



AGROECOLOGY AND FOOD SOVEREIGNTY IN SMALL-SCALE FISHERIES

Written by KNTI and the WFFP International Secretariat on the basis of inputs by WFFP leaders and the WFFP exchange hosted by KNTI in Indonesia from 28 November to 5 December.



FORO MUNDIAL DE PUEBLOS PESCADORES
WORLD FORUM OF FISHER PEOPLES
FORUM MONDIAL DES POPULATIONS DE PÊCHEURS

Report: September 2017
Indonesia

Agroecology and Food Sovereignty in Small-scale Fisheries

WFFP – report

Written by KNTI and the WFFP on the basis of extensive inputs by WFFP leaders and the WFFP exchange hosted by KNTI in Indonesia from 28 November to 5 December 2016.

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Design by Design for development

“I represent a small Indigenous community of the Mi’kmaq people in Nova Scotia, Canada known as L’sitkuk. For Indigenous Peoples, it is important to erupt this false notion of North and South divide by bringing attention to what is happening in the global north, where we have faced over 500 years of colonialism. Yet, we are experiencing a strong Indigenous resurgence in our struggle. This is not about returning to the way we lived 500 years ago. Rather, it is about respecting one another, the land and the water. It is about establishing a reciprocal relationship with all of life beyond just the value of commodities. This is a resurgence of our culture and knowledge rooted in Land and Water based practices, which is intergenerational. This intergenerational wisdom and Land/Water based practices provide knowledge for sustaining nature and all of life.”

- Sherry Pictou

“We, the El Molo people, co-exist with nature. Our livelihoods and traditions are connected with nature and the lake [Turkana] where we fish. In El Molo, we have a saying: ‘conserve, protect and sustain the lake so it can serve your family and your community.’ It is the source of your life; it is a two-way relationship. There is no commercial aspect, it’s about surviving.”

- Christiana Louwa, El Molo Forum, Northern Kenya

Foreword:

In 2007, the World Forum of Fisher Peoples (WFFP) traveled to Mali to attend the Nyeleni Forum for Food Sovereignty. This was the first global meeting in which WFFP leaders discussed Food Sovereignty and small-scale fisheries with allied social movements representing the urban poor, women, Indigenous Peoples, peasants, pastoralists and other constituencies. The meeting inspired an unexplored language for fishing communities to build solidarity and advance their struggles for dignity and equity on the basis of Food Sovereignty.

Some years down the line – at the 6th General Assembly in Cape Town in 2014 – the WFFP took a strategic decision to scale up the emphasis on Food Sovereignty by actively campaigning for its realization and by strengthening alliances with other social movements and allied organisations. In the following two years, the WFFP leadership participated in a series of international meetings on Food Sovereignty and Agroecology all over the world, including the Nyeleni International Forum for Agroecology in Mali 2015, continental Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO) conferences on Agroecology in 2015 and 2016, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) 21st Conference of the Parties (COP21) in Paris in 2015, to mention a few.

The importance of Food Sovereignty – as a means, a goal, and a global movement – is long recognized by the WFFP leadership: Food Sovereignty is a political agenda of small-scale food producers in the defense of our rivers, lakes, oceans and land. It is a response to the encroachment of our food system by multinational corporations who, in the context of fisheries, seek to privatize and consolidate fishing rights in the hands of the few. It is for these reasons that WFFP established a working group to take Food Sovereignty to the fishing communities of all our member organisations. The main purpose of this report is to do exactly that: to cultivate the study and debate about Food Sovereignty among youth, women and men in all of WFFP's constituencies.

The report is the result of a long journey in which WFFP leaders have articulated and contributed to the meaning of Food Sovereignty from the perspective of small-scale fisheries. At its core, food sovereignty is not new to fishing communities. It simply gives us a new language to describe what already makes up the heart and soul of the defense of our territories, our heritage and our capacities to produce healthy, good and abundant food. Food Sovereignty is at the centre of our struggle against the neo-liberalism and global capitalism. It provides a framework for sharing indigenous, traditional and new knowledge and wisdom between fishing communities within the entire WFFP constituency.

The report is produced by the WFFP Food Sovereignty and Agroecology working group, together with Kesatuan Nelayan Tradisional Indonesia (KNTI, the Indonesian member of WFFP), Why Hunger, Transnational Institute (TNI), and the WFFP International Secretariat. Its contents were discussed and agreed to during a WFFP Food Sovereignty exchange hosted by KNTI in November 2016.

Naseegh Jaffer, General Secretary of the World Forum of Fisher Peoples

WFFP's vision of Food Sovereignty: the six pillars.

