

WORLD FORUM

of Fish Harvesters and Fishworkers



LAND, TERRITORY AND DIGNITY FORUM AND ARTISANAL FISHERIES

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1. This paper approach succinctly the different discussion themes related to artisanal fisheries. The analysis is presented in three parts: the context of resource management, its importance, and the relevant experience of artisanal fishing communities. It includes a brief analysis on access rights and presents the challenges facing coastal fisheries; globalization and development; the impact of neoliberal policies on fishing communities; and, finally, food sovereignty and fishing. A characterization of the present state of the artisanal fisheries sector is included in order to introduce the global analysis.

Characterization of the present state of the artisanal fishing sector. International overview

2. According to FAO¹ records 36 million people are employed in primary activities related to capture fisheries and aquaculture production. Out of this total 15 million are full time workers; 13 million, part-time workers; and 8 million, occasional workers. 60 per cent of workers are linked to marine capture; 25 per cent, to aquaculture in marine and internal waters; and approximately 15 per cent fish in internal waters. More than 90 per cent of them work on vessels whose length is less than 24 m.
3. The total labor force in fishing communities around the world is estimated to reach 100 million people. It is supposed that for each fish harvester there are three people occupied in fish-related jobs², which shows the importance of small-scale fisheries from the social, the economic, the political and the environmental points of view.
4. World fisheries are facing a crisis without precedent. Fish stocks, and most marine species, have decreased to a much lower fraction than their historical natural levels. Commercial productivity of the oceans is at its lowest level 73-75 per cent of global main fisheries being overexploited, fully exploited or in the process of recovering. All over the world marine ecosystems as well as human communities are suffering the consequences of non-sustainable fishing.
5. The world productions of capture fisheries and aquaculture as well as fish supplies for food are presently at record levels in international statistics. They reach a

¹ . - *State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture 2002 (FAO)*

² . - *Idem*



strategic importance as food for the world population while supplying more than 15 per cent of the total human consumption of animal protein.

6. China is still by far the main producer being that its declared fishing production was 41.6 million tones in 2000 (17 million tones coming from capture fisheries and 24.6 million from aquaculture), which is estimated to provide a supply of 25 kg of food per capita.
7. Apart from China, the world population has increased faster than the total fish supplies for food provided by production, which means a decrease of the per capita world fish supply from 14.6 kg. in 1987 to 13,1 kg. in 2000. This decrease was distributed unevenly. In some countries and regions fish consumption has decreased while in others it has remained stable or increased lightly.
8. In 2000, the declared production for capture fisheries excluding China returned to the levels of the 1990's with a total between 77 and 78 million tones. This result followed 1994-1998 oscillations caused by El Niño effects in Peru's anchovy captures. Some relative increases have been recorded recently in other regions mainly in continental waters of Asia, the Indian Ocean and the Central Western Pacific. Some decreases have been recorded in some zones compared to 1998, especially in the North Pacific.
9. In northwestern Pacific the declared total captures have doubled going from 12 million tones in 1970 to 23 million in 2000. At the beginning of the 1970's China held approximately 20 per cent of this total but in 2000 its share increased to more than 60 per cent.
10. The rapid increase of the declared production of China, especially the two times and a half increase of its capture to almost 17 million tones since 1990, offers a net contrast with the decrease to almost half of the captures in other countries of the region that went down to less than 9 million tones during the same period.
11. Contrary to capture fisheries, aquaculture production had a sustained remarkable increase. Excluding China, aquaculture world production (excluding aquatic plants) recorded an average annual growth rate somewhat lower (5.3 per cent) in the 1990's than in the 1980's (7.1 per cent).
12. It is believed that aquaculture still has a potential in many zones and species. Employment in primary sectors of capture fisheries and aquaculture production



has been relatively stable since 1995 and it is estimated that these sectors employ around 35 million people in 2000.

