from various sources, including the Conapach website (<http://www.conapach.cl/>)

A play written and performed by 11 artisanal fisherwomen from San Antonio and Valparaiso, first staged in 2004, has recently made a comeback in Chile’s Vth Region, thanks to the support from the Regional Government of Valparaiso.

The play, *Women, the Embodiment of Abundance*, depicts the story of San Antonio over the last 40 years, from times of abundance to the current harsh realities faced by the artisanal fishing sector. The women have gathered together anecdotes, legends, and life experiences, and show how the catch quotas now set under the fisheries law have deprived women of their work.

According to Maria Teresa Olivera, the play’s director, “We want to tell people about the work that we used to do, to make women’s work in the sector—not previously known in this country—visible. The play is based on real-life stories taken from the book *Women in Artisanal Fisheries* by Michele Alarcón. It looks at the process of artisanal fishing from a woman’s perspective: male work has always been recognized, but the thankless women’s tasks of baiting the hooks, essential for catching the sea’s bounty, have been ignored.”

The play is currently (October/November 2006) touring theatres in Chile’s Vth Region, but its producers have put forward a much more ambitious proposal: to develop a nationwide tour. They have applied for support from the National Culture and Arts Council, the Fisheries Subsecretariat, and various fishermen’s organizations countrywide, in order to realize their project ‘Women forging networks...from San Antonio throughout Chile’. They hope to initiate this before the year-end and to continue through the whole of 2007. Maria Teresa Olivera asserts: “The project has been successful in demonstrating the important cultural rescue work that is being done to

get such unique and unknown practices as hook-baiting recognized”.

It was in 2004 that 11 women from the Encarnadoras Union Mártires del Mar de San Antonio (Sea Martyrs of San Antonio), with no previous acting experience, won a National Culture and Arts Council (Fondart) award. This enabled them to participate in the “Theatre of the Sea and Fishing Theatre Workshops with Artisanal Fisherwomen”. It involved five months of hard work, including acting and theory classes, which inspired them to create the play.

When people talk about artisanal fishing, they only tend to think about the fishermen who put out to sea every day, risking their lives in order to feed their families. However, if men are to go to sea, thousands of anonymous women must prepare the fishing trip at home, putting the bait on the hooks; a scene that is replicated in other spheres of economic activity: for men to work, women must take care of the domestic tasks and childcare, work that is not recognized by society.

“To begin with, we were very scared of failing, but, with hard work, we achieved our objectives of making the situation of women in artisanal fishing known, which had been invisible for so long,” recalls Viviana Cornejo, one of the actresses in the play, a representative of the Sea Martyrs Encarnadoras Union of San Antonio, and a member of Conapach’s Women’s Union Committee.



Another of the actresses and former *encarnadora* is Miriam Almonacid. Several years ago, when the resources depleted, she had to leave her work of baiting hooks. Since then, she has been working in the Valparaiso municipal programme for employment generation. Miriam says that acting in the play “is like stepping back in time, reminding me of when I learned hook-baiting, and how difficult it was at first. I did not like it because it pricked my fingers and everything stank, but, over time, I realized that this work allowed me to meet people and to earn good money. As far as supporting the struggles of the sector is concerned, this play provides some useful ammunition that allows us to say things that we could not otherwise say, that is, that artisanal fishermen’s continued existence depends entirely on hook-baiters continuing their work of preparing the trip so that the men can continue putting out to sea.”

In San Antonio alone there are at least 800 *encarnadoras*, and it is estimated that in Chile around 10,000 women live, or rather used to live, from this work; all belong to the informal sector, so they do not even have the basic rights historically gained by women, like maternity leave, social security, healthcare, etc.

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Latin America/Chile

Whose gain?

The community of Mehuín, on the southern coast of Chile, is fighting against the polluting operations of the cellulose company, CELCO, in order to preserve the source of their livelihoods

by Juan Carlos Skewes and Debbie Guerra, Professor and Associate Professor, respectively, at the Universidad Austral de Chile

The ten years spent defending Mehuín, on the south coast of Chile, has developed into a kind of saga for the population, whose only demand is that the source of their livelihoods be protected and preserved. Fishermen, women, indigenous people and coastal inhabitants have united to defend their birthright from a daunting foe. And their foe has now come armed with the Chilean Navy, and is confronting fishermen in the bay of Maiquillahue along the coastal fringe. Fishermen have deployed their boats to prevent the destruction of their source of livelihoods: the sea and the water courses.

But what is this story all about? In 1986, a company, Celulosa Arauco y Constitución (CELCO), planned the construction of a cellulose processing plant. Then, as now, they looked at the possibility of discharging the plant's waste into the sea through a 20-km long pipe. The resistance of the people of Mehuín in 1998 stopped that from being realized.

When the company started up in 2004, it opted to dump its waste in the Río Cruces, whose waters feed the Carlos Anwandter Nature Sanctuary, a Ramsar site (Ramsar Site No. 222). That this was a catastrophe was clear after the deaths of the black-necked swans, the usual residents of the reserve, were recorded.

In their search for alternatives, CELCO came up with new proposals and, once again, the sea seemed to be the most convenient solution for waste disposal. For the Valdivian coast to be put to such a use, new environmental impact studies were required. The vessel hired by the CELCO company to do this work had the protection of the Chilean State, and the coastal residents knew that they had no option other

than to prevent these studies from being undertaken — studies that would then allow the construction of the ominous pipe.

The huge ship contracted to carry out the environmental impact studies has entered the bay twice this year, towards the end of July and in mid-August, under escort from Chilean naval vessels. The naval-industrial advance was confronted by numerous artisanal fishing boats and fishermen who sought to prevent the intended operations.

The community of Mehuín do not — and cannot — trust a company that, since the outset of its operations, has deceived them, sending, first of all, divers operating in an undercover manner and then, attempting to do so at night, on New Year. Worse still, they cannot trust a company whose claims of technological excellence were only mere distractions, as past experience has shown, to set up one of the most lucrative businesses in Chile, that of processing cellulose.

Thus the questions of the artisanal fishermen and their organizations seem legitimate: Who does the State serve? Who is the enemy? What is a legitimate State? The community of Mehuín has not only been witness to the unleashing of naval power by the public authorities to protect private interests but is also the victim of persecution and surveillance at home by the police.



The official response in such cases is well known: authority is backed by legality. Even as the authorities hide behind legal norms, such norms permit disasters to happen, like those in the nature reserve. It is, of course a fact that there is no scientific proof to indicate that CELCO is the direct cause of the tragedy of the Río Cruces— just as it is possible that there is no convincing proof that the victims of Hiroshima suffered from the direct action of the atomic bomb. Whatever the men and women in the locality have seen can obviously be twisted around by scientific reasoning and (especially) by the use of statistics. But, is this the role of the State? To turn a blind eye to, and step back from, such a terrible act, whose only objective is personal gain?

Once again, Mehuín is calling for Chile's attention. Once again, the resources belonging to Chilean men and women are being used for the benefit of a few Chileans, to the disadvantage of the great majority of the people of the country, and once again, such benefits are being procured at the cost of the health of current and future generations of coastal inhabitants.

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Latin America/Chile**Supporting the struggle**

Many groups are providing support to the struggle being waged by the community of Mehuín in southern Chile

by Brian O' Riordan, of ICSF's Brussels office, based on information provided by ECOCEANOS, Chile

There is now a nationwide campaign to halt the latest move by CELCO (see story above). A group calling itself the "Communities in Conflict with Celco Nueva Aldea", which brings together producer organizations, NGOs and community-based organizations from the Itata Valley and the coastal fringe opposed to CELCO, have organized mass protests. They have accused the authorities, whom they consider to be the most "compliant and irresponsible that the region has known", of approving a project that will pollute the last remaining basin of clean waters in the Eighth Region, on which 45,000 people depend for drinking water and irrigation for fields and vineyards of international quality.

They are demanding that CELCO be ordered not to start discharging its liquid waste into the river Itata, and describe the environmental regulations applied to CELCO as being "irresponsible, polluting and not giving any guarantees to the communities, while violating their constitutional rights to live in an environment free from pollution".

At a meeting in the city of Temuco on 28 July, more than 100 representatives of civil society organizations associated with human rights, environmental issues, social movements and NGOs gave their total support to the community of Mehuín. They issued the following statement:

1. We demonstrate our solidarity with the community of Mehuín and its organizations who have decided once more to reject the intervention of the CELCO-ARAUCO company in its territory.
2. We reject the position of the government in providing support to CELCO-ARAUCO

through ordering the intervention of police and navy personnel in this area so as to assist the work of this company. Through this action, which took place last Tuesday (25 July), the government showed its total lack of interest in the views of its people, and endorsed the activities of a company whose irresponsible social and environmental behaviour has been brought into question.

3. We demand that the government finish all collaboration with CELCO-ARAUCO, which is accused in this province of destroying a nature reserve and polluting the rivers of Valdivia, causing serious damage to many agricultural and indigenous communities and local economic activities, and also putting the health of the people at risk. We also demand that the surveillance of the community representatives be stopped, and that the alleged agreements between CELCO and the Chilean Navy for operations at sea be clarified.