Food Sovereignty is best understood by describing all its diverse but closely interlinked elements. At the Nyeleni Forum for Food Sovereignty in Mali in 2007, more than 500 people from close to 80 countries defined the 'six pillars of food sovereignty'. Since then, these six pillars have been used widely by the national, regional and global movements, and have served to develop a common language and build solidarity. At the WFFP Food Sovereignty exchange in Indonesia, November 2016, the importance of using the six pillars in a small-scale fisheries context was reaffirmed. The language we use to describe the six pillars is similar to that of other movements of small scale food producers, yet different in some respects to ensure that it becomes meaningful for small-scale fisher communities.

1. Focuses on Food for People

Inland and marine small-scale fishers are at the centre of fisheries and related policies, and ensure that food production (capture fisheries and fish farming – including other aquatic animals and seaweed) is not harming next generation. Food must be considered as a universal human right and not as a trade commodity. The right for fishers to eat their own fish is very important: first communities must have food, and then they have the choice to sell to other markets.

2. Values Food Providers

The human rights of all the small-scale fisher peoples who are involved in the entire value chain of small-scale fisheries (pre-harvesting, fishing and post-harvest activities), including youth, women, men and Indigenous Fishers, have to be respected and protected. Responsibilities, needs and benefits have to be shared by the whole community. Policies and developments that do not value small-scale fisher peoples or that threaten their livelihoods are rejected.

3. Localizes Food Systems

Fishing communities – people involved in fishing activities and local people dependent on fish for healthy food and nutrition – can decide independently on their own food system. They are at the center of decision making in terms of processing of fish products (salting, drying, smoking, fresh products, freezing, canning, etc); using aquatic products for medicine and cultural traditions (e.g. from mangrove forests); direct sales at local and regional markets; and use of traditional and new technology. In the localized food system, communities resist unsustainable policies and practices that favor export of healthy and nutritious food over local consumption.

4. Puts Control Locally

Fishing communities must have control over the land and water territories in both inland and marine fisheries. Access to fishing grounds – including lakes, rivers, salt marshes, mangrove forests, coral reefs, and coastal waters – is a fundamental right of fishing communities. Territories and resources are governed and managed locally as common goods for the benefit of communities at large. Governance and management practices leading to privatisation of territories and fish resources are rejected. The rights of women and Indigenous Peoples are fundamental for protecting and promoting local control over territories and resources in small-scale fisheries.

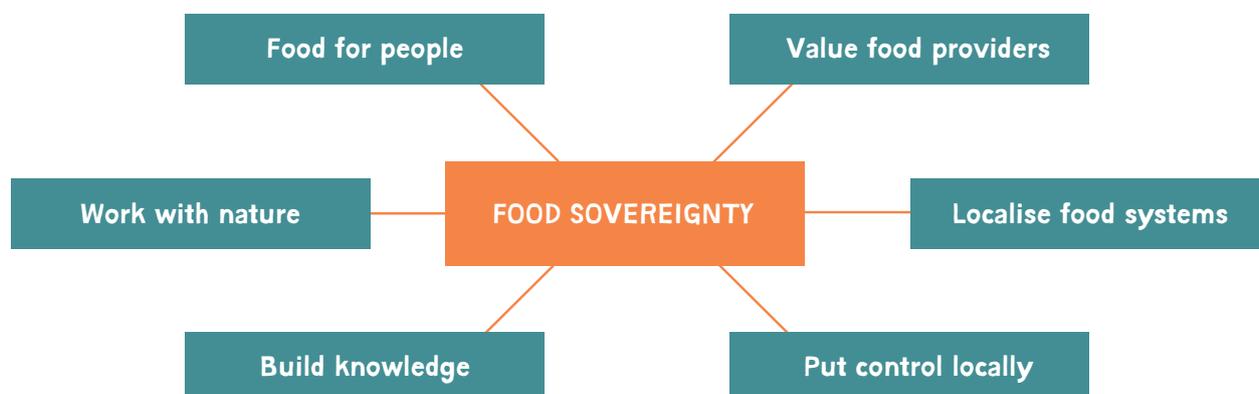
5. Builds Knowledge and Skills

Small-scale fishers have built their traditional, customary and/or Indigenous knowledge and skills over many generations. Knowledge and skills are passed on from parents to children in all areas of small-scale fisheries, both in inland and marine fisheries. Traditional, Indigenous and cultural practices must be protected, promoted and further developed to achieve Food Sovereignty. Women and Indigenous fishers are involved in all areas of small-scale fisheries, including the use of natural resources for food, fuel and medicine (e.g. from mangroves); preparing for fishing (e.g. bait collecting, maintenance of fishing equipment such as nets and traps); fishing in inland, coastal and marine waters; processing and selling fish products; and preparing food for families and communities. Hence, the role of Indigenous fishers and women are of particular importance for protecting and promoting the knowledge and skills in small-scale fisheries. At the same time, the Food Sovereignty agenda rejects practices and technologies that are harmful to fishing communities, their territories and natural resources including: large-scale aquaculture; conversion and destruction of natural water bodies (e.g. river estuaries, rivers, and mangroves); genetically modified fish species; and industrialized export oriented fisheries.