13. International trade of fish products reached again a top value increasing to 55,200 million USD, which means maintaining the annual growth rate of 4 per cent registered for the last decade. Net export trade of developing countries increased from 10,000 million USD in 1990 to 18,000 million USD in 2000, which represents an actual growth of 45 per cent (corrected in respect to inflation).

Context, importance and experience in fish resources management by artisanal fishing communities

14. The importance of fish resource management by local coastal communities is more and more recognized. Sustainable utilization can be reached only if both ecosystem effects on living resources and fisheries effects on ecosystem are explicitly determined and understood according to possibilities. Fish harvesters are a constituent part of the ecosystem and there is a need of reaching the wellbeing of the ecosystem as well as that of fish harvester communities. According to the scale of operation, artisanal fisheries transmit a series of values that make them worthy of protection in their most valuable aspects, mostly in contrast with industrial fisheries exploitation models. Actually artisanal and small-scale fisheries have a special recognition from international bodies. In the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries (FAO, 1995) it is evident for the first time “the important contributions of artisanal and small-scale fisheries to employment, income and food security...” and the advise that States should appropriately protect the rights of artisanal fishers in order to ensure their livelihood as well as preferential access to traditional fishing grounds under their national jurisdiction.
15. As artisanal fisheries allow a more rational and equitable exploitation of fish resources, they contribute to maintaining biodiversity of marine ecosystems and promote social reproduction of human groups depending on them. Fish harvesters’ ecological knowledge is a particular feature of their culture that allows an appropriate management of fish resources; thus, there is a need of preserving the utmost socio-cultural aspects implicit in traditional fisheries.
16. Artisanal fisheries represent an economic activity in developing countries whose role is essential as a source of employment and attachment of populations to their



local areas. According to FAO³ data, during the past 25 years in developed countries, employment doubled in fisheries while it had an increase of 35 per cent in agriculture. In contrast, in developed countries Iceland and Portugal excepted one third of the population occupied in fisheries was lost. Additionally, production processes of artisanal fisheries allow a more equitable redistribution of natural resources and income due to the similar scale of production and the modality of payment (share system) generally in equal parts according to captures. In industrial fisheries, vessels are managed as net capitalistic corporations where crewmembers participate as labor force earning a salary plus a minimum percentage on captures. Work division according to specific tasks within the vessel also generates economic differences among crewmembers.

17. Small-scale fisheries proportionally create more wealth than industrial fisheries due to a smaller investment in the cost of exploitation and a higher value per unit of captured species. In several African, Caribbean and Pacific countries, the value of exports of fish products mostly coming from small-scale fisheries is higher than those of tea, coffee or cocoa⁴.
18. Virtually 99 per cent of artisanal fisheries capture goes through commerce or directly to human consumption. This is a remarkable important point because since 1982 the Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) recognizes the importance of marine ecosystems in the biodiversity of oceans, the fragility of them and the need to have them protected and preserved from large-scale fisheries (Agenda 21, UNCED). Actually, many countries already get under way ecosystems-based models for fisheries management and tend to recognize although inadequately the important role of artisanal fishing communities. In contrast, industrial fisheries strategy and non-selective fishing methods have a negative impact on the sea bottom and on fish stocks, as immature fish is captured and other non-commercial species (discards) are returned dead to the sea. Mortality via discards is sometimes higher than 90 per cent of captures, as for instance in shrimp fisheries in the Gulf of Mexico⁵.

³.- *Idem*

⁴. - MATHEWS, S. (2001) *Small-scale fisheries perspectives on an ecosystem-based approach to fisheries management*. Reykjavik, Iceland: Reykjavik Conference on Responsible Fisheries in the Marine Ecosystem 3, 2001.

⁵ FREIRE, J. (2001) *Gestión de pesquerías y conservación de ecosistemas marinos*. *El Ecologista*, Nº 24, 2001.