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Latin America/Chile**Action, not more words**

This profile of Zaida Zurita Huaitisa, a seaweed harvester in southern Chile, and a member of CONAPACH's Executive Committee, is based on an interview by Brian O' Riordan

Zaida Zurita Huaitiao comes from the fishing community of Maullin in Chile's southern Tenth Region, a community of shellfish divers (*buzos* and *mariscadores*) and seaweed harvesters (*algueros* and *algueras*). A fisherman's wife and mother of six children, she is herself a fishworker. She works both as an *alguera*, cultivating and harvesting the seaweed *gracillaria*, and in a small aquaculture concession where she cultivates the mollusc, *loco*.

In addition to her busy professional and domestic life, Zaida is also an elected fishworker representative at both local and national levels. She is President of the Federation of the Syndicates of Artisanal Fishermen and Agriculturists of the North Bank of the River Maullin, and a member of CONAPACH's Executive Committee. CONAPACH is a national fishworker organization in Chile.

It is a struggle to make a living from fishing, emphasizes Zaida, and to survive, it is important to keep one's options open. "Management areas are not the answer, but only one option. As a fishworker in Maullin you have to work in a variety of activities", says Zaida. (In Chile, management and exploitation areas provide well-defined community groups, quasi-property-rights to sedentary resources, based on approved management plans.)

One of the biggest challenges facing fishworkers, according to Zaida, is maximizing their earnings, particularly as the seasonal nature of their activities tends to saturate markets at times of peak production, reducing prices.

Zaida participated in the recent ICSF workshop on "Emerging Concerns of Fishing Communities: Issues of Labour, Trade, Gender, Disaster Preparedness, Biodiversity and Responsible

Fisheries", held from 4 to 6 July 2006 at SESC Colonia Ecologica in Fortaleza, Brazil.

She found that the issues being discussed at the workshop were very important, but was not clear about how such a meeting can make real progress towards resolving them. She cites the issue of trawling as a case in point, which, in her view, needs firm and concrete action, not just more words.

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Latin America / Chile**Unaccounted and undervalued**

Even though women are highly involved as workers in artisanal fisheries and in their communities, their roles have been constantly undermined and undervalued.

by Fabio Iacomini of Terra Nuova, Italy

In a context where development is identified fundamentally with the exploitation of natural resources, and where fishing is mainly associated with men in the sector, the work and presence of women is largely invisible. Illustrative of this is the fact that only since 2001 has gender been included as a variable in the official register of the sector. However, the Artisanal Fishing Register of the Servicio Nacional de Pesca (SERNAPESCA) does not recognize the support activities generally undertaken by women, which include baiting hooks, processing and the direct sale of fishery products. What is more, only 4,105 women are officially recorded in the artisanal fishing register as being directly involved with artisanal fishing, a figure far from reality, and estimated to be only 10-18 per cent of the female workforce associated with fisheries.

This situation marginalizes women in the various government programmes: if they are not taken into account, how can they become the focus of any development strategy? A similar situation exists with the official programmes that aim to improve productivity in the sector, through larger-scale production, requiring higher levels of organization. Groups of women interested in developing economic and productive activities tend to be excluded.

This prompted the Women's Network of the Confederación Nacional de Pescadores Artesanales de Chile (CONAPACH) to prioritize the issue of access to, and control over, natural resources as a key strategy. In effect, because women are not recognized as actors in the fisheries sector, they cannot claim any access rights. The control they can exercise over the resources they harvest or those on which their work depends, is even lesser. They can neither show any record of their past activities in production nor any landing figures that could be used to claim historic rights. This has a particularly important bearing

in the context of the fisheries management model being currently promoted, which is strongly geared towards the privatization of resources, and the establishment of fishing quotas based mainly on recorded catch histories. This policy has been fiercely contested by organizations of artisanal fishermen, who feel that their fishing rights are threatened.

This situation, combined with the intrinsic uncertainty and insecurity of fishing, is made even worse by the fact that neither men nor women benefit from any savings or insurance schemes, greatly increasing the social vulnerability.

A further aspect that affects a significant number of women is that their productive work is not valorized. The work of fishermen's wives is seen as an extension of their roles in the family. This also includes the support activities of their daughters and other female relations. It is thus difficult to assign any economic value to their work, which generally remains invisible, along with all their domestic tasks, and makes it difficult for them to get access to any professional occupational training. In addition, their participation in unions and other organizational activities is restricted, and they are excluded from any healthcare and insurance schemes.

Another issue is women's low levels of participation in decisionmaking and their representation in artisanal fishing organizations. Thus, for example, in CONAPACH's previous 21-member National Committee (prior to 2004), there were only three women. At the local level, there were no women presidents in any of the 24 regional federations, and only 14 women in the entire country were presidents of union bodies out of a total of 504 artisanal fishing organizations at the national level.

Nevertheless, there have been important increases in the numbers of women found in organizations with jobs that require low levels of decision-making—as treasurers and secretaries in unions and federations. It is important to highlight that some women's capabilities for financial management are held in high regard, and their skills for handling cash and for financial management are generally recognized by fishermen and particularly appreciated by their leaders, an accomplishment that is associated with their gender.



This provides the context for addressing many of the practical needs of women engaged in the sector, which are difficult to resolve without dealing with issues such as access to resources and decisionmaking.

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Latin America / Chile

Long road ahead

Seeking allotments of management and exploitation areas can be a major challenge for women engaged in artisanal fisheries in Chile today

by Maria Teresa López Boegeholz, Professor of the State and Specialist in Environmental Education and Gender Relations, University Deacon, University of Concepcion, Chile

In Chile, use and exploitation rights are granted to organizations of artisanal fishermen in the five-mile coastal zone through management and exploitation areas (AMERB), an administrative measure of the Fisheries Subsecretariat (Subpesca).

The AMERB process involves a number of steps, starting with a request from the interested organization, with an outline and co-ordinates of the possible management area. This must be submitted to Subpesca, which then, together with other public bodies (the National Fisheries Service, the Marine Subsecretariat, and the General Direction of the Marine Territory), elaborates a technical report. This is followed by the publication of the decree in the Official Diary publicizing the fishermen's proposal.

The request from the fishermen's organization goes through the following stages in an AMERB project: proposal for a baseline study (ESBA); undertaking the ESBA; and formulation of a management and exploitation plan (PMEA).

Once this is sanctioned by the fiscal institution, the area is handed over to the fishermen's organization through a user contract. The PMEa is formulated based on a modern understanding of coastal management that balances conservation and exploitation objectives, so as to achieve sustainability of the coastal ecosystem. It requires the technical advice of relevant professionals. In this way, fishery access is regulated, conservation of resources attempted, and the capacity of the fishermen/fisherwomen for responsible commercial management, enhanced.

Requesting management areas is a major challenge for women engaged in artisanal fisheries in Chile today.

In this context, it is important to note the efforts of a group of 45 women who have overcome major hurdles to enhance their basic competence and capacity to use new technologies, and to administer and manage their scarce economic resources.

These 45 women live in the *caleta* (village) of los Moros in the bay of Coliumo, Chile. Of the 1,200 people in the *caleta*, 380 are fishermen, belonging to four *sindicatos* (unions). Two of the *sindicatos* are of men (fishermen and vessel owners), one is mixed, and the other groups the 45 women. These women are engaged in administering three management areas for the following seaweed species: 'marine chicory' (*Chondracanthus chamissoi*); 'black luga' (*Sarcothalia crispata*); and 'spoon luga' (*Mazzaella laminariodes*). The first species, highly sought after in Taiwan for direct human consumption, requires ever more stringent quality certification, a lot of care to control growth and profitability, as well as systems for replanting and protection. The value of the other species comes from their gel and agar content.

These 45 women formed the *sindicato* of "Independent Women Workers, Fisherwomen and Women Gatherers", a legally constituted body that meets the requirements of the Labour Inspectorate. The president is Sara Garrido, who started off her career in fishing 16 years ago when still in her teens, gathering seaweed in spring and summer, and later going with her husband to sea to fish for conger eel and crabs. She learned to commercialize the catch and administer the income for the wellbeing of her family and the education of her two daughters, now 17 and 12 years old.

In 2002, this group of women decided to apply for a seaweed management area, in view of the overexploitation affecting this resource. Even today, there are no regulations or administrative plans for exploiting seaweeds. The women, therefore, "became alarmed and took defensive action". They were allotted three management areas, and a management plan (PMEA) for sustainable management of the resource was finalized.

The women have three management areas: the first of 0.6 hectares, already in use, and two others of 4 hectares each. Due to a dispute with a men's *sindicato*, which is against ownership by the women's *sindicato*,



there is objection to all of these. The problem may finally be resolved through a negotiation process that will provide the women with access to other areas, in exchange for the ones under litigation, even though these already have their ESBA's approved, and are co-financed through a project that they put together and got approved. The areas they will receive in exchange have no ESBA, and, moreover, they have no natural banks of seaweeds.

The vision of Sara Garrido is striking. In the tiny assigned management area of half a hectare, and with the management plan accepted, she is thinking about how to effectively assess and replant seaweeds, so that the spores of 'marine chicory' will take root and grow. She feels confident because she listened attentively to the university specialists and technicians who helped her with the ESBA and she always took their advice and heeded their warnings.