6. Works with Nature

Small-scale fishing communities have a long history of working with and respecting nature. The inter-connectedness between fisher people and nature is deeply rooted in traditions and customary practices, and especially so for Indigenous Peoples. Small-scale fishers use low technology fishing gear (compared to industrialized fishing); consume all the fish landed (in contrast to industrial fishing which lands enormous volumes of fish that are not used for feeding people, and is well know for the bad practice of catching large volumes of unwanted fish that is thrown back into the water); use very little fuel per volume of fish caught (in stark contrast to industrial trawling); and use integrated fish farming systems with no chemical inputs. The inter-connectedness between small-scale fishing communities and the natural environment provides the best possible safeguard against environmental destruction and constitutes a real solution to stop climate change (unlike the privatization and financialization schemes and mechanisms of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change).

The World Forum of Fisher Peoples' acknowledges that new knowledge and technology generated through Agroecology is fundamental for all six pillars of Food Sovereignty. In this perspective, Agroecology is a process and method that values the knowledge of fishing communities embedded in the traditions and cultures of small-scale fishing, and at the same time, helps to improve it by combining it with other scientific knowledge and practices. As a new technical knowledge, Agroecological practices are improved in ways that everyone in the community should be able to replicate and continue improving. Agroecology should not be perceived as simply a technique for the production of food, but also as a way to strengthen social organizations, build local knowledge, keep traditional knowledge alive, and strengthen the sovereignty of small-scale fishing communities.





What is the difference between Food Security and Food Sovereignty?

With some 2 billion people suffering from malnourishment and close to 800 million people facing hunger, the right to food is high on the agendas of many governments and intergovernmental institutions. The right to food is enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948 (article 25) and underpins the International Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication (FAO, Rome, 2014).

Small-scale fishing communities are “...engaged in directly providing food for their households and communities...” and yet “... their contribution to food security and nutrition... is not fully realised” (Preface of the SSF Guidelines). It is therefore not a coincidence that the first objective of the SSF guidelines is “... to enhance the contribution of small-scale fisheries to global food security and nutrition and to support the progressive realization of the right to adequate food” (objective 1.1a of the SSF guidelines)

Other important international instruments addressing food security include the International Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security (Tenure Guidelines) and the International Guidelines to support the Progressive Realization of the Right to Adequate Food in the Context of National Food Security (Right to Food Guidelines).

But what is Food Security?

The dominant understanding of Food Security is limited to four dimensions: *availability*, *access*, *utilization* and *stability* of food. This means that Food Security is fulfilled as long as food is *available*, regardless of whether it is produced locally, imported or distributed by food aid agencies; that food is *accessible*, meaning that it is affordable to all people; that food can be *utilized*, meaning food can be digested, that

it meets the physiological requirements of people and that it is culturally appropriate; and that the food supply *stable*, meaning that food is available continuously over time.

A fundamental problem with this understanding of Food Security is that it ignores the root causes of hunger. It does not, for example, address people's rights to access and control of territories and the threats imposed by the increasing take over of natural resources and territories by transnational corporations (TNCs).

Another big problem is that some of the biggest TNCs, which are guilty of dispossessing small-scale food producers from their land and access to fishing grounds, are gaining more and more economic power and political influence in models of food governance rooted in this food security frame. The Global Challenge Initiative on Food Security of the World Economic Forum argues that food production has to be increased to end hunger, even though we already produce enough food to feed all the people on the planet. The real problem is unequal distribution of resources and control over what we do with all the food that is produced. Combined with the fact that, in the current system, food is more often treated as a commodity to make money rather than as a human right, the result is hunger and malnutrition amidst overproduction. Nonetheless, the forum aims to boost food production and economic development through market-based and multistakeholder approaches. It has committed to invest over 10 billion USD in food production. Its leading partners are the same corporations that are benefitting most from the current system including Monsanto, Rabobank, Syngenta, Unilever (established the Marine Stewardship Council fisheries certification brand together with World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF)), Coca Cola, Wal-Mart, to name a few.

How does Food Sovereignty differ from Food Security?

According to the Food Sovereignty vision, food is a universal human right and not a trade commodity. Corporations also do not hold human rights; fisher peoples do. (see pillar 1)

Food Sovereignty values all food providers. In small-scale fisheries, this means youth, men, women, including Indigenous People, who are involved in activities in the entire value chain (see pillar two)

A Food Sovereignty-based food system is localized. Hence, fishers do not rely solely on global trade and exports. (pillar 3)

The Food Sovereignty agenda demands that it be the fishing communities who control the fishery system. This means fishing communities are at the center of decision making (pillar 4)

Food Sovereignty builds on local, traditional and/or Indigenous knowledge and skills. The passing on of knowledge and skills from parents to children is fundamental. (pillar 5)

Food Sovereignty builds on the inter-connectedness between fishing communities and the natural environment and protects and works with nature. (pillar 6)

Food Sovereignty also captures the four dimensions of Food Security, but whereas the latter can be perceived as a technical approach to end hunger, Food Sovereignty is much broader and captures the human rights based approach in small-scale fisheries.

