

SAMUDRA

REPORT

THE TRIANNUAL JOURNAL OF THE INTERNATIONAL COLLECTIVE IN SUPPORT OF FISHWORKERS



Climate Change: Alaska, Bangladesh, Vietnam

Indonesia's Blue Economy

Japan's Fisheries Co-operatives

Peru's Small-scale Fishers

Chile's New Fisheries Law

Ghost Nets in Kenya



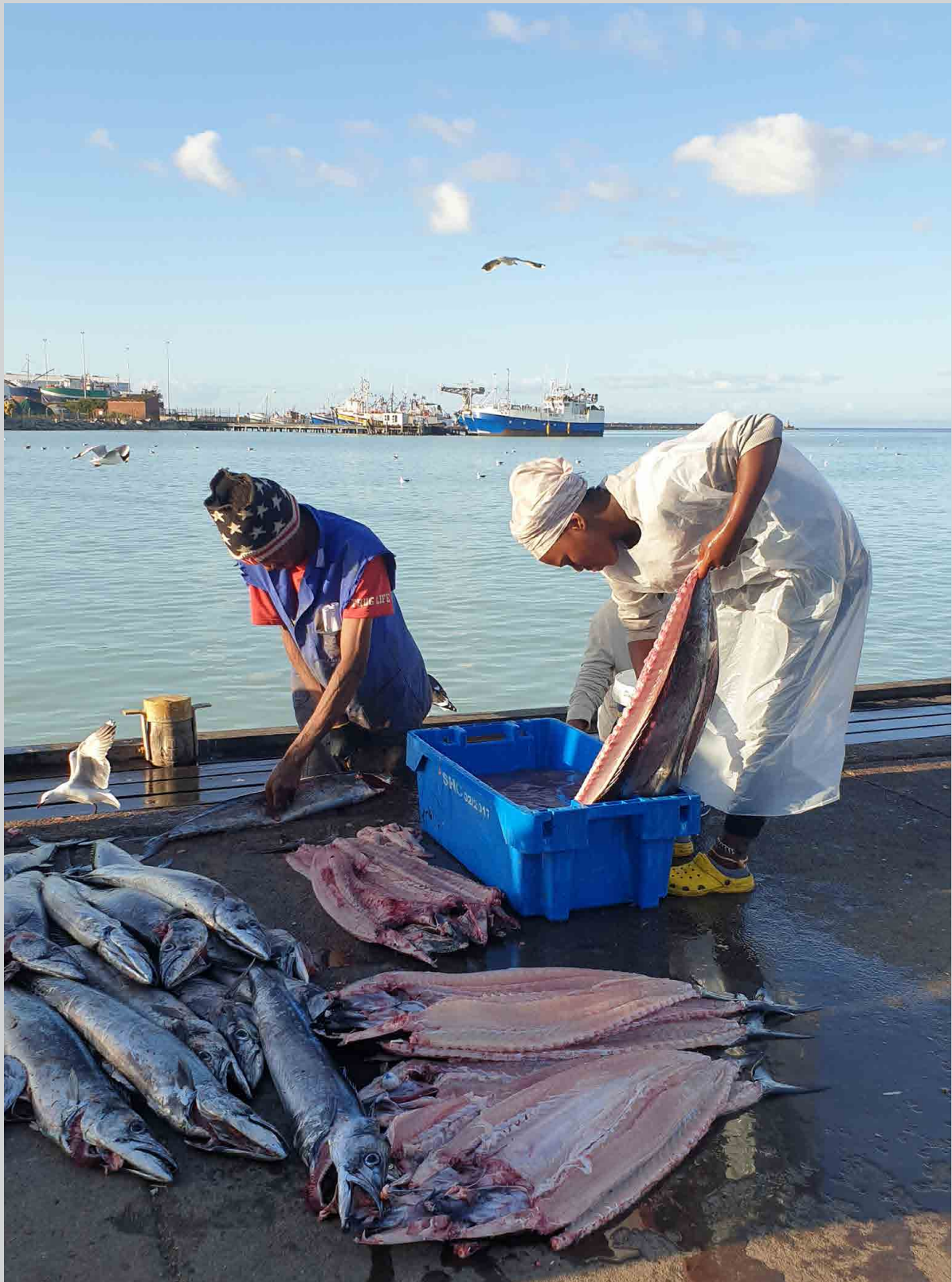
ICSF is an international NGO working on issues that concern fishworkers the world over. It is in status with the Economic and Social Council of the UN and is on ILO's Special List of Non-governmental International Organizations. It also has Liaison Status with FAO.

As a global network of community organizers, teachers, technicians, researchers and scientists, ICSF's activities encompass monitoring and research, exchange and training, campaigns

and action, as well as communications. *SAMUDRA Report* invites contributions and responses. Correspondence should be addressed to Chennai, India.

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

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JACKIE SUNDE

SAMUDRA

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FRONT COVER



“Devalar” (it means “change of course”) Painting by NOVENOEL
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The service often features exclusive, original stories on small-scale and artisanal fisheries, particularly in the regions of the South, as well as issues that deal with women in fisheries and safety at sea. Apart from news and stories on fisheries, the service also focuses on environmental and oceans issues. Please visit <http://www.icsf.net> to subscribe to SAMUDRA News Alerts.

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DAOUDA NDIAYE

Mbour fish landing centre, Senegal

A Climate of Adaptation

Adaptive social protection and effective fisheries management can be the best approach to move towards climate-resilient fisheries

Livelihoods and jobs based on small-scale fisheries are the most vulnerable to climate-driven changes in marine resources and ecosystem services, observes the IPCC Sixth Assessment Report 2022 (SAR 2022). They would, as a result, face the risk of reduced ability to provide food security and social well-being. It is pertinent, therefore, to reduce this vulnerability through responsive early warning systems, improved sea safety, better adaptation measures, secure access to fishing grounds and effective fisheries management. In this backdrop, the Early Warnings to All Initiative by 2027 of the United Nations needs to be upheld by all stakeholders, and fishing communities are to be brought under its coverage.

In the context of mainstreaming climate change adaptation in fisheries strategies and plans, data and information are to be generated to identify areas, fishing grounds and fishing activities most—and least—vulnerable to climate-change impacts. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) needs to undertake this task. Such databases, periodically updated, can lead to the development of suitable adaptation measures for different categories of small-scale, artisanal and Indigenous fisheries without too much loss and damage.

Resilience-building measures, for example, could include investing, with the help of climate finance, in fishing capacity and sea safety of some fishers to access new fishing grounds to deal with slow-onset disasters such as flooding and shift in fishery resources to new latitudes. They could involve investing in taking some other fishers completely out of their traditional fishing grounds due to safety concerns, and providing them with alternative sources of livelihoods. They

could also include investing in adapting traditional ecological and local knowledge to new contexts.

Further, to cushion the adverse effects of climate change on poverty eradication and livelihoods, as recognized in the Outcome of the First Global Stocktake of the 28th Conference of the Parties, United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), Dubai, 2023, the use of ‘adaptive social protection measures for all’ needs to be promoted and mainstreamed in fisheries. Climate finance portfolios may include support to developing such

measures in consultation with affected communities. FAO may document such uses of climate finance.

Adaptive social protection is defined by SAR 2022 as a resilience-building approach to eliminate extremes and slow-onset climate events like sea-level rise. It combines elements of social protection, disaster risk reduction and climate-change adaptation, and includes: cash transfers under social assistance and social insurance, labour market policies such as unemployment benefits, and livelihood development measures such as income diversification and livelihood shift strategies, weather index insurance, housing subsidies, sea-safety measures, and post-disaster construction.

As a safety net to deal with climate-change impacts and the protection of livelihoods, especially of those in the frontline facing extreme and slow-onset disasters, there needs to be a concerted effort to bring adaptive social protection to small-scale fishing communities across the world. Needless to say, this has to be undertaken in a gender-responsive manner and by applying a human-rights-based approach. A combination of adaptive social protection and effective fisheries management can be the best approach to move towards climate-resilient fisheries and fishing communities. ♣



Alaska's empty nets, ageing fleets

Stocks of fish and crab have collapsed in Alaska, devastating both commercial and subsistence fishers

Climate change used to be something fishers in Alaska talked of as a concern for the future. No longer. That future is now. Alaska has witnessed, almost overnight, collapses in both fish and crab stocks. The cod of the Gulf of Alaska; the Bering Sea king crab and snow crab; and the Yukon River salmon. These collapses have devastated fishers—both commercial and subsistence.

Commercial fish and shellfish condition, survival, population biomass and catch have been negatively impacted by extreme events. They include the marine heat waves of 2014-2016 and 2018-2019 in the Gulf of Alaska and Bering Sea, and the record low ice cover in the Bering Sea. Alaska fishers and coastal communities that depend on vulnerable commercial fish species such as Pacific cod, salmon and crab have experienced significant economic losses that are ongoing. Negatively impacted species support high-revenue fisheries and a large proportion of Alaska fishers' earnings, as also the US fishery harvest value.

Pacific cod are highly vulnerable to ocean warming. The cod population in Gulf of Alaska declined by over two-thirds during the heat wave. The fishery accounts for nearly a third of Gulf of Alaska groundfish value and supports the largest groundfish fleet, mostly smaller fixed-gear vessels owned by Alaska residents. The fishery was a declared disaster in 2018 and again in 2020. Harvests declined by 80 per cent from 2015 to 2019 and fishers' earning dropped from US \$50 million to US \$15.5 million. The fleet shrunk in half: from 386 vessels to 176.

The Bering Sea snow crab and Bristol Bay red king crab fisheries are

among the most valuable fisheries in the US. The high value and volume of red king crab and snow crab sustain roughly 100 vessels, 500 crew members, 12 processing plants and 2,500 workers. Surveys in 2021 identified record low abundances of snow crab, suggesting a mass mortality event. The total snow crab biomass declined 86 per cent relative to 2018. The Bristol Bay mature red male king crab biomass has declined by over two-thirds, closing the fishery for the 2021-22 season. The economic losses are likely to exceed several hundred million dollars to fishers and processors. The losses to crab-dependent communities such as St Paul in the Pribilof Islands reverberate even farther; the one processing plant on this remote island cannot afford to operate without crab. This leaves the local people without a place to sell their halibut or cod.

Alaska's most important commercial fish species is salmon, accounting for over a third of Alaska's fishery value. Ten commercial salmon fisheries from Norton Sound to Southeast Alaska suffered disastrous returns in recent years, affecting fishers and fishworkers throughout the state. Western Alaska fishers have lost access to commercial chinook salmon fisheries, making chum salmon the most important commercial salmon species in the region. Poor conditions in the marine environment have caused ongoing and unprecedented chum run failures throughout western Alaska. The impacts are as dramatic as larger economic losses in other fisheries because of the importance of the cash income to western Alaska rural communities.

On the Yukon River, families that have depended on salmon since time



Gathering sockeye salmon for distribution to families in need along the Yukon River, Alaska. On the Yukon River, families that have depended on salmon since time immemorial can no longer harvest fish; it amounts to a loss of sustenance, culture and inter-generational connections

immemorial can no longer harvest fish; it amounts to a loss of sustenance, culture and inter-generational connections. Historically, young people have learned fishing and fish-processing techniques from parents and grandparents, with summer work conducted at fish camps, accompanied by a sharing of cultural knowledge about tides, weather, respect for salmon, and deep connections to place. All that has now stopped—nets and fish camps are empty.

Increased risks

Climate change is identified as the driving force behind crab and salmon run failures. Many also recognize the environmental injustice of ongoing bycatch and habitat impacts associated with the factory trawl fisheries when target and indigenous fisheries are closed. Equity is poorly served by a system that allows high-impact distant-water fleets to preclude small-scale,

local people from feeding their families or passing along cultural knowledge to the next generation.

The greying or ageing of the fleet is a well-documented challenge in US fisheries. Alaska is no exception. A number of organizations in the state have worked for years to address this trend through programmes to support the next generation of fishers in gaining skills, capital and access to fisheries. The Alaska Longline Fishermen's Association (ALFA), in particular, has designed programmes to support young fishermen, from a crew apprentice or training programme to a revolving loan programme. These programmes become more important as climate change increases the risks associated with fishing while coastal families become more vulnerable to supply-chain disruptions and food insecurity. Support for young fishermen is essential.

For more

Fishing is Life

https://www.icsf.net/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/4294_art_Sam76_e_art07.pdf

From the Heart

https://www.icsf.net/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/3804_art_Sam63_E_art11.pdf

Alaska Longline Fishermen's Association (ALFA)

<https://www.alfafish.org/>

Alaska's 2023 ecosystem status reports released by NOAA Fisheries

<https://www.nationalfisherman.com/alaska-s-2023-ecosystem-status-reports-released-by-noaa-fisheries>

A Perpetual Struggle

The shocks from climate change have reduced incomes and adversely affected the livelihoods of fisher communities in Bangladesh

Often called the Land of Rivers, Bangladesh boasts a remarkable riverine landscape that has nurtured a flourishing fisheries sector. With about 230 rivers crisscrossing it, the country is one of the world's largest deltas along with the world's largest flooded wetland. The fisheries industry is a vital pillar

both industrial (trawler) and artisanal fisheries using wooden boats.

Historically, inland capture fisheries dominated fish production in Bangladesh. In 1983-84, they contributed a substantial 62.59 per cent to the country's total fish production; inland culture fisheries made up 15.53 per cent. There has been a notable shift, however, with inland capture fisheries contributing only 28.45 per cent in 2017-18, while inland culture fisheries account for a more substantial 56.24 per cent; marine fisheries constituted 16 per cent.

The sector faces a multitude of challenges, with the adverse effects of climate change standing out as a primary concern. Despite its relatively low carbon emissions, Bangladesh faces considerable challenges from climate change, making it one of the most vulnerable countries in the world. In 2018, the per capita carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions for Bangladesh were a mere 0.56 tonnes, while countries like Saudi Arabia and the United States emitted 18.48 and 16.92 tonnes per capita, respectively.

A World Bank report projects that by 2050, Bangladesh's annual average temperature is set to rise by 1°-1.5°Celsius, affecting approximately 134 million people and incurring an estimated loss of US \$167 billion. Moreover, the life expectancy of the population may decrease by 6.8 per cent by 2050. The international NGO Germanwatch ranks Bangladesh as the ninth most affected country by climate change.

Bangladesh's susceptibility to the effects of climate change is

of the national economy, contributing 3.57 per cent to the gross domestic product (GDP) and an impressive 25.30 per cent to the agricultural GDP. Beyond economic contributions, fisheries play a pivotal role in ensuring food security, providing approximately 60 per cent of the nation's animal protein. This sector engages an estimated 18.5 million people directly, with women constituting 10-12 per cent of the workforce.

The national fisheries sector can be categorized into two primary groups: inland and marine fisheries. The former further divides into inland capture and inland culture fisheries, encompassing diverse aquatic ecosystems such as rivers, estuaries, beels (wetlands), floodplains, the Sundarbans, and the Kaptai Lake. The latter includes ponds, seasonal cultured water bodies, baors (oxbow lakes), shrimp/prawn farms, crab farming, pen culture, and cage culture. Marine fisheries consist of

This sector engages an estimated 18.5 million people directly, with women constituting 10-12 per cent of the workforce

DIN M SHIBLY



Small-scale fishers cast their nets near the shore, an age-old dance between man and the sea unfolds against the backdrop of the coastal horizon, Kutubdia, Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh

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compounded by its population density and socio-economic environment, as recognized by the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) progress report in 2020. The country faces increased occurrences of unpredictable rainfall, intensified floods, droughts, extreme temperatures, and other natural hazards, as reflected in Bangladesh's disaster-related statistics. A staggering 70 per cent of the landmass in Bangladesh is susceptible to flooding.

Climate change severely threatens the country's food security, affecting crop production, particularly rice. Water scarcity for pre-monsoon irrigation is already hampering the production of high-yielding variety rice that accounts for about 36 per cent of the total rice production. Saline intrusion threatens to reduce crop yields significantly. Additionally, water-related hazards, including floods, cyclones and storm surges, as well as

salinity in surface and groundwater, are hitting communities. Access to safe drinking water, proper sanitation and hygiene practices are persistent challenges, especially in coastal and char areas (lands surrounded by water), with fears of severe health consequences.

According to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), extreme temperatures, erratic rainfall, floods, droughts, tropical cyclones, rising sea levels, tidal surges, salinity intrusion and ocean acidification are causing profound adverse effects on the lives and livelihoods of millions of people in Bangladesh. This onslaught of climate-related challenges threatens to undermine the socio-economic development achieved over the past three decades.

With approximately 40 per cent of its population living in poverty, the variable and unpredictable climate

adds another layer of complexity, significantly limiting livelihood options for the most vulnerable segments of Bangladesh's society.

Climate change

The unmistakable and distressing effects of climate change in Bangladesh manifest clearly in the case of river erosion on two crucial islands: Manpura and Kutubdia. Both these islands are inhabited by fisher communities grappling with the imminent threat of losing their homes and fishing grounds. The changing climate exacerbates the severity of river erosion, compounding the challenges these vulnerable communities face.

means of sustenance. Take Kutubdia, for example. Located in the Bay of Bengal, it functions as a upazila (sub-district) within the Cox's Bazar district. A majority of the island's inhabitants subsist primarily on farming and fishing. Over the past century, from 1880 to 1980, Kutubdia has lost a substantial portion of its landmass—about 65 per cent. What once expanded across 250 sq km has dwindled to a mere 59.56 sq km). Unrelenting erosion has forced more than 60 per cent of the population to seek refuge in urban areas.

Manpura Island, also a sub-district 80 km from Bhola district town (itself an island district), hosts a population of 125,000. Fishing is their livelihood. Over a 37-year period, from 1973 to 2010, the total land area of Manpura has steadily decreased from 148 sq km to 114 sq km.

This article draws from a series of focus group discussions (FGDs) with fishers. Conducted as part of a study sponsored by the International Collective in Support of Fishworkers (ICSF), these discussions took place in the coastal districts of Bhola, Cox's Bazar and Bagerhat. The insights shared by the fishers provide first-hand perspectives on the impacts of climate change, corroborated by previous studies and literature.

The fisher communities here have an up-close understanding of the tangible and often distressing consequences of climate change, given the stark shifts they have witnessed. The primary manifestation is the increasing frequency of cyclones and adverse weather. These disrupt fishing activities, preventing fishers from completing their trips successfully. In many instances, fishing expeditions are abandoned due to depressions or cyclones, leading to the loss of fishing nets and boats in the turbulent waters.

Residents of Cox's Bazar have been grappling with flash floods and waterlogging, previously uncommon. These present significant obstacles to aquaculture and fish capture. In Bhola,

Unrelenting erosion has forced more than 60 per cent of the population to seek refuge in urban areas

In Bangladesh, fisher families are perpetually struggling to save their homes, primarily because they reside in close proximity to rivers and coastal regions. The relentless forces of riverbank erosion are a never-ending threat, displacing thousands. A staggering 283 locations, encompassing 85 towns and growth centres along with a substantial 2,400 km of riverbank, remain exposed to unforgiving erosive forces. The major rivers, including the Padma, the Jamuna and the Meghna, persistently encroach fertile floodplains, rendering countless individuals landless and homeless each year. The results, often termed 'Internally Displaced Population' (IDP), reinforce a multitude of inescapable challenges for the affected population at various stages of displacement.

In the country's islands, many people rely on fishing. Here, river erosion compounds the already formidable challenges. The eroding riverbanks claim not only the houses of numerous fishers but also disrupt their

the rise in river erosion has compelled fishers to migrate in search of alternative livelihoods. Fishers in both Cox's Bazar and Bhola have noticed shifts in fish stocks, resulting in diminished catch; they believe fishes have changed their habitats. About 45 per cent of fishers have associated climate change, especially adverse weather conditions, with increased domestic violence, as uncertain weather conditions often leave fishermen without work, escalating family conflicts.

In the district of Bagerhat, fishers encounter reduced access to freshwater due to heightened saline intrusion. This leads to a declining stocks of freshwater fisheries. Flash floods wreak havoc on shrimp farms. Fishers engaged in pond and closed water body aquaculture have witnessed unusual diseases and fish mortality. They attribute these fish kills to the effects of climate change, such as unexpected winter rains that were historically rare in Bangladesh.

Frequent and heavy rainfall, even in winter, can disrupt ecosystems and impact fish populations.

The fishers' experiences and observations are supported by the findings of Hussain and Hoq (2018). Their research underscores the impact of climate change on fish reproduction, migration patterns and survival rates. Climate-induced floods, erosion and salinization of coastal lands further imperil both agricultural and freshwater fish habitat. Physical factors like temperature, rainfall and hydrology directly and indirectly influence fish reproduction, growth and migration.

The Ministry of Forest Environment and Climate Change's findings validate the Bagerhat fishers' concerns over saline water ingress. They emphasize the rise in sea levels, leading to saltwater intrusion. This, in turn, results in increased soil salinity, impacting crop cultivation and diminishing access to freshwater for

DIN M SHIBLY



A Small-scale fisherman carry fresh catch to the local market, weaving through the hustle with basket brimming with ocean treasures in Kutubdia, Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh

For more

Impacts of Climate Change on Coastal and Marine Fisheries Resources in Bangladesh by Hussain and Hoq (2018)

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Knowledge and perception about climate change and human health: findings from a baseline survey among vulnerable communities in Bangladesh by Md Iqbal Kabir et al. (2016)

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https://mpr.ub.uni-muenchen.de/81552/1/MPRA_paper_81552.pdf

Climate change impacts on a tropical fishery ecosystem: Implications and societal responses by Islam et al. (2020)

<https://www.mdpi.com/2071-1050/12/19/7970>

Extreme Climate Events and Fish Production in Bangladesh by Haque et al. (2019)

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/329707051_Extreme_Climate_Events_and_Fish_Production_in_Bangladesh

Social Development and Sustainable Fisheries: Bangladesh by Md. Mujibul Haque Munir (2023)

<https://www.icsf.net/resources/icsf-social-development-bangladesh/>

consumption and production. Climate change-related events such as floods, riverbank erosion, cyclones and storm surges disrupt infrastructure and fisheries practices, compelling fishers to adapt. Many have switched to cultivating saline-tolerant species like tilapia and parsa.

Chowdhury *et al* (2010) align with the perception of Bhola fishers engaged in closed water body aquaculture. They emphasize how increased evapotranspiration and reduced water bodies adversely affect fish habitat, leading to higher fish mortality due to habitat loss. Anticipated increased rainfall, driven by climate change, extends breeding grounds for freshwater fish but also raises the risk of flooding and damage to aquaculture infrastructure.

The ministry has identified multiple impacts of climate change on the fisheries sector, including alterations in fish breeding patterns, changes in species composition and distribution, and increased risks of disease outbreaks. These disrupt the aquaculture industry, affecting both major culture species and organic culture. Climate change-induced disasters damage fishery infrastructure and further imperil habitats, leading to changes in patterns of fish migration and distribution.

The study by Blasiak *et al* (2017) ranks Bangladesh as the 18th most vulnerable nation in terms of the impacts of climate change on marine fisheries, highlighting the heightened vulnerability of fishing communities living close to the coast and reliant on climate-sensitive fisheries resources.

Islam *et al* (2020) reveal the fishers' coping strategies. Migration to alternative areas and professions has become a necessity for many; they rely on cautionary signals of extreme weather from radio and text messages on mobile phones. Cyclone shelters, often provided by the government, serve as critical facilities during adverse climatic conditions. However, access to health services during disasters remains limited for some, posing a challenge to their well-being.

Haque *et al.* (2019) have assessed the economic losses suffered by the fisheries sector due to climate change. They vary across regions; the southern part of the country is the most vulnerable. Floods have particularly devastating effects on the fisheries sector. Kabir *et al* (2016) note the dire consequences of climate change, such as the influx of saline water, leading to fish mortality and crop damage. Mostafa A.R. Hossain underscores the severe losses experienced across aquaculture, agriculture and biodiversity due to climate change. Changes in temperature, habitat quality and migration patterns, along with increased disaster events, impact the livelihoods of grassroots stakeholders.

Host of challenges

Azad and Wadood (2017) emphasize the intertwined nature of poverty and climate change on fishing communities. Vulnerability to climate change-induced shocks has intensified for those heavily dependent on fisheries and aquaculture. These shifts in fishing patterns, growth and distribution have made the fishery-associated population more vulnerable, leading to income reductions and a host of socio-economic challenges.

A Top-Down Mirage

The Indonesian government's increasing focus on the Blue Economy should not be at the cost of the knowledge gained from long years of customary or traditional management, says Susan Gui of the conservation NGO KIARA. Edited excerpts

On KIARA's current work

KIARA still does advocacy. The Indonesian government is focusing on the Blue Economy, with emphasis on massive expansion of production from marine resources, affecting the community. We have also been working on the climate crisis, especially as it relates to the sinking and drowning villages in central Java and many other parts of Indonesia. The climate crisis has led to decreased fish capture, hitting the economics and livelihoods of fishers. It is getting worse.

On the differential impact of climate change on women facing socio-economic difficulties

Over the past decade, climate change has already affected Indonesia's fisherfolk. It has worsened over the past five years. The fishers talk of losing their customary knowledge in discerning weather conditions and tides; they cannot 'smell' the ocean now. Due to changes in the ecosystem, they now have to go farther out to sea to fish. They face a lot of issues related to poverty. Children in coastal communities get forced into early marriages. Women have the double burden of earning and managing the household, ensuring nutrition and education for their children. Many fishing families are trapped in debt. Flooding from the sea drowns all the facilities. Migration has also been affected.

On the government's quota-based management for industrial fisheries

Neither the government nor the fisherfolk are ready to implement quota-based management. We do not actually have the base data of the resources available in our ocean. About

three or four years ago, the Indonesian government tried to introduce quota for lobster exports but the scheme only led to corruption. There are no tools for monitoring, despite the huge potential for transshipment at sea. Some of Indonesia's waters are already over-exploited and implementation of transshipment would be problematic.

On the likelihood of positive impacts of quotas

If you consider revenue a positive impact, we don't see how this will benefit us. For example, now in Indonesia, the government's focus is on developing infrastructure like big ports and cold storage facilities. These, however, will facilitate only large vessels. Small-scale or traditional fisherfolk cannot sell fish in the big ports because they sell in small volumes. We see a lot of gaps in the government budget. Protection and empowerment are still far away. So, the tax revenue only benefits those who have control to access it; but there's no way this can happen for the fisherfolk.

On the impact of quotas on community-based management structures

Looking at the quotas given to big vessels that get big catches, there is definitely going to be an impact on the value chain. The ocean is like a bowl connected from side to side. If you overexploit one side, it could affect the other side. So it's not just the production perspective, the holistic perspective must also be considered. For example, the relationships among the indigenous community, artisanal fisherfolk and fisherwomen, as also their relationship with the coast. This is the missing connection.

This interview with Susan Herawati Romica (guisusan98@gmail.com), General Secretary of KIARA (Koalisi Rakyat untuk Keadilan Perikanan), Indonesia, was conducted by N. Venugopalan (icsf@icsf.net), Programme Manager, ICSF, on 3 November, 2023

ASIAN DEVELOPMENT BANK



Fishermen unloading buckets of fish from their boats in Makassar, South Sulawesi, Indonesia. Some fish are going to disappear because of over-exploitation from catch-based quotas

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On the competition between trawlers and artisanal fishers

Under the new regulations, there will be foreign fishing vessels in our waters. That means our traditional fisherfolk are going to use larger fishing gear to face the big foreign vessels. The big will grab the most, while the smaller players will get only

On reaching the quotas when catches are dwindling

I'm not really sure. The quotas given are based on the data that we have. Take the case of export of baby lobster. A certain quota is given to one company; if it cannot meet it, it can smuggle fish from another area. There is also the potential for corruption.

There is no mechanism for the control and monitoring of foreign fishing vessels

the last of the remainder. That is not just. There is no mechanism for the control and monitoring of foreign fishing vessels. Our government says there will be logbooks and VMS. It doesn't realize that not every fisher has the necessary tools; some can't even read and write.

On the total available catch (TAC)

Government maps show only the red, yellow and green parts of our waters. Red indicates over-exploitation; yellow warns of near over-exploitation; and green indicates plentiful resources. But no data exists for the exact catch availability. This is also part of our criticism: On what basis will the government decide on the quota when it doesn't have a clue about the available catch?