She also has another approved project comprising a seaweed drying and dehydrating plant, with which profitability can be greatly improved. The women have worked hard to obtain funding through the organizations, Fosis (Social Solidarity Fund for Investment), Sercotex (Service for External Credit) and Chile Barrios (a development programme to alleviate poverty in vulnerable settlements). This has allowed them to establish a micro-enterprise to start activities within an appropriate legal (co-operative) framework.

In future, they want to manage a project for an "experimental fishery" for seaweeds, and through this, gain access to co-financing, which will also help them get effective technical advice on socioeconomic and environmental sustainability of the coastal areas where the natural seaweed banks are found.

In the fiercely oppressive atmosphere arising from the response of the men's *sindicato*, which may influence local fisheries policies, listening to Sara, feeling her energy and understanding her courage, makes one realize how long a road must be travelled before there is a genuinely transparent and gender-balanced participation in the development of artisanal fisheries.

(This article has been translated by Brian O'Riordan of ICSF's Brussels office)

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Latin America / Chile

Fishing for generations

Women in Chile are out at sea with their husbands. And they are not work-shy. Their only worry is leaving their children alone in case something goes wrong.

This article, by Soledad Neira, first appeared in the Chilean Daily “El Mercurio”

(www.elmercurio.com)

PUERTO MONTT - “Lets get out fast, or else we won’t leave here alive,” said Bernardita Llancapani to her husband, trying to stay upright in their fishing boat. All around, a violent storm pounded the gulf of Comau in the Province of Palena, Los Legos, Region.

The launches seem like nutshells leaping across 4- and 5-m-high waves. Bernardita has got no time to be scared. All her thoughts are on her three- and five-year old daughters waiting for them in Quiaca, on the Isle of Llancahué. “We are going to die. What will become of them?” she reflects, whilst her husband urges her not to lose hope.

They had gone out fishing with other relatives when they heard a Navy warning. A storm was brewing and the only safe haven was private, in Huinay. They would have to ride out the storm on the ocean, where they could lose their launch, with their lives on the line.

Quiaca is an island locality in Hualaihué. Thirty-three families live there and all the women are fishermen. Grandmothers, mothers, daughters and granddaughters all go out in their fragile craft for days at a time. Most go with their husbands. Others, on their own, manage their own boats.

All are inscribed in the fishing registers and have up-to-date licences. In Bernardita’s family, three generations of women have fished. She, her mother and grandmother Clotilde, 56 years old, who, since being widowed, has worked alone. Shipwrecks and serious material losses do not deter them. Although in Chile fishing is historically man’s work, increasingly women are going to sea with their husbands or working as crew. They even have their own unions.

The catch quota set by the National Fisheries Service (Sernapesca) is for 330 kg, but at times, they don’t

catch even 12 kg and hardly receive CLP700 (around 1 Euro) per kg. With such a low quota, says Rosa Ojeda from Quiaca, if her husband had to pay a crew, there would not be enough to go round. So that’s why she has to go fishing too.

They start work during childhood. They learn the ropes in summer “when there is less hardship”. “In winter you get soaked and it is very dangerous”, says Bernardita, who has been fishing since the age of six. They also engage in lesser tasks, like baiting and cleaning the hooks. When working as a crew, you must always be on the alert. One false move, and you are in the water, she says.

Alejandra Contreras, from the island of Juan Fernández, is now an expert lobster fisher. Bait must be caught, put in the traps, and the traps set. Day in day out they must be lifted and checked, and then reset.

Two thousand km to the south, Miguelina Oyarzún, who is 64, and comes from Chiloé, has worked at sea since the age of 22 in Punta Arenas. She used to fish for bass (*robalo*) or hoki (*merluza de cola larga*). Then she tried her hand at spider crabs. She has two boats, *La Gordi* and *La Marina*, and hopes to be at sea in July, in the spider crab season. She has had two serious accidents, but “I have never thought about leaving the sea. If I have to die there, so be it”, she says.

In Antofagasta, Daniza Orrego, who is 26 and nicknamed “La Chunga”, has followed after her father as crew. Mother of four children, she is the only person interviewed who has felt discriminated against. All the others have even felt welcomed and supported by their men.

Daniza recalls an occasion when she entered the fish-hold to unload: “My fellow workers got angry. They thought that I was there to waste time. But I was doing the same work as them”, she says. There is always one such case, and often there are strange happenings. Once, when on the verge of going under, everyone took off their clothes to jump overboard, only Daniza kept her clothes on.

The women don’t fear the sea, but they respect it. “One is always ready for an accident to happen. But you’ve got to go, for the children’s sake. To get on”, underlines Rosa Ojeda.

Out of the 50,000 Chilean fishermen registered by the National Fisheries Service, 2,089 are women. The Lakes Region (Los Lagos) has the greatest number: 11,500 men and nearly 1,000 women. The Region of Biobío follows, with 9,200 men and 550 women. In the Aisén Region, of the 2,000-odd fishermen, only 19 are women, who are scattered amongst the tiny localities between Puerto Cisnes, Puerto Aisén, Puyuhuapi, Isla Gala, Gaviota and Puerto Aguirre.

Latin America / Chile

Questioning invisibility

Women workers in the fisheries sector in Chile are often not formally recognized or covered by social security

By Dodani Araneda, Jacqueline Salas, Alejandra Pinto and Marisol Alvarez, working with the Undersecretariat for Fisheries, Government of Chile, and Cecilia Godoy, working with Prisma Consultants, Chile.

As part of a research project, 1,571 interviews were undertaken with women who work in artisanal fisheries and aquaculture activities in 10 councils of Chiloe Province, in southern Chile, between November 2004 and February 2005. The aim was to obtain information about their activities, age profile, income and education levels, professional recognition, and future expectations.

There are 80 fish landing centres in Chiloe Province that are recognized by the government via Decree 240/1998. All these were visited for the research project. In addition, information was collected from 74 other places where women engage in fisheries and aquaculture activities.

For some years now, the invisibility of women's labour in artisanal fisheries has been a matter of reflection and research in several countries where fishing has been a traditional activity. In Chile, the existence of native groups living in coastal areas has been recognized from pre-Hispanic times, and women have been working along rivers and estuaries, maintaining a direct relationship with fishery activities and collection of seaweed and shellfish, abundantly available in their immediate environment.

As a first step towards looking at the activities of women in fisheries, the Undersecretariat for Fisheries in Chile felt it necessary to quantify the work, both formal and informal, of women in artisanal fisheries and aquaculture.

Towards this end, it initiated a project named "Quantification of the Formal and Informal Activities of Women in Artisanal Fisheries in Chiloe Province, X Region, Chile". This project, funded by the Japan International Co-operation Agency (JICA), was

executed by Prisma Consultants between November 2004 and February 2005.

Chiloe Province was selected because of the high concentration (35 per cent) of artisanal fishermen and divers in this region (Region X), equivalent to 33 per cent of the total artisanal fisheries workforce engaged in extractive activities in Chile (National Statistics Institute, 2002).

This research was the first of its kind at the regional and provincial levels. 1,571 personal interviews were undertaken in the 10 councils of Chiloe Province, as follows: Ancud (536), Quemchi (68), Dalcahue (34), Curaco de Velez (111), Quinchao (346), Chonchi (70), Puqueldon (71), Castro (72), Queilen (42) and Quellon (221).

The results showed that the principal activity of women is the collection of shellfish and algae along the coast, with 88.2 per cent women reporting themselves to be engaged in such activities. Children, teenagers and old persons were also found engaging in these activities. Additionally, about four per cent women were found to work as *desconchadoras* (workers engaged in de-shelling the shellfish), while two per cent did actual fishing.

According to the General Fishery and Aquaculture Law (Decree 430/1991), some categories of labour must be recorded in a national registry. The research found that most women work 'illegally' as their activities are not registered in the National Artisanal



Fisherwomen's Register or in the National Aquaculture Register.

The incomes of these women were seen to be low at about US\$ 86 per month. A high percentage (69 per cent) declared no coverage under social security. As for the age profile of women in the sector, about 45 per cent of the women interviewed were between 20 and 40 years of age, another 45 per cent were older than that, and about 7 per cent younger than 20 years. Ninety-five per cent of the women interviewed had received some education—19 per cent had completed primary school and six per cent, high school.

The project is the first institutional effort to recognize and valorize women's participation in fishery and aquaculture activities at the national level. The main outcome expected from the project is the formal recognition of the fishing activities performed by the women in Chiloé Province, and their registration in existing records, so that their productive activities gain official recognition. It is also worth remembering that most of the funds earmarked for the artisanal fisheries sector are granted to formally constituted organizations.

The co-operation of the women interviewed for the research project indicates their yearning for a better quality of life and for changes that can ultimately lead to greater recognition of women's work.

