

Globalisation affects those who work in industrial fishing

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On behalf of the Director General of FAO, I thank the organizers of this Congress for inviting FAO to participate in its deliberations on the Apostleship of the Sea in a new Globalized World.

Although I am speaking under the heading of *globalisation and its effects on those who work in industrial fishing*, I will speak more about FAO's work in fisheries in general, while making greater reference to small scale fishing, touching on the constraints to their development and on the subject of safety at sea. My colleague David Ardill and Bruno Ciceri will speak after me on industrial fishing and Thomas Kocherry will speak tomorrow in greater detail about small scale fishing. I would like to talk about the interrelationships between globalisation, poverty and governance, using small scale fisheries as my reference.

The greater part of FAO's work in sea issues rests with the Fisheries Department of FAO whose mission is to facilitate and secure the long-term sustainable development and utilization of the world's fisheries. FAO is acutely aware of the fundamental social and economic role played by the fisheries sector in:

- ?? Meeting global and national sustainable food security.
- ?? Providing employment for fishing communities as a means of alleviating poverty in fishing communities.
- ?? Contributing to national and international trade, and
- ?? Generating national income.

Underpinning these basic social and economic objectives is the requirement for fisheries to be responsibly managed. This implies preventing overfishing, co-ordination and delivery of effective research, and the empowerment of people, especially women, tasks for which many FAO Members are not fully prepared. The Fisheries Department therefore provides, on the request of Members, assistance in all aspects of fisheries management and development.

The 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (1982 Convention) and the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries provide the umbrella for FAO's work in fisheries. The Code is a voluntary instrument which provides a framework for the conservation, management and development of fisheries. It was unanimously adopted by FAO members in 1995, and its implementation was specifically called for at the recent World summit on Sustainable development in Johannesburg. It over-arches the Department's work programme and touches, to some extent, all activities in the fisheries sector. Article 6 of the General Principles of the Code states:

Recognising the important contributions of artisanal and small-scale fisheries to employment, income and food security, States should appropriately protect the

rights of fishers and fishworkers, particularly those engaged in subsistence, small-scale and artisanal fisheries, to a secure and just livelihood, as well as preferential access, where appropriate, to traditional fishing grounds and resources in the waters of their national jurisdiction.

In many parts of the world, those rights of fishers and fishworkers to a secure and just livelihood, are under threat, and some of those threats arise from the effects of globalisation.

Although long-distance trade was known to the ancient world, improvements in communications and transportation as well as the liberalization of trade have now brought most producers and consumers into a global market. The interdependencies created in this manner have the potential to generate greater global solidarity. Yet the rules for this new global economy are only partially written and are themselves the subject of considerable contention.

Global competition may result in lower prices, but it also erodes cultural values and national identities. Moreover, while textbook accounts suggest that trade liberalization will lead to greater overall welfare, some stakeholders have the wherewithal to take advantage of global markets to a far greater extent than others, owing to their access to capital, expertise, technologies and policy-makers. Conversely, others benefit much less and even suffer losses, often through no fault of their own. Furthermore, only in a few situations are people who are unfairly denied access to these means compensated or provided with alternative opportunities to help themselves.

It is this lack of access and influence which is a key characteristic of many small scale and artisanal fisheries. Although definitions of small-scale fisheries frequently make reference to their technical limitations (eg their smaller craft and simpler gear), FAO provides a broader definition¹: “*small-scale fisheries are labour intensive and are conducted by artisanal craftsmen whose level of income, mechanical sophistication, quantity of production, fishing range, political influence, market outlets, employment, social mobility and financial dependence, keep them subservient to the economic decisions and operating constraints placed upon them by those who buy their production*”.

Now, what is the significance of these small scale fisheries? It is estimated that they contribute around 50% of global food-fish landings. About 30 million people are involved in catching and harvesting fish in marine and inland waters. For every one person who is catching fish it is believed that three people are involved with on-shore fisheries-related jobs. If their dependants are included, we can see that perhaps 500 million lives are dependent on small scale fisheries. But it is a stark reality that many of those who are dependent on small scale fisheries are living in conditions of what is described as poverty.

What is poverty? Traditionally, definitions of poverty have tended to focus on low earnings i.e. income poverty. For example, the World Bank definition defines the poor as those living on less than \$1 a day. However, it is now increasingly acknowledged that poverty is a complex, multi-dimensional concept, and is about much more than just

¹ Expert Consultation on Small-Scale Fisheries Development, Rome, 8-12 September 1975.

income. The definition of poverty has correspondingly changed from one based on physiological deprivation to one that considers social deprivation and human poverty, social exclusion, and inadequate participation. These are some of the factors to be included when considering the constraints which prevent the small scale sector from fully achieving its economic and social potential. Other constraints would include inadequate or ineffective fisheries management; resource constraints in terms of fish stock availability; conflict with industrial fishing activity; technological and economic constraints in the form of lack of access to capital; few alternative employment opportunities; inadequate government support. But underlying all these are the most important and man-made constraints in the form of governance and policy issues and the lack of access to those who can promote reform.

Alleviation of poverty in small scale fisheries is thus dependent on the removal of these constraints, but only very rarely is it within the power of those small scale fishing communities to do so. To enable their survival, they can resort only to increasing fishing effort, and this they do in competition with other small scale fisheries as well as the industrial fleets. Overexploitation of coastal resources is a major underlying factor which has resulted in fishing at sea becoming a dangerous occupation. Excessive fishing effort; increased competition; reduced profitability; fatigue; inadequate or un-enforced fisheries management measures; these are some of the factors which have resulted in fishing becoming the most dangerous occupation in the world.

Data from those countries who collect accurate accounts show that occupational fatalities in their fishing industries far exceed their national average. It seems plausible that the fatality rate in countries for which information is not available might be even higher. Thus, the number of global fatalities might be considerably higher than the figure of 24 000 deaths world wide per year estimated by ILO. The consequences of loss of life fall heavily on the dependents. In developing countries, these consequences can be devastating: widows have a low social standing, there is no welfare state to support the family and with lack of alternative sources of income, the widow and children may face destitution.

What strategies then exist to alleviate the poverty of the small scale sector? Where stocks are not overexploited, poverty could be decreased by increased landings and improved marketing. In the more typical case of over exploited stocks, poverty might be reduced by:

- ?? Improving the resource base through improved resource management
- ?? Allocating a greater share of the resources to small-scale fisheries
- ?? Providing alternative livelihoods

FAO is active in promoting and providing assistance in all these strategies. However, it is clear that governance issues are fundamental to their success. Understanding the importance of governance issues is crucial in designing and implementing effective solutions that identify solutions that are in the interests of all, not just of the rich, elite and powerful, but also of the poor.

Good governance can be regarded as requiring three key conditions to be fulfilled: promotion of inclusiveness; promotion of lawfulness; and promotion of transparency and

accountability². Only in the presence of such conditions are strategies aimed at reducing poverty in fishing communities likely to be effective.

We are aware that globalisation of markets in its present form may bring hardship to those communities least able to influence the course and consequences of globalisation. Their poverty, in its widest sense, excludes them from the processes which might lead to reform. FAO is active in promoting reform through the provision of policy advice, and building on the processes through which these communities might participate in fisheries management, and we need all the help we can get. Yesterday, some of the speakers, in describing the problems they face in the various AOS regions, made mention of the need for awareness raising, the need for advocacy, participation and networking. These needs are shared by FAO, and I look forward to the development of a partnership between our organizations, which will result in the achievement of impact and concrete results in those areas where our concerns are shared.

² New Thinking on Poverty: Implications for Poverty Reduction Strategies. P. Shaffer, 2001