19. The management experience is cumulative and irreplaceable; it is the result of the identity and socialization process in which the accumulated know-how within the family and early experimentation are present. It is information, data and concepts but also how to employ sensorial, gestic and kinetic aspects in the use of gears and in navigation. These skills imply a systemic interpretation model of marine environment. The supporting role of technology (navigation, fish banks detection) does not determine the efficiency of fish operation.
20. The experience in the management of fish resources by local communities shows an important contribution to the recovery of fish resources, the capitalization of fish harvester cooperatives, organizations and guilds, the substantial improvement of prices and the insertion of fish harvester organizations in the marketing of their products. Resource allocation in several African, Asian and Latin American countries contributed to the stability of the settlement of fish harvesters and their families, multiplied the negotiating capacity for obtaining better prices, access to credit and social benefits. It also stressed the divergence of the vision of fishing communities and that of governments. The defense of artisanal fisheries and the value of sustainable management faced the process of privatization and sale of protected areas and the Exclusive Economic Zone, and the signature of international treaties and agreements like FTAA, APEC, and EU. That is the case of Chile, Peru, Argentina, South Africa, Russia, and New Zealand among others.
21. International bibliography shows that fish harvesters' participation in the management and preservation of allocated resources contributed to a better fisheries management in important issues as controlling the fishing effort, fighting against furtive fishing, protecting the environment and creating databases useful for research on fishing and decision-making in general.
22. In Chile, benthonic resources management areas are legally established and assigned to fish harvester organizations for controlled exploitation under strict evaluation conditions. In Cuba all lobster fisheries are carried out under concessions, which means that fish harvester enterprises are given exclusive fishing rights in well-delimited fishing areas. In Mexico, resource concessions to artisanal fish harvester organized in cooperatives that are supposed to fulfill predetermined requirements for their exploitation are reported.



23. Another example is the case of prud'homies (kind of brotherhood), a decentralized structure of management and organization of the fishing effort that exists on the French Mediterranean coast since thousands of years. Prud'homies, of course, emerged under given conditions: a very small sea and many candidates for its exploitation. They were created much before the birth of State, recognized and incorporated in 1859, and renewed their validity in 1993. Prud'homies are formed by a community of fish harvesters grouped in one or more ports and a fishing area whose limits are identical, in length, to those of the corresponding port and, in width, to the zone of action of existing occupations. The French Mediterranean coast is presently divided into 33 prud'homies of different size.
24. The fishing sector is very important to Mauritania economy, fisheries still being the main food resource relatively available because of the small development of agriculture caused by agroecological conditions linked to the desertic nature of the country. Mauritania is known for the fishing wealth of its coasts that extend over some 900 Km approximately. Banc d'Arguin represents a renovation basin for stocks exploited by Imraguen fish harvesters, a Berber-speaking community that gathers populations from diverse origins and settled on the Park since centuries ago. Around 1,500 Imraguen individuals live in eight villages spread all over the 180 Km of coast of the Banc d'Arguin National Park. They carry out a type of artisanal fisheries with particular characteristics, i.e. communitarian fisheries based on the capture of yellowtail mullet, which is a basic food for the population. This kind of artisanal fisheries operated by small sailing boats is absolutely sustainable.
25. Presently, a pilot project on resource allocation is being tested in Kerala, the biggest fishing state in India. Kerala is an overpopulated coastal state that gathers 150,000 fish harvesters and stands for one of the test laboratories working on a new approach to coastal resource management aiming to benefit extremely poor and marginalized fish harvesters.
26. In Asia, where fish is an essential part of the diet for many cultures, women participate in artisanal fisheries as well as in commercial fisheries by launching, extending or maintaining the management of fish resources within local fishing communities. In some places of India, women use nets to catch shrimp at sea. In Laos they fish in channels. In Philippines they use canoes for fishing in coastal



lagoons. In many places, women have played an outstanding role in the rapid growth of aquaculture. They often carry out most of the tasks related to fish feeding and capture as well as fish handling and processing.