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South America/ Chile

My life is the sea

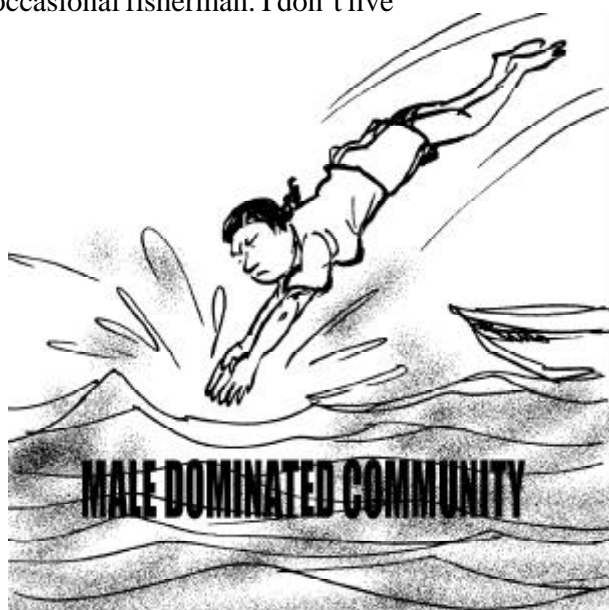
This brief profile of a fisherwoman from Chile is taken from the book 'Mujeres de la Pesca Artesanal, relatos e imágenes de mujeres de la V región' (Women and artisanal fishing: stories and pictures of women from Region V).

by Francesca Mariana, an anthropologist who works with CEDIPAC, an NGO associated with CONAPACH, the national fishworker organization in Chile.

There are five children in my family, four girls and one boy. My father wanted two boys to go fishing with, but the second one never came. So of the four girls, he selected one to be trained to fish—and that was me. And I'm certainly not complaining about that.

I've been going to sea since I was six, but actively since the age of 12. When I was a child, the three of us—my brother, my father and I—would always work together. When my mother found out that I had chosen this profession, she cried, saying that having three family members to worry about was a lot.

I am 38 years old and have a son of 14. He is doing his first year at secondary school (*primero medio*). I don't want him to become a fisherman, not because I don't respect the work a fisherman does, but because there are many sacrifices to make, and there are good times and bad times. I am not married, I never got married. The father of my son lives in Loncura. He is an occasional fisherman. I don't live



with him.

When my son was six months old, a tiny tot, I took him me whilst we were away, but my mother told me, "No, because you are breastfeeding, you can't go". So I went for two or three months without going to sea. Later I used to leave the milk under the pillow in a bottle wrapped in a cloth, and my mother would feed my son whenever he demanded milk.

I'm also a sandwich maker in the *Fuente de Soda* (soda fountain) that belongs to my aunt, where I work every day in the summer, starting five years ago. I get up almost every day between two and three, change my clothes, wait for my brother to get up and together we go fishing. After returning from the sea, we sell our fish and when I get home, I sleep for a while, from 11 am till 4 in the afternoon, and return to the *Fuente de Soda*. In summer, when I have both jobs, I have the most work.

There are some fishermen who think that a woman in a boat brings bad luck. But I am personally known in the fishing villages of Cartagena, La Salina de Puhaiy, Papudo and Los Molles, having worked with my father for many years. We would camp for three months in Las Salinas de Puhaiy and for five months in Cartagena.

Apart from collecting razor clams and fishing, I also dive, though I don't have a licence. I have not been diving much recently after having nearly punctured my ears. I also suffer from painful menstrual periods, and have to take to bed often. I don't dive around here any more, but it's fantastic under the water and when I go diving, time flies and you'll have to come and search for me...

When the water is turbid, you don't see very much, but when it is clear, it's beautiful. Everything that is on land you find under the water; there are little bushes, coloured green, blue and purple, which disappear when you go to pick them. I used to play around a lot with these plants when I first started to dive, which was when I was 15 years old. My father taught me to dive in Las Salinas de Puhaiy. I used to dive wearing only shorts and a t-shirt, with a plastic cap on my head because when the water is freezing, it really hurts your head. Once I took up the challenge of a local fisherman, who said, "I bet you won't go diving in mid-winter." He was wearing a diving suit and I only had my usual clothes. I plunged in, but he didn't.

Until a few years ago, I was the only woman fisher

with a licence, but it cost me dearly to get it. The local harbour master at the time provided a letter requesting that I be given an artisanal fishing licence so that I could go out to work without any problems. The first application was rejected, since it came from a woman. Following that, the harbour master and I went to talk personally to the navy captain. He told me that it was not possible to grant a licence. When I asked why, he said, "Because you are a woman". That made me really angry. "So being a woman is an impediment to working?" I asked furiously and told him off for discriminating against women. He finally gave me a licence. But later we failed to get it renewed.

My mother always told me, "Fish only until you are 40 or 45, at the latest, no more, because afterwards you will have problems with your bones, due to the cold." But the truth is that I hardly know how to do anything else. I have a licence to handle foodstuff, to get which I had to do a course. It was my aunt who asked me to do it so as to have an alternative source of livelihood, for when it is no longer possible to work at sea. But the truth is that my life is the sea.

I also like to experience new fisheries and new challenges. I have even been after albacore, out in the deep sea. I respect the sea, but I am terrified of fog. Once a ship nearly hit us, right here, inside the bay. Another time, the fog made us nearly capsize on the rocks. That's why I am really scared of the fog.

I'm also scared of the wind, but not so much, because inshore, the sea is different. You know that if you capsize, you can swim for a while to reach shore. But you know that if you capsize offshore, you will go on swimming until you get hypothermia. There are many fishermen, workmates, who have died at sea, leaving behind just an urn, clothes and a photo for their families to remember. I wouldn't want that to happen to my son.

Once, in Quintero, a fisherman went missing for three years. His boat capsized and some fishermen in a boat found his body three years later. They recognized him because his identification documents were intact in a nylon purse. There was a second funeral and the family had to experience grief all over again. In such cases, until the body is actually found, there is always hope that the person is alive somewhere, that he could have gone north or south, that he could have been picked up by a boat...A thousand possibilities are

offered, but rarely do people immediately believe that the lost person is at the bottom of the sea.

We believe that the sea is female, so when things are going well for us we say to it: "OK, Maria, don't give us too much fish because later you'll make us pay for it, and you'll probably abandon us out here, so that's enough..."

This excerpt is from the book *Mujeres de la Pesca Artesanal, relatos e imágenes de mujeres de la V región* that was published in Chile in 2001 thanks to support from the Art and Culture Development Fund of the Ministry of Education.

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Latin America/ Chile

Breaking the mould

An experience from the far south of Latin America reveals the new roles possible for men and women in artisanal fisheries

by **Maria Teresa López Boegeholz, Professor of the State (Biology and Chemistry) and Specialist in Environmental Education and Gender Relations, University Deacon, University of Concepcion, Chile (Translated by Brian O'Riordan of ICSF's Brussels office)**

In the history of Latin American coastal communities, the *caleta* (settlement), a dynamic system of life and work, was initiated in the first prehispanic coastal settlements. Daily survival depended on hunting birds and mammals, collecting seeds and fruits from the surrounding valleys and forests, gathering shellfish (molluscs and crustaceans) and catching fish in the inter and subtidal coastal areas.

The activities of the artisanal fisheries sector go beyond simply catching fish, molluscs and seaweed. There are tasks that are carried out on land and on the fish quays as well. These tasks include support processes such as:

- a) Pre-harvest work: This includes activities that range from the maintenance of vessels (certified by the Maritime Authority and registered with the National Fisheries Service) and their engines, surveillance, cleaning of fishing gears and equipment, and obtaining the authorization to embark. The fishing area and the resources to be exploited need to be registered. This is especially so where fully exploited species, such as southern hake (*Merluccius australis*) and sea urchin (*Loxechinus albus*) are concerned.
- b) Post-harvest work: This includes several activities. Since 2002, all fishermen, in whatever kind of vessel (launches and boats), must fill in a catch report as part of the landing form. Artisanal vessels in Chile fall into two main categories: *botes* (boats), smaller vessels, powered by oar, sail, and small motors, making short trips and *lanchas* (launches), vessels that are larger, up to 50 GRT and 18 metres in length. Other post-harvest activities relate to the distribution, storage, processing and sale of fish.

Members of the artisanal fishing community participate in pre- and post-harvest activities: women and men, boys and girls, with varied needs and interests, who often do not show up in official statistics even though their tasks form a very important part of the sub-culture of Chilean artisanal fishworkers. In the current context, this culture is being influenced by changes in the legal, environmental and socio-economic realms. With respect to the above, and to a greater or lesser extent, the issue of gender in productive work, at the levels of decision-making and participation, is being shaped by the evolving coastal zone policy. Legal recognition of the *caletas* and the maintenance and administration of fish quays, which have been modernized along the 4,500 km national coastline, is creating new roles for men and women in fisheries work. It is worth noting that until 1997, people in fishing settlements (*caletas*) had no legal right to carry out fishing activities, to make or repair their boats, prepare their fishing gears, or even live there. In 1998, the Ministry of National Defence, together with the National Fisheries Service and the National Commission on the Use of the Coastline, recognized 436 fishermen's *caletas* countrywide (Decree 240 of 1998). This means that these *caletas* can not be appropriated by those who would like to develop tourist beaches etc.