On the declining numbers and status of artisanal fishers

The past five years have been the worst for Indonesia's ocean management. No

wonder the numbers are decreasing. Exploitative and destructive practices are rampant. Many foreign fishing vessels enter Indonesian waters using trawl and seine gear; their use is not prohibited under any clear regulation. Incidents of conflicts between traditional fisherfolk and those using disruptive fishing gear are much too frequent. Indonesia now allows the export of sand. Who will monitor it? The sand could be coming from the waters that have good resources; its mining could hit the catches. Under the Blue Economy schemes, the government is expanding aquaculture, especially for shrimp. This is likely to destroy our mangrove forests.

On small-scale artisanal fishing sector's contribution

It accounts for about 20 per cent of the total production. Although the government claims an increase in GDP, the economic parameters do not really capture the real issues of migration and poverty along the coast. There is no precise demographic data on the existing fisherfolk, especially the traditional or artisanal ones.

On governance of marine fisheries

Indonesia's fisheries regulation programme is not bottom-up. It arises at the top and then goes down. As long as the government doesn't make it hard for the fisherfolk to get access to subsidized fuel, there shouldn't be problems with registering all the traditional fishing boats. But if the idea is to only collect data of how many traditional fishing boats Indonesia has, the traditional fisherfolk are unlikely to benefit in any way. In Malaysia, the government compiles data of the traditional fishing boats but, at the same time, they provide insurance. In Indonesia, it's the fisherfolk who have to pay for insurance.

On controlling IUU fishing

Over the past five years, we have not moved forward on illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing. The government has now opened up our waters for fishing vessels through quotas, but it has made little effort to solve the problem of destructive

fishing. Logbooks are hard to monitor mid-sea. Hence IUU fishing goes largely undetected. The government does not have a large budget for monitoring, control, and surveillance. Even if those caught stealing our fish are taken to court, they are likely to get away with minimal punishment. Even then, only the captain of the boat is prosecuted, not the investor who pumped in money for the boat.

On the best management of fisheries areas

Our government assigns the red, yellow and green labels on the map to indicate resource health. But in customary or

Incidents of conflicts between traditional fisherfolk and those using disruptive fishing gear are much too frequent

traditional regimes, several indigenous communities already manage their waters in the best way possible. But these communities now have to face the issues of quota and IUU fishing, of mining and reclamation. ↴

For more

KIARA

<http://www.kiara.or.id/>

Hot Water Rising: The Impact of Climate Change on Indonesia's Fisheries and Coastal Communities

<https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/bitstreams/f7eea193-6e04-4875-9787-058167df2410/download>

Reclaiming Rights

https://www.icsf.net/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/4358_art_Sam_79_Reclaiming_Rights_Susan.pdf

Lack of Transparency

https://www.icsf.net/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/4422_art_Sam_83_art01_Indonesia_Marthin.pdf

Adapt and Reap Rewards

By promoting gender equality in shrimp farming, some provinces of Vietnam's Mekong Delta are finding innovations for adapting to climate change

Vietnam's largest deltaic region, the Mekong Delta offers great potential for rice production and aquaculture. With an area of 747,000 hectares in 2022, it is the country's largest shrimp-producing area. The shrimp-rice area covers nearly 190,000 hectares, accounting for 26.8 per cent of the total shrimp farming area in the Mekong Delta. The production of farmed shrimp of all kinds in 2022 reached 1,080,600 tonnes, an increase of 8.5 per cent over 2021; of this the rice-shrimp production reached about 120,000 tonnes.

The year 2022 also saw a significant increase in shrimp exports by 11.2 per

ecosystem conservation and community livelihood development. MCD's focus includes environment and natural resources management, community sustainable livelihood development, and communications and policy recommendations, in which climate change response, disaster risk reduction, and gender equality are cross-cutting issues. From 2015 to 2023, MCD successfully implemented the project Gender Transformative and Responsible Agribusiness Investments in Southeast Asia (GRAISEA), supported by OXFAM International. The objective of the project is to enhance the capacity of small-scale producers, particularly women, to obtain equal opportunities and benefits. To support businesses in improving their operational efficiency and implementing social responsibility standards within the shrimp value chain while adapting to climate change in Ca Mau province and the Mekong Delta region.

Under this project, MCD collaborated with the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development of Ca Mau, along with its partners. The objective was to implement and promote two sustainable models of shrimp-rice and shrimp-mangrove farming, with the main production being black tiger shrimp in Tri Luc commune in Thoi Binh district and Dat Mui commune in Ngoc Hien district. These models are economically efficient, which help reduce risks and diseases, and adapt to climate change more effectively compared to other aquaculture models.

Synergy of nutrients

In Ca Mau, the shrimp-rice model dominates farming activities because of its high economic efficiency. Its feature is one shrimp crop and one rice crop in the same farming area. The main crop of rice-shrimp starts in early September

The objective of the project is to enhance the capacity of small-scale producers, particularly women, to obtain equal opportunities and benefits

cent compared to 2021, reaching US \$4.3 bn. The Ca Mau province is the second largest area in the Mekong Delta for shrimp-rice farming (after Kien Giang) with 40,000 hectares in 2020. Shrimp farming production here reached 145,000 tonnes in 2017, accounting for 29 per cent of the total production of the Mekong Delta and 22 per cent of the total national production. In recent years, however, climate change and natural disasters like drought and saltwater intrusion in the dry season have hit the productivity of rice-shrimp farming, reducing income for millions of farmers.

The Centre for Marinelife Conservation and Community Development (MCD) is a non-state science and technology organization in Vietnam that is active in coastal

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Shrimp harvesting in Tri Luc Commune, Ca Mau Province, Vietnam. In Ca Mau, the shrimp-rice model dominates farming activities because of its high economic efficiency

when farmers finish soil preparation and salt washing on the surface of the rice paddies. In this model, small-scale farmers use fresh water from the rainy season for growing rice. After, farmers start raising black tiger shrimp using brackish water in the dry season. The black tiger shrimp is fed on the food source in the rice fields. By minimizing the utilization of inorganic fertilizers and pesticides, this model produces safe products of high quality. It also meets the goal of the Tri Luc commune's agricultural and aquaculture sectors to develop sustainable and organic products.

The shrimp-mangrove model also benefits from the nutrients provided by the leaves of trees in the mangrove canopy, a food source for shrimp. Shrimp farming takes place continuously throughout the year, and the shrimp are harvested as per the production cycle. One advantage of this model is that the forest canopy provides significant pond coverage, helping minimize the impact of unpredictable

weather on the shrimp's living environment. It also helps regulate and limit fluctuations in salinity and temperature, ensuring more stable conditions for shrimp farming.

The international standards consist of several requirements, such as those of the US (USDA organic), Europe (organic aquaculture) and the Aquaculture Stewardship Council (ASC), as well as technical procedures for rice and shrimp farming. Organic practices for rice and shrimp production areas are encouraged, in accordance with the organic agricultural production development planning of Ca Mau province (2021-2025), to adapt with climate change and ensure market demand.

The implementation of these models has provided small-scale producers with opportunities to enhance income through diversification. Taking advantage of natural conditions while ensuring ecological balance and sustainability in resource use, they were mitigating impacts from

...the shrimp-mangrove model is an effective response to climate change. Mangroves are well known for their carbon storage capabilities

abnormal physical conditions as in the case of drought or saltwater intrusion, especially in Thoi Binh district of Ca Mau. This area is heavily affected by climate change. In addition, the presence of natural food sources in shrimp ponds reduces the farming workload. This, in turn, facilitates women's economic empowerment and their increased participation in the family's economic activities.

Both the shrimp-rice and shrimp-mangrove models contribute notably to the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions from agriculture. A study conducted by the Vietnam Institute of Agricultural Environment shows that in the rice-shrimp model, CO₂ emissions from shrimp ponds account for about 4,585 kg, whereas the emissions from two rice crops in the field exceed 12,160 kg. This demonstrates a significant reduction in emissions through shrimp

and average black tiger shrimp yield was 341 kg/ha. The ASC-certified area was expected to exceed an estimated 1,200 hectares by the end of 2023. Due to the peculiarities of shrimp farming, the proportion of women participating in shrimp farming is a low 30 per cent. However, women have been mobilized to participate in this model and receive equal opportunities to access technical training and capacity building. MCD, OXFAM and local partners studied the economic, environmental and social benefits of the model. They investigated both the effects of training/guidance on gender mainstreaming in sustainable livelihood development and on sustainable production practices meeting international standards.

The project also organized policy consultation workshops at provincial and Mekong Delta levels to share research results. It was also meant to review and update the sustainable aquaculture development plans. In collaboration with the Sub-Department of Fisheries and OXFAM, MCD has taken the initiative to publish a comprehensive technical document titled 'Guidelines for Sustainable Organic Rice Production and Shrimp Farming for Community Application'. This document aims to provide valuable support to individuals in adopting the proposed models.

It promotes the practice of organic agriculture in order to reduce environmental impacts and ecosystem degradation; all the while, it enhances farmer resilience to the effects of climate change. The GRAISEA project provides technical training, capacity building and experiences on shrimp-rice and shrimp-mangrove models for co-operatives and local producer groups. It contributes to the development of organic shrimp farms according to international standards for climate-change adaptation with gender mainstreaming.

Co-operatives/local producer groups have been supported and promoted to develop sustainable shrimp-rice and shrimp-mangrove production practices. They also receive training to improve technical skills in farming, in accordance with the requirements of international

production. Moreover, the shrimp-mangrove model is an effective response to climate change. Mangroves are well known for their carbon storage capabilities. They help mitigate CO₂ emissions.

MCD and its partners have implemented capacity-building efforts to address climate change impacts for local producer groups and individuals in Ca Mau. By 2023, a total of 1,073 participants from the communes of Tri Luc and Dat Mui have engaged in the shrimp-rice and shrimp-mangrove models; 812 were men and 261 women. The project has collaborated with the Minh Phu Social Enterprise to connect shrimp farming areas based on certification standards; this provided technical guidelines to improve production practices.

Up to 252 households participating in the shrimp-rice model had received the ASC standards certification by October 2022, covering 565 hectares. Their average rice yield was 5,518 kg/ha



Tri Luc Rice Shrimp Cooperative Group, Vietnam. Co-operatives have been supported and promoted to develop sustainable shrimp-rice production practices

standards. The project helps connect shrimp farmers with associated enterprises in the value chain to ensure consistency in the quality of products produced to meet the strict standards of many markets. Contracts and comprehensive business models between co-operatives/local producer groups and small- and medium-sized enterprises are promoted, along with support in product marketing and expansion of consumption markets.

The project provides farming households with standard rice-shrimp farming techniques. It promotes linkages in collective production activities to comply with standards. Ten local producer groups were established in the Tri Luc commune, where members started raising shrimp to ASC standards. The project also supports the establishment of a rice-shrimp club for households to share experiences and learn from each other.

Farming households in the co-operative also have the opportunity to participate in field trips to learn from

successful models in other provinces and cities, such as the Hoi Quan model in Dong Thap and the Agro-Ecological Village Model in Son La. The project held many communication activities with the participation of co-operatives/local producer groups and local communities, such as a competition to follow ASC standards in farming activities.

The project supports agreements with management agencies and businesses to establish and expand groups of shrimp farmers applying ASC standards in Tri Luc and Dat Mui. This helps spread the success of the model and scale it up for other communes/localities with similar natural conditions. GRAISEA co-ordinates with businesses to support people in evaluating and improving shrimp farming practices according to ASC standards. In addition, through the establishment of the Vietnam Sustainable and Clean Shrimp Alliance (VSSA), MCD is promoting and connecting actors and stakeholders in the value chain.

Organic waste

Shrimp farmers have stopped using probiotics and have shifted to using rice straw or mangrove trunks as natural food for shrimp. They also use organic waste products and by-products such as rice bran to grow mushrooms and vegetables to improve their incomes. Members of co-operatives and local producer groups have started keeping farm dairies, cleaning shrimp ponds, and planting trees and flowers along the village roads surrounding the farms. The project trained both men and women to help improve governance capacity for co-operatives/local producer groups, for small producers and shrimp farmers. The training included mapping markets and value chain analysis, as also business model planning to adapt to climate change.

Thanks to such efforts, the black tiger shrimp-rice method has been recognized as a typical model of climate change adaptation in Ca Mau. At the Workshop on promoting

group participated in the training courses on gender mainstreaming and economic empowerment, as also the Gender Action and Learning System (GALS). Study tours enhanced women's participation and capacity in leadership roles. Hoang Yen rice produced from the rice-shrimp model is the product of the women's livelihood group at Tri Luc, trained in planning and implementing business plans, in branding and product packaging. Livelihood initiatives not only generate additional income but also empower women, enhancing their self-determination and confidence in household and community activities. The project co-operated with the Commune Women's Union to organize cooking contests using local products.

Van Ngoc Dieu, a member of the Tri Luc Co-operative, is a typical case of comprehensive transformation in behaviour. From a woman who shied from participating in community activities, Dieu has now become confident and proactive. She actively participates and co-ordinates group business activities. She has encouraged other women in the group to affirm their voices and position in the family.

Truong Thi Kieu Diem, a co-operative member, has become more confident after participating in capacity building. With her new-found experience and knowledge, she has led her family's transition to shrimp-rice farming. Currently each hectare of rice and shrimp generates an annual income of more than 100 million Vietnamese Dong (VND), equal to about US \$4100 for her family. Before the initiative, women rarely participated in the cooperative. After the project, they have begun to boldly express their opinions. The project has significantly changed labour relations and divisions, increasing gender participation in both production and livelihood activities.

The risks from climate change are becoming increasingly apparent in Ca Mau. In 2020, the sowing time for rice was delayed and the crop was affected by high soil salinity; the productivity declined by 20 per cent. The adverse weather then hit the next shrimp stocking season, affecting shrimp quality. High salinity retards shrimp growth, decreasing productivity.

The project has significantly changed labour relations and divisions, increasing gender participation in both production and livelihood activities

the rice shrimp model and business linkages in the Mekong Delta, held in Bac Lieu in March 2023, the model was proposed as typical for the Mekong Delta and presented to the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development by the Institute of Policy and Strategy for Rural Development. Due to its high adaptability to the environment, in line with the increasingly obvious changes in weather patterns in the Mekong Delta, and considering the cyclical nature of farming, the black tiger shrimp-rice model has also been included in the sustainable agricultural development plan, the organic agricultural production development plan for the period 2020-2023, and the aquaculture plan for 2021-2030 of Ca Mau.

Along with other production groups participating in the project, the Tri Luc Co-operative and its women's livelihood



Van Ngoc Dieu and her husband are working on a rice-shrimp farm, Vietnam. Productivity challenges make it necessary that individual farmers join co-operatives or local producer groups, gaining from unified production processes

Unified processes

Productivity challenges make it necessary that individual farmers join co-operatives or local producer groups, gaining from unified production processes. They receive training and awareness on farming activities and regulations. The effects of climate change include shifts in water flow and weather patterns, making farmed shrimp more susceptible to diseases. To solve this problem, it is necessary to maintain the model of sustainable shrimp-rice production and scale it up. Farming areas need a long-term strategy and plan to become certified organic areas. Aquaculture that meets international standards not only ensures sustainable output and livelihoods for farming households, it also constitutes a form of adaptation to climate change.

Stakeholders in the production chain need to work together to overcome unpredictable weather by stabilizing product values, organizing the on-site and on-demand procurement

guaranteed by the affiliated company. Since farming households here are still small, it is necessary to improve the management capacity of the co-operatives and strengthen the links between groups and enterprises.

The model of shrimp-rice and shrimp-mangrove farming in Ca Mau offers economic potential in the face of climate change. In order to develop and scale up the results achieved in Tri Luc and Dat Mui communes, MCD hopes to co-ordinate with stakeholders to supplement and update the impact/risk assessment and integrate it in adaptive interventions. Documenting of results and communication of good examples should be promoted for both climate change adaptation and positive spillover effects for producers, especially women. The support and unification of the overall development plan and strategy for the above models at the provincial level, especially within the irrigation and infrastructure network, is extremely important in adapting to climate change. 📌

For more



Gender Transformative and Responsible Agribusiness Investments in Southeast Asia (GRAISEA)

<https://graisea.github.io/>

Centre for Marinelife Conservation and Community Development (MCD)

<https://mcdvietnam.org/en/>

Sustainability of the rice-shrimp farming system in Mekong Delta, Vietnam: a climate adaptive model

<https://www.emerald.com/insight/content/doi/10.1108/JED-08-2019-0027/full/pdf?title=sustainability-of-the-rice-shrimp-farming-system-in-mekong-delta-vietnam-a-climate-adaptive-model>

Old Values, New Challenges

Associations of fisheries co-operatives have a great past in protecting and supporting Japan's fishers and fishing communities. They are now preparing for the future

Every corner along Japan's long coast has a fishing port. Where there are fishing ports, there are fishing communities working diverse small-scale and coastal fisheries daily. Its beautiful coastal landscape is Japan's identity. It is no exaggeration to say that the Fisheries Co-operative Association (FCA) system has supported such an essential coastal landscape, traditions and culture throughout its long history.

Yet Japanese fisheries are now undergoing significant change in the marine, environmental, socio-economic and policy spaces. What is the FCA's status in the face of such enormous changes? What should be their role in the future of fisheries sustainability?

and conservation activities for children such as beach clean-ups and tree planting. The FCAs now fulfil additional roles of regional revitalization, ecological conservation and environmental education. They form the basis for community-based management. Their organizational structure is clear, represented by various subordinate organizations and committees, regulations, agreements and decision-making mechanisms. As a result, intra-organizational conflicts are minimal. There is also an equitable sharing of profits and costs through pooling mechanisms and competent leadership.

A triple whammy

The incomes of fishing households is adversely affected by three important factors: one, decline in fish catch; two, low fish prices; and, three, rising costs due to high oil prices. When these three occur at the same time, it becomes a triple whammy for fishers. According to the Fisheries Agency, Japan's fisheries and aquaculture production peaked in 1984 at 12.82 million tonnes, declining to 4.37 million tonnes in 2016. Fishing households have suffered falling incomes; average income fell from ¥2.51 million in 2020 to ¥1.77 million in 2022.

Other problems are becoming apparent, too, such as a lack of successors in the family and an ageing population of fishers. The decline in the number of fishers is tangible: from 238,000 in 2003 to 153,000 in 2017. The proportion of fishers aged 65 or above has risen from 30 per cent to 40 per cent in the same period, according to the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries.

Under such circumstances, FCAs continue to merge, downsize and reorganize. The data on the number of

...Japanese fisheries are now undergoing significant change in the marine, environmental, socioeconomic and policy spaces

An institution of long standing

It is impossible to talk about the Japanese fisheries, it is well known, without mentioning the FCA system. It is essential to the nation's fisheries, managing fishery rights and resources. An FCA comprises fishers and is meant to support them on the basis of the Fisheries Co-operative Law. It guides them, coordinating the use of fishing grounds and the processing and sale of catch by its members. In many cases, FCAs operate direct-sales stores selling fresh fish and processed products from the local landing areas.

In recent years, the FCAs have engaged in environmental education

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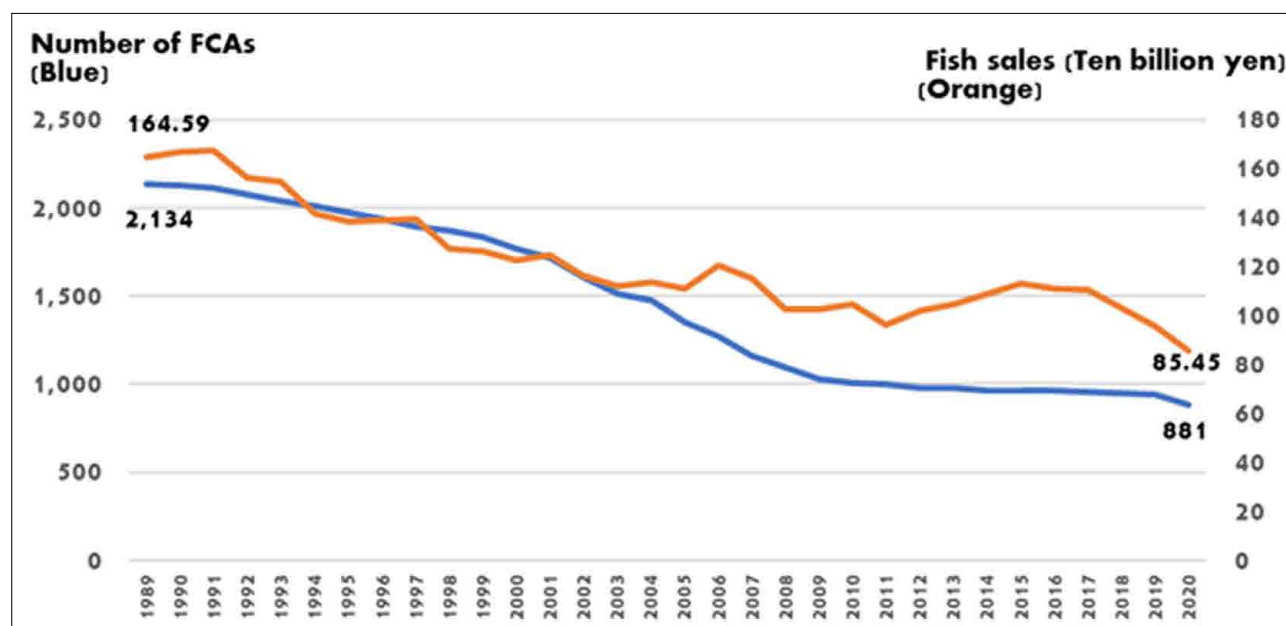


Figure 1 Trends in the numbers of the FCAs and its sales handling amount (1989-2020)

Source: from Fisheries Agency. (Accessed October 2023)

https://www.jfa.maff.go.jp/j/kikaku/wpaper/r03_h/sankou/sankou_4_4.html

coastal FCAs and the fish sales at their markets from 1989 to 2020 reveal a sobering picture (see Figure 1). Both have decreased significantly. FCAs have fallen in number from 2,134 in 1989 to 881 in 2020; fish sales have almost halved from ¥16.459 billion in 1989 to ¥8.545 billion in 2020. The primary source of income for FCAs is commission on fish sales. Such a decline in sales has significantly impacted their operations.

It has reached the point where FCAs now seem to hinder the development of fishers. For example, the associations prevent fishers from developing their sales channels outside the FCA network. Many fishers have begun to regard FCAs as a problem.

Seicho-sangyoka and new challenges

In response to the decline in the fishing industry, the Japanese Fishery Act was legislated in 2018 and enforced in 2020. It was the first major reform of the sector in 70 years. The main goals of the revision was *seicho-sangyoka* (growth-industrialization) and resource management. Heated discussions ensued about the pros and cons of the revised law that puts an end to priority in granting fishery rights and eases the entry of private capital into the fishing industry. Plans

are afoot to broaden the total allowable catch (TAC) system into small-scale and coastal fisheries.

While the original Act from 1949 had put much emphasis on democratization of fisheries and comprehensive and advanced use of fishing grounds, the new law focuses more on resource management and fishery efficiency. It remains to be seen how Japan will secure sustainability in fisheries in the era of big change.

Because of the lack of sufficient discussion and communication between fishers and government authorities, it is unknown how many and what types of justice issues will small-scale fisheries face under the new law. From the Blue Justice perspective, there are many aspects of small-scale fisheries that need to be considered before realizing *seicho-sangyoka*.

The revised law leaves unresolved several issues relating to fishers' rights, social justice and maintenance of fishing communities. It is crucial to adopt the Blue Justice lens, which calls for a critical examination of how small-scale fisheries and their communities may be affected by ocean development initiatives, such as those promoted under the Blue Economy and Blue Growth agendas.

YINJI LI



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Shirasu fish landing for the community festival, Mochimune fishing port, Shizuoka Prefecture, Japan. Yet Japanese fisheries are now undergoing significant change in the marine, environmental, socio-economic and policy spaces

For more

Unlocking legal and policy frameworks for small-scale fisheries in Japan

<http://toobigtoignore.net/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Japan.pdf>

In the Era of Big Change: Essays about Japanese Small-Scale Fisheries

https://tbtiglobal.net/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/In-the-Era-of-Big-Change-ebook_Final_small.pdf

Adopting a Blue Justice Lens for Japanese Small-Scale Fisheries: Important Insights from the Case of the Inatori Kinme Fishery

<https://www.springerprofessional.de/en/adopting-a-blue-justice-lens-for-japanese-small-scale-fisheries-/20198634>

Significant role

In such circumstances, FCAs should play a more significant role than ever before. The question is: Can they do so amidst the existing difficulties?

In keeping with the spirit of the times

A general term for a series of economic activities carried out by the community, *Umigyo*, is gaining momentum in Japan, drawing great support from national and local governments. *Umigyo* centres on the fishers' response to the diverse needs of marine and coastal community resources. Its primary purpose is to increase the fishing households' income and widen its base by boosting non-fishing income. This it aims to do by utilizing all the resources in the fishing communities, such as fish restaurants, direct-sales stores, fishing boat cruises, recreational fishing, and environmental education. As a refrain goes, "Protecting life above water leads

to life below water". *Umigyo* emphasizes the 'who' part, that is, the community. It aims to enhance the viability of fishing households through a complementary any synergistic relationship.

Umigyo recognizes the nature of FCAs as social enterprises closely tied to the community. That the associations are more accessible for business than individual fishing households. FCAs display a spirit of mutual help that connects, manages, reunites and creates a value of shared community resources. Separately, it will leave the fishing communities scattered and unorganized. *Umigyo* is embedded in the future of FCAs, in supporting fishers and fishing communities, in protecting their rights and livelihoods. While the conditions are changing, the FCAs values and social role remains unchanged. 3

“We are artisanal fishers, not criminals”

The small-scale fishers of a famous beach in Peru defend the ecosystem and its biodiversity through responsible and sustainable selective fishing

I am a small-scale fisherman working the beach of Bujama Baja. It lies in Mala district of the Cañete province in Peru’s Lima department. I have been plying my trade for 34 years, fully engaged in the only livelihood I was given by God: the sea. I am registered with the authorities under the number CO-15443290-BM. To friends and family, I am just Alejandro Bravo Avalos.

The Bujama Baja beach has been a fishing ground for a very long time; local fisherfolk live in small huts here. At some point, people from the capital began building summer houses on the beach, alienating and displacing the local population. The newcomers tried to intimidate and displace us with their economic and political power in the 1990s. The illiterate, powerless locals—our grandparents—felt this was an abuse of power. They insisted on educating us. Many local residents supported us.

In recent years, we created the Asociación Gremio de Pescadores Artesanales (Artisanal Fisher’s Association Guild) of San Pedro de Bujama Baja, registered in Mala. It continues the legacy of the local maritime workers’ organization created in the 1930s. We represent a new generation of fishers resisting widespread abuse of power in order to maintain our presence in all types of fishery operations. Through a continuous dialogue, we have managed to reach a long-term agreement with the owners of second homes in the area.

Sometimes I take part in deep-sea fishing, targeting dolphinfish, squid, giant squid, marlin, swordfish, sharks, skates or flying fish. The season for deep-sea fishing opens in September-October to close in June-July, when

strong winds force most of the artisanal fleet to stay in the harbour. This is the time for boat maintenance; we fix and paint our vessels to keep them operational. Coastal fishing in sand or rocky areas continues round the year at low tide, when sea currents and winds are weaker. We use sand crabs for bait; their population has declined considerably. In the rest of the country, anchoveta is the most common bait. Industrial fisheries use their power to pressure on the government ministries,

We represent a new generation of fishers resisting widespread abuse of power in order to maintain our presence in all types of fishery operations

insisting on permits to fish even the smallest fish. This predatory practice should not be permitted. But industrial fishers continue ruthlessly, without any fear or shame.

Sense and sustainability

When Raul Perez Reyes Espejo was the minister of production, we were part of a working group created to consolidate all our fishing activities. We hope to resume the working group with the incumbent minister, Ana Maria Choquehuanca. We wish to stop fishing inspectors from penalizing our fishing operations and confiscating our catches during transport towards the fishing terminals in Lima and Callao. This worsens the declining catches because of extreme weather in the form of winds, currents and tides, increasing in

This article is by Alejandro Bravo Avalos (nanobravo02@gmail.com), a small-scale fisherman from Bujama Baja Beach of Mala district in the Cañete province of Lima, Peru

frequency. We also struggle against the competition from rogue fishers from other harbours; their illegal fishing practices continue in the absence of law enforcement from harbour authorities and ministry officials.