27. Artisanal fishing communities and organizations represent potential allies in the framework of sustainability, conservation and protection of fisheries all over the world. But it is only possible if they are legally recognized, protected and have their rights consolidated to access the resources traditionally exploited by them, which are now under dispute with the national and transnational industrial sector.
28. The tendency to privatize fish resources attempts against the rights of fishing communities and represents a direct consequence of the neoliberal model aiming to transfer to the private bank the property of fish resources that in most countries are considered as national goods for public use. By this means those who control the fishing capital become the owners of the fishing wealth of nations. Countries like New Zealand, Chile, South Africa, Argentina, Canada and USA prioritize this type of policy.

Recognition and challenges of coastal communities

29. Small-scale and artisanal fisheries are the base of a sustainable fisheries model. This principle emerged with force for the first time in Rome, in 1984, through the parallel Conference of fish harvesters and fish workers. The position was not then recognized being that artisanal fisheries appeared like an activity from the past, exclusively considered as a means of keeping employed and not as a model for the future. During the decade of the 1990's, international bodies (FAO, UNDP, etc.) revised progressively their positions and now they recognize artisanal fisheries viability as the base of responsible fisheries. This recognition opens a space for artisanal fisheries organizations. Actually, however, artisanal fisheries have to face neoliberal globalization, which appears in this context as a movement of resource privatization, particularly through individual transferable quotas (ITQ) and liberalization of exchanges. This liberalization at all costs advances in the North as well as in the South. In a country like Chile, for instance, implementation of ITQ generates big conflicts. In Asia, liberalization appears as the support of authorities to the development of an industrial sector totally focused on exports. Liberal offensive endangers the existence of traditional



artisanal fishing communities that, in many cases, have their own regulation systems.

30. Strengthening the organizations at all levels. Traditional communitarian structures for fish harvesters have become pretty unstable and, if still existing, they are not capable of facing by themselves the new challenges represented by the resource crisis, the opening of exchanges, the threats of privatization, etc. In many countries like Senegal, Philippines, Canada, Iceland, USA, Mauritania, Guinea, Venezuela, Colombia, France, Portugal, etc. national organizations became stronger allowing fish harvesters to defend their options before the development alternatives adopted by States.
31. Ensuring the rights of traditional and artisanal fish harvesters. On land as well as at sea, fishing communities are subject to a growing pressure that risks their access to the coast as well as to sea resources. On the coasts of Africa and South America, for instance, and in many Northern countries, the pressure by tourism and the infrastructure of ports demanded by the Export Model tend to deprive fish harvesters and their families of the indispensable space to carry out their activities. There is a need for guarantee of territorial rights over the coasts. In Asia, the pressure exercised by industrial shrimp aquaculture adds to that coming from tourism. A legal guarantee of the rights of access and collective use is also crucial before the threat of privatization of the access to fish resources. These rights are at the base of comanagement of resources and marine territories carried out by communities together with State.
32. Protecting the coastal and marine environment. Fisheries are, together with the exploitation of forests and nomad cattle, the last activity founded solely on natural productivity of ecosystems. Anything attempting against this productivity represents a threat to the survival of fishing communities. Dangers come essentially from land pollution and the destruction of coastal environments (mangroves, corals, humid zones, etc.). All over the world fish harvesters organizations are very active at denouncing the assaults against the integrity of coastal and marine environments. However, they also face some environmentalist approaches on protection of the environment that are very limited as they focus their actions on "pets" (seals, whales, dauphins, etc.) without taking into consideration the protection of ecosystems as a whole.



