

# New socio-economic role models for women in fisheries and aquaculture



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Sciences and Arts for Sustainability

# Role of women in traditional fishing communities

- Women had important roles in traditional fishing communities, recognising their productive and reproductive roles
- In a number of cases, women's roles were strongly connected to resource conservation, often mediated through belief systems and expressed through special ceremonies and taboos
- Examples: several societies in the Pacific, Inuits in what is now Canada, traditional societies in Southern Italy (sword fish fishery), ...

# Decline of women's roles

- Technological change and overfishing have tended to erode women's social role in a vicious circle
- Case material from four continents shows a pattern of unrecognised, unpaid female labour that shows similar marginalisation trends as the artisanal fisheries in the face of industrialisation
- Reconstruction of true catches beyond official underreporting to FAO of 'marginal' activities, e.g. by Sea Around Us Project, illustrate the scale of resulting misrepresentation

# New role models are arising for women in fisheries and aquaculture

- Fisheries and aquaculture research
- Government and public administration at different levels
- Company managers in fisheries, more so in aquaculture
- Fish processing industry, canneries, shrimp peeling
- Managing family businesses in artisanal fisheries
- Leaders in corporate organisations, community <sup>4</sup>

# Example: Academia



- **Adaba T. Ibim** is a lecturer in aquaculture of the Agriculture Dept. of Port Harcourt University, Nigeria, and a leader in the NGO “Agricultural Support Foundation”
- Women in FARA – promoting agricultural innovation powered by research and training<sup>5</sup>

# Example: Government and public administration



- **Dr Jane Lubchenco**, Head of the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) of the US is a trained marine ecologist and a committed leader in ocean protection and ecosystem restoration

# Example: company manager

- **Elvira A. Baluyut** from the Philippines, successful aquaculture company manager, consultant, and author of several FAO technical reports on aquaculture topics, inland water management and planning
- **Dr. Ursula Warnke**, Director of the German Maritime Museum in Bremerhaven, Germany



# Example: Community Leader



- Awa Seye, leader of the women in the fishing community of Guet N'Dar in Saint Louis, Senegal, and member of the Executive of the National Collective of Artisanal Fishers in Senegal (CNPS)



# Can women regain their pre-eminence in nature conservation and restoration?

We looked at the report of Pitcher *et al.*, (2006) On compliance with the Code of Conduct for responsible fisheries: 53 countries responsible for 96% of global nominal catches according to FAO.

We looked at the gender balance in senior positions from minister down and compared that with the scores in Pitcher *et al.*

At a very crude level, the generally poor performance coincided with low number of women, but the result is only indicative and should not be over-interpreted.

# Tentative Conclusions

- Gender alone is not sufficient in explaining differences between management outcomes in different countries – none of which abides by the Code of Conduct they have voted;
- Nevertheless, we found evidence that women are not only victims of technological and global change, but do seize opportunities to stand their ground and bounce back;
- Access to education and training is key;
- Satisfactory societal and conservation outcomes depend critically on greater equity and improved institutions.

# Recommendations for policy

- Access to education and technical training for girls and women
- Credit schemes adapted to women's investment and management needs, not only at micro-scale
- Adaptation of legislation to allow women to inherit and hold assets (land, capital, ...)
- Adaptation of bylaws of professional organisations to allow women to hold office
- Study & communication of effects of interventions
- Implementation of existing conservation commitments and enforcement of rules.

## Selected further information:

- Collet, S., 1992. De la fonction symbolique des femmes dans les économies halieutiques. *Anthropologie Maritime*, 4:181-194.
- Kronen, M. and Vunisea, V., 2009. Fishing impact and food security. Gender differences in finfisheries across Pacific Island countries and cultural groups. *SPC Women in Fisheries Information Bulletin*, 19:3-10.
- Williams, S.B., Hochet-Kibongui, A.-M. and Nauen, C.E. (eds.), 2005. Gender, fisheries and aquaculture: Social capital and knowledge for the transition towards sustainable use of aquatic ecosystems. Brussels, *ACP-EU Fish.Res.Rep.*, (16):128 p.

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