An additional and very important difference is that Food Security ignores the question of gender, and the market-oriented approach of many 'supporters' of Food Security often, if not usually, marginalises women and Indigenous Peoples. Food Sovereignty places women and Indigenous Peoples at the heart of the food system.

Agroecology as tool for Food Sovereignty.

“We are saying that our manner of practicing fishing, it is actually agroecology that we are practicing. Being very selective in the fish that we catch and being attentive to the environment [...] Our interconnectedness with the ocean has always been there, but now we have a term to describe our connectedness with the ocean. And agroecology helps describes the practice of fishing we’ve been doing for the past 5000 years.”

- Christian Adams, Coastal Links South Africa and member of WFFP

Agroecology is “The science of applying ecological concepts and principles to the design and management of sustainable food systems.”. The term agroecology can be traced back to the 1930’s and up until the 1960’s it was referred to only as a purely scientific discipline. In the 1960’s environmental movements applied agroecology in the struggle against industrial agriculture and two decades later, in the 1980’s, peasants movements increasingly worked with and further developed what we know as agroecology today. While agroecology was considered purely as an agricultural practice by food producers, other small-scale food producing and consumer movements have applied agroecology in their work over the last decade. The practices and principles underpinning agroecology are just as relevant in the context of small-scale fisheries as in other food producing sectors.

In small-scale fisheries we find many of the same structural dynamics as in agriculture or ranching, and in many places fishers are also peasants. Small-scale fishers must confront the industrial fishing model in the same way that peasant farmers and ranchers must confront industrial agriculture. At the same time, agroecological principles are followed in artisanal fishing and small-scale forms of aquaculture including: the use of specific fishing equipment and techniques; respect for the seasons and lifecycle of each species; limited catches according to agreed upon stipulations; and cultivating and protecting mangrove areas; in order to assure sustainability and biodiversity in production and diet.

The practices and principles of agroecology can be divided into three key areas:

Biophysical and environmental practices and principles of agroecology:

- Defend water as part of the commons and the access to water streams and oceans as human right of local communities.
- Promote circular systems of food production that mimic the structure and function of local natural ecosystems, seasonal availability of fish species, the multi-species approach in fisheries, nutrient recycling, efficient use and conservation of locally available resources.
- Work to promote and conserve biological and genetic diversity, both in the wild and in domesticated small-scale fisheries. It keeps the knowledge of those species under control of local communities and advocates against the patenting of new varieties of fish.
- Promote natural pest control in small-scale aquaculture, and taking into account the upstream and downstream impacts of food production. No use of agrottoxics, artificial hormones, GMOs or other dangerous and inappropriate technologies.
- Promote carbon capture in vegetation biomass such as salt marshes and mangrove systems, as a way of contributing to climate change mitigation and to protect coastal communities from natural disasters (mangrove systems are critical habitats protecting against storms and floods).

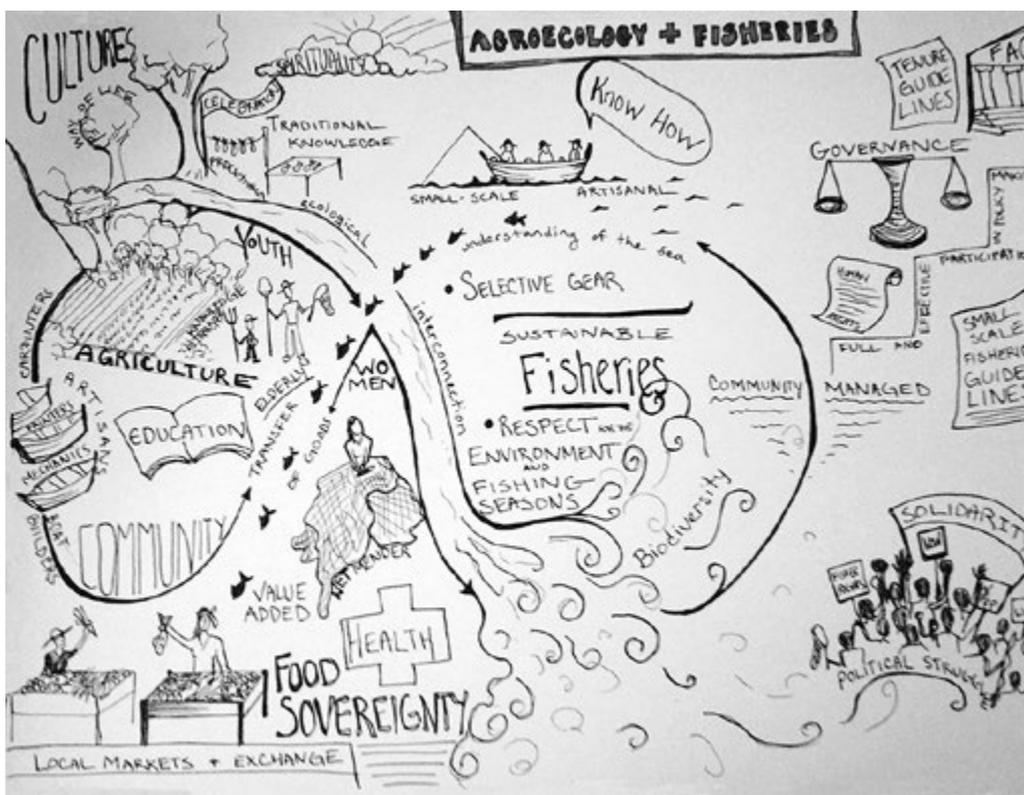
Social and political practices and principles of agroecology