The case (discussed below) of a woman, an administrator of the artisanal fisheries quay of Puerto Natales (in the Province of Ultima Esperanza or Final Hope) adds yet another dimension to the never-ending and unacknowledged work of women in our country's artisanal fishery. These women exhibit entrepreneurial flair and show hidden depths of personal capacity, creativity, honesty, fulfilment and persistence, as much at the professional level as in the simple tasks of artisanal fisheries.

Zoila Mayorga, a fisherman's daughter, is the Administrator of the Puerto Natales fish quay. After studying to be a kindergarten teacher, in 1995 she was sent to participate in a course for fishing *caleta* administrators, designed for fishermen. The Puerto Natales Artisanal Fishermen's Association (established in 1984), to which the fish quay had been handed over, had no fisherman able to attend the course. In this remote part of the country they put to sea for many days, even up to one or two months. They navigate vast distances to trap, with iron traps, king crabs (*centollas* or *Lithodes antarcticus* and *centollenes* or *Paralomis granulosa*), to dive for sea urchins, and long line for southern hake. In such a context the President of the fishermen's association encouraged

and assisted Zoila to participate in this course of specialization.

Afterwards Zoila took on the charge of Administrator of the Puerto Natales fish quay. She formed a team of five women, who had to share night shifts and attend to running of the quay, including operating the radio telephone, 24 hours a day. For six months they worked night and day free of charge. As the members of the Fishermen's Association showed no signs of paying them, two women resigned. Zoila and the two remaining women sent a letter to the President of the Association pointing out that unless they had a contract of work they would not continue in the Administration. This got them a contract. In Chile, in the fish quays, it is generally men who work as professionals, contracted by the fishermen. In some cases they are fishermen who have been trained to carry out these tasks. It is not normal that a woman runs a quay.

As with other women who break the mould in the artisanal fishery, Zoila had to work free of charge and to demonstrate her technical capacity before being recognized in her role. Today she has an in-depth knowledge of the legal framework. She knows the importance of registering catches of fish, sea urchins and crustaceans for SERNAPESCA (the National Fisheries Service of Chile). She knows the relevance of completing, in a timely fashion, the receipts and file copies of the embarkation and landing forms of vessel owners, and of noting the destination of fishery products. In addition she must provide facilities for investigators who measure and weigh the fish that is landed. It is very important that she completes the daily accounts, along with the status of the finances and of the outstanding debts owed by the Association.

A Fisheries Bulletin provides an annual progress report on the fish quay. Thus in 2001 it is reported that the fisheries terminal was widened, a gangway was installed to provide easier access to the vessels, a guard hut was built, and the communication system (lights, binoculars, radio station, barometer, and searchlight) for people who use the fish quay was improved.

Through SERCOTEC (the State Service for Technical Co-operation which assists small enterprises), fishermen who administer artisanal fishing port infrastructure in Region V (Valparaiso, San Antonio) and Region X (Puerto Montt, Chiloe Island) were sent on field courses to *caletas* to learn about other realities and experiences. In addition workshops were organized on themes such as a) improving the competitiveness

of the sector; b) sustainable extraction of marine resources; c) solving social problems of fishworkers and those of their family groups; and d) modernization of public institutions dedicated to promoting production.

Other projects financed a library for children and adults in the *caleta* and reserved space on the Puerto Natales Radio Station dedicated to providing information to coastal communities about the work in the artisanal fishery. This parcel of micro-projects is given shape and is co-ordinated through the Associative project for the promotion of Small Enterprises called "Assistance for the Artisanal Fishermen of the Fishing Quay of Puerto Natales". It is a demonstration of work integration between the professionals of SERCOTEC, the Members of the Artisanal Fishermen's Association and the administration of Zoila.



Thus work goes on seriously and responsibly even as the hake fishermen set out in their boats for fishing trips that last up to 30 hours, taking the bait (frozen sardine) needed for their task, and whilst the spider crab fishermen go on fishing trips that may last several weeks, taking traps and setting up island camps, and establishing storage systems for traps with crabs so that they can be brought back to Puerto Natales.

In Puerto Natales artisanal fishing is undertaken by 700 fishermen, and it sustains commercial life in the city. When there are problems with fishery resources, the lack of money in circulation is all too apparent. According to Zoila, fishermen are held in higher regard today, and whilst they go off fishing far away, their wives look after the finances and take care of the home.

Shedding light on Zoila's work, in the context of modernization of *caletas* and fishing terminals in the XII Region of Magallanes and Antártida Chilena achieves two main objectives: a) it strengthens interdisciplinary work in pre- and post-harvest fisheries, and b) it promotes self-management as well as the personal and organizational development of economically active communities in the coastal fringe of the country.

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Latin America/ Chile

Women count here

In the indigenous Huilliche community women are socially, politically and economically active

**By Claudia Meneses Z and Maria Teresa López,
Management Consultants in Coastal Community
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Historically, coastal communities in the large island of Chiloe have been interacting closely with the marine and coastal ecosystem. It is important to emphasize this at a time when the country is prioritizing the modernization of public services, promoting production and seeking to give an image of being part of the outside world, and, as part of this process, is mooted the construction of a bridge over the Chacao canal that will join Chiloe with the mainland (the Bicentennial Project).

The indigenous Huilliche communities have survived the onslaught of modernization, making use of the sea and establishing themselves in coastal settlements where they have freely developed the cultural model of the *campesino* household.

These communities prefer an open access regime to fishery resources, a regime which for decades has provided them with a free source of food and income from the sea. This has also attracted large migration towards the coastal strip.

A recent study, undertaken in 2001, in Quellon district (Lat42°50' to 43°40') shows that the way of life in rural areas combines work on the land with coastal fishing. It also shows that some 80 per cent of the population are of Huilliche ethnicity with low levels of formal education.

Today profound changes are taking place in the regulatory framework for fisheries development, the impact of which has not been fully evaluated. The expanding use of the coastal fringe for industrial fisheries, aquaculture, salmon farming, tourism, urban expansion, along with the gradual depletion of resources, has jeopardized the future of fishing and the quality of life of fishermen and fisherwomen in the district and in the island.

One can observe a deep sense of shared crisis. Local organizations (independent *sindicatos* or workers'

unions) recognize the need to develop their own strategies for effective reconversion and diversification of productive activities, with a better use of natural resources and adequate integration into the market and other formal systems within society.

Quellon is a district which, until recently, had no facilities to complete basic education. As a consequence a large proportion of fishermen and fisherwomen do not have the required eight years of schooling needed to register as an artisanal fisher. However, with the unconditional help of professionals dedicated to rural development, they are looking for alternative ways to overcome this problem through special adult education programmes.

In Quellon district, about 13 *sindicatos* have been formed and several proposals and projects are being elaborated. Of the 13 *sindicatos* in the area, 10 are rural and three urban. Membership in each *sindicato* varies from between 25 to 160 persons. It is noteworthy that 10 of these have significant participation of women, ranging from 35 to 45 per cent on an average.

All the organizations have legal status and a strong bias towards the Huilliche ethnicity. All organizations show high levels of participation with members and/or representatives carrying out in equal measure their rights and responsibilities.

Currently, with the help of Conapach, the national fishworker organization in Chile, a programme of adult education is being carried out in Quellon in three rural and one urban *sindicato*. The effort is to study gender equity not only in the education project but also in the context of sustainable development, incorporating social, cultural, political and economic aspects.

The presence of women in the organizations is something typical and cultural in the rural artisanal fisheries sector of the district. This, in part, is explained by the large concentration of ethnic Huilliche, where it is common to find women carrying out the most varied activities—as collectors, fishers, shellfish divers, seaweed and filter-feeding (bivalve) mollusc cultivators etc. Nor is it odd for these women to take on management responsibilities within the steering committees.

Research is needed on the important role that Huilliche culture and gender have played in helping put in place

management strategies for the environmental conservation of the wetlands (Huilidad and Compu). Thus, for example, in harvesting the *gracilaria* beds, some mixed *sindicatos* (men and women) in the area have established self-imposed closed seasons, extracting seaweed only for four days per month, during the lowest tides.

Moreover a gender perspective promotes a better understanding about what is happening today in the rural *sindicatos*. These *sindicatos* are compiling background information to identify areas available for managing and exploiting benthic resources in the Quellon District, a pre-requisite step prior to applying for Management Areas as such. In the wetland area of Huilidad, in Compu, and in the island of Chaullin, thanks to the intervention of the team from the National Professional Services (2001), a plan was developed for a zone where there is no other concession and where there are benthic resources of interest.

It is worth pointing out that in such cases, each organization funds the work of the team of professional advisers (four people) with its own income, using members' contributions. The organization also provides the vessel, fuel and transport and participates in the visits that define the most productive area. The organization also provides suggestions for the preparation of the report that will enable them to formally adopt a Management Area.

Today several *caletas* in Quellon have requests being processed by the Fisheries Subsecretariat to undertake base-line studies to identify, through a process of sampling, the location and quantity of benthic species to be managed. Following this they will develop a management and exploitation plan of the area that constitutes the Management and Exploitation Area. It is at this stage, which lasts for four years, that the level of conservation needed for managing the resource and its productive potential is realized, and where the Huilliche women take on a key role in the control and monitoring of resources. At the level of the government, in the Programme of Improved Management (PMG), it is recommended that "gender equity is applied in the Management Areas of the country".