33. Traditional aquaculture against industrial aquaculture means to face the development of industrial aquaculture that grows fast in order to satisfy the increasing demand from northern countries within a frame of limited natural stocks. Concurrency is evident when accessing land and marine spaces but also markets. Industrial aquaculture creates pollution in coastal and littoral spaces, has an increasing consumption of fishmeal and carries the same risks that intensive agricultural cattle does. Artisanal fish harvester organizations condemn this practice and demand its banning or a strict framing of its development. On the contrary, traditional aquaculture (French or Asian, for instance) or traditional fish raising assesses the natural potential of any habitat while protecting the environment and being adequate for familiar exploitations.
34. Managing of exchanges against wild liberalism. Exchange liberalization promoted by WTO involves all fish harvesters by generating an explosion on the international trade of fish and by developing exports, which often attempts against resources and food availability for coastal populations. Liberalization represents also a threat to the access of resources by fish harvesters because it prioritizes the access of those who own the capitals (ITQ, for instance). Finally, the development of exports could make markets unstable in detriment of artisanal fish harvesters from importing countries. Furthermore, some countries even disregard their fisheries evolution when imported resources are available at lower prices.
35. Assessing the know-how and skills of traditional and artisanal fish harvesters. Industrial fisheries model classifies within the logic of an investment race that generates overcapitalization and standardizes fishing methods impeding their adaptation to the diversity and variability of sea bottoms. On the contrary, traditional artisanal fisheries are based on a fine adaptation of gears and methods to the diversity of ecosystems. These methods may evolve and adapt while respecting the traditional know-how and practical skills. Thus artisanal fish harvesters knew in general how to adapt to modernization (use of engines) taking into account the functional features of their vessels. Fishing communities also implemented regulation systems for fisheries.
36. Promoting the alliance with other sectors of the civil society, especially with farmers within the context of globalization. Several aspects link farmers and fish



harvesters. The artisanal and small-scale fisheries model promoted by the World Forum of Fish Harvesters and Fish Workers (WFF) is similar to that of farming agriculture. Frequently fish harvesters are also farmers. That is the particular case of millions of temporary fish harvesters. Similar to farmers, fish harvesters contribute to food sovereignty and face the same multinational corporations, the same degradation of the environment. Both operate on a territory that has to be managed and preserved.

37. Looking for alliances with consumers. Most of the production of small-scale fisheries is consumed at origin or close to it, but in Southern countries it often happens that the part of production devoted to exports increases more and more. Actually, the level and nature of the fishing effort will be increasingly linked to the demand in northern countries. The consumer movements in these countries begin to concern about the production in Southern countries. In coordination with these movements, fish harvesters organizations can define the conditions of exchanges and put pressure on import-export corporations to make them respect the fishing methods that take into account the interests of fishing communities. From a broader point of view, there is a need for the civil society from the North to commit for the defense of fishing communities.
38. Commitment for peace, changes in the international system and assessment of sovereignty of peoples before globalization, are the most important tasks for fishing organizations and communities the world over.



Globalization and development. Impact on fishing communities

The Oceans of the world are on the way of being privatized

39. Globalization implies an accelerated process of economic, technologic, cultural and political monopolization, which practically means that countries are more and more affected by events occurring beyond their frontiers. Ethnic and interstate conflicts, which are out of international laws, threaten international stability. Threats of massive destruction weapons, terrorism, drug traffic and organized crime are global affaires that trespass national limits.
40. Poverty, hunger and malnutrition are neither a casual result nor a consequence of the lack of an adequate international arrangement. They are the result of a systematic process of exclusion of millions of people from the access to productive means as land, forests, water, seed, knowledge and sea. They are the direct consequence of an international arrangement governed by transnational corporations which by means of financial control put pressure on States in order to impose their own interests in national and international policies. Promoters of this kind of international arrangement, whose highest expression emerged during the last decade of globalization, expected to increase the volume of exchanges, encourage economic growth, modernize economies and reduce poverty and hunger around the world. On the contrary, these policies have brought about the increase of business and profits of those economic powers, while developing countries and populations have seen the increase of the external debt as well as the level of poverty, misery and exclusion in popular sectors.
41. In fisheries, international consortiums have concentrated 80 per cent of fisheries production of the planet. PESCANOVA group, in Spain, operates the largest commercial fishing fleet excluding China and also owns important quota in main fish markets around the world. Its operation in all five continents through national corporations displaced the domestic industry by acquiring fishing rights and monopolizing the international market. In Asia (Japan, China, Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Thailand, Singapore and Malaysia); in USA (is located in Miami and makes distribution to the rest of the country); in Western Europe (Spain, Germany, France, Denmark, Netherlands, Italy, United Kingdom, Greece, Portugal and Belgium); in Latin America and the Caribbean (Chile, Argentina, Brazil,



Ecuador, Peru, Colombia, Venezuela, Panama, Uruguay and Guyana); and, in Eastern Europe (Russia, Estonia, Poland, Bulgaria, Croatia, Albania, Slovenia, Latvia and Macedonia).