Industrial fishing vessels are never inspected, disciplined, sanctioned or fined. Industrial fleets deplete anchoveta stocks when they catch undersized fish. They deplete stocks of other species, too, such as tuna, horse mackerel, mackerel, sea bass and comber, besides marine birds, mammals and other aquatic resources. Yet a presidential decree protects their predatory practices. Anchoveta is the basis of the food chain, the primary source of our livelihood. Even some industrial fishers have denounced this unsustainable situation, posting on social media pictures of seine nets completely full of small anchoveta.

Small-scale fisheries (SSF) are not that lucky. Our slightest fishing irregularity is penalized. If we do not

During the COVID-19 pandemic, we, small-scale fishers took the responsibility of feeding our people, even without any support or capacity-building by the State at the central, regional or local levels

pay the fine, our fishing gear is seized. Artisanal fishers are sent to prison, compelled to pay compensation to the State or forced to report to the Public Prosecutor Office once every month. I wish everyone in Peru and in the whole world knows that our woes start when an ignorant inspector reports that a small-scale fisher or vessel owner is obstructing justice. They force the fisher to sign their sentences without actually reading them. This indignity leaves us feeling terrible. We are simply artisanal fishermen. We are not criminals.

The Ministers often, end up defending industrial fishing as best they can, following a jargon-filled script. They pay lip service to “empowering small-scale fishers”, but never try to implement any empowerment programme. In practice,

as soon as a minister shows a favourable disposition to our plea, he is swiftly fired and cast aside.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, we, small-scale fishers took the responsibility of feeding our people, even without any support or capacity-building by the State at the central, regional or local levels. Faced with the threat of starvation for our children, women and elderly, we undertook the risky and heroic task of providing sustenance for the national population, providing special care for pregnant women, children and elderly people at affordable prices. Falling back on ancestral traditional knowledge, we prepared medicinal drinks with ginger, onion, eucalyptus, rosemary, thyme or lemon, as well as fish-based foods using tuna, mackerel, horse mackerel or anchoveta. We also resorted to social distancing, even before the authorities propagated it.

COVID-19 was an invisible enemy. It made us look hard at the central government; we realized it was incapable of dealing with the situation. We were horrified by the profiteering at the time of a grave crisis—the rising of prices; the misuse of important resources in disregard of the suffering masses; the diversion of funds to keep afloat certain companies that had declared bankruptcy; the sight of pharmacies and hospitals making big profits at the cost of our own lives. The COVID-19 pandemic exposed the inefficiency and total incompetence all around.

Fish barter

The SSF organizations in our country were most affected because their members lack harbour or landing facilities. We were cruelly left to our own devices and told to stay at home, with markets and restaurants closed and no customers to buy our produce. When we managed to get out and catch some fish to feed our families. Taking good care avoid the army’s scrutiny, we took the opportunity to barter fish for other essential products like sweet potato, manioc, potato, noodles, oil or sugar. We adapted. Now we claim recognition for our heroic service, for risking our lives to feed the country.

JESÚS MIGUEL BRAVO ROLDÁN



Guitar Fish caught by members of the San Pedro de Bujama Baja - Mala Artisanal Fishermen's Guild Association, Peru. We represent a new generation of fishers resisting widespread abuse of power in order to maintain our presence in all types of fishery operations

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What we get, instead, is the indifference of public authorities.

The government poured millions into the Reactiva Peru initiative, giving non-refundable grants to big companies that then hurried to declare bankruptcy. It also offered loans of 2,000 nuevos soles (US \$520), through the National Fund for Fisheries Development (FONDEPES), but that only reached 10 per cent of the fishers. Small grants of 500 nuevos soles (US \$130) reached a little more than 40,000 small-scale fishers and other disadvantaged groups. At the end of the day, most of us fisherfolk did not receive any help at all.

In the past we have had to fight other disasters. For example, chicken production companies ran campaigns claiming that diseases like cholera came from fish. Then, we stopped fishing but the cholera outbreak went on,

even worsened. Our traditional fishing techniques are highly selective. Consider the case of capturing grunt; when we started, nobody wanted to buy this fish. With the little proceeds obtained from selling at low prices, we were able to trade with our farmers, and bring home a healthy diet for our families.

In times of economic hardship in every corner of the world, small-scale fishers have always absorbed shocks. We are aware that economic flows must never stop. But governments should also be aware that it is not fair to let a handful of families own all the resources included in the 200-mile maritime zone. Or even give them permission to enter and fish within the 5-mile zone, regardless of the danger of getting stuck in shallow waters, using seine nets to catch anchoveta and other species.


The dire forecasts of global hunger by 2030 is already being felt among our communities. Our pockets are empty, our plates are empty

They are destroying ecosystems, reducing biodiversity, and sowing the seeds of famine and devastation in our communities in the southern part of the country. We are ready to sacrifice our lives to defend the five-mile coastal zone as breeding grounds and a source of food for local communities. The dire forecasts of global hunger by 2030 is already being felt among our communities. Our pockets are empty, our plates are empty. Our families lack the bare essentials needed for a basic livelihood.

Currently, we are also facing the attempts of the National Fishery Association to lobby the minister of production to reduce the minimum permitted size for the capture of anchoveta. We find this unacceptable. We will not tolerate regulations that

stakeholders in SSF to find solutions, to promote sustainable fisheries production and consumption. Launched in 2022 by the Artisanal Fishers Association Guild of San Pedro de Bujama, of which I am a member and representative, it includes SSF representatives, famous chefs from restaurants such as La Mar, Maido, Shizen and Piscis, and other stakeholders from the seafood value chain. It draws support from an advisory group led by the Future of Fish, along with NGOs such as WWF, SPDA, and public institutions and networks like Produce and SERNANP (National programme for the Promotion of Seafood).

Recently, the group approved the 'Criteria for Responsible Fishing and Consumption'. It is now preparing its rules of procedure, as well as a capacity-building plan for members and candidates. The guild is also running pilot projects to develop direct sales to restaurant members of the Good Fishing initiative, hoping to make them operational by February 2024. We hope these pilot projects will bring our fishers better income. We also aim at increasing consumer awareness about how and where the fish is caught, by whom, and the freshness of the product—all the information consumers need to learn about responsible production and consumption.

These pilot projects include capacity building on business development, product quality and other associated matters, in order to make sure the product supplied is legal, selective and safe. We will keep defending responsible production and consumption of seafood in Peru, working together with restaurants and other stakeholders of our value chain who share the same principle: responsible fishing for the sake of future generations. 

perpetuate predatory practices, spelling disaster for the artisanal fishers of our country. Besides, the ocean is not a rubbish dump. We must bring back to land all the rubbish we generate on board our fishing vessels, as well as collect any waste we happen to find at sea. Let us protect the sea, not just in Peru but all over the world, as it is our main source of life and livelihood.

Stewardship, common sense

We small-scale fishers respect reproductive and fishing closures, in the face of the changes in ecosystems and biodiversity generated by climate change. We follow the development of the El Niño phenomenon along the coast of Ecuador: if this were to happen closer to our coastline, hunger and devastation would be inevitable. We have always defended—and will always defend—the ecosystem and its biodiversity by practising healthy, sustainable fisheries.

Consider the 'Good Fishing' initiative, a call to action for all

For more

Peru's Small-Scale Fishers

<https://www.perc.org/2017/02/10/perus-small-scale-fishers/>

Growing Into Poverty: Reconstructing Peruvian Small-Scale Fishing Effort Between 1950 and 2018

<https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fmars.2020.00681/full>

Peru's Artisanal fishermen and entrepreneurs seek to build new sustainable business models

<https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/feature/2022/06/08/pescadores-artesanales-emprendedoras-y-emprendedores-buscan-construir-nuevos-modelos-de-negocios-sostenibles>

Seeking Refuge

Only proper implementation of Peru's General Fisheries Law will reduce fishing pressure in coastal waters. It will also protect the resources and provide fishers better income and food security

The Humboldt Current drives northwards along Peru's Pacific coast. The upwelling it generates in the tropical waters of the country's northern shores has immense value for fisheries. Its vast relevance is not new to this publication; a previous article dwelt on the extraordinary diversity of fishing techniques, especially in coastal waters, to tap the bounty of this current (see *SAMUDRA Report* No.77, September 2017).

The number of fishing boats has risen constantly over the past decades. More recently, Peru has witnessed a significant increase in distant-water artisanal fleets targeting mahi mahi or giant squid. There has been a concomitant increase in fishing pressure in the area within five nautical miles off the coast, with the presence of purse-seiners using mechanical devices to haul the nets. The five-mile strip has been protected since 1992, with specific exclusion of any type of purse-seines. Since 1995 only industrial fleets have been excluded. But there has been a presence of industrial fishing boats within the five-mile zone on at least three occasions, the last being in 2011, off the southern parts of the country.

In 2017 all the fishing boats (purse-seiners) registered to catch anchoveta for human consumption were excluded from the three-mile fishing zone. This ban, however, has never been fully enforced. In the tropical waters around Tumbes in northern Peru, purse-seiners and trawlers have been excluded from the five-mile zone for more than 10 years. Trawling is only permitted in the tropical and transitional fishing areas.

Old law, new features

In May 2022 Peru's National Congress passed a law with three main elements.

One, it acknowledged traditional fishing activities as deserving of specifically-targeted policies. Two, it amended two key articles of the country's General Fisheries Law to add a new category of fishing fleet, namely, small-scale, to the existing two categories of industrial and artisanal; the law excluded access to the five-mile fishing zone to industrial vessels and mechanized purse-seiners that were previously unrestricted have been restricted from the three-mile zone. Three, it calls for transparency and stricter norms in fishing regulation.

The new law states that the Ministry of Production is responsible for regulating fishing. It establishes a series of tasks to enforce the full protection of the five-mile area, But the ultimate deadline for its implementation expired in August 2023.

There has been a concomitant increase in fishing pressure in the area within five nautical miles of the coast, with the presence of purse-seiners using mechanical devices to haul the nets

From the moment the law was passed, purse-seine owners strongly resisted their exclusion from the three-mile zone. They found support from some parliamentarians and even from some artisanal fisher organizations that put their private interests before resource conservation and ecosystem protection.

The co-ordination body of small-scale fisheries organizations responded to this campaign. It demanded publication of the implementing regulation and explained to the Congress that the law, published

This article is by Juan Carlos Sueiro (jcsueiro@oceana.org), Fisheries Director, Oceana, Peru

ALEX PROIMOS



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The boats of Ancon, a district of northern Lima Province in Peru. From the moment the law was passed, purse-seine owners strongly resisted their exclusion from the three-mile zone

six months ago, is yet to be fully implemented. Furthermore, the organizations of small-scale sustainable fisheries from Huaura and Huaral provinces have sued the ministry for the lack of enforcement.

It is imperative that the implementing regulation is aligned with the law's objectives, enabling a better arrangement of activities in coastal waters that comprise a refuge for many fish species to breed and protect their juveniles. This is the first step towards a reduction of fishing pressure in coastal waters and, in the long run, towards resource protection. In the long run, it will bring small-scale fishers a better income, not to mention food security for the country. 3

For more

Against the Current

https://www.icsf.net/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/4306_art_Sam77_e_art03.pdf

Peru moves to strengthen fisheries protection in the 5-nautical mile zone through amended law

<https://www.icsf.net/newss/samudra-exclusive-peru-moves-to-strengthen-fisheries-protection-in-the-5-nautical-mile-zone-through-amended-law/>

Peru passes new law to protect its oceans thanks to artisanal fishers

<https://oceana.org/blog/ceo-note-peru-passes-new-law-to-protect-its-oceans-thanks-to-artisanal-fishers/>

Undoing a Great Wrong

Small-scale fishing communities in Chile are up in arms against the imposition of a new fisheries law and the neoliberal paradigm

Chile stretches along the southeast rim of the Pacific Ocean. The seas off South America's southwestern coast are one of the five most productive and biodiverse marine areas on Earth. After 50 years of applying an orthodox neoliberal economic model, fishing and aquaculture comprise the second largest sector of the Chilean export economy, with an annual production of 3.4 million tonnes, valued at US \$8.5 billion.

Chile ranks 12th among the world's largest landers of fish, crustaceans, molluscs and marine invertebrates. It is also the world's second largest producer of fishmeal, the fifth largest exporter of seaweed for human consumption, the leading exporter of mussels (bivalve molluscs), and the second largest producer of industrially farmed Atlantic salmon (*Salmo salar*).

A decade of corruption

Both the civil and military dictatorship of 1973-1990 and subsequent civilian governments made several attempts to privatize Chile's valuable fisheries. They failed due to the resistance of citizens' organizations and coastal communities. However, the imposition of the neoliberal fishing export model succeeded through a corrupt parliamentary negotiation between the then minister of the economy, government officials, politicians and some artisanal fishing leaders, who privatized Chilean fisheries through the enactment of a law in January 2013.

This flawed legislation handed over the ownership of fisheries for free—and in perpetuity—to seven Chilean business clans and transnational companies. It eliminated the State as the assigner of property rights, as well as the access and use of the country's fisheries resources. That capacity was transferred to the market through a system of fishing licences and individual

transferable quotas (ITQs), which are legally bankable and tradable.

This authoritarian restructuring of the fishing sector allowed the neoliberal civilian governments of the last decade to implement their technocratic and modernizing agendas. In turn, this opened extensive coastal territories and their valuable biodiversity to investment flows from the implementation of various agreements, including free trade agreements, consolidating Chile's role as one of the main exporters of marine protein to global markets.

This flawed legislation handed over the ownership of fisheries for free—and in perpetuity—to seven Chilean business clans and transnational companies

New power relations, speculation

The new law eliminated indigenous communities and small-scale fishers who were not boatowners as "legal subjects" with rights to access and use Chile's marine resources. Only 10 per cent of the total fishing quotas were allocated to 12,901 boat owners, called 'artisanal shipowners', who constituted 13 per cent of the total number of artisanal fishers officially registered.

The heterogeneous fleet of vessels classified as artisanal includes the so-called lanchas that are 12-18 metres long overall and have up to 80 cubic metres of hold capacity. These semi-industrial vessels represent 72 per cent of artisanal fishing landings; they are used by fishers who do not own boats.

With the creation of an active market for the purchase, sale, lease, mortgage and even inheritance of fishing licences and ITQs, the

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Artisanal fishermen in a cove in Puerto Montt, Chile. The new law eliminated indigenous communities and small-scale fishers who were not boatowners as "legal subjects" with rights to access and use Chile's marine resources

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'speculative phase' in Chilean fisheries began. It has facilitated the processes of company mergers and economic concentration. While nine large industrial companies control 18 of the 21 main Chilean fisheries, banks and the financial system have increasingly become owners of fishing licences and quotas, as well as aquaculture concessions. A section of 'artisanal shipowners' has emerged as rentiers, through the leasing of their annual fishing quotas.

Environmental impacts

Neoliberal policies mean that about 70 per cent of fish catches are destined for export, while the majority of pelagic fish catches and some bottom-fish species are transformed into fishmeal and fish oil, destined as raw material for the animal production and pet food industry.

The application of this extractive export model, together with weak governmental control, has had a destructive impact. Up to 57 per cent of

Chilean fisheries are in a state of over-exploitation and collapse, while illegal fishing volumes exceed legal catches by 300 per cent.

The increase in exports of marine products has been detrimental to the consumption of marine protein by the Chilean population, the annual average of which is only 11.7 kg of fish per person. It is below the per capita global annual average of 20.4 kg, according to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO).

This is despite 15.6 per cent of Chile's citizens suffering from moderate food insecurity and 3.8 per cent from severe food insecurity, according to 2023 COFI/FAO's State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World.

The transformation of small-scale fisheries

There are 467 coastal communities called caletas along the 4,200 km of coastline and 30,000 km of protected coastline in which live and work 101,245 artisanal fishers. Their production is

equivalent to 32.7 per cent of Chile's fishery and aquaculture production.

These small-scale fishing communities are facing a deep reconfiguration of their living and working spaces. Pressured by the ageing of their male labour force, they bear various impacts from climate change, marine pollution, over-exploitation of fisheries and a growing occupation of coastal territories by mining, aquaculture, port, energy, real estate, tourism and industrial shipping projects. In terms of production, Chilean artisanal fishing has been reorienting the destination of its catches, becoming a growing supplier of raw materials for industrial fishing companies and export processing plants, while coastal communities are turning to marine farming, services or tourism.

Two revitalizing dynamics have emerged in the middle of all this. The number of women in the Chile's artisanal fishing sector increased from 22,063 in 2019 to 25,181 people in 2022, showing great dynamism and greater adaptability to new scenarios. There are currently 25,181 women (24 per cent of all artisanal fishers) who are boatowners, fishers, divers, seaweed and mollusc gatherers, fish smokers, or working in the marine, farming, services and tourism sectors. In addition, there is a growing development of small-scale aquaculture activities linked to the production of macro-algae, molluscs and bivalves. There are currently 714 owners of 800 cultivation centres, whose production is destined for local markets or intermediaries.

A parliamentary annulment

In an unprecedented event in September 2022, the Maritime Interests and Aquaculture Commission of the Chamber of Deputies declared the new law on fishing and aquaculture "undeniably null and void". This decision was a response to a decade of sustained struggle by citizens' organizations and coastal communities, which had previously led to the conviction of parliamentarians for bribery.

After a year of meetings and negotiations with the industry and organizations of the artisanal sector, the government of Gabriel Boric announced that it will send to

Conditions of Democracy

The demands of the citizens' movement and Chilean coastal communities to recover their rights taken away by the corrupt 2013 law:

- * Restitution to the State of absolute, exclusive and imprescriptible dominion over the country's fishing patrimony, restoring its capacity to assign property rights, access and use of the country's marine resources and coastal areas;
- * Elimination of the IRQ system, wherein fisheries are only perceived as negotiable goods and property and for the exclusive benefits of investors and owners of licences, fishing quotas and aquaculture concessions;
- * Recognition that fisheries and coastal territories constitute a common patrimony that cannot be handed over as private property of an indefinite nature and tradeable legally;
- * Strategic valuation of small-scale fisheries and aquaculture in the implementation of public policies for food security, public health, poverty alleviation and regional coastal development;
- * Incorporation of a gender perspective in policies for strengthening artisanal fishing and small-scale aquaculture communities;
- * Increased consumption of high biological quality marine proteins by the Chilean people, weakened by five decades of neo-liberal export policies. This measure, under a public health approach, should be complemented with the reduction of the high volumes of pelagic species, and some demersal species, to produce fishmeal and fish oil for the transnational animal feed industry; and
- * Declaration of Chilean hake (*Merluccius gayi*), southern hake (*M. australis*), pilchard (*Strangomera bentincki*), anchovy (*Engraulis ringens*), golden kingclip (*Genypterus blacodes*) and squid (*Dosidicus gigas*) as fisheries exclusive for the artisanal sector.

parliament a draft of a new fishing law before the end of 2023. As a foretaste of the lobbying power of the salmon farming industry, the executive announced that the regulations for aquaculture will be discussed independently as an exclusive law for this productive exporting sector.

Coastal communities, small-scale fishers and citizens' organizations are on alert in the face of the possibility that the business sector controlling Chilean fishing and aquaculture, together with parliamentarians and high-level officials, may try to "make up" the text of the annulled law. They could achieve this through secondary changes or populist proposals, in order to maintain and consolidate the loss of the rights of indigenous communities and small-scale fishers through a privatizing logic in the new legislation.

For this reason it will be crucial to ensure a transparent parliamentary discussion, ensuring public oversight and the informed participation of the socio-environmental movement. The citizens' demands must remain front and centre to undo the historic wrong committed against small-scale fisheries of Chile (see box). 📌

For more

Panorama de la pesca artesanal

<https://www.subpesca.cl/portal/616/w3-article-645.html>

Chilled Out

https://www.icsf.net/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/4289_art_Sam76_e_art02.pdf

Nulidad ley de pesca: Comisión de Intereses Marítimos despachó la iniciativa a su par de Constitución

<https://www.senado.cl/nulidad-ley-de-pesca-comision-de-intereses-maritimos-despacho-la-mocion>

Coevolutionary decoupling in artisanal fisher communities: A temporal perspective from Chile

<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0921800922000854>

A Mere Mural on the Wall?

Christian Adams, a fisher leader, highlighted the experiences of small-scale fishers in South Africa facing large-scale challenges in the era of the Blue Economy. Edited excerpts

On the long struggle for legal recognition of the small-scale fisheries (SSF) sector

SSF includes indigenous, traditional and artisanal fishers. They were subjected to extensive criminalization in South Africa and have fought a long struggle for legal recognition. They were recognized for the first time only in 2007, when the Equality Court ordered the then minister of fisheries to develop a policy to ensure they get acknowledged in the Marine Living Resources Act of 1998.

The industrial sector in South Africa has had a close relationship with the fisheries authorities since the apartheid years. They have a co-management relationship and are involved in the scientific working groups that advise the minister on the quantum of fish, the total effort they are allocated as well as the areas they wish to fish in. In contrast, we in the SSF sector still do not have any co-management structures, nor are we involved in decision making. This despite a very progressive policy and getting legal recognition over 10 years ago. We have begged for co-management and for our local ecological knowledge to be included in decision-making processes.

The political will to implement the underlying principle of equity is still lacking. This results in a disjuncture between ground realities and our SSF policy that is based on the principles of human rights, equality and non-discrimination. I see the need to challenge these power imbalances, to shift the paradigm towards sustainable, human rights-based governance of fisheries. That is key to achieving successful implementation.

This requires pressure on those in power to demonstrate the political will to implement the 2007 court order. To recognize the importance of the SSF sector, that it deserves preferential access to fulfil its potential to contribute to food security and poverty alleviation. What will that take? Nothing short of an overhaul of the current general fisheries policy, equitable and preferential apportionment of resources to the SSF sector, as well as specific measures to provide the necessary co-operative governance and social development support. However, the small-scale directorate is under-resourced and does not have the requisite staff. This

I see the need to challenge these power imbalances, to shift the paradigm towards sustainable, human rights-based governance of fisheries

After a participatory process, we celebrated the gazetting of the Policy for Small-Scale Fisheries in 2012, amended to a statute in 2014. However, since then, progress to implement our visionary human rights-based policy, drafted in accordance with the SSF Guidelines, has been painfully slow.

On reforms in governance for equitable co-management

For the successful implementation of the SSF Guidelines and our Policy for SSF in South Africa, we really need a paradigm shift in the governance of fisheries. If we look historically at the position of SSF, both in South Africa and globally, it can be seen that the sector has been marginalized. The large industrial fisheries have been prioritized for access to marine resources, for access to ocean space as well as getting the bulk of the budget for the management of fisheries.

This interview with Christian Adams (cjadams1976@gmail.com), a long-standing leader and activist in the SSF sector in South Africa, and a founder member of the national fisher organization, The Collective, and the current Chairperson of the Steenberg's Cove Multi-Purpose Primary Small-scale Fisheries Co-operative Limited, was conducted by Jackie Sunde (jackiesunde25@gmail.com), a researcher with the One Ocean Hub Small-scale Fisheries Research Team at the University of Cape Town, South Africa



Mural fishers protest outside the Cape Town High Court, South Africa, February 2022. The political will to implement the underlying principle of equity is still lacking

results in a lack of co-ordination across various departments, red tape and unreasonable bureaucratic delays for fishers.

On the need for co-management

The current top-down paradigm allocates the lion's share of resources to the commercial sector, including the high-value species in the nearshore areas. This leaves the SSF sector with little more than crumbs. At the heart of this failure is the reluctance to respect the principle of co-management in the policy for SSF, as also the regulations and the devolution of power required. From the outset the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment (DFFE) have refused the fishers' request to implement a co-management approach. This, then, strengthens the top-down approach, with the department developing permit regulations and requirements that are inappropriate for the small-scale sector. It also means that the fisheries staff are not available in the rural areas where they are needed; the fishers are forced to travel to the large centres to get their permits and the licences to operate.

On safety at sea

The SSF sector is required to have their boats surveyed annually. Fishers need to ensure that they have up-to-date safety gear on board. In addition, they must have a radio licence. These requirements are onerous for small-scale fishers. However, they go to extreme lengths to get the necessary certification under a system managed

At the heart of this failure is the reluctance to respect the principle of co-management in the policy for SSF, as also the regulations and the devolution of power required

by a different authority, while the fisheries authorities say they have nothing to do with this system. South Africa has a shortage of adjudicators in the national radio licensing system; it is nearly impossible for fishers to get the necessary documentation. The allocation of an actual radio call site sign is managed by one national office inland, over 1,000 km away from the sea. Given the high prevalence of power outages in South Africa, it is extremely

JACKIE SUNDE



Fish cleaning at St Helena Bay harbor, South Africa. The current top-down paradigm allocates the lion's share of resources to the commercial sector, including the high-value species in the nearshore areas

go to sea as a result of these regulatory requirements.

On the lack of equitable access to resources

Legal access to resources is one of the greatest challenges. Apportionment of high-value species still favours the more powerful large commercial fisheries. Despite advocating for the transformation of the processes of managing access to resources on an individual quota-based system for over a decade, and ensuring that resources are allocated to traditional, indigenous communities that have historically depended on the resources for their livelihoods, the DFFE continues to first apportion the vast majority of resources along a commercially-orientated fisheries rights allocation system, despite the Equality Court Order of 2007.

On emerging threats to traditional fishing grounds

A primary reason for the continued disparity and failure to address the marginalization of the SSF sector has been the simultaneous emergence of South Africa's Blue Economy policy, known as the Operation Phakisa Ocean Economy. Ironically, Phakisa means 'hurry up, hurry up' in the local Sesotho language.

Just when the SSF Guidelines provided an important international policy framework for the sector and brought it in line with the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries, the SSF sector is now facing a new threat from the push for an Ocean Economy or the Blue Economy. Thus while our policy for SSF in South Africa was poised to shift the enormous challenges we faced within the fisheries sector, vis-a-vis the prioritization of the large-scale commercial and recreational fisheries sectors, we are now facing an even greater challenge. The priority over fisheries in ocean governance goes to extractive, energy-related activities and marine transport.

I see the systematic exclusion of SSF from the ocean space, coupled with the marginalization of SSF within fisheries governance and management, as linked within a global neoliberal system of

difficult for fishers to contact this office and obtain the necessary radio call sign. All the red tape that fishers have to endure means that fishers cannot get their licences on time and often endure long periods when they are not able to

ocean governance. In South Africa, the same DFFE leads fisheries management, ocean environmental governance and the Blue Economy policies and, ironically, also leads our response to climate change. Thus we have an absurd situation where the DFFE is leading the development of an Ocean Economy Master Plan that has prioritized oil and gas exploration, and is also inviting new sectors to exploit ocean resources, while it simultaneously is supposed to be protecting our ocean environment and promoting small-scale fisheries.

Due to a directive from the Presidential Office, supported by the ruling party, there is a very strong push to implement the Ocean Economy Master Plan, despite the lack of implementation of the Marine Spatial Planning legislation to ensure that any economic development in the ocean is balanced with ecological and social justice. This focus on the economic development of the ocean. The false promise that oil and gas exploration will create employment is further marginalizing small-scale fisheries.

On the ssf sector defending environmental concerns against ocean exploitation

We first heard about the Blue Economy as early as 2010 at the African CAMFA meeting in the Gambia. We realized then and there that it is a neoliberal extractive approach to the ocean and we began asserting the need for 'Blue Justice'. At the Climate Change COP17 meeting in Durban the following year we demanded 'Blue Justice Now'. However, instead of the progressive realization of our rights in the ocean, we have, instead, seen the systematic erosion of our rights. I now feel we risk becoming just a memory, and our children and their children will only know us through murals on a wall.

In the past two years my fisher community has been directly involved in litigation against the minister of minerals and energy and the minister of DFFE. It is a desperate attempt to stop the total onslaught facing us from oil and gas exploration and the expansion of energy-related infrastructure to support the extraction of fossil fuels along the coast. Despite successfully

stopping Shell and an Australia-based company from conducting seismic surveys, through co-ordinated social resistance campaigns and court action on the grounds that this would be a violation of our human rights as small-scale fishers, we are currently facing five applications for environmental authorization for oil and gas exploration off our coastline.

