

News Round-up

Shrimp crimped

The **United States** is determined to go ahead with its antidumping case against six shrimp-exporting countries. The US International Trade Commission (ITC)

recently said there is reason to believe that the US industry is materially injured by imports of certain frozen and canned warmwater shrimp and prawns from **Brazil, China, Ecuador, India, Thailand, and Vietnam** that are allegedly sold in the US at less than fair value.

The US Department of Commerce will continue to conduct its antidumping investigations, with its preliminary antidumping determination due on or about June 8, 2004.

The US Southern Shrimp Alliance filed a complaint late last year with the US Department of Commerce and the ITC against

farm-raised shrimp originating in these countries.

The alliance claims that imports from the six countries had been sold in the US at unfairly low prices for years, causing domestic shrimp sales to drop to US\$559 million in 2002 from US\$1.25 billion in 2000.

All the six countries have decided to legally challenge the US decision. The Indian government, for instance, has officially said it will fight out the US trade panel's decision giving preliminary approval for imposition of anti-dumping duties on imports of shrimp from India. "We will fight it out...We are all geared up to fight the case and industry has already hired lawyers for this," Special Secretary, Ministry of Commerce, S.N. Menon, said. Observing that New Delhi had a very strong case, Menon said India was mainly exporting "tiger shrimps", which are not found there and that too in unprocessed frozen form. The Seafood Exporters Association of India has appointed the US law firm, Garvey

Schubert and Barer, to fight the suit.

Major shrimp producers in China, who export some US\$800 million worth of shrimp each year, have hired lawyers to fight the case, said officials with Zhejiang Zhoushan Aquatic Export Association.

Ballast blast

The International Convention for the Control and Management of Ships Ballast Water and Sediments was adopted by consensus at a Diplomatic Conference at the International Maritime Organization (IMO) in London on 13 February 2004.

The Conference was attended by representatives of 74 States, one Associate Member of IMO and observers from two intergovernmental organizations and 18 non-governmental international organizations.

Under Article 2 (General Obligations), Parties undertake to give full and complete effect to the provisions of the Convention and the Annex in order to prevent, minimize and ultimately eliminate the transfer of harmful aquatic organisms and pathogens through the control and management of ships' ballast water and sediments.

Park here

A consortium of Latin American countries, conservation groups and United Nations agencies has announced its intention to create one of the world's largest marine parks.

The creation of the Eastern Tropical Pacific Seascape was announced during last weeks' 24th Symposium on Sea Turtle Conservation and Biology, which took place in San Jose, **Costa Rica**, assembling together around 1,000 experts from 80 nations.

This new reserve will span 211 million hectares of ocean, linking and expanding existing marine reserves and consolidating current and planned conservation efforts in the region to provide greater protection to many ocean species found there, including sperm whales, dolphins, tuna,

sharks and turtles, reports National Geographic.

The four-year project will involve a USD 3.1 million investment, USD 1.5 million of which will be provided by the United Nations Foundation, and the rest will come from the environmental group Conservation International as well as other donors. Twelve percent of the Earth's surface currently falls under some kind of conservation protection, but just one per cent of this area extends to the oceans.

Debate abate

After having approved the creation of the National Commission for Fishery and Aquaculture (CONAPESCA) within the framework of talks on the new Law of Fishery and Aquaculture, the National Assembly of Nicaragua resolved to suspend the parliamentary debate without announcing a date for its reinstatement.

Though the country's fishery sector is happy with the creation of the new organization, it has criticized the postponement of the plenary discussions, which, according to local news sources, was due to the prevalence of political interests.

The enactment of the Fishery and Aquaculture Law has been delayed for various years in the National Assembly, though it was approved in 1996. It was later returned to the Environment Committee for review of specifics.

Bill will

A new bill to be presented by the government of **Zambia** is expected to help develop the country's fishing industry.

The bill is asking for the review and modification of the current fisheries policy in order to finally tap into the potential of the industry, reports the *Times of Zambia*.

The proposed amendments to the fisheries policy includes the employment of overseers to control rivers and lakes in a particular area, the introduction of scales for weighing fish, the implementation of proper export procedures, and the introduction of training programmes for fishermen and traders.

The government, intending to create support for Brazil's fishery trade, last Friday forged a heterogeneous work team made up of experts from the Special Secretariat of Aquaculture and Fisheries (SEAP) and the National Company for Foodstuffs (CONAB) representing the private sector.

Gratified

Though **Thailand** signed the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) on 12 June 1992 at the Rio Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), it ratified it only on 29 January 2004. According to observers, many Thai NGOs and civil society groups have lobbied the country's parliament against it, saying that the instrument encroaches on Thai sovereignty.

Fishy standard

The 92nd Session of the International Labour Conference of

the International Labour Organization (ILO), to be held during 1-17 June 2004, will address the issue of adopting a comprehensive

standard (a Convention supplemented by a Recommendation) on work in the fishing sector. The new standard will revise the existing seven ILO instruments that apply to persons working on fishing vessels. It is also expected to provide protection for workers on both large and small fishing vessels.

New dossier

ICSF has just published a new dossier on safety at sea, titled *Dangerous Calling*. A compilation of articles published in *SAMUDRA Report*, the dossier documents the hazards of what is arguably the world's

most dangerous vocation. As fishermen are forced to move farther away from shore in search of declining stocks, they have to confront several dangers: bad weather, rough seas, flooding, fire, poor vessel design, mechanical problems, and so on.

These problems are made worse in developing countries, as the dossier reports. The dossier can be accessed at www.icsf.net.