42. The World Bank⁶ and other bodies highlight that the international economy will still be growing, especially international trade, within a frame of stability in macroeconomy and instability in microeconomy which stands for 70 per cent of the world total. This growth is due, in part, to changes in the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Treaty as well as to generalization of free market and capitalism. Together with globalization of economies, the creation of regional blocks replaced the bipolar world that existed during the Cold War. As an example, appear NAFTA, the European Union (EU) and the Association of Southwestern Asian Nations (ASEAN). Inexorably, these regional associations will yield before trade globalization. The present per capita annual growth tendency, which is over 2 per cent, will continue until 2020. Particularly, all States will increase their dependence on international trade, which will be made mostly by sea (95 per cent). Projections for 2020 of the international fish trade highlight that it will double or triple. In contrast with other regions of the world, it might be seen an increase of trade among large economic blocks and the countries from Asia-Pacific and Latin America due to the characteristics of their traditional fishing grounds.
43. The present tendency shows that fish resources have reached commercial and social values without precedent. That is why, paradoxically, since the decade of the 1990's, some States have launched accelerated processes of privatization of their fishing wealth under the pressure of industrial consortiums that claim "historical rights" and "cost-efficiency in production and in investments" on main fisheries. This fact particularly affects coastal countries from the Third World where the Export Model has no counterbalance and facilitates an extreme dependency.
44. Privatization of fish resources make that fisheries laws change in those countries where new legal bodies exist – or are launched – to create the necessary conditions for the transfer of property rights from the nation or the State to third parties (national or foreign corporations) and establish new fisheries regimes generally through the individual transferable quotas – ITQ - whose main features

⁶ *World Bank Report 2003*



are the free granting of resource property rights, the perpetual right to trade, rent, and speculate with resources on the market of futures.

45. Multinational and bilateral free trade agreements on fisheries promoted by the EU, USA and APEC among others, always demand that privatization conditions are already set up and ratified by national Parliaments, which provides a solid financial support to foreign investment. Under this expectation of foreign investment the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank and recently the WTO implement an all-scale blackmail on nations which threatens the survival of small and medium-scale fishing communities.
46. The interest of international consortiums on fish resources and the gradual loss of rights by States and by artisanal fishing communities can be explained through the increase of commercial and social values of resources as well as through market concurrence for controlling the access to food. Resources, as merchandise, can then be marketed at the highest prices. The results of such a policy have a universally recognized factor: the spread of hunger all over the world. Industrial countries appear to be less fishing but more fish consuming while southern countries, more fishing but less fish consuming.
47. Millions of people live in fishing communities in developing countries. Although all small-scale fish harvesters are not supposed to be poor, in fact a large part of them are in an extremely vulnerable position under the impact of globalization policies. Among the reasons of poverty persistence both factors, internal and external to fisheries, are present; they include vulnerability, as said before; loss of access rights or their lack of recognition; tendency to resource depletion; remoteness of many fishing communities; agroecological characteristics of the surrounding land; low socioeconomic, cultural and political level; lack of political and financial support (frequently as a consequence of the emphasis put on semindustrial and industrial fisheries); and, concurrency and conflict with industrial vessels and other economic sectors in coastal zones.
48. Out of the estimated world total, 23 million artisanal fish harvesters survive with less than 1 USD per day. The poor from fish-related activities such as shipbuilding, processing and commercialization reach 17.3 million⁷.