In the past month the DFFE has dismissed our appeals against France-based Total Energies and Shell to stop the drilling of five wells off our coastline. Our sector has been completely marginalized in the Marine Spatial Planning and the Ocean Economy Master Planning processes. These meetings are held online with no data support provided to the ssf sector. The oil and gas sector, the marine shipping sector and the large-scale industrial aquaculture sector have submitted extensive sector plans, elaborating their planned growth and expansion in our ocean. Yet those of us who depend on the ocean and our coastline are being squeezed out.

This drive to turn the ocean into the next frontier for neoliberal capital is drowning out our voices as small-scale fishers who have traditionally depended on the sea and have used the ocean sustainably. The ocean is the material basis of our culture and the home of our ancestors. Despite the struggles we face, we will continue to defend the ocean from destruction. 📢

For more

Southern Africa's Blue Economy: Regional Cooperation for Sustained Development

<https://www.taylorfrancis.com/books/mono/10.4324/9781003245179/southern-africa-blue-economy-donald-sparks>

Improvident Law

https://www.icsf.net/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/3805_art_Sam63_E_art12.pdf

Reaffirming Rights

https://www.icsf.net/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/4246_art_Sam75_e_art07.pdf

Social Relations and Dynamics Shaping the Implementation of the SSF Guidelines in South Africa

<https://www.icsf.net/resources/social-relations-and-dynamics-shaping-the-implementation-of-the-voluntary-guidelines-on-small-scale-fisheries-ssf-guidelines-in-south-africa/>

From Apartheid to Democracy

The regulation of South Africa's inland fisheries continues to remain stuck in apartheid and colonial practices. The country needs a road map to make it work for all stakeholders

South Africa's inland fisheries sector is unusual. It is probably the only country on the continent with a recreational fishery larger than its small-scale fisheries sector, both in the number of participants and in terms of economic contribution. South Africa is also among the few countries on the continent with under-exploited inland fisheries. The norm for the African

continent is the opposite: small-scale fisheries (SSF) are usually larger than the recreational fisheries and most inland fisheries are over-exploited.

Colonial recreation

Early records show that they considered the rivers "tantalizing empty streams" despite an abundance of indigenous species of fish in South Africa. Since the British colonials had a strong preference for trout, they thought it can never be too plentiful in South African streams. They began a programme to stock trout in South African rivers. A hatchery was built outside Cape Town; live trout was shipped from Britain to start a breeding and stocking programme in the late 1890s. It had a critical role in shaping the country's inland fisheries.

Sustaining and developing the recreational fishery to the intended scale needed government support and funding. A law passed in 1867 to this end; its consequences went far beyond the support and development of the recreational fishery. It continues to influence current environmental legislation. The colonial law effectively recognized the legitimacy of only recreational fishery over the country's aquatic resources. It made no mention of traditional fisheries, let alone recognize or develop small-scale fisheries.

Traditional methods

Such laws and regulations are the basis of present-day provincial environmental legislation. Freshwater fishing regulations focus on recreational fisheries. Thus, the only legal way to catch freshwater fish was by using gear that a recreational fisher would use: a rod and line. This excluded traditional fishing methods and gear used by small-scale fishers like nets.

The colonial law effectively recognized the legitimacy of only recreational fishery over the country's aquatic resources

Race adds another layer to South Africa's inland fisheries sector. Historically, recreational anglers have largely been white people and small-scale fishers are largely black people. How did this happen? Like most matters of access to the country's natural resources like land, water and minerals, South Africa's inland fisheries is a product of colonial policies and apartheid.

During South Africa's long colonial period, the early British settlers came with a well-established tradition of recreational fishing—in particular fly fishing for trout, not indigenous here. The early settlers from Europe had no interest in the many of the indigenous species could be caught using a fly.

During South Africa's long colonial period, the early British settlers came with a well-established tradition of recreational fishing—in particular fly fishing for trout, not indigenous here. The early settlers from Europe had no interest in the many of the indigenous species could be caught using a fly.

This article is by **Qurban Rouhani** (Q.Rouhani@ru.ac.za), the Director of the Rural Fisheries Programme, a developmental unit within the Department of Ichthyology and Fisheries Science, Rhodes University, South Africa.



Small-scale fishers on Disaneng Dam in North West Province of South Africa

After becoming democratic in 1994, South Africa addressed the inequalities in marine fisheries. Like the freshwater sector, small-scale fishers were excluded from the legislative framework of the marine sector. In 1998, a new law was passed: the Marine Living Resources Act (MLRA). This paved the way for managing South Africa's marine fisheries along the values enshrined in its new constitution.

A similar transformation did not take place in freshwater fisheries. Even today, inland fisheries are managed and governed by provincial environmental legislation that has not undergone the required transformation. It therefore serves the interests and needs of only recreational fishers, continuing to exclude the needs and rights of traditional and small-scale fishers. The exclusion of small-scale fishers from provincial laws did not prevent them from fishing. On the contrary, SSF are

expanding across the many dams and rivers of South Africa. Just that this growth is unregulated.

The exclusion of small-scale fishers from provincial laws did not prevent them from fishing

At the national government level, fisheries come under the Department of Forestry, Fisheries & Environment (DFFE). Historically, it has dealt only with marine issues, leaving freshwater fisheries to be administrated by environmental departments of the provinces. DFFE recognized the issues within the freshwater sector and, in February 2022, gazetted South Africa's first National Inland Fisheries Policy.

Guided by constitutional imperatives, the policy provides for equitable access to aquatic resources to all recreational anglers as well as traditional and small-scale fishers

This was a milestone. Guided by constitutional imperatives, the policy provides for equitable access to aquatic resources to all recreational anglers as well as traditional and small-scale fishers. It recognizes the need to balance development with sustainability. Its other key elements include the ecosystem approach and co-management, the structures of which will be created at both the local level as well as provincial and national levels.

However, as progressive as the policy is, it cannot be implemented because it is not backed with legislation. DFFE is yet to develop national legislation that specifically deals with inland fisheries. Therefore, within the legislative framework, the existing provincial environmental legislation is placed higher than national policy.

to compromise on their unreformed environmental legislation.

SSF is growing in this regulatory vacuum. This will have two consequences. One, the unchecked use of gill-nets will have environmental repercussions. Two, regulation of inland fisheries for sustainable growth will become increasingly difficult down the line. This is a greater long-term concern if fishers develop their sector on their own, without agreeing on regulations and management practices on, for example, the size of the gill-nets.

In recent years, conflict between recreational anglers and small-scale fishers have increased. There are many instances of recreational anglers seizing and destroying gill-nets of small-scale fishers, ratcheting up the tensions along the fault lines of race.

This current situation is undesirable; if it continues it will generate losers only. Recreational fishery contributes to the economy and therefore needs protection. Likewise, SSF and traditional fisheries must be afforded access their resources along the values of equity and sustainability. There is enough space for all users to co-exist and thrive.

What is lacking, then? For one, DFFE needs to engage with the various provinces and sort out an interim solution, recognizing small-scale and traditional fishers, allowing them equitable access to their resources. While doing this, DFFE needs to work on the necessary national legislation. If this is not done at the right time, it will be a missed opportunity. South Africa's inland fisheries can contribute to both economic development as well as food production.

This has created a difficult situation for the country's inland small-scale and traditional fishers. While the national policy recognizes them, they are still subject to provincial laws that effectively keep them excluded. In many ways, this has heightened tensions among the various stakeholders. Provincial environmental departments, in many ways, see the development of SSF and traditional fisheries as a risk to the environment. They continue to stick to old legislation.

Likewise, recreational anglers see SSF as an existential threat. For over a century recreational angler have enjoyed near exclusive rights to fish in the countries freshwater systems. Therefore, they are wary of the government effort to formalize and develop the SSF sector. Another concern is the increasing—and unregulated—use of gill-nets in SSF. The national government says it cannot act without the legislation to back the new policy. Provincial governments are unwilling

For more

Democratising South Africa's Inland Fisheries

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hBX4vb6-B5I>

A Situational Analysis of Small-Scale Fisheries in South Africa: From Vulnerability to Viability

https://www.masifundise.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/A-Situational-Analysis-of-SSF-in-South-Africa_V2V-Working-Paper-No.-2022-9.pdf

National Freshwater (Inland) Wild Fisheries Capture Policy for South Africa

https://www.gov.za/sites/default/files/gcis_document/202203/45954gon1790.pdf

A Balanced Approach

Daouda Ndiaye of the National Collective of Artisanal Fishermen of Senegal (CNPS from the French) wears several hats. He is Co-chair of the World Forum of Fisher Peoples (WFFP) and vice-president in charge of communication of the Joint Commission of the Professional Artisanal Fisheries Organizations of Senegal (CONIPAS). Edited excerpts of a conversation with him about Senegal's artisanal fisheries and a wide range of issues

On the crisis in Senegal's artisanal fishing

Fish plays a very important role in nutrition and livelihood here. The volume of catches is estimated at over 0.46 million tonnes, representing high level of protein consumption. The COVID-19 pandemic left the fishing industry here in a very difficult situation. Several factors contributed to this. Worldwide economic disruption from the pandemic affected Senegal's fish exports. COVID-19-related restrictions hit local fishing activities, hampering fishing operations. Fluctuating fish stocks, overfishing, degradation of the coastal environment, climate change, unsustainable fishing practices have also contributed. Conflicts over access to resources and governance also play a role.

On depleting fish stocks and workers migrating to Europe in 2005-06

Several factors combined to cause the depletion of fish stocks, contributing to irregular migration from Senegal to Europe. Overfishing is driven by the growing demand for fish, the loss of coastal habitat due to urbanization and environmental degradation, as well as the effects of climate change on marine resources. All these contribute to the depletion of fish stocks. That, in turn, affects local food security. Fishers have to seek opportunities elsewhere. Governance also bears on all this, such as ineffective management of fisheries resources and conflicts over access. The result is irregular migration, as happened in 2005-06, when many young Senegalese began seeking migration to Europe.

On the influx of foreign trawlers

Foreign trawlers, often operating without adequate controls, exacerbate the pressure on local fish stocks. Fishing agreements that sometimes favour foreign interests over those of local fishers have compounded the problems. In addition, weak fishing laws and inadequate enforcement allow unsustainable practices.

On improving fisheries management

Only an integrated approach can realistically alleviate the crisis. It will

We need to negotiate just fishing agreements with foreign countries to avoid excessive exploitation of our resources and ensure benefits for local communities

include improving the management of fisheries resources through stricter laws and rigorous enforcement. Regulatory and monitoring institutions need strengthening. We need to negotiate just fishing agreements with foreign countries to avoid excessive exploitation of our resources and ensure benefits for local communities. Sustainable fishing techniques must be encouraged to preserve fish stocks and minimize adverse impacts on the marine ecosystem. Communities dependent on fishing need help to diversify their livelihoods to reduce pressure on marine resources. If such measures are combined and adapted to local realities, sustainable management of Senegal's fisheries will become a reality.

*This interview with **Daouda Ndiaye** (davidndiaye68@gmail.com), Co-ordinator, Collectif national des pêcheurs artisanaux du Sénégal (CNPS), WFFP Co-Chair and CONIPAS Vice-president in charge of communication, Senegal, was conducted by **N. Venugopalan** (icsf@icsf.net), Programme Manager, ICSF*

On steps already taken

The government has undertaken legislative reforms that will strengthen the regulatory framework for fishing and improve governance. Campaigns have been initiated to raise awareness and educate fishers and communities about the challenges of preventing over-fishing and promoting sustainability. International organizations like FAO provide technical and financial support to build capacity and implement sustainable initiatives.

On small-scale fishers' demands

They are diverse and often linked to their working conditions, as also the management of fisheries resources and socio-economic challenges. Small-scale fishers are pressing for fair access to resources, stressing the need to protect their traditional fishing rights. Artisanal fishers are calling for stricter measures like severe penalties to combat illegal fishing. They demand improved working conditions at sea, including vessel safety and the provision of adequate safety equipment. Fishers seek improvements in the value chain; for example, more investment in infrastructure like landing quays, storage facilities and fish markets. They desire participation in taking decisions related to the management of fishery resources, emphasizing the importance of true consultation and collaboration, rather than fictitious participation.

On the EU's new fishing protocol

The last protocols signed between the EU and Senegal were in 2019, are to end in December 2023. Our organizations have asked the government to not sign any new agreements that will cause further depletion of marine resources.

On combating IUU fishing that leads to an estimated annual loss of US\$90 billion

Preventing losses from illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing in Senegal requires several actions in concert.

Increased monitoring to detect and deter IUU practices, for example. It could include the use of modern technology like satellite surveillance. Enforcement of existing laws against IUU fishing must be improved, including severe and

exemplary penalties on offenders. We must work with neighbouring nations because illegal activities often cross maritime borders. Senegal must involve fishing communities in monitoring and denouncing illegal activities by raising awareness of their destructive impacts, as also the need to encourage sustainable practices. The capacity of regulatory bodies and law enforcement agencies needs improvement. Greater collaboration among governments, civil society organizations and the private sector will encourage holistic and sustainable solutions.

On the damage from large vessels and their effects on small-scale fishers

With their large capacities, large vessels contribute to overfishing and the deterioration of marine habitats, hitting fish stocks. Certain types of fishing, particularly bottom trawling, can damage marine habitats like the seabed. With their destructive fishing gear, large vessels contribute to biodiversity loss. Large vessels contribute to marine pollution by dumping plastic waste, oil discharges and other forms of pollution; they harm the marine ecosystems and the livelihood of small-scale fishers.

Be they foreign or domestic, large vessels compete with small-scale fishers; this competition is unequal, given the limited means of small-scale fishers. Small-scale fishers, often dependent on coastal areas, face increased competition for access to resources due to the presence of large vessels.

International fishing agreements are unbalanced; they favour the interests of large fleets to the detriment of small-scale local fishers. Alleviating these problems requires effective regulation, strengthening of fisheries governance, encouragement of sustainable fishing and promotion of just agreements that to protect the needs of small-scale fishers and the marine environment.

On overfishing or IUU fishing by foreign vessels

Yes, foreign vessels are involved in such practices, including fishing in prohibited areas, under-reporting catches, using illegal fishing gear, or other activities that violate current regulations.



Mbour fish landing site, Senegal. Fishers seek improvements in the value chain; for example, more investment in infrastructure like landing quays, storage facilities and fish markets

On controlling illegal activity

Monitoring, control and surveillance (MCS) measures are crucial in the fight against overfishing and IUU fishing. These may include various initiatives and technologies that make it possible to track the movements of fishing vessels in real time. It could ensure transparency, enabling verification of vessel activities; this does not happen right now. The use of maritime patrols to monitor fishing zones helps detect any illegal activity. This may require specific and dedicated law enforcement agencies.

The adoption and enforcement of stricter laws governing fishing is crucial. Co-operation between nations to share information, harmonize standards and co-ordinate monitoring is important, especially to address cross-border fishing. If implemented consistently and effectively, these measures will help conserve marine resources and support small-scale fishers.

On the first African Maritime Forces Summit held in Cape Verde in March 2023

Such events can provide a platform for discussing best MCS practices and combating illegal practices. They can also foster regional and international collaboration to strengthen maritime surveillance capacities and promote concerted approaches for the sustainable management of marine resources.

On the 2013 initiative launched in Yaounde, Cameroon

The 2013 initiative refers to the Yaounde Partnership Agreement against IUU fishing in the West African region. Also called the Yaounde Action Plan, this agreement aims to strengthen regional co-operation to combat IUU fishing and promote sustainable management of marine resources. Its architecture divides the west coast of Africa into zones A to G, each covering waters

DAOUDA NDIAYE



Mbour fish landing site, Senegal. Some workers may face difficult working conditions, including long hours, extended periods at sea, and physically demanding tasks

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under the jurisdiction of the coastal countries concerned; it establishes a code of conduct, promoting the co-ordination of fisheries-related surveillance, control and enforcement activities. It encourages member states to adopt measures to combat IUU fishing, enhance transparency in the fisheries sector and promote regional co-operation. It also emphasizes the need to develop national and regional capacities for MCS.

On working and living conditions of Senegalese workers on European vessels

They vary depending on a number of factors like company policies, local

and international regulations, and the implementation of labour standards.

Some workers may face difficult working conditions, including long hours, extended periods at sea, and physically demanding tasks. The safety of workers at sea is also a concern; accidents or injuries do occur. Wages may vary but there are concerns about the fair remuneration of Senegalese workers on these vessels, particularly in relation to workers of other nationalities. Foreign workers may face challenges in protecting their rights under labour law, particularly if they work on foreign-flagged vessels. Workers sometimes cannot access information on their rights; even if they know them, they might face obstacles in asserting their rights or reporting violations. A number of international initiatives and agreements aim to promote decent working conditions for fishers, like the International Labour Organization’s (ILO) C188 (Work in Fishing Convention). Their implementation, however, is not effective.

On the benefits of best practices to Senegalese workers on European vessels

Some employers and shipowners might adopt the best practices on working conditions, safety and workers’ rights; others, such as Chinese boats, have shortcomings. The best practices should include reasonable working hours; safe working conditions and tasks adapted to workers’ abilities; and fair and transparent wages, in line with international labour standards. Independent monitoring and collaboration between governments, companies and civil society organizations, and compliance with international labour standards are essential.

On EU-Senegal deal on wages, given minimum monthly wage of US \$658

Each country determines its own minimum wage, taking into account its economic and social realities. In the Fisheries Partnership Agreements (FPAs), the payment system for Senegalese workers on EU vessels depends on the specific terms of each agreement. These agreements often

govern aspects like access for European vessels to Senegalese waters, fishing quotas, access rights and, sometimes, working conditions for fishers.

On FPAs vessels using flags of convenience

This is driven by tax advantages or more flexible regulations in the country where the vessel is registered. It is often to the detriment of safety standards, working conditions and environmental sustainability.

On FPAs preventing such deals

To prevent the use of flags of convenience in fisheries agreements, they may include specific and varied provisions to ensure that vessels comply with international standards on maritime safety, working conditions and the conservation of marine resources. They may also include requirements for vessels to comply with the coastal State's regulations on working conditions and environmental standards. Unfortunately, compliance is weak due to corruption.

On other requirements

Vessels operating under these agreements must comply with international standards for maritime safety, resource conservation and working conditions. Agreements may require greater transparency on ship ownership and information on compliance with international standards. Specific measures can ensure sustainability and conservation.

On benefits from them to fishing communities

FPAs with the EU and the so-called mixed fishing licences managed by Chinese companies have negative impacts on fishers and their communities. The benefits depend on the agreement design, on how it is negotiated and implemented. FPAs could be investments in fisheries-related infrastructure, such as ports and fish processing facilities, which can benefit local communities. They should be designed to promote sustainable fishing, respect workers' rights and ensure a fair distribution of benefits to local fishing communities. Monitoring, transparency and involvement of local stakeholders are essential.

On climate change

The Sixth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) estimates that, by 2030, some 116 million Africans could be living in low-lying, densely populated coastal areas. The IPCC stresses the need for co-ordinated action to cope with rising sea levels; it deplores the fact that too few tangible adaptation measures have been implemented. It highlights the growing vulnerability of coastal zones in Africa and the urgent need for co-ordinated action to cope with rising sea levels. Senegal's coastal areas like Saint-Louis, Dakar and Ziguinchor are also vulnerable to these changes, requiring local and national adaptation strategies.

On the vulnerability of Senegal's coastal areas

Fishing communities face challenges like coastal erosion, flooding and storm surges linked to rising sea levels. Existing inequalities can make conditions more difficult for Senegal's fishers by exacerbating disparities in access to resources and opportunities.

Population growth, rapid urbanization, increased demand for water and land, and destructive activities such as sand mining compromise marine habitats and breeding areas, breaking the resilience of coastal communities.

Achieving the SDGs requires a holistic approach including efforts to promote sustainable fisheries, build the adaptive capacity and resilience of coastal communities, and manage land and natural resource sustainably.

The importance of involving local communities, promoting environmental sustainability and implementing inclusive and equitable policies is crucial to mitigating the negative impacts.

On fishmeal production and industrial pollution

Senegal's fishmeal factories are supplied by both foreign and domestic trawlers, as well as artisanal fishers, depending on the practices and policies in place. Their rapid growth has raised concerns of overfishing and environmental impacts. Industrial pollution has affected water quality in coastal areas,

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Mbour fish landing site, Senegal. Senegal's fishmeal factories are supplied by both foreign and domestic trawlers, as well as artisanal fishers, depending on the practices and policies in place

notably by contaminating drinking water sources. Discharges from these and other industrial activities have introduced harmful substances into the marine ecosystem. Offshore gas drilling terminals threaten environmental disturbances, including changes in marine habitats and water quality.

Concerns over chemical spills, oil accidents and disruption of fish migrations abound. In particular, they endanger coastal communities like Kayar that depend on artisanal fishing. Conflicts over resource use, environmental degradation and risks to the health of local populations can generate tensions.

On the scope of Senegal's international fish trade

Cross-border trade is a significant component of Senegal's fishing economy, driven by exports to lucrative markets like the EU. Often there's trade among neighbouring countries to meet local and regional demand. If a significant proportion of production

is exported to more remunerative markets, it can lead to supply challenges for inland regions. Cross-border trade is essential for consumers in inland regions, for nutrition security there.

The dynamics of the fish trade can have complex implications. Trade policies and practices need to be balanced to support both export to lucrative markets and meeting local and regional needs.

For more

Collectif national des pêcheurs artisanaux du Sénégal (CNPS)

<https://www.facebook.com/p/Collectif-Nationale-Des-P%C3%AAcheurs-Artisanaux-du-S%C3%A9n%C3%A9gal-CNPS-100067477194655/>

A Health Check

https://www.icsf.net/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/3186_art02.pdf

Growing pains

https://www.icsf.net/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/2527_art02.pdf

Twine to the Rescue

Kenya has a problem of 'ghost nets' or abandoned polyethylene fishing lines that pollute the aquatic ecology. An alternative design project finds a solution in biodegradable twine

Fishing gear is a major contributor to marine litter. 'Ghost nets' is the informal term for what is formally called Abandoned, Lost or Otherwise Discarded Fishing Gear (ALDFG). These continue to catch both target and non-target species. They pose risk to boat operations; damage coral reefs and the seabed; and present a safety hazard for ocean users and resources. They comprise a serious threat to food security, long-term economic growth, the viability of marine ecosystems, and the development of a vibrant and productive Blue Economy.

As fishing gear wears and tears, it releases toxins and microplastics into the marine environment. Larger fragments of plastics are ingested by marine organisms; these are carriers for adsorbed contaminants that affect the food web through 'biomagnification'. Old and discarded fishing nets further contribute to the stockpiling of plastics on land, where they take up to 1,000 years to decompose, leaching potentially toxic substances into the soil and water. Their impacts are of particular concern on the African continent, given that more than 200 million people in Africa rely on fish for high-quality, low-cost protein. About 12 million are employed in the fishing sector.

It is in this backdrop that a Catchgreen project aimed to provide a viable solution to tackling ocean plastics pollution. It began with pilots in biodegradable fishing gear that can help cut down incidents and duration of ghost fishing. The density of this biodegradable fishing gear is higher than polyethylene; if lost or dumped, it sinks to the bottom of the sea, where it breaks down through biodegradation with help from rich colonies of microorganisms. The nets turn into biomass, water and carbon dioxide without leaving behind any harmful toxins or

microplastics. This reduces the amount of microplastics on land and in the ocean. When it falls into disuse on land, it can be turned into beneficial agricultural mulch and compost at any biodigestion facility.

The project was a result of a partnership with Swedish-based GAIA Biomaterials; financial support came from the Sustainable Manufacturing and Environmental Pollution Program (SMEP) and the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO). Catchgreen is working with fishing gear manufacturers, research organizations and fishing industries in South Africa and Kenya to develop an innovative compound, called BiodolomerOcean,

Old and discarded fishing nets further contribute to the stockpiling of plastics on land, where they take up to 1,000 years to decompose, leaching potentially toxic substances into the soil and water

designed specifically for marine applications. The Kenyan Marine and Fisheries Research Institute (KMFRI) is a partner to pilot the viability of biodegradable fishing gear for the small-scale fisheries (SSF) sector along Kenya's coast. These will evaluate whether the nets are effective and usable, advancing research in this field and developing more market-competitive products. The project has found no prior studies that tested the viability of biodegradable fishing nets within the African context.

The matter of gill-nets

KMFRI is testing if Biodolomer Ocean can replace the polyethylene twine in a modified design of gill-nets. Gill-nets are controversial because of the great damage they inflict. In response,

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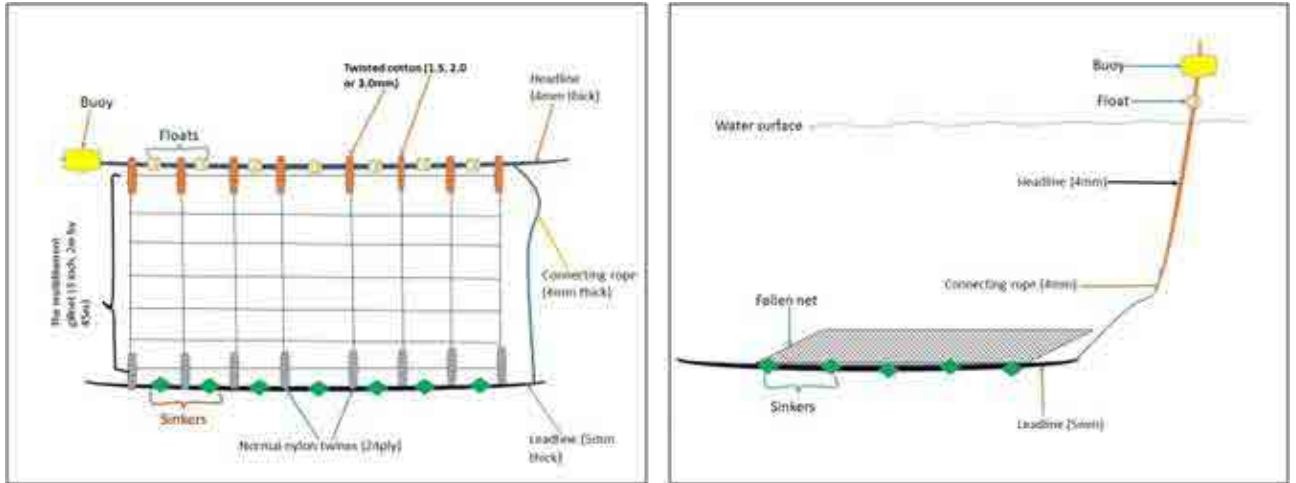


Illustration of the modified multifilament gillnet vs modified net collapsing in the event of loss

Kenya has implemented regulations to curb this. In 2021 it prohibited the use of monofilament gill-nets. Also prohibited is any gill-net with a mesh size smaller than 45 mm in stretched diagonal length. These nets are more efficient than nylon gill-nets and are preferred by fishers. They are particularly destructive because they capture juvenile fish in large numbers, also damaging corals. Gill-nets made of monofilament take long to break down if lost; they are major contributors to ghost fishing along the Kenyan coast. Despite regulations prohibiting decreasing net mesh size, some fishers still modify their gear to improve catch rates. The absence of proper systems for the collection of old and discarded gill-nets exacerbates the problem. Fishers often discard old nets in the ocean or burn them, leaving them at the beach or in mangrove forests. The result is significant damage to mangrove forests and the gradual decline of fishery resources.

Kenya's marine fisheries hold significant strategic value; they play a crucial role in supporting livelihoods and contributing to food security. In Kenya, the sector employs approximately 27,000 artisanal fishers. It also provides employment to a diverse range of individuals in varied aspects of the value chain, including traders, processors, input suppliers, merchants of fishing accessories, and providers of related services. Artisanal fishers in this region utilize varied gear, depending

on the species and size of fish available.

Due to limited access to suitable fishing vessels or equipment for deep-water fishing, they often rely on cost-effective options such as gill-nets. Kenya's fishing sector has been predominantly male-dominated, with men being more actively involved in the direct harvesting phase. Women often play a significant role in complementary activities like trading, processing and intermediary functions, constituting nearly half of the overall workforce.