- Agroecosystems cannot be understood as separate from food producers or the socio-economic realities in which they operate.
- Youth and women provide key social bases for the evolution of agroecology. For agroecology to achieve its full potential, there must be equal distribution of power, tasks, decision-making and remuneration.
- Self-determination and autonomy of peoples are essential to secure, develop, control, and reconstruct the customary social structures and collective rights that ensure that food producers have control over the means of production, their lands, commons and territories, including fishing grounds.
- Small-scale fishers' local and diverse knowledge and practices are valued, even when not yet fully understood by scientists. Learning processes are horizontal and peer-to-peer, based on popular education and innovation. The knowledge and skills held by Indigenous Peoples and women are of particular importance.
- Agroecology is a political project to transform structures of power in society and put the control of seeds (including aquaculture fingerlings / juvenile species), biodiversity, land and territories, waters, knowledge, culture and the commons in the hands of the people who feed the world.
- Solidarity between people's and between rural and urban populations, is critical.

Economic practices and principles of agroecology

- Reduce dependency on external markets and variable costs by reducing inputs, generating your own fingerlings / juvenile species, resource protection, and fisheries management systems.
- Emphasize local marketing and trade of inputs and products and small-scale production.
- Work to reshape markets so that they are based on the principles of solidarity economy and the ethics of responsible production and consumption.

From these principles and practices it is evident that there is an overlap with the pillars of Food Sovereignty, yet, there are also differences.



Food Sovereignty builds on Agroecology but is also much more.

Agroecology is Food Sovereignty in action. The vision and practice of agroecology is based on the principles of Food Sovereignty: provide culturally appropriate, healthy, nutritious food, defend the rights of fishing communities and value the work of food producers, including women and youth. Food Sovereignty is the solution to the deep rooted problems of the neo-liberal capitalist system which largely governs our current food system. It is built on values of health, justice, equity, self-determination and life before profit. Food Sovereignty also builds on alliances and solidarity across food producing sectors and consumers in rural as well as urban settings.

Agroecology and Food Sovereignty is the political project that unites rural with urban, producers with consumers, and small-scale fishers with all other food producers.

Threats and opportunities

Food Sovereignty and Agroecology is threatened on numerous fronts. The industrial model of food production, its so-called Green and Blue Growth / Economy and various forms of Ocean, Land and Water grabbing² all contribute to dispossessing fishing communities and destroying our natural habitats. The industrial food system is a key driver of the multiple crises of climate, food, environment, public health and others. Free trade and corporate investment agreements, investor-state dispute settlement agreements³, and false climate solutions such as the Blue Carbon⁴ scheme of the United National Framework Convention on Climate Change, and the growing financialization of nature and food, all further aggravate these crises.

Some of the most devastating practices and projects posing a threat to small-scale fisheries include large-scale bottom trawling; harmful subsidies to the industrial fishing sector; the Marine Stewardship Council and similar fishery certification schemes; industrial aquaculture; construction of big infrastructure projects such as hydro-power dams, port development and coastal coal and nuclear power-plants; and so-called Rights Based Fisheries policies⁵.

Corporate power and Transnational Corporations

Transnational Corporations, or TNCs, operate with the sole objective of accumulating wealth at the expense of poor, marginalized and working class communities globally. They are responsible for Ocean, Water and Land Grabbing and pose a direct threat to Food Sovereignty.

The excessive economic and political power of TNCs is largely made possible through the neo-liberal ideology of governments which paves the way for privatization (transferring of public property and resources to private owners), deregulation (e.g. less environmental regulation and state 'interference' in business), tax reductions for the elite (allowing companies and the rich to pay less tax), and free trade and investment agreements (strengthening the rights of TNCs and undermining States' regulatory opportunities). Together, these lead to a massive redistribution of wealth from small-scale fishing communities to an elite minority⁶.