⁷ *State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture 2002 (FAO)*



Trade and exports benefit the structure of fishing monopolies

49. World fish exports increased 1.1 per cent in 2001, to reach 55 900 million USD, out of which something more than 50 per cent was fish exports coming from developing countries. The 86 low-income food deficit countries (LIFDCs) contributed 19 per cent to the total value of exports. Imports are more concentrated in developing countries, which took more than 80 per cent of fish imports in 2001. Japan was the largest individual fish importer representing 23 per cent of the total although with a decreasing participation. The EU as a whole still increased its dependence on imports of fish supplies and represents the largest market for fish imports (35 per cent). Besides being the fourth exporting country in the world, USA is the second world importer (17 per cent). In total, 38 per cent of the world fish production goes to international trade (live-weight equivalent). Preliminary figures for 2002 show a new increase in fish trade to 57,700 million USD (exports), China being for the first time the largest world exporter before Thailand is in the importing-countries ranking at level eighth.
50. In developing countries net incomes from fish exports were 17,700 million USD in 2001, a higher amount than any other basic food product such as rice, cocoa, tea or coffee. Besides its important role in employment, income generating, and food security, fish trade represents a considerable source of currency income for many developing countries. In the case of LIFDCs net incomes from exports were 7,500 million USD.
51. Some important issues concerning international fish trade in 2002 and 2003 should be mentioned. They are: changes in measures of quality control and safety in main importing countries; introduction of new label requirements and the tracking concept in main markets of developed countries; residuals in products coming from industrial aquaculture; general public concern for overexploitation of specific fish stocks, especially groundfish; sustainability of aquaculture including future needs of fish fodder; illegal fishing, not declared or not regulated; added value and processing in third developing countries; international trade negotiations within the World Trade Organization (WTO); expansion of regional trade zones and increasing number or new bilateral trade agreements



52. Many countries pay significant subsidies to its commercial fish sector in order to build and modernize fish vessels. These subsidies increase the fleet capacity of the granting nations giving them not only a competitive advantage but also creating a fishing overcapacity larger than available resources.
53. In Southern Atlantic subsidized vessels played an important role in the 1997 hake collapse in Argentina. In Northern Atlantic subsidies perpetuated overfishing cycles that almost lead main cod reserves to the brink of commercial extinction. Along Western Africa coasts artisanal fishing communities witness how subsidized industrial fleets fish their traditional fishing grounds. In the Pacific subsidies alter the concurrent balance in the race for the capture of worthy fish like tuna and black hake.
54. In the Fifth WTO Ministerial Meeting held at Cancun, Mexico (September 2003), WTO encouraged by a group of countries known as " Friends of the Fish" – formed by Australia, Chile, Ecuador, Iceland, New Zealand, Peru, Philippines and USA – put pressure on the international community to get its regulations on trade enforced. WTO disregarded that the definition of subsidy in USA's and EU's proposals implicitly include those programs that promote, protect or collaborate with artisanal fisheries and fishing communities, including the reserve zone that already exist in many countries. WTO could not or should not regulate the destiny of artisanal fisheries. WTO represents the institutionalization of the privatization of oceans.
55. WTO's fight to get the world trade regulated is part of the expansion and supremacy model promoted by the world economic power formed by transnational corporations aimed to increase profits while concentrating command in a few actors with virtually unlimited authority. WTO represents the international institutionalization of the neoliberal model allowing international consortiums to "legally" claim for advantageous conditions.
56. If WTO enters the fisheries, industrial corporations – like Pescanova, in Spain, which operates with capitals from the European Union (EU) –, consortiums from North America, China, Japan and Korea, among others, could design the future of fishing communities whose survival depends on the access and management of natural resources. WTO intends to increase the corporations' control over natural resources allowing that decisions on the use of resources depend on financial



markets' short-term demands, which intensifies the exploitation of fishing grounds traditionally operated by artisanal fisheries especially in developing countries. In view of this consideration, the aim is to modify the internal legal order of states to ensure high cost efficiency for international consortiums. Privatization of resources is the way that international consortiums use to ensure high cost efficiency in the fisheries business; by this practice, states transfer the property of their fishing patrimony to these corporations generally for free and to perpetuity,