There is no ideal replacement for monofilament gill-nets as yet. These are inexpensive; their import is difficult to regulate because they are also used to make anti-mosquito nets. KMFRI designed a modified version of the commonly used gill-net in 2021 in collaboration with the Department of Fisheries and the Blue Economy project in Kenya, and with financial support from the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO).

This innovative design replaces the usual synthetic twine used to hang the multifilament nylon netting to the headline of the gill-net with cotton twine. This alternative design allows for the cotton to break down and the nets to collapse should the nets be lost, thus preventing ghost fishing. Catchgreen is building on the alternative design by substituting the traditional polyethylene head and lead lines with twine made of BiodolomerOcean, which biodegrades in two years. 3

For more

Catchgreen

<https://www.catchgreen.net/>

Kenyan Marine and Fisheries Research Institute (KMFRI)

<https://www.kmfri.go.ke/>

Compostable fishing nets: An end to Ghost Nets in the oceans?

<https://www.gaiabiomaterials.com/news-media/press-release/compostable-fishing-nets%3A-an-end-to-ghost-nets-in-the-oceans%3F>

Freshwater Blues

The scarcity of freshwater fish resources in the eastern Indian state of West Bengal highlights alarming trends in inland capture fisheries

On a rainy day in August, when the availability of fisheries resources is high in the Teesta river here, Bimal Das returned from a four-hour fishing trip with only three kg of fish. While sorting the fish from the ice slabs, a dejected Das contemplated quitting fishing to looking for jobs elsewhere. All across the northern part of the Indian state of West Bengal, fishers like Das are faced with the dire crisis of fish scarcity, pushing them out of inland capture fisheries.

The freshwater aquatic ecosystem of the northern region of the state, once a biodiversity 'hot spot', is now threatened by multiple anthropogenic activities. Such threats not only impact the freshwater biodiversity and fish availability but also livelihood viability of the small-scale fishers. Considering cases from riverine ecosystems in four northern districts of West Bengal, a study tried to understand the ecological, social and political drivers of the vulnerability of small-scale fishers engaged in inland capture fisheries.

West Bengal is called *nodimatrik desh*, meaning the 'land of rivers'. It has a diverse riverine system stretching up to 2,526 km with rivers and canals. The northern part, commonly called 'North Bengal', comprises the districts of Darjeeling, Kalimpong, Jalpaiguri, Alipurduar, Coochbehar, North Dinajpur, South Dinajpur and Malda. These host a diverse freshwater habitats, both rain-fed and snow-fed by the Himalayan rivers. Rivers here include Teesta, Jaldhaka, Atrai, Raidak, Punarbhaba, Tangon and their tributaries. They host a rich faunal diversity, making them ideal for fishing.

Although fishing is not a predominant occupation in North Bengal, a significant population of rural communities belonging to the

backward castes depend on riverine capture fisheries. The fisheries resources in the major rivers have declined significantly, not only from destructive overfishing, but due to external anthropogenic causes. Resource degradation also stems from water control through dams and barrages, abstraction of river water for irrigation, upstream sedimentation due to deforestation, and mineral extraction from river banks, among other factors. These negatively impact the vibrant capture fisheries that provide livelihood and nutritional security to rural communities.

The importance of capture fisheries in alleviating poverty and their contributions to regional nutritional security do not get their due

National policies overlook such negative impacts on capture fisheries because dependence on fishing is seen as a cause of poverty and a barrier to 'development'. The importance of capture fisheries in alleviating poverty and their contributions to regional nutritional security do not get their due. Resource degradation forces fishers to either exit from the sector entirely or shift to fish vending in a highly competitive market of non-native species of fish arriving from other states.

The study analysed such trends from a social-ecological systems approach. It highlighted that such emerging crises are, firstly, located in discursive narratives of river water use; secondly, arise from an inadequacy in governance systems to

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AMITRAJIT CHAKRABORTY



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A fisher operating a lift net in the downstream of Teesta river, West Bengal, India. The nature of fishing in the rivers Teesta, Jaldhaka, Atrai, Raidak, Tangon and Punarbhaba is small-scale

manage resources sustainably; and, thirdly, occur due to a lack of political will to support small-scale fishing communities to sustain their livelihood and integrate them in governance processes to manage and protect water bodies.

level gradually recedes after the month of November, especially in downstream areas; in some cases the rivers dry up completely until the monsoon rains. In upstream areas, the rivers retain water through the year.

Fishers in the upstream areas usually set sail on boats where water currents are stronger. They are usually gill-netters. In some cases, they cast their nets from the river bank as well. In the downstream areas of the rivers, where the waters are shallow and currents weaker, fishers cannot use boats. Here fishers mainly use cast nets, stake nets, lift nets and scoop nets, built for manual operation without being attached to the craft. Such gears are stationed on specific fishing grounds and are not mobile in nature.

The catch per unit effort (CPUE) in riverine capture fisheries in North Bengal is extremely low. The average CPUE in upstream areas is five kg per day, whereas in downstream areas it drops to three kg per day. Fishers say the CPUE is gradually diminishing over

The catch per unit effort (CPUE) in riverine capture fisheries in North Bengal is extremely low

Features of small-scale fishing

The nature of fishing in the rivers Teesta, Jaldhaka, Atrai, Raidak, Tangon and Punarbhaba is small-scale. The fishers operate on handmade non-motorized craft and use passive gear to catch fish. Its norms and knowledge have been passed down through generations. The type of boat is determined by water availability in the rivers. The water

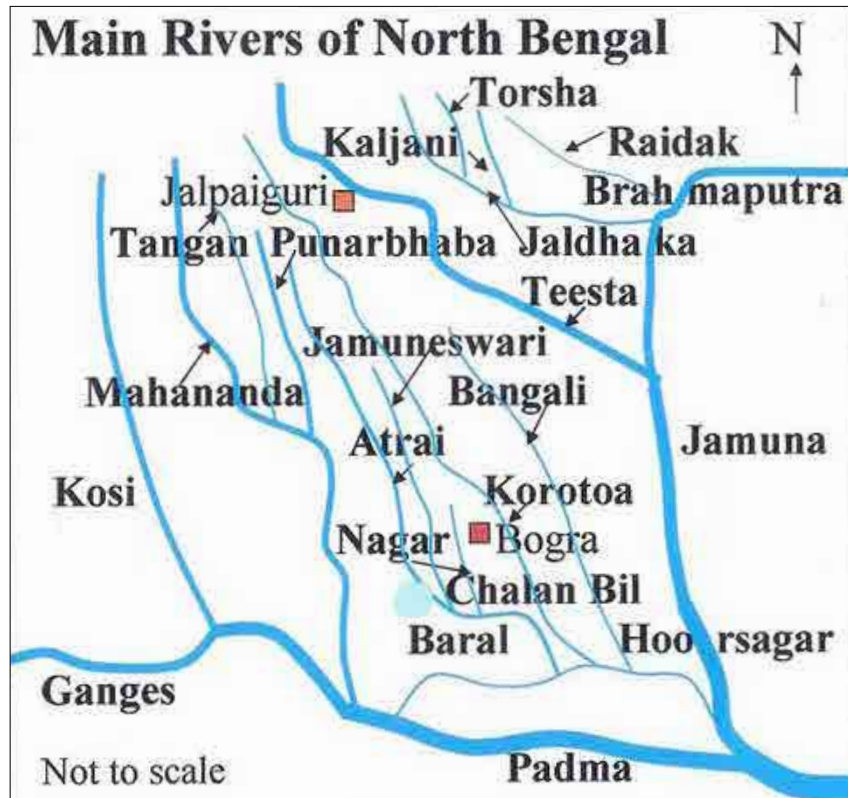
the years. They take the catch to the wholesale auction market to sell. The decreasing CPUE compels them to sell their catch themselves by the road near the markets at prices much lower than prevailing market rates. Lacking cold storage boxes to preserve their catch, the fishers have no option but to distress sell on the same day.

The fishing communities can no longer rely on capture fisheries for livelihood. Diversification into work as agricultural labourers or wage labourers and, in many cases, out-migration to other states for manual wage labour has become common.

The fishers in North Bengal belong to socially backward castes and are mostly migrants from Bangladesh. Due to their poor social status, their political representation in the local, state and national-level decision-making in the governance of water bodies is extremely marginalized. Further, in the absence of a legal or political identity as a fish worker, their work remains largely 'informal'. Their contribution to inland fish production goes unrecognized. According to the International Classification of Status in Employment (ICSE), determined by the International Labour Organization (ILO), such small-scale fishers engaged in inland fisheries can be classified as 'own account workers'. They fall under the broader category of 'self-employed' because they deploy their own labour and capital to catch fish and are not employed by anyone else.

Despite attempts of the state government to recognize fisherfolk by issuing identity documents called 'Matsyajibi Card', many fisherfolk remain outside the purview of the programme. As a result, they are deprived of the necessary social protection in the form of social insurance and assistance; they end up excluded from the safety net during the lean season when fishing is not possible, especially in the downstream areas. They are not allowed to exercise their customary rights to access and manage the water bodies.

In the absence of customary rights, the fishers have to engage in multiple political struggles to access the fishing grounds. Property relations in the



Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_rivers_of_West_Bengal

river stretches are not formally coded, leaving capture fisheries to open access. Consequently, powerful groups with the backing of local political elites from the ruling party often privatize river stretches informally, looting the fish resources by staking large mosquito nets across the rivers. Such cases have been reported by the traditional fishers of the rivers Tangon and Punarbhaba in the South Dinajpur district.

In this district, fishers operating near the India-Bangladesh border are often subjected to harassment by the Border Security Force (BSF). The soldiers frequently mistake the fishers as intruders or smugglers from the neighbouring Bangladeshi villages, confiscating their gear and catch, aggravating the already marginalized. The desperate fishers' ability to organize themselves becomes even more difficult when they are faced with challenges of daily survival, spending long hours in fishing or other wage labour work. In the absence of rights and entitlements to protect and manage the water bodies, fishing communities cannot mobilize themselves to overcome the

causes for depleting fisheries and the deteriorating health of the riverine ecosystem.

The decrease in fish stocks results from the negative impacts of anthropogenic activities on freshwater biodiversity. It is a misnomer to label

Without customary rights over the water bodies, disempowered fishers have no way to prevent unsustainable and damaging practices

them 'natural'. Based on fishers' responses, the causes and effects of the severe threat to the freshwater biodiversity is summarized in Table 1.

Apart from the weather variability from climate change, all the listed causes are directly related to human interventions—in the larger frame, climate change is anthropogenic, too. Dams and barrages on rivers to regulate

water flow dominates the development discourse. Benefits derived from them include production of 'green' hydroelectricity; irrigation; industrial and domestic use of water. Such development discourses do not account for the health of the aquatic ecosystem or the livelihood of those who depends directly on it. Dams seriously affect the movement of fish and spawning areas, thereby affecting fishers. Infrastructure on riverbanks disturbs spawning areas, resulting in migration of fish species.

From pollution to destructive fishing using poison and electricity, from the growth of hyacinths on channel inlets to sedimentation and mineral extraction, all the threats can be attributed to a lack of governance and protection of water bodies. Without customary rights over the water bodies, disempowered fishers have no way to prevent unsustainable and damaging practices. Everything speaks to inadequate governance mechanisms.

The cumulative impacts of social, political and ecological factors are

Table 1: The causes, the severity of each threat and its impacts on freshwater biodiversity and fish resources

Dams, barrages and barriers	High	Prevents movements of fish schools, isolates populations
Unpredictability of weather and variability due to climate change	High	Increasing water temperature breaches the thermal maximum of fish species, forcing them to migrate
Infrastructure development along riverbanks like roads, embankments, houses, bridges	High	Change in spawning areas
Destructive fishing with poison, electric shock, explosives	High	Depletes fish stock. Use of poison and electric shocks is a serious threat in the rivers of Alipurduar district like Raidak I, Dhaula, Dharsi and Turturi
Water flow regulation by opening and closing of dam floodgates	Medium	Changes water level, disrupting spawning
Pollution, toxic waste from farmlands	High	Pollutes water bodies, depletes fish stock, depletes spawning grounds
Growth of invasive species like water hyacinth	High	Changes nutrient levels in water, hits food webs, destroys bottom habitats
Sedimentation	Medium	Disrupts the flow of river water and movement of fish
Mineral extraction, sand mining	High	Erosion of the river bank and bed, affecting the river's course and flow

forcing small-scale fishers to exit from inland capture fisheries, either fully or partially. The study found many fishers entering the fish vending business, buying non-local fish from auction centres to sell in the market. Which brings them in direct competition with existing vendors operating with a larger capital base. Such trends question the basis of nutritional security from the declining local catch. The fishers who have completely exited the sector lack adequate adaptive capacities to cope with the resultant vulnerability.

Policy: a wrong direction

The recent West Bengal Inland Fisheries Policy 2023 aims to conserve aquatic resources and enhance fish production. Yet fishworkers' bodies in the state are concerned; they say the policy lacks a well-defined framework of fishers' rights and roles. The organizations include the Dakshinbanga Matsyajibi Forum (DMF) and the Uttarbanga Matsyajibi Forum (UMF). It contains little to no mention of the current state of affairs of not only riverine capture fisheries but also reservoir fisheries. Nor to the large number of smaller tank and pond fisheries that have high contributions to fish production in the inland fisheries of the state, providing livelihood to many.

The policy prescriptions allow leasing out of water commons to private entrepreneurs through auctioning. This will alienate the small-scale fish workers from exercising their rights to access, protect and manage the water bodies. Enabling privatization of the water commons through a leasing system alienates the customary rights of small-scale fisheries; it is also antithetical to the cause of sustainability. It disrupts ecological health by introducing non-native species and encouraging the pursuit of intensive aquaculture and cage culture.

How can this be addressed? For one, the participation of the traditional fishing communities in co-management efforts, along with responsible state departments and research institutes in conservation and rejuvenation of fish resources in the rivers. The state's inland fisheries policy must prescribe measures to protect the rights of small-

Table 2: River-based distribution of fish species has become scarce in the past decade, according to a survey among traditional fishers

Rivers	Local Name	Scientific name
Atrai	Bacha	<i>Eutropiichthys vacha</i>
	Chela	<i>Chela cachius</i>
	Dari	<i>Schistura scaturigina</i>
	Chnada	<i>Pseudambassis baculis</i>
Tangon	Boal	<i>Wallago attu</i>
	Tengra	<i>Mystus vittatus</i>
	Ar	<i>Sperata aor</i>
	Boal	<i>Wallago attu</i>
	Bacha	<i>Eutropiichthys vacha</i>
	Tengra	<i>Mystus vittatus</i>
	Gagor	<i>Hemibagrus menoda</i>
	Ghaira	<i>Clupisoma garua</i>
	Kajoli	<i>Ailia punctata</i>
Punarbhaba	Bacha	<i>Eutropiichthys vacha</i>
	Ar	<i>Sperata aor</i>
	Tengra	<i>Mystus vittatus</i>
	Kajoli	<i>Ailia punctata</i>
	Chela	<i>Chela cachius</i>
	Bou	<i>Botia dario</i>
	Tinkata	<i>Pseudolaguvia shawi</i>
Teesta	Chitol	<i>Chitala chitala</i>
	Boal	<i>Wallago attu</i>
	Ar	<i>Sperata aor</i>
	Baghair	<i>Bagarius bagarius</i>
	Sillong	<i>Silonia silondia</i>
	Shorputi	<i>Puntius sarana</i>
	Shol	<i>Channa striata</i>
	Puia	<i>Acanthocobitis botia</i>
	Bacha	<i>Eutropiichthys vacha</i>
	Kajoli	<i>Ailia punctata</i>
	Chapla	<i>Gonialosa</i>
	Pangash	<i>Pangasius pangasius</i>
	Ritha	<i>Rita rita</i>
Jaldhaka	Bata	<i>Labeo bata</i>
	Khoksa	<i>Barilius vagra</i>
	Kajoli	<i>Ailia punctata</i>
	Boirali	<i>Barilius barila</i>
Raidak	Ar	<i>Sperata aor</i>
	Boal	<i>Wallago attu</i>
	Ritha	<i>Rita rita</i>
	Kalbaush	<i>Labeo calbasu</i>

scale fisheries over water bodies. Small-scale traditional fishworkers are by far the largest non-consumptive primary stakeholders and natural custodians of

AMITRAJIT CHAKRABORTY



Fishers preparing to cast their net from the riverbanks of Teesta river near the Teesta barrage, West Bengal, India. Enabling privatization of the water commons through a leasing system alienates the customary rights of small-scale fisheries

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For more

NPSSF website

<https://smallscalefishworkers.org/small-scale-fish-worker-organisations/national-platform-for-small-scale-fish-workers-inland/>

Poverty in small-scale fisheries: old issue, new analysis

<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/146499341001100203>

Profits and Perils of Farming Fish

<https://www.icsf.net/resources/profits-and-perils-of-farming-fish-case-studies-of-shrimp-and-carp-aquaculture-in-west-bengal-santanu-chacraverti-2022/>


SIFFS Workshop Report, 23-25 February 2010

<https://www.icsf.net/resources/workshop-on-small-indigenous-freshwater-fish-species-their-role-in-poverty-alleviation-food-security-and-conservation-of-biodiversity-siffs-workshop-report-23-25-february-2010-c-2/>

water bodies. Their inalienable rights to access and manage water bodies can ensure sustainable management of fish resources wherein stock replenishment is naturally facilitated alongside traditional fishing.

At every step of the governance of the inland fisheries, small-scale fishers and fish farmers must be consulted since their engagement in inland fisheries is directly linked to the health of the freshwater biodiversity. Extension of rights to water bodies and inclusion of unions and organizations of small-scale fishers in planning and management of fisheries resources can be a step forward. It will help build up the adaptive capacities of small-scale fishers, also facilitating conservation and rejuvenation of aquatic and fish resources in freshwater ecosystems. Further, the relevant state departments and governing bodies must monitor that all small-scale fishers engaged in inland fisheries are identified and registered in the national statistics. That will pave the way to cover them under a comprehensive social security framework, ensuring the delivery to fishers of the benefits accruing from

state and central fisheries policies and schemes.

Such an integrated ecosystem approach to inland fisheries, based on human rights, can have longstanding positive results to maintain the health of the freshwater ecosystem. It can protect small-scale fishers, while enhancing the production of native fish resources that have the potential to secure the nutritional needs of the community at large. 

A New Road Map

A national platform of fishers met to assert the inalienable right of fishers and fishworkers to access water bodies, campaign for climate justice, and become a federation of unions through a new constitution

The national council meeting of the National Platform for Small-Scale Fish Workers (NPSSFW) was held in Kolkata, India, on November 6-7, 2023. The main objectives of the first day of the meeting were to discuss the issues and challenges faced by small-scale fishworkers in the country and to strengthen the organization's efforts to address them. The primary objective of the second day of the meeting was to adopt the constitution of NPSSFW so as to provide a clear definition of small-scale fishworkers and indicate how the organization should operate at the state and national levels, with defined objectives and mechanisms to achieve the same.

At the meeting, Pradip Chatterjee, NPSSFW convener, placed the report on organizational progress before the national council. Representatives from small-scale fishworker organizations of 12 states and Union Territories reported on the situation of fisheries in their respective areas and the status of their struggle for livelihood. N. Venugopalan of ICSF made a presentation on titled 'Climate Crisis Impact on Fisheries and Fishing Communities', also speaking to the ways and means needed to address the problem.

Nandkumar Pawar and Sunil Dubey, along with Ramanand Wangkheirakpam, placed reports on the work of the ports and wetland committees, respectively. Pradip Chatterjee and Siddharth Chakravarty placed the draft constitution of NPSSFW. There were also in-depth discussions on the situation of women fishworkers, their demands and participation in the organization and the movement. Several decisions taken at the meeting will set the course of the movement. Five are worth mentioning.

Right to Water Campaign:

The national council reiterated the observation of NPSSFW that the small-scale fishworkers in both marine and inland sectors need legally recognized right to access the basic natural resources of their livelihood, that is, water bodies and fish resources. Neither do they have any legal right to protect the water bodies or fish resources. This has been a universal deprivation and the root cause of the sufferings of the small-scale fishers and fish farmers. It was resolved that NPSSFW will strengthen the 'Right to Water' campaign by connecting it with the specific conditions prevailing in every fishing community area, on the one hand, and by connecting the demands raised under specific area conditions into a national campaign, on the other.

Climate Justice: The council observed that the small-scale fishworkers as a community are least responsible for the climate change, yet they suffer the worst on account of it. The actors that reaped huge profits from fossil fuels have been the most responsible for precipitating the climate crisis. Meanwhile, government policy does little to address these actors. NPSSFW demands that the fossil fuel producing and using companies must pay for the damages of the climate crisis. Climate-resilient livelihood practices must be promoted. Pollution and encroachment of water bodies and destructive overfishing must be stopped to enhance the capacity of small-scale fishworkers to cope with the climate crisis. This discussion iterated the position of NPSSFW and to strengthen relations with other natural resource-based communities at international climate negotiations.

This article is by the NPSSFW Secretariat (npsfw@smallscalefishworkers.org/npsfw.delhi@gmail.com), India



Group Photo at the National Council Meeting of NPSSFW. A road map for proceeding with the constitution was agreed upon and a committee was appointed to oversee the process

Ensuing General Elections: The council observed that NPSSFW is duty-bound to undertake the following:

Protect the interests of the members of NPSSFW and make the political parties sensitive to the united voice of the small-scale fishworkers; submit a charter of demands on the main points to the political parties and present them time lines to implement them; prepare a manifesto for fishworkers to be published in Indian news outlets and social media; and undertake a continuous ground-level movement at all levels to carry forward the demands.

Women's inclusion and empowerment: Women fishers face barriers in entering the fishworkers' organizations due to societal norms, both at the community level, as well as the organizational level. To strengthen women's participation, these obstacles must be tackled through representation of women at all levels of the organization, as well as mobilizing them on women's issues at all levels of governance. Women fishworkers, who shoulder the responsibility of reproduction of life within households, also bear the burden of fishworkers' issues not only at work but also in their household tasks. Most often, only the livelihood space issues are addressed but not the mechanisms that affect the household. Women fish vendors play a crucial role in the supply of fresh fish to households. Society overlooks this critical role in providing nutrition. There are caste-based exclusions in

accessing water bodies. Women fishers bear the burden disproportionately. As part of their empowerment, women fishworkers need to develop their organizations and lead them as an integral part of the larger fishworkers' organizations. The addressing of these matters was taken up affirmatively in the drafting of the constitution with the view of building an inclusive and representative federation of unions.

Adoption of the constitution: The organizational expansion, increasingly covering new areas and categories of fishworkers in both marine and inland sectors, called for adoption of a democratic constitution for it as a federation of trade unions. The meeting discussed the main text of the constitution with its members. They made several suggestions for strengthening the organization's constitution. A road map for proceeding with the constitution was agreed upon and a committee was appointed to oversee the process. ❧

For more

National Platform for Small-Scale Fishworkers (NPSSFW)

<https://smallscalefishworkers.org/small-scale-fish-worker-organisations/national-platform-for-small-scale-fish-workers-inland/>

Joined In Common Cause

More than one hundred small-scale fishworkers from five Central American countries gathered for the third fisheries congress

The city of Cahuita in Costa Rica hosted the III Small-Scale Fisheries Congress from September 26 to 29, 2023. Its theme was: 'Life, knowledge and culture linked together'. In attendance were numerous fishworkers and shellfish gleaners and their representatives from Costa Rica, along with 21 delegates from Mexico, Honduras and Panama, representing communities dependent on marine small-scale fisheries (SSF). In this region, "coastal communities display a unique cultural and social profile, derived from historical settlement patterns, that sets them apart from inland communities," according to the Central American Integration System (SICA).

"For example, the Caribbean coast in Nicaragua, Honduras, Costa Rica and Panama was initially developed by groups of African descent with a long tradition in artisanal fishing and trade with other parts of the Caribbean. Many indigenous communities, such as the Garifuna in Honduras and Nicaragua or the Kuna in Panama have traditionally depended on coastal resources for both their livelihood and cultural integrity. Fish constitutes the main protein source for many coastal communities in Central America. Marine fishery resources are consequently key for the coastal economy, and it is estimated that they provide work and income to a significant part of the local population," according to SICA.

The need to co-operate

This was the third time that CoopeSoliDar R.L and the Red de Areas Marinas de Pesca Responsable

(Responsible Fisheries Marine Areas Network) joined forces to organize an event aimed at exploring challenges and opportunities for fishworkers. On this occasion they were assisted by the TICCA Consortium, SwedBio and SSF Hub-EDF.

The Congress approached topics such as consolidation and recognition of decent work; governance; marine and coastal conservation as a consequence of sustainable use and management of resources; full participation in public policy-making; and the global challenge of lobbying to protect SSF from the Blue Economy that deprives communities of their rights to land and marine territories and their human rights in general.

Fish constitutes the main protein source for many coastal communities in Central America. Marine fishery resources are consequently key for the coastal economy...

Fishworkers young and old, men and women shared their priorities in the Congress through inter-generational knowledge and experience exchange. Participants also held a night wake in order to discuss the Final Statement and express support to Cahuita's local communities, threatened by national authorities reluctant to recognize shared management systems for decision making in the area. Several national and local fisheries and environmental institutions also took part, including Costa Rica Fisheries and Aquaculture Institute, National

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Manifeto

We, artisanal small-scale fisherfolks and mollusc gatherers, present at the III Congress of Small-Scale Artisanal Fisherfolks: Intertwining Life, Knowledge And Culture from Costa Rica, Panama, Honduras, Nicaragua, and Mexico, from September 26 to 29, 2023, do hereby assert our rights.

Aware of the importance of our work for the sustainable development of our coasts and seas and of the inescapable commitments of our countries before the world, especially SDG 14, the GBF and a path full of important meetings towards the III United National Ocean Congress led by the governments of Costa Rica and France.

Present the following manifesto to our authorities, in the hope that progress will be made in the recognition of the small-scale artisanal fishing sector within the framework of justice and equity, as demanded in several agreements to which our governments are signatories.

Considering:

That small-scale artisanal fishing is more than just catching fish, it is a way of life that allows indigenous, tribal, Afro-descendant and local communities to live and work in a dignified way for their daily sustenance, a living culture that makes us happy.

That fishing allows our communities a connection with the beautiful simplicity of our ancestors.

That we need to be allowed to resume our customs and maintain our identity as fishing peoples conscious of their positive relationship with the sea and its resources.

That united we have the strength to preserve our culture, the right to access to the sea and the land in our territories.

That we must exercise our right to health, to the conservation of our marine territories and to follow up and conserve the essence and fishing identity of our ancestors.

That our contribution to the conservation of the sea and its resources is extremely important at a time when threats to the conservation of marine resources are imminent due to climate change, and the excessive development resulting from the Blue Economy such as mass tourism, pollution, and industries.

Request:

That national and regional institutions linked to small-scale artisanal fishing, as well as international organizations interested in supporting conservation with people of the sea, take into account the real needs and interests of fishers, mollusc gatherers, women and young people involved in this activity.

That we must be participants and protagonists in all policies and decisions for the sector that affect us and be present in the decision-making spaces. We assert: 'Nothing About Us Without Us.'

Respect for the traditional use and knowledge related to indigenous peoples and the use of coastal marine resources that are important for the culture and development.

To develop programmes and projects that respond to the real and felt needs of the small-scale artisanal fishing populations, considering their diversities and contexts.

That programmes be developed for elderly fishers who reach an advanced age without a pension or social security.

To consider small-scale artisanal fishing as a decent and dignified job and not to have other alternative activities imposed on us that are not linked to what we know how to do, which is to fish and make sustainable use of fishery resources.

We demand greater support from the institutional framework of our countries in our marine territories.

That there is political will to implement the sector's ideas and law proposals.

We the fishermen and fisherwomen of 24 communities of Costa Rica's Pacific and Caribbean coasts, hereby request:

A ministry of fishing (INCOPESCA) that is present and more involved, that recognizes the true importance of a shared model of our marine territories and the co-management of our fisheries. In this sense, we support our Afro-Costa Rican brothers and sisters in the defence of Cahuita and its National Park, which today suffers from vulnerability in the face of a State that does not recognize the rights of its people to the shared management of their territory.