It is hoped the women from the coastal fringe in the South of the island of Chiloe, who, thanks to the influence of their Huilliche ethnicity, will design a

work programme that will provide indicators and information not only about productive activities in the Management

Areas, but also about its natural capital (inventory of species), the state of the productive ecosystem, the division of labour by gender and aspects such as control over and benefits from the resource (economic and political).

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Latin America/ Chile

Labour focus

This report highlights the poor working conditions in Chile's salmon processing plants

By Brian O' Riordan of ICSF's Brussels Office

In December 2001, ICSF Brussels Office received two reports in Spanish from Estrella Diaz, Chile. For several years Ms. Diaz has been researching and documenting the working conditions of women in fish processing plants. These two reports are a continuation of that work.

The first report is intended to provide the Regional Labour Directorate with proposals for improving its formal interventions in the areas of health and safety—at a time when its management is being modernized, and it is committed to promote equality of opportunity and social equity in the work place.

The second report hopes to contribute to the general improving of working standards for the benefit of the workers, and to improve competitiveness in a framework of socially and ethically responsible business practice.

Both reports provide a wealth of information about the Chilean fish processing industry in general, and the salmon aquaculture industry in particular. Extensive reviews and analysis of working conditions (contracts, physical environment, salaries etc.) and of the evolving national framework for labour policy are provided.

Given the high level of international investment in salmon aquaculture in Chile, it is hoped that international standards of health and safety and internationally accepted working practices will be introduced to Chile. However, it is noted that there are few trade agreements between Chile and other countries that include working conditions. Also, given the fact that significant quantities of salmon are exported to the North, it is hoped that the increasing concerns of Northern consumers that their food be produced under just and equitable conditions will have a positive influence on working conditions in Chile.

Both reports are the result of research carried out in the Xth Region of Chile, where the salmon aquaculture industry is concentrated. In the case of the first report, salmon was by far the main species processed by 16 out of the 23 processing plants studied.

Although salmon was introduced to Chile back in 1905, and salmon aquaculture started in 1914, it was not until the decade of the 1980s that industrial salmon aquaculture began to be developed. The subsequent boom of this form of aquaculture has been phenomenal. In 1979 some 11 million tonnes were harvested, whilst 20 years later, in 1999, the amount harvested had increased to more than 230,188 tonnes. Today Chile is the world's second largest producer of salmon after Norway, and in 2000 it exported 206,254 tonnes valued at US\$ 973 million. Today three main species of salmon are cultivated in Chile, and in 1999 the Xth Region accounted for more than 86 per cent of the national production of these species.

Despite the claims that the booming salmon industry is creating significant employment opportunities, there is much to be done to improve working conditions. About 70-90 per cent of the workers in the processing plants are women. It is noted that Chile's rapid elevation to the world's No 2 salmon producer is due, in no small part, to the "hidden side of its operations"—the low costs of labour. A Chilean investor is quoted as saying that labour standards in the salmon industry are low, even by Chilean standards. This is especially true in the Xth Region... where many production units take advantage of the high unemployment in the region to reduce their labour costs. As the report shows, there is a dramatic difference between the monthly salaries of Canadian (US\$ 1,435), USA (US\$ 1,400) and Chilean (US\$ 480) workers in the salmon industry.

The low costs of Chilean labour, as compared to other salmon producing countries, has led to accusations of dumping. Comparisons with Norway show that, on average, in Chile salmon production plants employ 20 people. Similar units in Norway employ 5 workers. In Chile labour in the processing industry is far more important than technology—large numbers of workers are required to produce fillets and to remove bones by hand.

In her report on the salmon processing industry, Ms Diaz reflects that: "The various opinions gathered highlight issues where little progress has been made, but which, in the light of the literature review of international experiences, are highly relevant." She suggests six main areas for further work:

- The improvement of working conditions through social dialogue between the various actors;
- Where workers in different companies carry out similar kinds of work, there may be scope for

establishing across the board labour norms for businesses.

- Where there is foreign investment in export production, there may be scope for bringing international political and public relations pressure to bear to improve labour conditions.
- Promoting socially responsible business practices, particularly in an industry with significant forward and backward linkages in the production chain (service providers, concessionaires, sub-contractors etc).
- Use independent certifying agencies that are credible and competent to review working practices in the industry.
- Promote the role of unions in negotiating work contracts where good working practices are a central concern.

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Latin America/ Chile

Shared concerns

Notes from a trip to Chile

By Maria Cristina Maneschy, working at the Federal University of Pará, Belem, Brazil, and a member of ICSF

In October 2001 I had the privilege of spending two days in Valparaíso, Chile, with the National Confederation of Artisanal Fishermen from Chile (CONAPACH), the fishworker organization of Chile. I was well received by Kim Cooperrider and Jéssica Alfaro, professionals working for the project "Women weaving networks to promote the sustainable future of our communities (*caletas pesqueras*)". Though my visit was very brief, I would like to share some of my impressions as well as the information I collected about this project being undertaken by a national fishermen's union.

Having been engaged with ICSF's Women in Fisheries Programme in Brazil for some years, I sought to learn about the Chilean experience in promoting gender issues in fisheries. I also sought to explore the possibility of establishing regular contacts between Chilean and Brazilian groups and organizations sensitive to such issues. My purpose was also to invite CONAPACH to collaborate in a new participatory newsletter project on women in fisheries initiated by several organizations in north and northeastern Brazil.

CONAPACH congregates about 400 unions and has approximately 40,000 members. In 1998 CONAPACH instituted its Women's Department, which has sought to promote and support women's groups and their economic initiatives in fishing *caletas* around the country. Luisa Pineda, a fisherwoman from the South of the country, is the director of the Women's Department. Luisa had earlier visited Brazil, in June 2000, as a member of the CONAPACH delegation that participated in a meeting organized by ICSF in the state of Ceará on *Gender and Coastal Fishing Communities in Latin America*.

In November 2000 the women's department began the implementation of the above-mentioned project, being financed by the *Fondo de las Americas* agency. According to Kim and Jéssica, the project's aim is to create a network of women who will act as environmental educators in fishing communities and unions. In fact, for several years Chile has been facing

serious problems due to the high pressure on fisheries resources as well as related environmental and economic problems. This led the Government to institute new policies to manage fisheries resources. The introduction of individual fishing quotas has raised serious controversies within the artisanal sector and between workers on industrial fishing fleets.

In concrete terms, explained Kim, the project seeks to educate women who are "concerned about the future of the small-scale fishing industry and the survival of fishing communities". According to CONAPACH leaders, the integration of women is a natural step, especially given the present context of Chilean fisheries. The participation of women promises to strengthen the organization while boosting its political power.

In addition to local efforts to develop organizational skills and knowledge about environmental issues associated with the artisanal fishing industry, the project has, over the last year, begun to facilitate the formation of a national women's network. In a national meeting held in January 2001 in Valparaiso, the participants decided to elect zonal coordinators. This network is expected to contribute to the recognition of the women's traditionally invisible roles in the small-scale fishing industry. Subsequently, it might contribute to consolidating the organizational, political, social and economic force of the artisanal fisheries sector.

According to a brochure of the project: "At present, artisanal fishermen in Chile are defending their cultural and productive patrimony. The destruction of the coastal environment may lead to the disappearance of artisanal fisheries. Therefore, the participation, integration, and organization of men and women is crucial."

Some results of the women's meetings held through the project:

- Growing knowledge about women's roles in production and in sustaining fishing communities, within the local and regional contexts;
- Preparation of projects on organization and economic support;
- Identification of women's interests and needs and the development of methodologies for the project to work with their organizations;
- Identification of health and educational problems

that fishing communities face.

As in other countries, there are no available statistics that reflect women's actual contribution in the fisheries. According to an estimate by CONAPACH, women constitute about 10 per cent of the workforce in the fisheries sector in Chile. They work as *encarnadoras* (baiters), fish processors, seaweed collectors and as sellers of fish products.

Local labour and organizational conditions vary along the long Chilean coast. According to Kim and Jéssica, the project intends to facilitate the integration of women in existing fishermen's unions and organizations, in accordance with CONAPACH guidelines. In the event that there is no organization of fishermen, women may consider forming an organization of their own. That was the case in San Antonio, a town about two hours from Valparaíso, where a women's union of *encarnadoras* was formed with CONAPACH support earlier this year. CONAPACH, through the project, has continued to support this initiative. CONAPACH leaders estimate that more than 800 *encarnadoras* live in San Antonio.

I had the opportunity to visit a community near Valparaíso—*caleta* El Membrillo—a lively fishing port where the 'Union of Independent Workers and Fishermen of *caleta* El Membrillo', founded in 1936, is located. According to the President, the union has 200 members, of which only 10 are women. The President is presently engaged in integrating women into the union.

In fact, the *encarnadoras* play a very active role in the fisheries, given that the use of hooks is common in the artisanal fisheries of Chile. Longlines, with hundreds of hooks, have to be baited before each fishing trip. In general, every crew engages an *encarnadora* or *encarnador* to prepare the hooks. Most of the *encarnadores* are women. On the day of my visit some young men were working among the women. As the workers are paid only after the fishermen get back to shore, they also share in the risks involved in fish capture and sale.