2 http://worldfishers.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/The_Global_Ocean_Grab-EN.pdf and <https://www.tni.org/files/download/landgrabbingprimer-feb2013.pdf>

3 https://www.tni.org/files/download/iias_report_feb_2015.pdf

4 http://worldfishers.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/Blue_Carbon_June_2016.pdf

5 http://worldfishers.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/SSFG-Human_Rights_vs_Property_Rights-EN.pdf

6 Transnational Corporations: A threat to peoples' sovereignty and our planet? Page 6 in WFFP Newsletter: http://worldfishers.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/WFFP.Newsletter.Nov_20161.pdf

Rights Based Fishing – RBF

Rights Based Fishing is a fisheries governance model that focuses on so-called, ‘economic efficiency’. It has led to widespread social disruption in fishing communities, and stands in stark contrast to the Human Rights Based Approach and Food Sovereignty. In recent years, RBF has undergone a ‘renewal’, and has been increasingly framed as a win-win-win solution that can cater to all needs at once i.e. small-scale fisher communities, the environment, and profits. However, behind this new rhetoric lie the same privatization policies that we denounce as ‘ocean grabbing’.

Despite the use of the term ‘rights’ – which could encompass different types of rights – ‘rights-based fishing’ is primarily about establishing property rights, and for the most part private property rights, in fisheries. RBF has very little, if anything, to do with human rights. As reiterated by the World Forum of Fisher Peoples for years, real world experiences with rights-based fisheries has led to massive social disruption in fishing communities through increases in distinction between social classes, with severe impacts on the struggle for equity and social justice. In short, it is a direct threat to Food Sovereignty.

Multi-stakeholderism

As seen in recent years with the push for Rights Based Fishing, international NGOs like the Environmental Defense Fund, Oxfam, Conservation International, and WWF, as well as corporate actors, are increasingly making use of multi-stakeholder platforms in pursuit of their agendas. This is no coincidence as it has become a preferred approach to governance and development.

The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (Transforming our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development) clearly shows how multistakeholderism is perceived as a ‘cure-all’ or as ‘the solution to all problems’. According to the United Nations (UN), “Partnerships for sustainable development are multi-stakeholder initiatives voluntarily undertaken by Governments, intergovernmental organizations, major groups and other stakeholders, which efforts are contributing to the implementation of inter-governmentally agreed development goals and commitments.”

Also in the words of the UN, “It is **“We the Peoples”** [emphasised] who are embarking today on the road to 2030. Our journey will involve Governments as well as Parliaments, the UN system and other international institutions, local authorities, indigenous peoples, civil society, **business and the private sector** [emphasised]...”. In these words, the UN is implying that corporations are people and have equal rights as people – also in terms of participating in governance dialogue.

This notion is becoming entrenched in all UN institutions including the Food and Agricultural Organisation which is a leading agency in programmes and initiatives on the implementation of the International Guidelines on Securing Sustainable Small-scale Fisheries.

Multi-stakeholderism ignores the imbalances of economic and political power held by TNCs and aligned international environmental NGOs vis-a-vis social movements. It enables the former to capture governance spaces, and as such, multi-stakeholderism is another direct threat to Food Sovereignty.

Co-optation of agroecology:

Popular pressure has caused many multilateral institutions, governments, universities and research centers and some NGOs, corporations and others, to finally recognize “agroecology”. However, they have tried to redefine it as a narrow set of technologies, to offer some tools that appear to ease the sustainability crisis of industrial food production, while the existing structures of power remain unchallenged. This co-optation of agroecology to fine-tune the industrial food system, while paying lip service to environmental discourse, has various names, including “blue growth”, “blue carbon”, “climate smart agriculture”, production of “organic” farmed fish, etc. For us, these are not agroecology: we reject them, and we will fight to expose and block this insidious appropriation of agroecology.

Opportunities:

First and foremost, Food Sovereignty and Agroecology articulate alternatives that represent a platform from which to fight for social transformation. We can do so by building solidarity and forming alliances with social movements from all over the world, including fisher movements, other food producing and consumer movements, urban and rural movements and allied organisations and academics. The global peasant movement, La Via Campesina has played a prominent role in advancing the struggle for Food Sovereignty and paving the way for strengthened alliances with other social movements - including the alliance with WFFP.

Food Sovereignty and Agroecology offer an opportunity to recover lost ground, rebuild healthy ecosystems and food systems. They enable us to bring women, youth and Indigenous Peoples to the fore in all decision making processes and to maintain and promote our cultural values. They allow us to maintain and develop a localised value chain for the benefit of fishing communities around the world.

Agroecology enables us to highlight the importance, and vulnerability, of small-scale fisheries. More specifically, it provides an opportunity to place small-scale fisheries in the central position in political debates and governance processes at national and international levels. In this context, it is important to mention that the FAO in 2014 decided to prioritise Agroecology and established a department to advance the role and position of small-scale food producers. While this provides an opportunity to advance the Agroecology agenda within the UN system, it is important to be consciously aware of the danger of other stakeholders - including TNCs - attempting to advance their understanding of Agroecology and aligning it to the neo-liberal framework.