57. WTO is a compelling and threatening tool: if the privatization process is hampered, the international tribunal acts to open economies or protect the investments and expansion of corporations. The objective is to eliminate management and resource administration policies systematically and associate such measures to coastal fishing communities, which are considered as commercial barriers. Thus the role of regulations in international trade is illusory since barriers, subsidies and protectionist measures are applied to countries that produce raw materials and not necessarily to the EU, USA and the emergent Asian economies. Therefore all multilateral, bilateral or internal agreements on resource management are subordinated to general rules promoted by WTO.

Food sovereignty and fisheries. Globalization attempts against food sovereignty of people and impedes that they exercise their rights on natural resources

58. World fisheries make an important contribution to human nutrition and to social and economic progress. During the past forty years, production has quintupled moving from 20 million tones to 98 million tones. By the first years of the 2000's it could overpass 100 million tones. Fish is fundamental to feed the people of the world and provides an important part of the consumption of proteins of hundreds of millions people. Almost 16 per cent of the average total consumption of animal protein in the world comes from fish.

59. Developing countries now provide more than half of the world capture. Different from what happens in industrial countries, their fishing sector is dominated by small-scale or artisanal producers. These fisheries, which generally use canoes and small boats, are the source of more than 40 per cent of fish devoted to human consumption.



60. Recent world statistics show large variations in fish consumption, but in general the populations of developing countries use more fish as an element of their daily diet than people from the developed world although this tendency is rapidly changing from the beginning of world trade and its effects. Actually, industrial or fully developed countries are demanding more and more resources for food, which triggered a war among groups or capitals represented by large transnational consortiums to define who would monopolize the fish market while putting pressure on developing countries and fishery states to get their national laws adjusted to the demands of trade and capitals.
61. Only in industrial countries, like in Japan, people get from fish more than 20 per cent of their total meat supplies. This source of high quality protein supplies 29 per cent of the total animal protein in the diet of Asians and almost 18.6 per cent in that of Africans. In Latin America, fish consumption as a main source of animal protein is much lesser, representing 7.6 per cent, although, as said before, these countries produce more and more and consume less and less. In North America, the contribution is 6.6 per cent to the total of ingested proteins; in Europe and Russia it almost doubles to 12 per cent. An increase in the demand of developed countries is forecast for the next decade due to a larger promotion of the nutritional and health value of fish.
62. 79 per cent of the world fish production is devoted to direct human consumption; the rest goes to fodder production and other uses. Out of the total going to human consumption, 30 per cent is sold fresh, 33 per cent is frozen, 17 per cent is processed into airtight containers, and the rest is cured, salted, smoked, etc.
63. Artisanal fisheries supply more than 25 per cent of the world captures. They are an important source of food, income and employment in the developing world. Artisanal fisheries communities lack the general conditions for their development, but they provide work for millions of people at all levels, from the capture, through landing and processing, to commercialization, support and services.
64. Some of the poorest and dispossessed groups of society participate in these fisheries. Fish harvesters from this level carry out a precarious existence at the mercy of extreme climatic conditions that limit their capture hence their income. In many cases geographic isolation and lack of installations and services, drainage, housing, medical assistance, transport and communications accentuate



poverty and malnutrition. These fishing communities are excluded from the main currents of political and economical life because they have no land to make their problems evident.

65. One of the main expectations raised by the new regime of the oceans was to generate a significant improvement to the income and the conditions of life of artisanal fish harvesters. However, to allow this transformation, some urgent measures are needed to get basic life conditions in fishing communities improved and a more equitable part of available fish resources ensured, a matter not visualized in the short term because of the implementation of neoliberal policies and their "privatizing" effects.
66. Income generation is no doubt an engine propelling sustainable improvement in social wellbeing. Therefore, in the long term, the main objective should be to increase the income of fish harvesters, their access to resources and the recognition of their cultural, environmental, political and territorial identity.