A State that complies with its responsibilities towards us, along with its social institutions like the ministry of health, economic institutions like SENASA, and environmental institutions linked to small scale artisanal fishing, that reviews and updates, together with our organizations, the fishing management plans for the marine responsible fishing areas and follows up on them.

A ministry of fishing (INCOPESCA) that fights for us and works with us, in the search for a human rights-based approach to the conservation of the sea and its fishery resources, and that supports our proposals for fairer, more inclusive and equitable public policies.

A Ministry of fishing (INCOPESCA) that is clear of the need to provide the conditions for us to exercise our right to fish and access to the sea, as local communities, indigenous peoples, or Afro-descendant communities that deserve a humane and dignified treatment to develop our lives.

A Ministry of fishing (INCOPESCA) that accompanies us and helps us contact organizations such as INDER that develops projects that can support us, as fisherfolks, with resources and equipment for our work.

Costa Rica must recognize the traditional use of our indigenous peoples to the resources of the sea and coasts, specifically to say YES, to the traditional uses of Brunca's people in the Ballena Marine National Park.

Urgently attend to the requests of small-scale artisanal fishing organizations regarding their projects and alternatives to improve the quality of life of these communities, such as the ecotourism project proposed by El Jobo Fisher Association, the gathering centre projects of the different communities and the recognition of Cahuita Marine Responsible Fishing Area.

Cahuita, Costa Rica
September 29, 2023



Field visit during the Congress to learn of the situation of Cahuita and their National Park. The Congress was held under the motto 'Life, knowledge and culture' because small-scale fishing is a way of life with a unique identity

Conservation Areas System, Costa Rica Women's Institute, Talamanca's local government, fishworkers' associations from Costa Rica and neighbouring countries.

"Small-scale fisheries in Costa Rica are yet to be recognized in their full extent and complexity," says a report prepared as part of the 2022 State of the Union Project. "Their potential to contribute to sustainable development is neglected, making hard to imagine that the country will be able to move towards United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, namely Goal number 14, to conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development."

Ana Teresa Williams Cole, president of Cahuita's Fishworkers' Association, one of the local organizers, thinks that sustainability is a key defining element of the small-scale sector. "The Congress was held under the motto

'Life, knowledge and culture' because small-scale fishing is a way of life with a unique identity. Both our Pacific and Caribbean coasts hold a great diversity in fishing gear, targeted species or in the environment-friendly way we use marine resources. This Congress served to know the sector better and now we are joining forces to fight for other people's rights, having heard about the experiences of our friends from Mexico and Central America."

For more

Highlights III Congress of SSF in Cahuita, Costa Rica, 2023

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=043CSLnFRuY>

II Congress of SSF in Costa Rica (About Blue Economy)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gE2QFvSYDg&t=15s>

III Congress of SSF in Costa Rica – Governance

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JRp1DooiiVA&t=22s>

III Congress of SSF in Costa Rica - Women and Youth

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vecx4AU05U&t=17s>

III Congress of SSF in Costa Rica - Co management

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kau7KkYWRKo&t=28s>

III NATIONAL CONGRESS OF SMALL SCALE ARTISAN MOLLUSCHERS (AS) FISHERMEN (AS) 2023

<https://coopesolidar.org/iii-congreso-de-nacional-de-pescadores-as-artesanales-molusqueros-as-de-pequena-escala-2023/>

Stewardship, Resurgence

A decade after the adoption of the SSF Guidelines, a renewal of commitment and initiatives is needed to promote the sustainability, prosperity and well-being of small-scale fisheries in Asia

The International Year of Artisanal Fisheries and Aquaculture 2022 (IYafa) was celebrated worldwide. It provided a global platform to highlight the importance of small-scale fisheries and artisanal aquaculture, their role in sustainable development and the myriad of ways they ensure food security and poverty alleviation in dependent coastal and rural communities. As the lead agency, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) co-ordinated with member countries, governmental and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and partners to organize meetings, seminars and consultations around the world.

All these partners have a stake in supporting small-scale fisheries and aquaculture. They have highlighted the need to support the implementation of the international instruments in support of sustainable fisheries, particularly the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries (CCRF) and the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication (the SSF Guidelines).

In Asia, activities organized to celebrate artisanal fisheries and aquaculture began with a webinar held by FAO and INFOFISH. Titled 'Celebrating Small-Scale Fisheries and Aquaculture in Asia: Spotlight on Small-Scale Aquaculture in Asia', it featured presenters from fisheries departments, NGOs and research institutions from Bangladesh, Cambodia and the Philippines. The International Collective in Support of Fishworkers (ICSF), SEAFDEC and WorldFish were also represented. During the event, FAO and INFOFISH launched the IYafa 2022 e-photobook, a testimonial to the diversity, innovation and resilience of small-scale fisheries and aquaculture farmers in Asia.

In early 2023, the IYafa 2022 Closing Ceremony for Asia was organized by Thailand's department of fisheries, INFOFISH and the TBTI Global Foundation, with technical support from FAO. Titled 'Towards a New Era of Support for Small-Scale Fisheries and Aquaculture', this hybrid event was attended by key SSF advocates, including representatives from the Regional Advisory Group of the Global Strategic Framework in support of the implementation of the SSF Guidelines, the Southeast Asian Fisheries Development Center (SEAFDEC), the Network of Aquaculture Centres in Asia-Pacific (NACA), ICSF, the Ocean University of Sri Lanka, and the Sri Lanka Forum for Small-Scale Fisheries.

Important but unrecognized

These partners emphasized that artisanal fisheries and aquaculture are of immense significance in Asia, playing a multifaceted role in the region's socio-economic and ecological landscape. SSF and aquaculture in Asia serve as primary sources of aquatic foods, playing a pivotal role in ensuring nutrition and food security. Millions of people, men and women, depend on these resources spanning both marine and freshwater ecosystems. Beyond their immediate socio-economic contributions, artisanal fisheries and aquaculture have the potential to contribute significantly to biodiversity and ecosystem conservation through the adoption of sustainable practices that prevent over-exploitation. The inter-generational transfer of skills highlights their cultural importance, underscoring the need to preserve cultural heritage.

The key conclusions and recommendations from this event focused on a forward-looking, renewed commitment to support the SSF sector. Continuous advocacy and

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support are imperative to achieving Sustainable Development Goal 14 (SDG14) of adaptation to climate change in rural communities that rely on these sectors. However, despite their substantial contributions, these sectors are often overlooked by policymakers, emphasizing the need for greater support. Policymaking in Asian fisheries should be guided by evidence-based research, local knowledge and a transformative perspective.

Involving small-scale fishers and farmers in decision-making processes is essential for the effective management of resources and aquatic spaces. Their participation ensures the protection of customary rights, access and traditional tenure, promoting transparency and accountability in policies that may negatively impact small-scale fisheries. To support and enhance this engagement, the foundation is already laid by the Asia Regional Advisory Group (RAG) for SSF, convened under the International Planning Committee for Food Sovereignty (IPC).

RAG's primary purpose is representing the interests of small-scale fishers and to support the implementation of guidelines that can benefit these sectors. The group provides a platform for SSF actors to engage and utilize their advice effectively. Governments, agencies and organizations are encouraged to collaborate with the Asia RAG. This collaboration will promote greater participation in the implementation of the SSF Guidelines, reinforcing the principle of inclusiveness in decision making.

Secure tenure and responsible governance are critical for the sustainability of SSF and aquaculture. There is a need for efforts to protect customary rights, access and traditional tenure. It is vital to establish a framework that emphasizes consultation, participation, transparency and accountability in the policies and decisions that may affect SSF and small-scale aquaculture (SSA).

This is particularly relevant in the face of competing interests that may arise, such as the need for conservation and the establishment of marine protected areas (MPAs), the demands of tourism, freshwater management, infrastructure development, industrial-



Small-scale fishing family. Secure tenure and responsible governance are critical for the sustainability of SSF and aquaculture

scale activities and the pursuit of Blue Economy initiatives. Efforts must also be directed towards addressing issues related to pollution and the degradation of habitats caused by activities in other sectors. These challenges not only threaten the environment but also the very resources that small-scale fisheries and aquaculture rely upon.

Challenges and opportunities

Promoting fishery management that is sensitive to the needs of SSF is of paramount importance. It requires actions such as designating small-scale fishing zones, co-ordinating conservation measures, addressing over-capacity and overfishing, investing in stock assessment and data collection, combating illegal fishing, and supporting monitoring, control and surveillance. These actions will also serve to lay the groundwork for combating illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing. Additionally, supporting small-scale fishers' access to markets by offering capacity building that takes into account gender and culturally appropriate approaches to improved post-harvest and handling technologies, promoting equitable access to market information, ensuring the production of safe and healthy food, and implementing fish product certification training programmes are vital steps to boost these sectors.

Promoting decent work, safety and sound operational conditions in SSF and aquaculture is essential. Identifying elements of poor or unsafe working conditions for women and men working in these sectors, addressing the underlying drivers and seeking solutions with stakeholders is key. The introduction of safety guidelines at sea and in inland waters, as well as in aquaculture, improved infrastructure and landing sites, support for weather forecasts and notifications, and promoting risk communication and awareness are essential components of management.

Developing capacity in SSF and aquaculture communities and addressing gender issues is not only crucial for securing fishery resources but also for sustaining livelihoods, achieving gender equality and breaking the cycle of poverty. Providing adequate training and employment opportunities for youth in fishing or rural communities, and supporting women's organizations are essential for offering viable livelihood alternatives and prospects for the younger generation, to ensure continuity and vitality of SSF and aquaculture, while also addressing youth unemployment. Supporting and empowering women's organizations through training, leadership opportunities and access to resources is a key element of capacity-building efforts as women play a significant role in SSF and SSA. Their inclusion and participation are essential for the sector's success.

Social protection remains critically important for vulnerable households in SSF and aquaculture. This includes supporting fair access to credit, offering preferential rates, developing reasonable insurance and compensation mechanisms to address crises and natural disasters, and providing access to occupational healthcare. Recognizing the unique challenges and hardships faced by women and developing policies to address gender-related discrimination are also crucial components of social protection.


The tenth anniversary of the endorsement of the SSF Guidelines represents a significant milestone in global efforts to support these vital sectors. The implementation of these

Guidelines, in conjunction with the 2012 FAO Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security offers a comprehensive pathway to address a range of critical issues. This is particularly important in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), notably SDG 14 that focuses on life below water, emphasizing the importance of conserving and sustainably using oceans, seas and marine resources.

The emergence of National Plans of Action (NPAs) for the SSF Guidelines implementation and dedicated SSF policies in Asian countries demonstrates a commitment to supporting SSF at a regional level. These NPAs ensure the practical application of the Guidelines in diverse cultural and environmental contexts.

Participation in the Second Biennial Small-Scale Fisheries Summit, organized in conjunction with FAO COFI 2024 in Rome, Italy, will provide a platform for stakeholders to share insights, best practices and progress in SSF development, fostering collaboration and knowledge exchange.

FAO and its partners will continue providing countries with support for SSF and aquaculture. To this end, FAO is developing assessment tools for data-poor, multi-species and multi-gear fisheries, crucial for informed decision making and resource management. Other areas of focus include the review of fishery support measures and their application to SSF, as well as the promotion of SSA and mariculture activities as alternative livelihood options for coastal communities, reducing pressure on wild fish stocks.

In 2024, marking a decade of progress since the adoption of the SSF Guidelines, a renewal of commitment and initiatives to promote the sustainability, prosperity and well-being of small-scale fisheries remains essential in contributing to the achievement of global sustainability goals. 

For more

The small-scale fisheries and aquaculture sector in Asia: Small in scale, big in value

<https://www.fao.org/3/cc0026en/cc0026en.pdf>

Towards a new era of support for small-scale fisheries and aquaculture

<https://www.fao.org/webcast/home/en/item/6123/icode/>

SSF Guidelines website

<https://www.fao.org/voluntary-guidelines-small-scale-fisheries/en/>

Asia Workshop: IYafa 2022-Celebrating Sustainable and Equitable Small-scale Fisheries, 5 to 8 May 2022, Bangkok, Thailand

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

A Ripple Effect

Africa's shared vision of food security and nutrition, poverty eradication and sustainable natural resources finds voice in IYAFA

The message is clear: the role of fishers, fish farmers and fishworkers is central. They are custodians of aquatic resources for all. In scores of events and other engagements across Africa in 2022, conducted by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and our valued partners, what has been at the very heart of the shared vision is the need for food security and nutrition, the eradication of poverty and the sustainable use of natural resources.

Many of the obstacles facing small-scale fisheries (SSF) in Africa are also found in other regions. Some, however, are unique to Africa and need innovative remedies at local and regional levels. Improving the global understanding of the problems faced by those involved in small-scale fisheries and aquaculture is key. For FAO and its partners, the way ahead for growth lies in exchanging knowledge and providing lessons about what works well and what needs further consideration.

The International Year of Artisanal Fisheries and Aquaculture (IYAFA 2022) was a unique opportunity for collaboration, both large and small, to focus on the particular needs of SSF and aquaculture in Africa.

A much needed platform

IYAFA 2022 was celebrated as a unique platform to focus on the needs of small-scale fisheries and aquaculture in Africa. Numerous challenges and solutions related to artisanal fisheries and aquaculture in the continent were highlighted, especially through country and regional events. IYAFA 2022 emphasized the central role of fishers, fish farmers and fishworkers as custodians of aquatic resources. The year served as a springboard

for fostering future collaborations with Africa's fishing communities; showcasing FAO's fisheries and aquaculture projects in Africa; offering recommendations to support the artisanal fisheries and aquaculture sectors in the region, moving forward.

Regional co-operation for aquatic management of fisheries must be encouraged. This can be achieved through the establishment of effective monitoring, control and surveillance. Besides the development of improved conservation and sustainable use of fisheries resources, the involvement of Regional Fishery Management Bodies and Regional Fishery Advisory Bodies would be key to addressing the stock management and regulations

IYAFA 2022 was celebrated as a unique platform to focus on the needs of small-scale fisheries and aquaculture in Africa

surrounding fishing gear practices. Small-scale operators will benefit from this protection.

To secure a sustainable future for African SSF, the exchange and sharing of knowledge to avoid past problems is vital; it will keep up the momentum beyond IYAFA 2022. Fishers and fishworkers are among the most vulnerable to disasters and climate change, apart from lacking secure tenure of fishing waters. Policies and actions should support building resilience to these threats for the sector's long-term continuity. Encouraging awareness and implementing guidelines to avoid overfishing, a palpable threat to the

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The International Year of Fisheries and Aquaculture (IYafa) 2022 in Africa: Final report . Many of the obstacles facing small-scale fisheries (SSF) in Africa are also found in other regions
 Source: <https://www.fao.org/3/cc4939en/cc4939en.pdf>

community-led industry, will improve the maintenance of fish stocks, as will the implementation of a closed season for fishing activities.

Women make up around 40 per cent of the workforce in ssf production in Africa, not only in the post-harvest and

service sectors but also in subsistence fishing. They do most of the selling and marketing of fish products but are often constrained by high transportation costs and post-harvest losses, as well as gender inequality when it comes to earnings. It is important to

acknowledge that women and men involved in the sector are equals.

FAO wants to see that, beyond IYAFA, efforts continue to help develop and deploy technology and digital innovation to support women in all sectors. Besides being good news for the fishing industry, the women themselves will benefit as these moves promote equality and improve lives.

The promotion of academic research that looks at ways to safeguard access to aquatic resources for all is key. Overfishing of some fish species, such as tilapia on Lake Victoria, could result in the disappearance of certain species altogether. Fish and sea life are also at risk when lakes and seas become polluted with poisons. Regional co-operation must be encouraged to collectively fight illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing operations by establishing effective monitoring, control and surveillance.

Keeping the public informed about the benefits of small-scale fisheries for the wider population is important. Taking a fresh approach to organizing events can be just as effective as engaging audiences online to spread the word—examples include food tastings, cooking demonstrations and exhibitions. As a fisherwoman said, small actions can have big impacts like a ripple effect. She points out that fishers understand how to maintain a balance in the ecosystem. Any decisions made will affect their way of life and work.

FAO in Africa, and our partners, are calling on all those involved in the fisheries and aquaculture sectors to continue the momentum of the past year. Small-scale fisheries and aquaculture can benefit from a new era of support because despite being small in scale, they are big in value.

As custodians of shared resources, the small-scale fishers themselves have a fundamental role in responsible management and sustainable use of aquatic resources and ecosystems. Effective participation in any decision making process will ensure their traditional knowledge is maintained, that it helps shape laws and policies. Improving access to markets and infrastructure will safeguard the provision of aquatic products that



The International Year of Fisheries and Aquaculture (IYAFA) 2022 in Africa: Final report. IYAFA 2022 was a unique opportunity for collaboration, both large and small, to focus on the particular needs of SSF and aquaculture in Africa
Source: <https://www.fao.org/3/cc4939en/cc4939en.pdf>

are both affordable and of good quality. With all sides holding on to those strong principles, the path forward can be that of resilience. 📌

For more

The International Year of Fisheries and Aquaculture (IYAFA) 2022 in Africa: Final report

<https://www.fao.org/3/cc4939en/cc4939en.pdf>

Africa Workshop: IYAFA 2022-Celebrating Sustainable and Equitable Small-scale Fisheries, 15-18 February 2023

<https://www.icsf.net/resources/africa-workshop-iyafa-2023/>

Handing Over The Baton

IYAFA 2022 laid the groundwork for a future of inclusiveness, resilience and sustainable practices in the Caribbean region and Latin America

The journey from IYAFA 2022 to the upcoming 10th anniversary of the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-scale Fisheries in the Context of Poverty Eradication (SSF Guidelines) marks a transformational period in the Western Central Atlantic Fishery Commission (WECAFC) region. IYAFA 2022 was characterized by celebrations, multi-faceted initiatives, strategic events and recommendations. It set a robust stage for the significant milestone of SSF10.

Mesoamerica and South America enhanced the regional scope, resulting in joint publications and presentations that resonated globally.

In November 2021, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) launched a landmark virtual event that drew more than 1,200 attendees, setting the stage for a year of collaborative endeavours. The event initiated a year-long celebration, showcasing collaboration between WECAFC and sub-regional committees. To help lead the celebrations in the region, WECAFC, through its regional co-ordination committee, identified 24 champions, including individuals and organizations. These champions were recognized for their exemplary contribution to the development of small-scale fisheries (SSF) and aquaculture. This identification can extend beyond their contribution to IYAFA celebrations, dovetailing into the tenth anniversary of the SSF Guidelines.

Old relations, new partnerships

Venturing into Colombia, a strategic partnership with FAO unfolded, supporting the revitalization of cachama (the blackfin pacu) culture within the Ticuna indigenous producers association (ASOPROWONE). This initiative not only cut production costs but also elevated product quality. Meanwhile, Nicaragua took a bold step by hosting the National Forum on Artisanal Fishing and Aquaculture in Bluefields, where over 100 participants from diverse fishing communities engaged in discussions about experiences, challenges and innovations. This forum highlighted the significance of sustainable fishing practices, the vital role of women in the sector, and the looming effects of climate change.

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The proclamation of 2022 as the International Year of Artisanal Fisheries and Aquaculture by the United Nations General Assembly triggered a synergistic response in the WECAFC region

The proclamation of 2022 as the International Year of Artisanal Fisheries and Aquaculture by the United Nations General Assembly triggered a synergistic response in the WECAFC region. A pivotal recommendation from the 17th Session of WECAFC led to the establishment of a regional co-ordination committee comprising diverse stakeholders from the Caribbean Network of Fisherfolk Organizations, the Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism (CRFM), academic institutions and international organizations.

The committee strategically aligned its efforts with three main cross-cutting themes: recovery, resilience and gender-youth. Through careful planning, the committee orchestrated a series of impactful events, following a regional launching ceremony contextualizing the goals of IYAFA for the Latin America and Caribbean region. The collaboration between WECAFC,

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BERTHA SIMMONS



Colombian small-scale aquafarmers participating in the revitalization of cachama. Venturing into Colombia, a strategic partnership with FAO unfolded, supporting the revitalization of cachama (the blackfin pacu) culture within the Ticuna indigenous producers association

In tandem, the University of West Indies, through its Centre for Resource Management and Environment Studies, orchestrated a multi-faceted approach. This included youth dialogues in Jamaica, Guyana and St. Lucia, fostering discussions on youth-centric approaches to bolster SSF's sustainability. In Barbados, a popular theatre training initiative focused on women in fisheries, providing a unique platform for their voices. Furthermore, the university undertook a comprehensive study on inter-sectoral

linkages in Caribbean fisheries, offering valuable insights into the intricate web of connections within the industry. A webinar on social justice for women in fisheries delved into the nuanced dimensions of gender and social justice, enriching the discourse on the sector's dynamics.

Women's diverse roles

Building on this focus on gender in fisheries, the first Regional Women in Fisheries Forum was held on the margins of the 75th meeting of the

HEYSEL CALDERON GOMEZ



Small-scale fishers and aquafarmers displaying IYafa t-shirts while participating in a field trip during the 75th meeting of the Gulf and Caribbean Fisheries Institute

Gulf and Caribbean Fisheries Institute. This regional event brought together women from over 18 countries in the Latin America and Caribbean region as well as international participants. This session was instrumental in producing a call to action for the mainstreaming of gender equity in fisheries policies in the region. Such efforts stand as a testament to a region-wide commitment to celebrate artisanal fisheries and aquaculture, to engage in actions promoting sustainability, inclusiveness and social justice in the SSF landscape.

The WECAFC co-ordination committee, working hand-in-hand with sub-regional committees, fuelled a series of high-impact events and publications. Notable articles showcased a commitment to inclusive, responsible and sustainable fisheries; an example was titled: A 'Sea' Grassroots Approach to Celebrating IYafa 2022 in the Western Central Atlantic Region. The WECAFC Regional Co-ordination Committee facilitated a European Union-funded project co-ordinated by the WECAFC Secretariat. It had the provision of financial support to the South American committee for policy briefs, fostering sustainable development in artisanal fisheries.

The 18th Session of WECAFC marked a crucial moment, with a high-level side

event to institutionalize the momentum from IYafa 2022. This was jointly organized by an IYafa 2022 partner, the Environmental Defense Fund (EDF). The gathering laid the groundwork for the long-term sustainability of the region's artisanal fisheries and aquaculture sector. Furthermore, the CRFM's strategic resolution at the Special Meeting of the Ministerial Council in October 2022 stands as a beacon, emphasizing the integration of SSF and aquaculture in the ongoing Blue Economy dialogue, symbolizing a unified approach for a more sustainable fisheries sector in the Caribbean.

As the WECAFC region plans for SSFIO, the focus shifts towards institutionalizing the regional co-ordination committee to ensure sustained progress. The celebration of IYafa 2022 showcased achievements and laid the groundwork for a better future. 🌊

For more

Report on the implementation of the IYafa (2022) in the context of the Commission-recommended Roadmap for the celebratory year in the WECAFC region and next steps
<https://www.fao.org/3/cc7100en/cc7100en.pdf>

Latin America and the Caribbean Workshop: IYafa 2022-Celebrating Sustainable and Equitable Small-scale Fisheries, Brazil, 2-5 November 2022

<https://www.icsf.net/resources/latin-america-workshop-iyafa-2022/>

A "Sea" Grassroots Approach to Celebrating IYafa 2022 in the Western Central Atlantic Region
<https://www.fao.org/3/cc0158en/cc0158en.pdf>

The Stage is Set

The International Planning Committee for Food Sovereignty (IPC) has been active in IYAFA celebrations. It is all set to carry forward the energy

The United Nations designated 2022 as the International Year of Artisanal Fisheries and Aquaculture (IYAFA 2022). The global action plan emphasized the objective for the year as “a world in which small-scale artisanal fishers, fish farmers and fishworkers of both genders are fully acknowledged and empowered to sustainably manage their aquatic resources and foster socioeconomic development”. As a part of this initiative, social movements and organizations representing small-scale fisheries (SSF) were encouraged to seize the opportunity to enhance the visibility of SSF and their significant social, cultural and economic contributions.

The International Planning Committee for Food Sovereignty (IPC), an international platform representing small-scale food producers at the global level, participated in the celebrations through the efforts of the IPC Fishers’ Working Group (FWG). The group held the role of Vice-Chair within the IYAFA steering committee, contributing to the successful realization of IYAFA’s goals.

In its long-standing commitment to advocacy, FWG has consistently operated at international, regional and national levels through its affiliates, all of which have contributed with several national events to IYAFA. These aimed to propel the enforcement of the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication (SSF Guidelines), the primary and singular international documents encapsulating the rights and principles vital for safeguarding SSF rights. As part of its involvement in the IYAFA celebration, FWG, supported by the Advisory Group (AG) and the three Regional Advisory Groups (RAGs), dedicated substantial efforts throughout 2022 to develop the SSF

People-Centred Methodology to assess at the national level the SSF Guidelines.

This is tailored to assess progress and human rights violations within SSF communities, collaborating closely with these communities to comprehensively examine the implementation of the Guidelines. This pioneering methodology is intended to serve as a guiding document, enabling local communities to collect pertinent qualitative data regarding the status of SSF communities regarding the principles of human rights endorsed by the SSF Guidelines. This assessment aims to ensure that governments are held accountable for their commitments and present an accurate portrayal of

The timing is perfect with IYAFA’s momentum carrying over to the 10th anniversary of the SSF Guidelines in 2024, thereby shedding light on the realities faced by SSF a decade after the endorsement

the genuine implementation of the Guidelines. The timing is perfect with IYAFA’s momentum carrying over to the 10th anniversary of the SSF Guidelines in 2024, thereby shedding light on the realities faced by SSF a decade after the endorsement. Considering the lasting impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, this will aim to reinvigorate the advocacy efforts all across.

A report, a reckoning

The IPC Working Group on Fisheries and the SSF-GSF AG collaborated to spearhead the development of a first report using the SSF People Methodology. The preliminary report, titled ‘People-Centered Assessment of the Implementation of the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable

This article is by the Working Group on Fisheries of the International Planning Committee for Food Sovereignty (IPC) (ipc-cip@foodsovereignty.org), Centro Internazionale Crocevia (CIC), Italy

Small-Scale Fisheries', was crafted based on this methodology involving IPC members of SSF movements from all over the world. The data collected from the 21 participating countries, as presented in the preliminary report, illustrated a distressing pattern of non-implementation. A few positive instances were overshadowed by a significant violations of human rights. This underscored the systemic marginalization of SSF within their respective societies.

Although the preliminary report was an initial attempt at utilizing this methodology, IPC members undertook the responsibility to deepen the analysis by conducting three additional assessments at the regional level through the RAGs in 2023. These will help assess the implementation of the SSF Guidelines, shedding light on human rights issues from a more regional perspective.

The preliminary report was presented during the first SSF Summit on 2 to 4 September 2022; IPC's Working Group on Fisheries had contributed to its organization. IPC seized the opportunity provided by the concurrent 35th FAO Committee on Fisheries (COFI) session, coinciding with IYAFFA, to

commemorate the diverse SSF people's movements globally by organizing a one-day SSF global gathering during the SSF Summit. Dubbed 'The Peasants of the Oceans and Inland Water Bodies: Living with Nature', the event was a critical opportunity to establish a unified perspective on critical topics concerning the survival and dignity of SSF communities; to foster a collective space of solidarity; to emphasize the potential roles of fisher movements in transforming the global fishery system; and to introduce and launch the SSF People Methodology alongside its inaugural pilot report.

The open dialogue held during the summit greatly contributed to shaping a shared vision among several organizations and movements. The IPC's event gathered numerous SSF organizations from all over the world, including representatives from CAOPA, the Ibero-American SSF network RIPAPE and the Sambo Creek fisher association, as well as representatives from the Garifuna Indigenous Peoples, the Central American Network of Indigenous Peoples and Small-Scale Fishers, the NGO Mauritania 2000 and others.

To build on the solidarity of the SSF Summit and IYAFFA, IPC organized

IPC



The IPC Working Group on Fisheries delegation to the COFI35, FAO, September 2022



IPC Working Group on Fisheries delegation to the UN Ocean Conference in Lisbon, June 2022

a series of trainings and exchanges within the SSF sector, which continue to this day. The training programmes aim to build and strengthen SSF capacities by providing new and young leaders of small-scale social movements with a comprehensive understanding of the political and economic landscape in which they operate. The training is divided into two main sessions. The first focuses on the provision of theoretical tools and policy analysis through six modules covering topics such as the current economic system, the human rights approach, inter-governmental policy spaces, social movement politics and public policy on SSF. The second session focuses on practical skills and tools, such as developing an advocacy strategy, ensuring human rights, improving public speaking and enhancing leadership skills.