PREPARING



FISHING



PROCESSING



SELLING



EATING

Food Sovereignty as a key pillar of the World Forum of Fisher Peoples' agenda

It is on the basis of Food Sovereignty that we will be able to take our struggle into the next decade. With emphasis on youth, women and Indigenous Peoples, we will be able to strengthen solidarity between fisher movements from all over the world; to build integrity and strengthen the functioning of the World Forum of Fisher Peoples' at the regional and global levels; and to build a new and strong leadership who can provide renewed energy in our struggle for human rights.

Food Sovereignty speaks directly to the goals and principles of the International Guidelines on Securing Sustainable Small-scale Fisheries, and offers methods and strategies to achieve the implementation of the guidelines and to protect, promote and fulfill our human rights.

OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<p>Recover more healthy life and ecosystems</p> <p>Reduce climate change</p>	<p>Chemical inputs, greed, IUU fishing</p> <p>Consequences of climate change</p>
<p>Promote awareness</p>	<p>Lack of knowledge about Agroecology</p> <p>Corruption, economic benefits</p>
<p>Maintain local knowledge, traditions and cultures</p>	<p>Lack of knowledge transmission from parents to children</p>
<p>Recognize the role of women in fisheries, particularly concerning knowledge transmission</p>	<p>Patriarchal relationships</p>
<p>Improve livelihoods with more value added healthy food, and more employment (youth)</p>	<p>Industrialized food system (no information about price, middlemen, free trade, subsidies)</p> <p>No access to the market</p>
<p>Power decentralization</p> <p>Human Rights Based Fisheries management</p>	<p>Ocean grabbing, privatization</p> <p>Rights Based Fisheries management</p> <p>Non-adapted laws, lack of implementation of the laws</p>
<p>Create alliances with other social movements to put small-scale fisheries on the political agenda</p>	<p>Division of leaders and peoples within communities</p>
<p>Use Agroecology as an advocacy to fight neo-liberal producers</p>	<p>Co-optation of Agroecology and Food Sovereignty by corporations, governments, institutions, large Environmental NGOs</p>



COUNTRY CASE 1: Galicia, agroecological practices of women harvesting mussels

Harvesting of shellfish and other forms of small-scale fishing have been part of the culture in Galicia for centuries, and, together with peasants, small-scale fishers have been the key drivers of the local economy. More than 85% of the boats in Galicia belong to the artisanal fleet, which is organised in 62 *cofradías* – the local fisher organisations.

Fishing remains a traditional practice for local production, sale and consumption, and the skills and traditions of harvesting shellfish have been passed on from parents to children generation after generation. The fishing methods are based on artisanal and traditional practices, with no use of fuel and limited impact on the natural environment. The shellfish are salted or stored on ice and mainly sold at the local markets or in other parts of Spain.

Women have always been involved in harvesting different kinds of shellfish in the inter-tidal shoreline, but up until 1995, they were not formally recognized as harvesters and their rights as workers were not protected. It was only then, after the successful campaigns of the *cofradías*, that the government agreed to a policy process to give legal recognition to women in fisheries. Following a participatory process in which

the women of the *cofradías* participated, a new policy was put in place to ensure social security benefits for women, including pensions, which is important for encouraging young women to enter the sector.

Between 1995 and 1998 some 12.000 women were working in small-scale fisheries in the autonomous community of Galicia, but following a governmental decision in 2000 to impose a license fee for women, the number of fishers declined steadily. Following the financial crisis in 2008, the youth again see small-scale fishing as an opportunity for earning a living and while the number of women in the sector is still low compared to the 90's, some 4000 women continue to fish in Galicia.

It is only during low tide that the collecting of shellfish is possible, and women therefore only work around 165 days per year. This allows them to also take care of their families and households, and from time to time they also arrange guided tours for the tourists and explain how fishing is part of their identity and culture.

There are also challenges.

Over the last decade, some of the bigger corporations - including export oriented companies - are taking over a larger and larger share of the market. Buying up shellfish from the producers, and taking over processing (freezing and canning) is increasingly undermining the opportunities for women to maintain their role and position as the providers of food locally. At the same time, the local demand for shellfish has gone down, which makes the fishing practices less profitable.

In order to maintain and develop the culture and traditions of the small-scale fishers of Galicia, the *cofradías* have to build on the Agroecological practices and promote Food Sovereignty as the solution.



Photo credit: Aproamar

COUNTRY CASE 2: Honduran communities and their agroecological practices threatened by large-scale corporations, privatization and middlemen

The coastline of the Gulf of Fonseca extends for 261 kilometers, of which 185 are in Honduras. In this Pacific region, some 17,000 Honduran fishers, including those involved in the pre- and post-harvest activities, depend on fish and mangrove species for livelihoods and healthy food. Small-scale fishing is typically practiced by entire families, with the men and boys going to sea whereas women play a key role in the pre- and post-harvest activities such as selling ice, repairing nets, and processing and selling the fish at local markets.