I spoke with a 55-year old woman who has been an *encarnadora* baiting hooks for 36 years. Engraved on her hands were signs of the constant handling of knives, hooks, lines, in ever humid and cold conditions. The

work of the baiters involves standing in front of a kind of table where the lines are laid out so they can bait each hook.

Encarnadoras are independent workers whose daily earnings depend on the orders they receive and their ability to accomplish the job. Depending on the volume of landings, they can work from a few hours to half a day at the port. Many are single mothers. In El Membrillo port about 30 people work as baiters. They pay a tax to the port administration in order to work there. If they unionize they are supposed to pay the monthly fee of the union. Efforts to organize them are still in the initial stages. Organizing these women, who often find themselves without work due to the "closing of the quota" after the quota for the catch has been reached, and who, as housewives and single mothers do not have much time to participate in meetings and events, remains a challenge.



The professionals engaged in the project are enthusiastic. They are very concerned about the future achievements of the project, and hope that it remains a priority for the CONAPACH. They raise concerns that are shared by others engaged with gender issues in fisheries, such as: How to create legitimate spaces for women, alongside men, within fishermen's organizations? How to create strong organizations, able to sustain themselves? How to respond to the existing urgent economic demands of women?

The methodology of this project and the experiences of CONAPACH's Women's Department, merits attention and reflection, especially by leaders of fishermen's organizations and women's groups from other countries in Latin America. It is necessary to increase networking and sharing of interesting experiences of citizenship in the fisheries sector.

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Latin America/ Chile

Women Weaving Networks

Women fishworkers in Chile meet to discuss issues of common concern

By Jéssica Alfaro Alvarez, Co-ordinator of the CONAPACH Project on 'Women Weaving Networks'

The First Meeting of Women in Artisanal Fisheries: Northern Zone was held in Antofagasta, Northern Chile from 27 to 29 June 2001. Thirty seven participants from 14 women's groups belonging to all three zones of Chile—northern, central and southern—engaged in fishing, aquaculture, baiting hooks, processing and marketing fish, participated in this meeting. Nine of these groups were from the northern region. The event was organized by women members of the *Sindicato de Buzos Mariscadores* (Syndicate of Shellfish Divers) of the *caleta* Constitución–Isla Santa Maria, a part of the National Network of Women in Artisanal Fisheries of the National Confederation of Artisanal Fishers of Chile (CONAPACH).

Various public service organizations of Region II as well as officials from the central level participated in this meeting. This included officials from Sernapesca, Dirección de Obras Portuarias, (Port Works Management) Sercotec, Sernam and the UECPS (Unidad Coordinadora del Ministerio de Obras Públicas or the Co-ordination Unit of the Ministry of Public Works). They expressed their support towards the ideas put forth at the meeting.

This meeting was part of the project "Women weaving networks for the sustainable future of our *caletas*", being executed by CONAPACH with financial support from the *Fondo de las Américas*. Earlier this year, in January, women from the artisanal fisheries sector in Chile had organized themselves into a National Network and selected co-ordinators for each zone. The members of the Network have since been meeting regularly, every two months, to discuss strategies to strengthen, broaden and consolidate this movement. They have worked out zonal plans to identify new women's groups, deepen ties with those already in contact with the network, disseminate information on work being carried out by the network as well as identify sources to fund the initiatives of the movement and grassroot groups.

This meeting in Antofagasta was a product of these zonal-level projects. It was the largest event that the National Network of Women has ever organized and marks a milestone for the co-ordinators of the northern zone and for the CONAPACH Women's Network. It was an important step towards valorizing the role of women in artisanal fisheries.

Women discussed their expectations from the workshop and how these could be integrated into the work plan of the network. They elaborated on the concept of 'sustainable development' and formulated guidelines for 'community, economic and environmental development'.

They gave practical suggestions for achieving concrete results in their respective *caletas*. They suggested creating permanent channels of communication between their organizations. There was a strong sentiment in favour of holding more such meetings in future as a concrete step towards increasing communication between groups, leading to a strengthening of the movement. They stressed the significance of the Network of Women, the need to strengthen it and to elect more representatives to ensure better co-ordination.

Gender issues were approached within the context of legitimizing *caletas*, and recognizing that these comprised groups of both men and women. The need for women to develop their self-potential and power was stressed, and to ensure this it was proposed that new opportunities for sharing and analyzing experiences and learning from the experiences of others, be created.

The women also drew the attention of authorities to illegal fishing by the industrial sector in the 5-mile zone reserved for artisanal fishing. It was evident that even if women from the northern zone, in general, are not closely integrated into the activities of *sindicatos*, they are well informed about at least two major issues: the 5-mile zone and the fisheries law. Their interest in protecting resources, in respecting the closed seasons and in getting better prices, demonstrated their appreciation of problems arising from overexploitation of marine resources.

In the field of community development they highlighted the need for better organization into groups and for establishing alliances with other community-based as well as environmental organizations. They also proposed efforts towards influencing public opinion about problems faced by their communities, through the the media.

Women stressed the need to address various problems they faced in their *caletas*. These included: poor accessibility of *caletas*; lack of transport, affecting especially school-going children who need to travel to their schools; lack of proper sewage and drinking water facilities; and poor access to health services. They stressed the necessity for providing decompression chambers for divers exposed to pressure-related problems and a high accident rate. They also stressed that in *caletas* where there are no medical facilities, men and women need to be trained to provide first-aid to victims of accidents. The women expressed concern about the significant number of children who drop out of school or repeat academic years and highlighted the need for nursery and other schools.

Women proposed two broad areas for environmental action. First, they stressed the importance of promoting citizen's participation through the efforts of neighbourhood groups, schools and unions, and with the involvement of CONAPACH, Servicio País, and the authorities, towards finding solutions to their problems. They emphasized the need to keep the community informed through the use of various media.

They also proposed other alternatives for environmental improvement including recycling of organic and inorganic waste, developing green belts, controlling pollution (waste water, heavy metals, dregs etc), effectively enforcing the closed season and protecting resources (size and quality), and promoting environmental awareness.

In conclusion, this meeting of women in artisanal fisheries in the northern zone was perhaps a landmark in developing new perspectives in the artisanal fisheries sector, in general, and in efforts towards increasing the visibility of women, in particular. Through our efforts all over the country it has been possible to observe the situation of women in the sector. Although it is a fact

that women are the most marginalized in terms of direct participation in artisanal fisheries in the northern zone, what is noteworthy is that they do understand the role they play in the development of the sector. This assures us that it is possible for development initiatives for women in the sector to succeed.

We think it important to support women through strengthening their incipient organizations and supporting their plans for socio-economic development. This must be done based on an integrated plan. In the past, although the intention has always been there on the part of the authorities to elevate the role of the female 'actor', the efforts have, for the most part, been disjointed and based on isolated activities rather than on an integrated approach to development. The women from the northern sector of the country require support in their activities, along with their partners—husbands, fathers, companions etc.

It is clear to women that the issue of their integration into the sector is generally glossed over by the predominantly male organizations. We believe that we are now at a juncture where there is a strong possibility for success on an issue which is highly complex. During this meeting women suggested several development projects, directed towards *sindicatos* and the various public services of Region II. We are inviting these bodies to form a working platform that could help us in defining strategies and concrete opportunities for the integration of women.

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From Latin America/ Chile

Book Talk

A personal account of a visit to Peru, which the author, Professor Maria Terease López Boegeholz, a sociologist based in Chile, would like to share with artisanal fishermen/women and with professionals working with coastal communities.

I visited fishing communities of Paracas in Pisco, Peru on the invitation of Amelia García, a Peruvian sociologist. She was making the trip to present her book titled: *Los culpables desconocidos: Artisanal Fishworkers and the Environment in the National Reserve of Paracas, Pisco*, to the inhabitants of the *caletas* (fishing communities) who had provided her with the information and inspiration for this book, and who, besides this, had offered her “a lot of warmth”. This was to express her gratitude towards the people who offered her the hospitality of their homes, as well as the support and the motivation she needed to write this book.

In the port of Callao we visited the union of fishworkers. The 1800 members of this union are mainly shellfish collectors, boat-owners and longliners. Their boats and nets are small. The union is linked to the Committee of *Jaladeros*—those who wash the boats.

In Chorillos, Lima, our contact was Ms. Paquita Ramos, the first President of the *Comité de Damas* (Women’s Committee) of FIUPAP (The Federation for the Integration and Unification of Artisanal Fishworkers in Peru), founded in 1992. However, as there were never enough funds, they had to knock at many doors. She now works in the Ministry of Health, and manages health services for fishworkers. She has one of the restaurants under her in the scheme *Pesquero del Muelle* (Dock Fishworkers, literally translated). Her experience would be of great value in an exchange with successful women working in artisanal fisheries in Chile.

In the port of San Andres we met the Port Administrator. The wives of the fishermen here sell the fish catch. The fish are washed well with plenty of water and are laid out on the ground for sale.