The first training programme was organized during the meeting of the Regional Advisory Group (RAG) for Africa in Cape Town, South Africa, from November 18 to 24. With the support from Masifundise Development Trust, TNI, FIAN and Centro Internazionale Crocevia, RAG organized a fisher-to-

fisher exchange and training. During which the RAG Africa members were joined by representatives from inland and coastal fisher communities from several regions of South Africa. On that occasion, the training delved into comprehending the political economy surrounding the utilization of ocean resources and the human rights-based approach (HRBA). 3

For more



International Planning Committee for Food Sovereignty (IPC)

<https://www.foodsovereignty.org/>

The "People-Centered Assessment of the Implementation of the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries"

https://www.foodsovereignty.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/TNI_report-EN_web.pdf

IYAFA 2022 Small-Scale Fisheries Summit Report, 2-4 September 2022

https://ssfhub.org/sites/default/files/2022-10/SSF%20Summit%202022%20Report%20-%20English%20version%20_0.pdf

A New Era of Hope

The 10th Anniversary of the SSF Guidelines in 2024 will offer an opportunity to renew individual and collective commitments

The end of the International Year of Artisanal Fisheries and Aquaculture (IYAFA 2022) has led to a new era of support for artisanal fisheries and small-scale aquaculture. Several closing events were held around the world, not only to recognize the importance of small-scale fisheries (SSF) and their contribution to food security and poverty alleviation, but also to pledge support. Too Big To Ignore (TBTI) Global had the privilege of co-organizing the Closing Ceremony for Asia with the Thailand Department of Fisheries, in Bangkok on 28 February 2023, in partnership with INFOFISH and with technical support from the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO).

gaining visibility around the world, concerted and sustained efforts are imperative to enhance information and knowledge about the sector, to protect their rights and access to resources and markets, to promote decent work and safety for people involved in the SSF and aquaculture sector, and to develop fishery management and governance systems sensitive to the needs and the characteristics of SSF and aquaculture in each region. National commitments are key to achieving these goals, and mechanisms to enhance regional collaboration are a must for capacity building. The Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication (SSF Guidelines) is a key instrument.

Being a global research and capacity building network on SSF, TBTI Global is launching its new era of support with a range of activities. One, it is releasing the second edited volume on the SSF Guidelines, this time focusing on the roles of existing national policy and legal frameworks that can help support and advance the implementation of the SSF Guidelines. The first volume had described how the SSF Guidelines were received and perceived, exploring the challenges and opportunities that could be anticipated through case studies of SSF in about 30 countries. Collectively, authors talked about how implementation would not happen on its own, but would require continued persuasion and negotiation, especially as power and inequity continue to be an issue. Partnership and collaboration would need to be strengthened—or built anew. Various transformations and reforms in SSF management and governance are required.

The second volume picks up on these points and moves forward.

The speakers reiterated the significant contributions of SSF and fish farmers, in terms of livelihoods and food security, local economy, jobs and employment throughout the value chain

About 300 people from more than 40 countries joined this two-hour hybrid event including presentations from fishers' groups and civil society organizations (CSOs), non-governmental organizations (NGOs), government and inter-governmental organizations, and research institutions and academics. The speakers reiterated the significant contributions of SSF and fish farmers, in terms of livelihoods and food security, local economy, jobs and employment throughout the value chain. Their contribution to cultural and heritage value, conservation efforts and stewardship ethics were also emphasized.

IYAFA 2022 was an opportunity to reflect on several issues. While SSF are

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Fishing village in Malawi. Several closing events were held around the world, not only to recognize the importance of small-scale fisheries (SSF) and their contribution to food security and poverty alleviation, but also to pledge support

It emphasizes the need to look at the implementation of the SSF Guidelines from institutional and legal perspectives. Specifically, it examines the existing conditions in countries that can support the implementation of the SSF Guidelines. It does so in terms of laws and policies and whether these are directly or remotely related to SSF. The book illustrates this through reviews and appraisal of national-level policy and legal frameworks in 15 countries.

Two, the network is supporting the Thailand Department of Fisheries in a new initiative. Funded by the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Secretariat, it seeks to improve data and data collection system for SSF in the APEC economies. The best practices are getting documented through a collaborative process, based on the knowledge and experience shared by the participating economies, and further discussion. In line with the SSF Guidelines, this project contributes to enhancing knowledge and understanding of SSF, helping address challenges like overfishing and the

lack of recognition of SSF customary and tenure rights in law and policies. One focus of the work is on developing context appropriate strategies for sustainable resource management among APEC member economies. Once the best practices document is ready, it can be incorporated in the Information System on Small-Scale Fisheries (ISSF) that TBTI Global maintains, to broaden application in other areas.

Three, following the success of the World Small-Scale Fisheries Congress in five regions in 2022, the network is launching a new SSF Regional Symposium Series in 2024. The first one for the Asia-Pacific region will take place in April 2024 in Shizuoka, Japan. Its theme is 'Bright Spots ~ Hot Spots' to recognize the decades of hard work by fishers, fishworkers and their organizations, CSOs, communities, government organizations and NGOs, practitioners and researchers. It illustrates why SSF matter and looks to gather greater support for them.

The SSF Guidelines and IYAFA 2022, along with the work of the International

THAILAND DEPARTMENT OF FISHERIES



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IYAFA Closing Ceremony for Asia. About 300 people from more than 40 countries joined this two-hour hybrid event including presentations from fishers’ groups and civil society organizations (CSOs), non-governmental organizations (NGOs), government and inter-governmental organizations, and research institutions and academics

Collective in Support of Fishworkers (ICSF) and numerous other partners, are clear evidence of this effort. SSF has no shortage of bright spots with numerous studies, projects, networks and fisher-driven and community-based programmes. They contribute towards enhancing the knowledge and understanding about SSF, illustrating their values and contributions, and highlighting the critical role they play in supporting multiple Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Great work has been done to strengthen SSF organizations and build their capacity for better governance. Major advances have been made in theories, policies and practices that promote viable and sustainable SSF around the world. Therefore, the 2024 SSF Regional Symposium is an opportunity to share these bright spots to energize and inspire others. At least two more regional symposiums will be held later in the year.

To not get carried away

We must acknowledge that SSF still face many problems and challenges, making them vulnerable; climate change and disaster are two prominent ones. SSF continue to be economically marginalized and unable to engage in making decisions and policies. The lack of secure access to resources and markets is compounded by poverty, poor working conditions and inadequate infrastructure. Some fishers have been displaced from places where they live and work by major development projects. Numerous cases of injustice have been noted—they more are likely to happen with the continued presence of agendas for economic growth and development in ocean and coastal areas around the world.

The global interest in biodiversity conservation has not paid sufficient attention to SSF’s traditional and customary rights. Yet, none of these should lead to hopelessness or fear.

Quite the contrary: SSF communities are part of the 'hope spots' for the ocean, given how critical they are to the protection of the health of the ocean. More attention and support need to be provided to strengthen SSF and enable them to contribute to poverty alleviation, food security, cultural identity, conservation and sustainability, among other concerns. Describing SSF as hope spots recognizes the challenges that require varied interventions.

TBTI Global continues to dig deeper into the factors and conditions affecting SSF's viability and sustainability. It is strengthening its Blue Justice programme, with more stories and evidences, and with the application of a rapid appraisal tool, I-ADAPT, to the case studies, in order to enable the development of a Blue Justice typology based on a comprehensive set of guiding questions. These enable us to improve our knowledge regarding the community's resilience and its capacities to cope with stressors of injustices, as well as to adapt to change in ways that correspond well with their particular contexts.

Capacity is often mentioned in its absence in all efforts across multiple groups. Strengthening of SSF organizations is a key area for building capacity; to enhance their participation, including the representation of women, in policy and decision making processes, among others. Co-ordination among government departments involved in fisheries, environment, social development and legislation, is imperative to break the silos, and to facilitate concerted effort to protect fishers' rights and support their livelihoods.


Better integration of knowledge and building of common understanding and terminology across disciplines is also highlighted as an area needing greater effort. TBTI Global has developed a transdisciplinary training programme to deal with the current and emerging challenges, emphasizing how to structure the governance system to make it correspond with the diversity, complexity and dynamics of the sector. We offer free online training

on a regular basis, and on-site training whenever opportunities arise.

Just as co-management and decentralized systems can help improve SSF management and governance, TBTI Global has been creating 'country hubs' to strengthen the network and capacity to engage locally, as also to influence national policies. TBTI Japan was the first hub, co-ordinated by Yinji Li of Tokai University. It was followed by TBTI Bangladesh (Mahmud Islam, Sylhet Agricultural University), TBTI Philippines (Alice Ferrer, University of Philippines, Visayas) and TBTI Ecuador (María Jose Barragan Paladines, Charles Darwin Foundation).

Each hub has full autonomy in creating its focus, in how it is organized and operated. TBTI Global supports the country hubs through communication strategies that help enhance their visibility, by making connections that strengthen their networks, and through the production and promotion of e-books that illustrate the importance of SSF in their respective countries. The experience with the four country hubs, especially with the e-books programme, suggests this is a move in the right direction. We are excited to welcome more hubs in 2024, including TBTI Canada, launched on World Fisheries Day this year.

The new era of support for small-scale fisheries had a good start with the IYAFA closing events. SSF10 is an opportune time in 2024 for all stakeholders to renew their commitments, individually and collectively. For this, we need to first look back and see what has been done; we must review our efforts and then look at what has yet to be done.

When the World Fisheries Day comes around again in November 2024, we should be in a good position to put in place a comprehensive and holistic research programme and related activities that help enhance quality and capacity for SSF governance, support of the implementation of the SSF Guidelines, achieve the multiple SDGs relevant to SSF, and secure Blue Justice and development opportunities for SSF around the world. 

For more

International Year of Artisanal Fisheries and Aquaculture 2022: Final Report

<https://www.fao.org/3/cc5034en/cc5034en.pdf>

The new era of support for small-scale fisheries in Asia was pledged in Bangkok at the IYAFA Closing Event for Asia

<http://toobigtoignore.net/the-new-era-of-support-for-small-scale-fisheries-in-asia-was-pledged-in-bangkok-at-the-iyafa-closing-event-for-asia/>

The Small-Scale Fisheries Guidelines: Global Implementation

<http://toobigtoignore.net/the-small-scale-fisheries-guidelines-global-implementation/>

The SSF Regional Symposium in 2024

<https://www.ssf-symposium.com/>

Future Reimagined

Participants from 16 European countries discussed the analytical framework for better governance of fisheries, employing imaginative tools for greater collaboration

The last of the series of IYAFE workshops was convened by the International Collective in Support of Fishworkers (ICSF) in collaboration with Low Impact Fishers of Europe (LIFE) and Mulleres Salgadas (MuS). The regional workshop for Europe was held on November 13-16, 2023, in Galicia, Spain. With its participatory and effective co-management systems, Galicia was an apt location.

The participants from 16 countries included representatives of fishworker organizations, civil society bodies and academia. There were concerted efforts to ensure the participation of women, indigenous peoples and

Compostela, the exercise lasted five hours in which the session dynamic alternated between plenary, working group sessions guided by facilitators and group presentations. Engaging and empathic stories were co-created, employing future thinking tools and storytelling; all these focused on the ways in which people relate to SSF and coastal-inland aquatic ecosystems. To transcend the limits of textual and verbal communication, Nove Noel, a local artist, developed a metaphoric and artistic outcome, capturing the core of discussions.

The second day began with a field visit to women shellfish harvesters, showing the participants their roles in fisheries; their management systems; their organizations and networks; and their vision for the future. Thereafter, a major theme of discussion was governance challenges; the workshop discussed these in relation to access to fishery resources and fishing areas, co-management systems, access to fair and sustainable food systems and participatory guarantee systems. The third day focused on strengthening of SSF organizations and collaborations in Europe. The session started with brief question-answer pitches with a few participants. Later on, an interactive exercise was facilitated to map capacity strengthening needs and avenues of new partnerships.

The lengthiest day was the fourth one of the workshop. Two important aspects of the workshop were deliberated upon: a discussion on women in SSF and the preparation of the draft workshop statement. The women in fisheries discussion was channelled through an interactive panel; the participants prepared the draft statement through a collaborative process.

Engaging and empathic stories were co-created, employing future thinking tools and storytelling...

youth. The workshop aimed to discuss the desirable governance transitions, issues pertaining to women in small-scale fisheries (SSF), and pathways of strengthening capacities of SSF and support organizations. It shaped inspiring narratives for the future of SSF, emphasizing the importance of desirable and equitable futures.

The workshop opened with remarks from the organizers Maarten Bavinck of ICSF, Dolores Gomez of MuS and Marta Cavelle of LIFE, followed by an introduction to the programme by the ICSF team. After an icebreaker, it started with an interactive session to mainstream visions of preferable and desirable futures for SSF in Europe. Organized by the Equal Sea Lab team from the University of Santiago de

This article is by Sivaja.K.Nair, (sivaja.icsf@gmail.com) Programme Executive, ICSF and Ignacio Agnelli, (i.gianelli@usc.es) PhD. Scholar, University of Santiago de Compostela with inputs from workshop participants



The future is bright: Participants immersed in a group activity on building a new narrative for SSF in Europe. The participants from 16 countries included representatives of fishworker organizations, civil society bodies and academia

Imaginative and creative ways were used to design inspiring futuristic narratives. The working groups generated ideas from ‘seeds’, a list of 15 European initiatives offering potential solutions for an equitable future. The groups started drafting a framework of a future starting from the seeds at the centre, identifying first-order and second-order implications of positive actions. These ideas were further developed through a storyboard narrated by the group representatives.

The narratives developed by the participants waded across the themes on equity, inclusiveness, cultural heritage, representation, participation, sustainability, food security, access, conservation, restoration and innovation. Fishing was viewed as a culture embedded in food systems. The participants imagined a future in which small-scale fishers thrive under equitable and transparent policies that prioritize environmental sustainability, secure tenure, inter-generational

equity, gender equity, community vitality and inclusive governance.

The sessions focused on governance of the SSF sector, with an emphasis on promoting low-impact fisheries and nurturing attitudes instead of extractive ones. There was a strong emphasis on the need for fair access to resources and their equitable distribution, particularly for women and young people. The discussions identified over-fishing and depleted stocks, inequitable quota distribution, economic and social disparities, lack of social recognition and under-representation of small-scale fishworkers in decision making as major challenges.

The strategies identified to transform SSF governance in the light of these challenges included building new narratives with an interdisciplinary approach, proactive measures and legal actions to address unfair practices in fishing, enhanced community engagement for equitable practices, inclusion of SSF in marine

spatial planning to ensure their access to customary fishing grounds and resources, policy reformation and legal actions for SSF rights and capacity building. The new narrative has to build on the qualitative aspects of SSF, which takes into account its cultural context. While discussing the existing quota systems, fishworker representatives stated that preferential access based on the gear types can offer equity in terms to resource access. SSF's existence is important to assure the sustainability of resources; climate resilience has to be a hallmark of SSF, they added.

Incorporating fishery resources within the discourse of food systems, the participants raised their concerns on the unfair third-party certification procedures, making the resources inaccessible to the SSF. Within this framework, participants called for digital tools and technology to be developed and used by the SSF to access markets, marine spatial planning and sustainable management of resources. Participants discussed the idea of building an alternative food system that works for the SSF, prioritizing wet marketing and labelling.

With regard to the current co-management practices, the participants noted that the major challenge hindering SSF participation is the power dynamics between SSF organizations and government bodies. The participants called for policies to be based on community-centric initiatives and adaptive co-management at the local, national and regional levels. In addition to this is the emerging concern over private entities getting interested in marine spaces. They stated the importance of taking the responsibility of conservation beyond fishing communities to include general public and multiple stakeholders in the process.

Collectivism, the key

On the third day, the participants discussed the need to strengthen SSF organizations. It was felt that collectivization could build strength and engagement with policy makers. They explored the spaces of interdisciplinary collaboration—between civil society groups, fishworker

organizations, academia and policy makers. While building collaborations, it is important to engage young people and develop a network of youth in fisheries. In addition to collaborating with common connections, it is also important to identify and build new coalitions to strengthen a common vision.

They felt the need to develop a structure to building coalition, which can be furthered by a working group through an identification of policy needs, skills, market and communication needs. Participants also shared a vision of having a unified platform (potentially LIFE), to which all other existing organizations are linked. This central point can be used to access information, share experience, identify policy spaces and plan engagements.

However, there is a huge knowledge gap that can be filled through targeted capacity building of fisheries organizations in fund raising, lobbying, management, engaging in policy making, social media, leadership and women's rights. This is also needed to develop a collective narrative drawing attention to the SSF sector that is otherwise diminishing. In order to strengthen the collaborations, the participants listed out activities on knowledge generation, capacity building, knowledge exchange and networking.

A systemic lack of trust between fishers and other organizations has limited the scope of alliances. Moreover, the sector is fragmented, both internally and externally; there is manipulation of information and diversification of interest. While recognizing the diversities within SSF, it is important to identify a common goal to work on. This will require long-term engagement and trust building. While working on building alliances, it is also important not to lose thrust and focus on gender issues in SSF.

Gender in fisheries

The panel on women in fisheries discussed major challenges female fishers and fishworkers experience at various stages of their work. The major challenge was participation in leadership roles and representation



The healthy harvest : The mollusc gatherers detailing their sustainable harvest practices to the IYafa Europe workshop participants during the field visit. The second day began with a field visit to women shellfish harvesters, showing the participants their roles in fisheries; their management systems; their organizations and networks; and their vision for the future

in the decision making. Though the outright discrimination has trimmed down at the workspace, women's agency as decision makers and knowledge holders is still questioned and, at times, mocked. The participants shared their concerns on the invisibility and devaluation of their labour, even when they experienced a triple burden of household labour, occupation and organizational labour. The participants called for extensive research on matters regarding gender, recognition of occupational illness and provision of social security, including maternity and paternity benefits. They drafted an action plan for gender.

The field visit to the shellfish harvesters on the Galician coast exemplified the role of local communities in sustainably managing resources while protecting their livelihood and ensuring decent work

practices. The local fishers showed how they harvest shellfish and sort them based on size; they detailed the allowable catch limit based on the specificity of the species. They explained the role of technology in streamlining these processes and the entire value chain. The participants explored the intertwining of science, technology, community knowledge and engagement in sustainable management of resources.

The workshop concluded with a commitment to build alliances to strive towards transforming SSF governance, taking into account concerns of gender equity and justice and upholding a human rights-based approach. ♣

For more



IYafa Regional workshop: Getting the story straight and envisioning a fair future for small-scale fisheries in Europe, 13-16 November 2023, Galicia, Spain

<https://www.icsf.net/resources/europe-workshop-iyafa-2023/>

Voice of a Brighter Future

A 15-year-old girl from an Irish island attended a workshop on small-scale fisheries for the first time. A first-person account of her excitement, of tough realities and hope

My name is Amelie Bonner. I am 15 years old. I love art, film, reading and music. I speak French, English and Irish. I am from Arranmore Island off the coast of Ireland. It is a beautiful island and is currently home to around 500 people. The community is small. My grandfather is a fisher and my father is the secretary of the Irish Islands Marine Resource Association (IIMRO). As you can imagine, fishing plays a very significant role to me and to my people, the majority of whom come from fishing families, which is to say that the culture and traditions of fishing have been passed down through the generations. It is vital that we do not lose this knowledge.

to the meeting, but I got to know the attendees quite quickly through the week; I felt welcomed straight away. It is not as common to see people of the younger generation partake in the likes of fishing conferences. Yet I think it is important to get involved and to take in as much information as possible, since all of the work happening currently will be left to my generation down the line.

The workshop consisted of presentations, discussions and a field trip. The first day was an introduction to the workshop and to each other. We all paired up and interviewed each other for five minutes, after which we had to introduce the interviewee to the rest of the group. I liked this exchange; it put me with someone that I wouldn't have spoken to at the time had we not had to do the exercise. Introducing my partner was nerve-racking since the room was brimming with participants. Everyone showed respect and listened attentively.

We took part in an exercise with Equalsea, a group of researchers who specialize in biology, economy, marine sciences, fisheries management, equity and governance. For this, we split into groups, mostly staying with people who spoke the same language. We had to choose three current topics of fishing and to write what progress we would like to see in the future in those areas. We then looked at the topics we chose and connected recurring themes together. Moving on from this, we created a story with fictional characters relevant to our previous work. This activity aided me in learning more about the main problems that small-scale fishers face and what needs to be accomplished for these problems to change. For example, the recognition of the traditional knowledge of small-scale fishers and the fishworkers,

It is not as common to see people of the younger generation partake in the likes of fishing conferences. Yet I think it is important to get involved...

I had the opportunity to attend a regional workshop on the International Year of Artisanal Fisheries and Aquaculture (IFAYA) in Galicia, Spain. Held in Vilanova de Arousa on November 13-16, 2023, the workshop aimed to come up with a plan of action around what needs to be done to improve the conditions for fishers. I met many people from around the world, including representatives from India, Cyprus, Finland, Norway, Uruguay, Brazil, Portugal, France, Scotland, England, Poland, Italy, the Netherlands and, of course, Spain.

I was there as an observer to understand and learn about small-scale fishing. I knew nobody prior

This article is by Amélie (seamus@iimro.org), a student at Gairmscoil MhicDiarmada, Ireland



Group photo from Europe IYFA Regional workshop: Getting the story straight and envisioning a fair future for small-scale fisheries in Europe, 13-16 November 2023, Galicia, Spain

inherited and experiential, is essential for informing fisheries management decisions.

As someone without the same level of experience and knowledge in fishing, I found listening to others educational and eye-opening. These are not discussions I hear on a daily basis and I really enjoyed being allowed into a space where I could learn from all the people I was with.

Language barriers were a huge obstacle. Throughout the workshop, there were translators doing simultaneous translation from Spanish to English and vice versa. A couple of people translated for those who spoke only French. The workshop couldn't have happened without the tireless effort of the translators and I applaud them. Since I speak English and French, I could converse with most of the participants. I have a basic knowledge of Spanish, but not enough to carry on a conversation, although I found that being submerged in the language helped improve my Spanish.

On the second day, we went on a field trip to visit the Mulleres Salgadas,

an organization of local women who gather a variety of shellfish and clams in the Ria de Arousa. These women take great pride in their work. They are admirable. Whilst collecting shellfish, they simultaneously pick up rubbish on the beach, helping to keep the beach clean. We were given a tour of the production of the shellfish. First they grade them by hand, using small hand-held tools that look like rulers. Then they send the shellfish to the factory where they are graded once more through a shaking machine into three sizes. They are then put into appropriate containers and sold. I thought the process to be thorough and well-organized. I really enjoyed getting out of the conference room and seeing the area, which we hadn't previously had the opportunity to do. The landscape reminded me of home.

One of the main problems small-scale fishers face is industrial fishing and trawlers. I knew prior to the conference that trawlers caused huge damage. Listening to the real impacts on small-scale fishers and the environment made me realize the

extent of this problem. Apart from the trawlers, I also learned about the quota system, of which I knew nothing beforehand.

Another issue that came up frequently was diversity in fishing. When speaking of this topic, three groups of people often came up: women, youth and indigenous communities. As a young person, I found that people were very keen to talk to me about fishing. I was the youngest participant. At first I found it slightly strange because I didn't think anything of it. But I realize that it is quite unusual for someone so young to be involved with fishing.

On the final day, representatives and observers of the Mulleres Salgadas joined us in a panel discussion on 'Women in Fisheries'. The panel included select participants from the workshop. This was probably one of my favourite discussions. I think it is extremely important to highlight the gender-based struggles and inequalities in industries; the fishing industry is no different. Not only are there women in the industry of fishing itself, but women outside the industry who support fishermen often go unrecognized, without credit. A panel member mentioned that there is no gendered word for 'fisher' in Gaelic. The term used is 'iascaire'; 'iasc' being fish and the suffix changes it to 'one who fishes'. I like this word because it escapes any disagreements about the word fisherman and fisherwoman. Many of those who spoke at the panel mentioned that they didn't feel discriminated against in their place of work, but felt it once they had moved to higher positions.

I got to know of a law introduced in 1995 in Spain that prevents women becoming members of the management of organizations they were a part of rightfully; meaning they could only remain workers. This penalization has put women at a disadvantage. One panel member was not allowed to become the president of her organization because of this law. She appealed since she had a majority vote. But to no avail. Unfortunately, no political parties in Galicia are interested in changing this law. I think that denying women

their place in the fishing industry is an injustice to all the women who contribute to it. These women want to be heard and represented. I don't think misogynists realize the positive impacts and contributions that women have on the fishing industry. For too long women have been left unpaid, uncredited and unrecognized for their work in fishing. They have been gathering shellfish, fishing, buying parts for boats and equipment, managing the administration, selling fish, and doing so much more. Fishing would be nothing without women.

In our last hours at the workshop, we worked on a declaration. It was to be sent to politicians and government officials in the hope that they take action. The contents of the declaration are a list of points that everyone agreed were essential for a just future for Europe's small-scale fishers. Much of this part of the workshop went into overtime because everyone was fatigued. Nonetheless, they all put in a big effort to get the declaration finished before the end of the night.

Loving to learn

I am so thankful for the opportunity to learn and contribute to this workshop. I loved learning about the participants, their lives and their relation to fishing, as well as meeting new people. Socializing at dinner was always a pleasure. If there's one thing I learned, it is that fishers love to chat! I hope to see a brighter future for small-scale fishing and I think this conference was a step in the that direction. 🍷

For more

IYAFA Regional workshop: Getting the story straight and envisioning a fair future for small-scale fisheries in Europe, 13-16 November 2023, Galicia, Spain

<https://www.icsf.net/resources/europe-workshop-iyafa-2023/>

A Sense of Home

Svein Jentoft's essays on the experiences of small-scale fisheries focus on the human aspects of the communities in which they are embedded, common to both the North and the South

The Gift of Community – More Essays on Human Experiences of Small-scale Fisheries by Svein Jentoft. TBTI Global. 2023. 364 pages

The well-known sociologist Svein Jentoft has spent many years of his life studying and writing about fisheries, both in the global South (such as in Nicaragua, where he has spent much time) and in the North (such as his own country of Norway). Having taken part in the negotiations that led to the SSF Guidelines in Rome in 2014 and being immersed by the subject, he has already edited four academic volumes on small-scale fisheries (SSF), with one more on the way. In addition, he has given many presentations on the topic. Now he has followed up on an earlier collection of 2019 titled *Life above Water – Essays of Human Experiences of Small-scale Fisheries*, gathering 35 essays under the provocative title 'The Gift of Community'. The book can be downloaded for free from the Too-Big-To-Ignore website.

There are many publications and policy directives on SSF in the world, often highlighting the hardships and the difficulties experienced by those employed in the sector. Svein Jentoft is, however, unique in highlighting the human side of the relationship between these fisheries and their communities. After all, Jentoft argues, fishers—men and women—are part of communities, and there are things “that communities offer that small-scale fisheries cannot do without”. He continues: “They depend on each other and must both be viable.”

This book makes a passionate plea for taking care of SSF communities as much as of the fisheries themselves. After Much in line with, for example, the Community Conservation Research Network, he argues that “healthy

resources need healthy communities”. Needless to say, the reverse is also true.

What are ‘communities’? Jentoft does not provide a clear definition but the book suggests that he has in mind the settlements and neighbourhoods in which SSF families normally congregate. He acknowledges that these communities, frequently going back several generations, are rarely trouble-free. Still, they are crucial to the lives of their inhabitants.

