

Europe/ France

A community approach...

Issues identified by women fishworkers from different parts of the world were compiled into a working document, for discussions during the World Forum of Fish Harvesters and Fish Workers (WFF) meeting in Loctudy, France. This document was compiled by Danielle Le Sauze, President, of the French Branch of the WFF, and presented to the Constituent Assembly of the WFF. We carry excerpts from this document....

The Constitutional Assembly of the WFF, due to take place in Brittany from 2 to 6 October 2000 will formally establish the World Forum. We feel that it is vital that women are able to participate fully in this event, and to ensure that issues of concern to them are addressed and taken into account.

As part of our preliminary reflections we tried to integrate the views of as many women's movements as possible in the fisheries sector from around the world, to have as wide a participation as possible and a sharing of diverse experiences.

The demand for parity (one man/ one woman) in the delegations coming to Loctudy was made to enable the Forum to develop an alternative approach, based not only on economics but on the integration of social, family, community and cultural aspects.

Current systems and practices of fisheries management give little importance to the special concerns of women. We now have the opportunity to challenge this and to highlight the importance of communities in the North and South, and of the people (men and women) who depend on and support each other to defend their interests. It is, therefore, crucial that we adopt a *community approach* that recognizes the importance of both men and women, and promotes the involvement of communities in the negotiating processes with the political and economic powers.

The role of women and their modes of organizing are highly diverse across countries. However, in all cases, gaining recognition for the important role that they play would contribute to putting less aggressive and sustainable fisheries policies in place.

It falls to us to ensure that our sector is not weakened by dividing it, putting men on one side and women on the other, in a context where increasingly small-scale fishers from the North and South are having to abandon their way of life due to the impact of government policies which favour industrial fisheries interests.

Through the World Forum coastal communities first and foremost intend to reclaim priority access rights to resources for coastal communities.

Following a process of discussion, we have classified the key issues put forward by women under seven main headings: citizenship, professional and political participation, representation; participation in sustainable development and sustainable use of resources; working conditions and valorization of skills; access to credit; destructive tourism, protection of the coastal environment; access to health, access to education; developing and sustaining organizations of women.