The major species are *cabrilla* (*Paralabrax humeralis*) which amounts to approximately 180 tonnes per month, *cabinza* (*Isacia conceptionis*), *ayanque* (*Cynoscion analis*) and *chita* (*Anisotremus scapularis*). The fish is sold in boxes or by the dozen. The larger fish are sold in kilograms. Large vessels fishing in shallow waters, targeting mainly anchovies to supply fishmeal factories, catch a large number of small fish, and cause great damage.

In Laguna Grande, a village with temporary shacks, we were guided by Ms. Tita from the *Centro de Madres* (Mothers Club), and the daughter of one of the founders of the *Rancherías* (collection of shacks of fishworkers). The police personnel from the Paracas Police Headquarters and the Paracas National Park Security had tried to catch those using explosives—outsiders without permits—who had eventually escaped. The outsiders had stored their gear in a small inn, in the care of an old man they had paid, and this man had been imprisoned. The women had come together to protest in Paracas against this imprisonment and to testify in favour of the old man, seeking his release.

We observed the entry of vessels fishing at a depth of six fathoms in the bay area, which is prohibited. We conversed with old fishermen who had come here from Comatracá-Ica, their place of residence. Here, their workplaces are the little temporary shacks constructed on the shores of the beach. Their living conditions are very difficult, without water, electricity, proper drainage or sewage systems. As one of the young mothers, a niece of Ms. Tita explained, “they live like the fish, moving constantly— the fisherman goes where the fish is”

We then visited El Chaco accompanied by Ms. Gregoria. This was a visit to study family life in these parts. Ms. Gregoria is married to the grandson of the founder of El Chaco and is the first woman *chalanera* of the place. *Chalana* is the name of a boat used to ferry the fishermen from their boats to the beach and *vice versa*.

We also visited the Association of the Inhabitants of El Chaco and the *Atracadero Flotante Artesanal* (The Floating Artisanal Pier in El Chaco), a tourist attraction.

In La Gunillas we met Tia Fela, a 93-year old lady, who owns a family-run restaurant. This place has a

dock to offload fish and shellfish. Nevertheless there is pressure to privatize the place and get rid of the fishermen. Amelia's book influenced Tia Fela's family deeply as they are fighting to continue living in the place.

The problems faced by artisanal fishworkers in Peru are similar to those observed in Chile. However there is, in comparison, a lack of political awareness among the Peruvian fishworkers. During our conversations with them we found them to be poorly informed in political terms. The fishermen had little or no knowledge of the relations between CONAPACH (The National Confederation of Artisanal Fishworkers of Chile) and FIUPAP or of the Accord of 1998 signed by these two institutions.

The women, who are heads of extended families, have an important role to play in the family economy and many of them take an active part in fisheries activities. They have conserved and maintained the customs of the Andean culture, an issue being studied by Amelia, who is discovering roots of this culture among the coastal communities. Her book also describes this connection.

In the *caletas* of La Gunillas, El Chaco and Laguna Grande (the beach and residential areas), fishing communities are under pressure to leave the place and to make way for modernization and the development of tourism. Amelias book is her contribution to defending the cause of the inhabitants of these *caletas*. (Maria Terease López Boegeholz can be contacted at mtlopezb@hotmail.com)

Latin America/ Chile

The story of a women's group

A video film describes the experiences of a women's group in Chile in mollusc culture

By Debbie Guerra Maldonado, working at the Instituto de Ciencias Sociales of the Universidad Austral de Chile

De mar y tierra : historia de un grupo de mujeres or *The land and the sea: The story of a women's group* is an ethnographic video that describes the experience of CULTIMAR, a local association of fisher women in the Xth Region of southern Chile. This has been made possible by a working agreement between the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), the Memorial University of Newfoundland (MUH), and the Universidad Austral de Chile (UACH).

CULTIMAR is based in Caipulli, a village of the Ancud County in the Province of Chiloé, east of the Pudeto River. Here, two hundred people live by seaweed gathering, mollusc culture, agriculture and animal husbandry.

In the early 1980s, this agricultural village found in seaweed exploitation an unexpected resource that soon became its main source of income. The fast expansion of this activity was related to the "pelillo boom" (*Gracilaria spp*), a new international market that had its impact on the entire southern coast of Chile.

CULTIMAR, the production co-operative, was created in 1996. An earlier woman leader of seaweed gatherers suggested the creation of an organization that would unite the wives of members of the Pudeto union. She remembers: "In the year 1996, we created CULTIMAR ... We realized that every woman here was a ribereñas (person who lives near a river), and that they did not find jobs easily."

Earlier, women were trapped in their daily routines with few opportunities for generating an income from their activities. They earned some income from the seaweed, but it was too little. That is how the idea to ask for a concession for cultivating mussel (*Mytilus chilensis*) came about.

The first activity of the newborn organization was to invite people to be members. Announcements were

made over the local radio. The women from Caipulli were ready: 36 of them joined the organization of which five were already union members. Today, eight women have left the organization. This was partly due to the lack of immediate earnings, and partly due to the long distance that some women had to travel on poor roads.

Members of CULTIMAR went through a training program on mussel culture in November 1997, under the working agreement of CIDA/MUN/UACH. Beyond the initial aim of learning about mussel culture, these women found in this program a space for personal growth, for mutual support, and for encounters with other women. This was greatly facilitated by existing kinship ties among the women.

In November 1999 these women received an additional training on oyster culture. Simultaneously, they benefited from a grant for the acquisition of the materials required for installing the cultures. Currently, they are seeding both mussel and oyster.

CULTIMAR has applied for an aquaculture concession from the Subsecretaría de Pesca (the branch of the Secretary of Agriculture that regulates fishing activities in Chile) and from the Chilean Navy. This has, however, been delayed for bureaucratic reasons. The work of the group, however, continues.

The video tells the story of CULTIMAR, including the testimonies of each one of its members. It goes through their story that includes the initial change, the learning process of these women, and the consolidation of their organization. The increasing depletion of resources motivated them to search for new alternatives of production. They found an answer in an organization that provided them with a community space for meeting. For them this has been a liberating and empowering experience.

This 50-minute video has been produced by three students from the Universidad Austral de Chile, two from Journalism and the other from Anthropology. If you are interested on the video, please contact: Gabriela Araya: je_munoz@entelchile.net or Debbie Guerra: dguerra@uach.cl

From Latin America/ Chile

Uniting for health and safety

Unions in fish processing plants in Chile need to take up issues of health and safety as a priority

by Estrella Díaz Andrade, a sociologist and researcher based in Santiago, Chile

The Xth Region of our country, Chile, is one of the most important fishing zones, both in terms of volumes of fish produced (particularly farmed salmon) and in the variety of shellfish (molluscs and crustaceans) processed for human consumption—fresh, frozen and canned. Production is mainly export-oriented, destined for markets in USA, Japan and Europe.

In this region, there are around 150 processing units varying in size and investment profile—transnational, national, foreign and joint-venture. A significant number of them—about 100—employ women in labour-intensive jobs, in handling, cleaning and packing. Recently, we undertook a study of 23 fish plants, to draw attention to health and hygiene conditions of the work done by women. We found that workers are exposed to a range of hazards—the constant exposure to cold and dampness, having to stand for the entire working day of eight and more hours, the manual handling of loads (trays of raw material), repetitive and monotonous production line work—that need to be addressed if negative impacts on the health of workers are to be avoided. These conditions, essentially inherent in the performance of these jobs, frequently cause different complaints and ailments (lumbago, tendonitis, chronic colds, etc.).

The presence of workers aware of these issues is a key factor in hazard management. But in the entire region we could only find 40 unions in 150 plants. 20 of these are part of a union called the Federation of Fishing Industry Workers of the Xth Region, the President of which is a woman. This organisation has demanded that the employment authorities formulate a safety policy to address the lack of information about health and safety as well as all the other working conditions that act as aggravating factors.

The position of unions in the region is complex. The overall rate of unionisation is over one per cent lower than the national level—14.86 per cent, as against

16.19 per cent—and those affiliated to unions (33,181 workers) represent only five per cent of the unionised workers nationally (613,123). Legally, committees for health and safety, and joint committees for risk prevention are required in every establishment employing more than 25 workers. However, even where they have been formally set up they do not always work in practice or in a satisfactory manner, for various reasons. That is to say, they merely comply with the functions required by law: supervision, training, checking, etc.

It is possible that the preponderance of women workers in processing plants is the reason why there are low levels of organisation and why only moderate pressure is applied for compliance with the norms for preventive measures. Different studies have shown that women tend to be more absent from the proactive processes of prevention, often due to their particular situations, such as their dual responsibilities (for domestic work, childcare, etc.), which makes their involvement impossible. But it is also true that both women and men workers are made to feel that the issues of health and safety are too technical, and that to understand them requires expertise. What is certain is that despite the need for training, those with the appropriate technical capacity are hardly aware of the impact of the work on the health of women.

It would appear that there is a considerable challenge for unions to take up the issues of health and safety as a priority (at times hampered by earnings and job stability) and to involve the workers and their concerns about health and safety as a matter of union procedure, and in the joint committees. Both of these areas require coordinated action. The Federation has proposed such an initiative, which must develop concrete and proven measures, if the quality of life and work of the fishery workers is to be improved.