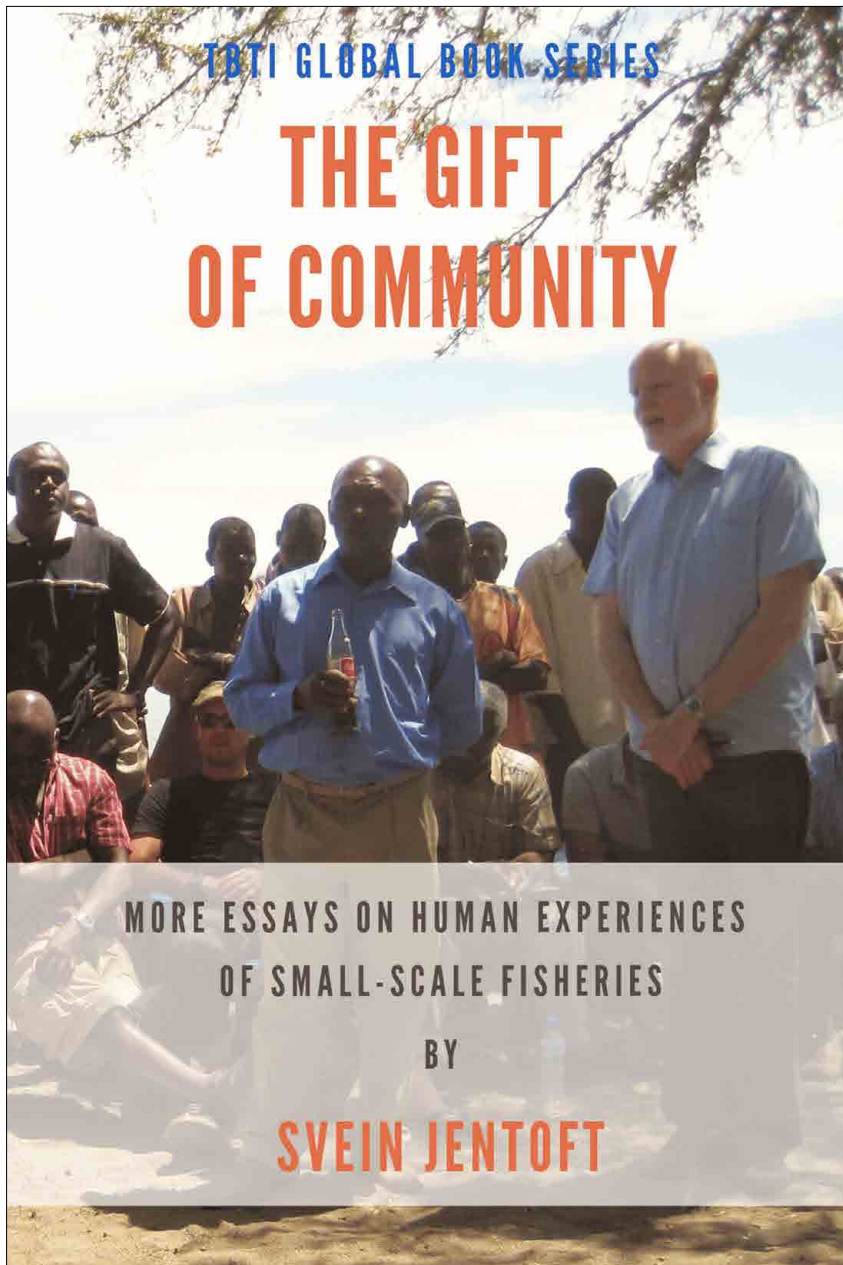
To illustrate his point, Jentoft refers to his former student, Paul Onyango, who shared the lives of a community of poor, small-scale fishers along Lake Victoria. He had noticed that “despite their lack of material wealth, people had each other and their community and their sense of self – their dignity”. Jentoft points out that people living in such communities supply others with all kinds of material goods and services. They also provide each other lasting social relationships and a basic sense of home. No person can do without that.

Shape and form

The book groups the essays under nine headings. The starting point or ‘the watershed’, as Jentoft calls Part 1, is the year in which the SSF Guidelines were ratified. He suggests that one must distinguish a time before the ratification of the Guidelines, in which SSF communities enjoyed little protection from international law, from the time that followed their endorsement, in which a comprehensive, protective umbrella has, in principle, been established. The remainder of the book speaks to the conditions that are relevant for putting the Guidelines to work. This is Jentoft's long-time ambition.

The section titles are worth noticing. ‘Why we need communities?’ (Part 2);

This article is by Maarten Bavinck (j.m.bavinck@uva.nl), Professor Emeritus, Department of Human Geography, Planning and International Development Studies, University of Amsterdam, and Chairperson, ICSE, The Netherlands

**For more**

The gift of community – more essays on human experiences of small-scale fisheries

https://tbtiglobal.net/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/The-Gift-of-Community_S.-Jentoft_TBTI_s.pdf

The MARE Publication Series

<https://www.springer.com/series/10413/>

The Community Conservation Research Network

<https://www.communityconservation.net/>

‘Small-Scale fisheries as a governance challenge’ (Part 5); ‘The small-scale fisheries employment system’ (Part 6); and ‘Learning the small-scale fisheries life’ (Part 8). Many chapters build on Jentoft’s interest in the fields of philosophy and social sciences; they are peppered with interesting anecdotes and quotes from the likes of Aristotle and Plato. The language he uses, however, is simple and easily accessible. This corresponds to the breadth of his target audience that includes those employed in fisheries, in governments, in academics and in the civil society. Jentoft tickles their imagination and

feeds their thoughts, building upon the experience gained during many years in the field. For those with an inquisitive mind, the book is a delight, with countless insights.

It is often assumed that the SSF Guidelines are intended primarily for safeguarding small-scale fishing communities in the global South. Jentoft disagrees vehemently. Although small-scale fishers in Norway, for instance, have declined in number, he argues that they face similar problems as their counterparts in the South, “such as loss of income, tenure rights, political marginalization and the erosion of communities”. There is, therefore, no reason that the human rights principles meant to govern SSF should differ between the North and the South. Because small-scale fisheries in the North and the South are ‘different but similar’, Jentoft suggests that “there are cross-cultural lessons to draw from their comparison”. Small-scale fishers in both Tropical Majority and Temperate Minority countries can, therefore, learn from each other’s experiences.

More than anything else, this refreshing book is about people—boys and girls, men and women—living the lives of small-scale fisheries in present and in future. It is also about those involved in their governance, providing people in positions of responsibility with worthwhile suggestions. Explicitly endorsing the SSF Guidelines, it points out pathways for their more thorough implementation.

Besides providing glimpses of the remarkable academic that Svein Jentoft is, the book is a welcome addition to the literature on small-scale fisheries in the world. **3**

One of a Kind

Clotilde de Jamblinne, honorary chair of the Coalition for Fair Fisheries Arrangements (CFFA), was a quiet and self-effacing stalwart committed to the fight for the rights of fishers

For those of us who knew Clotilde de Jamblinne, her sudden passing came as a surprise because she was still so active and joyous though all of 97 years. I had known her from the AFI group of which she had become a member in 1949. Along with professional women from developing countries, it had colleagues in India, too, where I worked. As part of the group, Clo had traveled to the US for studies. There she became known for her immense courage to drive alone cross-country, transporting furniture in a second-hand vehicle.

She took charge of training other young women who aspired to be part of the group. She subsequently worked in Rwanda and was back in Belgium after eight years of work in the administration of a hospital there. In Belgium she worked in the secretariat of the Entraide et Fraternelle, a support group that funded grassroots work in developing countries, which is where I got to know her well. Universally acknowledged was her spirit of service. She drove everything and everybody around her, organizing places and documents and then housing the global wanderers. Hence it came naturally to me to suggest to Pierre Gillet that he should ask Clo to help with the setting up of the first office of the International Collective in Support of Fishworkers (ICSF) in Brussels in 1986. ICSF had no funds to pay anybody or to hire an office space. One of Gillet's cousins provided that to us, very near the Grand Place.

"Clo was a real stalwart," said Brian O'Riordan, who worked closely with her subsequently at the office. "Always there, quietly, competently behind the scenes at events, in the documentation centre, welcoming visitors to the ICSF Brussels office, and taking a keen interest in all the people

and programmes of ICSF." That was exactly her, always behind the scenes but keenly interested.

Then in the 1990s, when the Coalition for Fair Fisheries Arrangements (CFFA) was set up to enable small-scale African fishers to defend their rights before European institutions, she volunteered to take up the helm, becoming its first chair. For years, she came to the office every Tuesday and Friday, meticulously recording and organizing all the publications and documents. If ICSF, and then CFFA, managed to set up a documentation centre on small-scale fisheries in Brussels, it's thanks to Clo.

She was always there with her smiling simplicity, welcoming and feeding women and men from all over the world who had come to Brussels to defend their rights to make a living from fishing. In May, a few months before her final goodbye, Clo was at the CFFA's 30th anniversary celebrations. As another CFFA Board member wrote: "Clo was so happy to be with us and our African partners, proud no doubt to see that this small association, which she chaired for many years, was going strong, and that a new generation had taken up the reins and was continuing the fight to which she had committed herself."

When she was taken to the hospital suddenly, a few hours before she passed away, she is said to have exclaimed: "Find out how our colleagues in Ramallah are." She was closely following the events there and in other parts of the world where people are struggling for their rights. She was one of a kind.

You are dearly remembered, Clo. We thank you for being who you were.



*This article is by **Nalini Nayak** (nalini.nayak@gmail.com), Trustee, ICSF Trust, India*

A Sparkling, Committed Fighter

Clotilde de Jamblinne was a gently persistent champion of small-scale fishers across the world

My name is Claude Lagasse and I chair the Coalition for Fair Fisheries Arrangements (CFFA). It is with great sadness that our team, the members of the association and the CFFA secretariat, learned that our honorary president Clotilde de Jamblinne, affectionately called Clo, has left us.

She was a pioneer. Back in the 1980s, she and Pierre Gillet helped launch the European office of the world's leading network for the defence of small-scale fishers rights, the International Collective in Support of Fishworkers (ICSF). Then in the 1990s, when CFFA

was set up to enable African small-scale fishers to defend their rights before European institutions, she volunteered to lead and became its first chair.

Clo was a committed woman, always on the side of the small-scale fishing communities of Africa, Asia and Latin America. Those struggling to survive and to give their children a decent future. She was always at our side too, welcoming people from all over the world who came to Brussels to fight for the rights of small-scale fishers.

For all this, we thank you, Clo. 🍷

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Clotilde de Jamblinne. She was always there with her smiling simplicity, welcoming and feeding women and men from all over the world who had come to Brussels to defend their rights to make a living from fishing

This article is by **Claude Lagasse** (samasbl@skynet.be), Honorary Chair, CFFA

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CLIMATE CHANGE

COP28 concludes with historic agreement to try to tackle the climate crisis

The United Nations Climate Change conference, COP28, has concluded with a historic agreement to transition away from fossil fuels and to try to rein in accelerating climate change.

Key messages

- Declaration recognizes need to transition away from fossil fuels
- It aims to keep Paris Agreement 1.5°C goal within reach
- It voices concern at accelerating pace of climate change
- It reflects WMO scientific input
- It urges more adaptation financing, including through Early Warnings for All

The United Nations Climate Change conference, COP28, has concluded with a historic agreement to transition away from fossil fuels, triple renewable energy and increase climate finance for the most vulnerable. It aims to keep alive the goal of the Paris Agreement to try to limit long-term global average near-surface temperature to 1.5°C above the pre-industrial era.

The agreement – whilst less ambitious than many had hoped – calls for more decisive climate action in the face of rapidly accelerating climate change and more dangerous extreme weather that is leading to massive environmental, economic and societal upheaval.

Source: <https://reliefweb.int/report/world/cop28-concludes-historic-agreement-try-tackle-climate-crisis>

CLIMATE CHANGE

WorldFish calls for small-scale fisheries' inclusion in COP28 loss and damage fund

As the COP28 begins in Dubai, WorldFish, an international research and innovation organization

reducing hunger, malnutrition and poverty across Africa, Asia and the Pacific, strongly advocates for the inclusion of small-scale fisherfolk in the Loss and Damage Fund, initiated at COP27 and due for operationalization at this year's COP.

“Over 58.5 million people are employed in small-scale fisheries, these fisheries are global lifelines,” says Dr. Essam Mohammed, Director General of WorldFish,

Small-scale fisheries, both marine and freshwater, face significant threats from climate change. Rising temperatures, ocean acidification, and extreme weather events disrupt ecosystems, affecting fish populations and habitats in rivers, lakes, and oceans. These changes can result in reduced catches, or loss of traditional fishing grounds, impacting the livelihoods, nutrition and food security of millions dependant on this sector.

WorldFish calls for the swift operationalization of the Loss and Damage Fund, stressing the need for straightforward access and rapid disbursement of grants, especially for marginalised communities like small-scale fisherfolk.

Emphasizing lessons from the Green Climate Fund's challenges, WorldFish suggests a more inclusive, responsive approach to funding, ensuring

broad accessibility beyond governmental reach, involving grassroots organizations, and local communities.

“Incorporating small-scale fisheries in the Loss and Damage Fund is essential for justice and equity. COP28 is our chance for transformative action to protect millions of lives, livelihoods and lay the groundwork for shared prosperity,” says Dr. Essam Mohammed,

WorldFish's other key recommendations for COP28 include:

Investment in Sustainable Aquatic Food Systems to maximize their potential as a climate solution. These systems play a key role in climate change mitigation, nourishing billions, and fostering economic growth, especially in low- and middle-income countries.

Increase South-South collaborative efforts to accelerate adaptation of proven innovations and technologies that sustainably manage fisheries and can climate-proof production.

For more information visit worldfishcenter.org/cop28

Source: <https://www.icsf.net/newss/world-news-worldfish-calls-for-small-scale-fisheries-inclusion-in-cop28-loss-and-damage-fund/>

ORGANIZATIONAL PROFILE

Red Ibero-Americana de Pesca Artesanal de Pequena Escala (RIPAPE) RIPAPE brings together 25 organizations of fishers from 17 countries

The Red Iberoamericana de Pesca Artesanal de Pequena Escala translates to Ibero-American Network of Small-Scale Artisanal Fishing (RIPAPE) in English. It is made up of over 25 fishing organizations from 15 countries in Latin America, Spain and Portugal. Established in May 2020 in the city of Cadiz, it represents more than 20 million artisanal fishers, men and women. It promotes social responsibility in their fishing communities based on the principles of ethical, socio-environmental and economic viability. It also aims for greater visibility and social and political recognition. Its priorities are the fight against climate change, incorporation of gender policies, and improving the quality of life of people in coastal communities dedicated to a sector in which more than 10 per cent of the world's population works.

RIPAPE seeks to provide a space for strengthening and supporting artisanal fishing organizations, promoting reflection and exchange of experiences that allow for



responses to challenges. The projects of 2023 have been based on two objectives: to strengthen projects and improve marketing of quality local products to meet the objective of the 2030 sustainability agenda and enhance the living conditions of artisanal fishermen; and to strengthen the role of women in our communities and identify the social deficiencies of our fishing populations so as to channel

demands before governments and international bodies.

The network also works towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), especially SDG 1 (End poverty in all its forms) and SDG 2 (End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable fishing). It does that through the identification and differentiation of products in local markets, through improving marketing through the motto 'fish less, sell better'.

It believes that small-scale fishers' heritage and cultural values make them stronger; sustainable and biodegradable materials are part of its objectives. Other goals include effectively regulating fishery exploitation; ending over-fishing and illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing; addressing fisheries subsidies; increase the economic benefits

of sustainable aquaculture; facilitate small-scale fisher's access to marine resources and markets; and implement the provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS).

As an organization created for the service of small-scale artisanal fishing communities in Latin America, Spain and Portugal, RIPAPE aims to set a benchmark for environmental, economic and social wealth, while preserving the incalculably rich cultural and heritage roots of the region.

By Nicolás Fernández
The Ibero-American Network of Small-Scale Artisanal Fishing (RIPAPE)

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CLIMATE CHANGE

Outcome of the first global stocktake

Adaptation

Emphasizes the importance of the global goal on adaptation of enhancing adaptive capacity, strengthening resilience and reducing vulnerability to climate change with a view to contributing to sustainable development and ensuring an adequate adaptation response in the context of the temperature goal referred to in Article 2 of the Paris Agreement;

Recognizes the increasing adaptation planning and implementation efforts being undertaken by Parties towards enhancing adaptive capacity, strengthening resilience and reducing vulnerability, as set out in national adaptation plans, adaptation communications and nationally determined contributions, as appropriate, and welcomes that 51 Parties have submitted national adaptation plans and 62 Parties have submitted adaptation communications to date;

Recognizes the significant efforts of developing country Parties in formulating and implementing national adaptation plans, adaptation communications and nationally determined contributions, as appropriate, including through their domestic expenditure, as well as their increased efforts to align their national development plans;

Also recognizes the significant challenges developing country Parties face in accessing finance for implementing their national adaptation plans;

Notes with appreciation the contribution of relevant UNFCCC constituted bodies and institutional arrangements, including the Adaptation Committee, the Least Developed Countries Expert Group and the Nairobi work programme on impacts, vulnerability and adaptation to climate change, to the efforts referred to in paragraph 45 above;

Notes that there are gaps in implementation of, support for and collective assessment of the adequacy and effectiveness of adaptation, and that monitoring and evaluation of outcomes is critical for tracking the progress and improving the quality and awareness of adaptation action;

Acknowledges that establishing and improving national inventories of climate impacts over time and building accessible, user-driven climate services systems, including early warning systems, can strengthen the implementation of adaptation actions, and

recognizes that one third of the world does not have access to early warning and climate information services, as well as the need to enhance coordination of activities by the systematic observation community;

Recalls the United Nations Secretary-General's call made on World Meteorological Day on 23 March 2022 to protect everyone on Earth through universal coverage of early warning systems against extreme weather and climate change by 2027 and invites development partners, international financial institutions and the operating entities of the Financial Mechanism to provide support for implementation of the Early Warnings for All initiative;

Calls for urgent, incremental, transformational and country-driven adaptation action based on different national circumstances;

Recognizes that climate change impacts are often transboundary in nature and may involve complex, cascading risks that require knowledge-sharing and international cooperation for addressing them;

Emphasizes that the magnitude and rate of climate change and associated risks depend strongly on near-term mitigation and adaptation actions, that long-term planning for and accelerated implementation of adaptation, particularly in this decade, are critical to closing adaptation gaps and create many opportunities, and that accelerated financial support for developing countries from developed countries and other sources is a critical enabler;

Recognizes the importance of the iterative adaptation cycle for building adaptive capacity, strengthening resilience and reducing vulnerability and notes that the adaptation cycle is an iterative process, consisting of risk and impact assessment; planning; implementation; and monitoring, evaluation and learning, recognizing the importance of means of implementation and support for developing country Parties at each stage of the cycle;

Encourages the implementation of integrated, multi-sectoral solutions, such as land-use management, sustainable agriculture, resilient food systems, nature-based solutions and ecosystem-based approaches, and protecting, conserving and restoring nature

and ecosystems, including forests, mountains and other terrestrial and marine and coastal ecosystems, which may offer economic, social and environmental benefits such as improved resilience and well-being, and that adaptation can contribute to mitigating impacts and losses, as part of a country-driven gender-responsive and participatory approach, building on the best available science as well as Indigenous Peoples' knowledge and local knowledge systems;

Notes that ecosystem-based approaches, including ocean-based adaptation and resilience measures, as well as in mountain regions, can reduce a range of climate change risks and provide multiple co-benefits;

Recalls that, as provided in Article 7, paragraphs 10–11, of the Paris Agreement, each Party should, as appropriate, submit and update an adaptation communication, and that the adaptation communication shall be, as appropriate, submitted and updated periodically, as a component of or in conjunction with other communications or documents, including a national adaptation plan, a nationally determined contribution as referred to in Article 4, paragraph 2, of the Paris Agreement and/or a national communication, and that Parties may, as appropriate, also submit and update their adaptation communication as a component of or in conjunction with the reports on impacts and adaptation as stipulated in Article 13, paragraph 8, of the Paris Agreement;

Also recalls that the guidance on adaptation communications is to be reviewed in 2025;

Calls on Parties that have not yet done so to have in place their national adaptation plans, policies and planning processes by 2025 and to have progressed in implementing them by 2030;

Requests the secretariat to prepare a regular synthesis report on adaptation information provided by Parties in their biennial transparency reports, adaptation communications and nationally determined contributions;

Stresses the importance of global solidarity in undertaking adaptation efforts, including long-term transformational and incremental adaptation, towards reducing vulnerability and enhancing adaptive capacity and resilience, as well as the collective well-being of all people, the protection of

livelihoods and economies, and the preservation and regeneration of nature, for current and future generations, in the context of the temperature goal referred to in Article 2 of the Paris Agreement, and that such efforts should be inclusive in terms of adaptation approaches and taking into account the best available science and the worldviews and values of Indigenous Peoples, to support achievement of the global goal on adaptation;

Calls on Parties to enhance their adaptation efforts in line with what is needed to achieve the goal in Article 2, paragraph 1(b), of the Paris Agreement and the global goal on adaptation, taking into account the framework for the global goal on adaptation referred to in decision-/CMA.5.3;

Urges Parties and invites non-Party stakeholders to increase ambition and enhance adaptation action and support, in line with decision-/CMA.5.4 in order to accelerate swift action at scale and at all levels, from local to global, in alignment with other global frameworks, towards the achievement of, inter alia, the following targets by 2030, and progressively beyond:

(a) Significantly reducing climate-induced water scarcity and enhancing climate resilience to water-related hazards towards a climate-resilient water supply, climate-resilient sanitation and access to safe and affordable potable water for all;

(b) Attaining climate-resilient food and agricultural production and supply and distribution of food, as well as increasing sustainable and regenerative production and equitable access to adequate food and nutrition for all;

(c) Attaining resilience against climate change related health impacts, promoting climate-resilient health services, and significantly reducing climate-related morbidity and mortality, particularly in the most vulnerable communities;

(d) Reducing climate impacts on ecosystems and biodiversity and accelerating the use of ecosystem-based adaptation and nature-based solutions, including through their management, enhancement, restoration and conservation and the protection of terrestrial, inland water, mountain, marine and coastal ecosystems;

Source: https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/cma2023_L17_adv.pdf

INFOLOG: NEW RESOURCES AT ICSF

Publications and Infographics

Report of the Africa Regional Workshop IYafa: Celebrating Sustainable and Equitable Small-scale Fisheries, 15–18 February 2023, Harajuku Hall, Erata Hotel, Accra, Ghana by Ahana Lakshmi, 2023

<https://www.icsf.net/resources/africa-iyafa-report-icsf-2023/>

The Africa workshop was the third in the series of four regional workshops planned by ICSF in connection with the proclamation of 2022 as the IYafa by the United Nations.

Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Framework: A handbook in support of the implementation of the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication by FAO, 2023

<https://www.icsf.net/resources/monitoring-evaluation-and-learning-framework-a-handbook-fao/>

This handbook aims to support such monitoring and contains a Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Framework for the SSF Guidelines implementation (MEL4SSF).

The Gift of Community: More Essays on Human Experiences of Small-Scale Fisheries by Svein Jentoft, 2023

https://tbtiglobal.net/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/The-Gift-of-Community_S.-Jentoft_TBTI_s.pdf

The 'The Gift of Community' is a collection of stories about hope, about the joy of being in the communities, witnessing and learning why small-scale fisheries matter to them.

Small fish for food security and nutrition by Maarten Bavinck et al., 2023

<https://www.icsf.net/resources/small-fish-for-food-security-and-nutrition-by-maarten-bavinck-et-al-2023/>

This technical paper brings focus to the often overlooked 'small fish' which play an integral role in the food security and nutrition of people living in poverty and the livelihoods of those who harvest, process, market, trade and distribute small fish.

Films

Lost Lands by Yale Environment, 2023

<https://vimeo.com/850451370>

Cambodia-based filmmaker Andy Ball focuses on two families who describe how unchecked mining of river sand for urban development has devastated their fisheries and food-producing wetlands.

The sea and the city: From the eyes of Mumbai's fishing community film by Lalitha Kamath and Gopal Dubey, 2023

<https://www.icsf.net/resources/the-sea-and-the-city-from-the-eyes-of-mumbais-fishing-community-film-by-lalitha-kamath-and-gopal-dubey-2023/>

What does it mean to live in the city and yet live amidst wetness? We explore this question through the experiences of Mumbai's indigenous fishing community, the Kolis, that live amidst the wetness of the Thane Creek, Arabian Sea and Ulhas River and the expanding concrete of Mumbai, Thane and Navi Mumbai.

A Thousand Hands: Story of Aquafarm Workers by ICSF, 2023

<https://www.icsf.net/resources/a-thousand-hands-story-of-aquafarm-workers/>

The often-overlooked issue of labour within the aquaculture industry, which has received limited attention in India.

Aquaculture at Crosswaters by ICSF, 2023

<https://www.icsf.net/resources/aquaculture-at-crosswaters/>

Aquaculture at Crosswaters delves into the dynamic emergence of aquaculture in India, with a focus on the states of Andhra Pradesh and West Bengal.

FLASHBACK

A Human-rights Approach to Fisheries

Twenty years after the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio, the United Nations (UN) is again bringing together governments, international institutions and major groups to Rio in June 2012 for the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development or Rio+20. This time, the aim is to secure political commitment for sustainable development, assess progress since the Earth Summit, and look ahead 20 years.



The human-rights approach will also:

- recognize the rights of small-scale fishworkers, indigenous peoples and local communities to the sustainable utilization and protection of their habitats;
- protect and encourage customary use of biological resources in accordance with traditional cultural practices compatible with conservation or sustainable use;
- ensure sustainable fisheries conservation, management and development, as well as conservation and sustainable use of marine biodiversity, drawing not only on scientific knowledge but also on the traditional fishery knowledge and technologies of fishing communities and indigenous peoples;
- empower traditional as well as producer organizations to undertake concurrent management of fishery resources;
- ensure consultation and effective participation of fishing communities in the conservation, management and sustainable use of living aquatic resources;
- safeguard the interests of local communities and indigenous peoples in the negotiation and implementation of international agreements on the development or conservation of marine living resources;
- recognize the social-security rights of fishers and their dependents on par with other workers, respect minimum age for work, recognize the right to safety and health, and the right to protection from work-related sickness or injury of fishers; and
- assure that policies and practices related to the promotion of international trade do not have adverse impacts on the nutritional rights and needs of local peoples.

A human-rights approach towards sustainable fisheries will sufficiently emphasize the social dimension of sustainable fisheries. It will promote the contribution of marine living resources to eliminate malnutrition. It will recognize the importance of sustainable small-scale and artisanal fisheries, and protect the rights of subsistence, small-scale and artisanal men and women fishers and fishworkers to a secure and just livelihood, and ensure preferential access to their traditional fishing grounds and resources.

Rio+20 hopes to generate solutions for sustainable development also by protecting oceans from overfishing, destruction of marine ecosystems and the adverse effects of climate change. All these could well reduce poverty, promote decent jobs and ensure sustainable and fair use of resources amongst fishing communities. But this will occur only if a human-rights approach towards sustainable fisheries is clearly recognized and factored into policies, legislation and reporting obligations of Member States. We hope Rio+20 will heed this lesson.

– from SAMUDRA Report No. 61, March 2012

ANNOUNCEMENTS

MEETINGS

High Level Event on Ocean Action: Immersed in Change, 7-8 June 2024, San Jose, Costa Rica
<https://ocean-climate.org/en/unoc2025/>

The Third UN Ocean Conference, which will take place in Nice in June 2025. This

event will be preceded by a stakeholder meeting in Costa Rica in June 2024, also with NGO participation.

WEBSITE

ICSF's IYafa 2022-Celebrating Sustainable and Equitable Small-scale Fisheries

IYafa Europe Regional workshop

<https://www.icsf.net/resources/europe-workshop-iyafa-2023/>

IYafa Latin America and the Caribbean Workshop

<https://www.icsf.net/resources/latin-america-workshop-iyafa-2022/>

IYafa Africa Workshop

<https://www.icsf.net/resources/africa-workshop-iyafa-2023/>

IYafa Asia Workshop

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



Endquote

Consider the subtleness of the sea; how its most dreaded creatures glide under water, unapparent for the most part, and treacherously hidden beneath the loveliest tints of azure. Consider also the devilish brilliance and beauty of many of its most remorseless tribes, as the dainty embellished shape of many species of sharks. Consider, once more, the universal cannibalism of the sea; all whose creatures prey upon each other, carrying on eternal war since the world began.

— Herman Melville, *Moby Dick*