Different organizations are involved in the fisheries management: FEDEPESCA is the national fisher federation, APAGOLF is a regional fisher union in the Gulf of Fonseca and CODEFFAGOLF is a conservation organisation. All three groups work together in the struggle for the human rights of fisher peoples and the protection of the natural environment.

Small-scale fishing in the Gulf is an Agroecological practice. Wild capture fishing and harvesting of mangrove species is done without any use of chemicals, allowing for nutritious food to be sold on local markets as well as protecting the natural environment. A seasonal closure is respected by the fishers to preserve the mangrove forests. Fishing is also celebrated as part of the traditional culture in the fishing communities.

These practices could ensure the Food Sovereignty of local communities, but the Gulf is being threatened on several fronts. Large-scale shrimp aquaculture has destroyed mangroves, caused severe pollution within and outside the farms because of the use of chemicals (including chlorine), and forced small-scale fishers out of their traditional fishing grounds. The predominance of the industrial corporate sector makes it increasingly difficult to ensure Food Sovereignty and maintain Agroecological practices. This destruction of the coastline, and similar industrial transformation in agriculture, also affect the peasants, who can no longer produce corn and beans for local consumption.

During the rainy season, the chemicals from agriculture and shrimp farming are washed into the sea, causing massive fish mortalities. Also the cattle suffer from this chemical pollution when feeding on grass in the coastal region, and the health of people in fishing communities is at serious risk. While people are aware of climate change, they generally do not recognize the harmful effect of industrial aquaculture and agriculture on the natural environment. Complaints from small-scale fishing communities are ignored by corporations, who instead run their own campaigns against Agroecology and Food Sovereignty under the slogan “if you want to save the world don’t buy ecological products”.

The state is also not making life easier for small-scale fishing communities. There is little – if any – interest by the government in allocating fishing rights to the fishing communities, and access to fishing grounds is continuously compromised. In addition to this, middlemen have effectively captured a significant share of the catch. One of the means is for middlemen to provide loans to poor fishing families, and thereby create a system of economic dependency and a debt cycle.

In order to change the tide, APAGOLF will continue to push for the recognition of Agroecological practices in the struggle for Food Sovereignty.

CASE STUDY 3: How alliances help to build a political project based on Food Sovereignty and Agroecology in Indonesia (Marthin, Henry Saragih)

For more than ten years, Serikat Petani Indonesia – the Indonesian Peasant Union, a member of La via Campesina and a close ally of Kesatuan Nelayan Tradisional Indonesia (KNTI) – has fought for the adoption of Agroecology and Food Sovereignty in national legislation, and the efforts have been successful. A series of policies developed in recent years recognize and adopt principles of Agroecology and Food Sovereignty:

- **2009:** rural protection for sustainable food agriculture area
- **2012:** recognizing Food Sovereignty in Act no. 8/2012
- **2013:** protection and empowerment of peasants
- **2016:** protection and empowerment of fishers and farmers

KNTI, representing local and regional fisher movements in 26 areas of Indonesia, is working closely together with Serikat Petani in order to also advance the Agroecology and Food Sovereignty agenda in small-scale fisheries. While there are obvious differences between the practices and cultures in small-scale fishing and agriculture – e.g. use of certain types of technology in capture fisheries (boats, gear and processing facilities) – there are also many areas where fishers and peasants converge. If fishers are asked about how and for whom they produce and how they process and market fish, then they will speak about the principles of Agroecology – e.g. localised markets, decentralised decision making and healthy and fresh food – but without using the term ‘Agroecology’, all of which is as relevant in the context of the peasants. It is also for this reason that KNTI has taken a strategic decision to strengthen alliances with other social movements, in particular La Via Campesina, in order to advance the struggle for Food Sovereignty.

Conclusion

For more than a decade, WFFP has engaged in dialogues with other social movements and ally NGOs through the International Planning Committee on Food Sovereignty and other spaces. Those conversations were vital to the learning and reflection of fishing communities around the themes of Food Sovereignty and Agroecology. Also, WFFP was able to influence the debate and include the voices and experiences of fisher people in exchanges and related policies.

As a global social movement, WFFP is committed to sharing information and nourishing the debate around these two important topics in fishing communities. This report reflects part of this decade-long process of documenting and formulating new questions about Food Sovereignty and Agroecology that will inform WFFP's analysis and strategies.

In the context of national organizations, members of WFFP, more time is needed to deepen and build the understanding of Agroecology and Food Sovereignty. We would like to encourage the organization of learning exchanges between and led by fishing communities, documentation of best practices and debates among WFFP members, and communication strategies to disseminate information about Food Sovereignty and Agroecology to fishing families. A good communication strategy is also important to support the organizing of local communities so they can advocate for their rights in the face of threats created by multinational corporations. To this end, we hope this report will guide our work in WFFP for years to come.



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