

# Fisher Folk



### Contact

Fisher Folk Constituency of Asia Pacific Regional CSO Engagement Mechanism (APRCM)

Focal point: Lani Eugenia

Indonesian Farmers and Fishers Society Organisation (PUANTANI)

Email: eugenia.aromatica@gmail.com



The Asia Pacific Regional Civil Society Engagement Mechanism (APRCM) promotes stronger, coordinated, and more effective civil society contribution in regional and global UN processes. It consists of 427 civil society organisations working in the Asia Pacific region within 17 different constituencies and five sub regions. It ensures stronger cross constituency coordination and that voices of all sub-regions in the Asia Pacific are heard in intergovernmental processes.

For more information please go to: <http://www.asiapacificrcem.org/>



Photo from <https://twitter.com/seawildearth>

The Asia-Pacific region is the world's largest producer of fish. By weight, more than 50 percent of the world's catch of marine and river fish and 89 percent of global aquaculture comes from the Asia-Pacific region. Eight of the top ten aquaculture producing countries in the world are in the Asia-Pacific region and inland fisheries in the region account for 68 percent of total world inland fishery production. The fisheries and aquaculture sectors are important contributors to the food security, livelihoods and income of rural and coastal populations. Around 90 percent of fishers and fish farmers in the region are small scale highlighting the impact of the sector at the local scale. Ninety-three percent of people employed in aquaculture and fisheries worldwide are located in Asia. These sectors and associated downstream services and industries employ approximately 10 percent of the world's working population (FAO).<sup>1</sup>

There are millions of people whose lives depend on fisheries. Of these millions many are small scale fisherfolk who are dependent on fishing for survival and nearly half of which are women. Within the fisherfolk community fisheries serve as the main source of food and income. The success and failure of small scale fisherfolk is dependent on their capacity to cope with external forces that engage in large scale fishing using unsustainable resource extraction.

Large scale fishing has significantly impacted marine habitats and has hampered the fisherfolk community's access to resources. With increasing economic collaboration among large corporations they are able to utilize their powerful capital in the marine sector in the Asia Pacific region. Large scale fishing is a growing problem in the Asia Pacific region due to dependence among the fisherfolk community on the dwindling numbers of available fish stock.

Despite the great importance of fisheries in poverty alleviation and food security significant research still needs to take place. This research includes finding disaggregated data, data updates, information about the number of the people involved in fisheries and the capitalization of fishery resources caused by country policies and bilateral economic agreements is crucial to be taken into attention.

<sup>1</sup> [www.fao.org](http://www.fao.org)



## Market liberalization policy on Indonesian Fishery

The Law No. 1 of 2014, which is an amendment to the Law No. 27 of 2007, on the management of coastal areas and small islands opens wider opportunity for investors to take control of sea, coastal areas and small islands. The law opens the possibility of around 6,000 uninhabited Indonesian islands to be privatized. There are a number of companies who are keen on taking over 20 small islands in Indonesia. Control by corporate bodies of coastal areas would result in coastal communities losing their livelihood. Overlapping policies over coastal areas and sea territories also would worsen the condition, triggering conflicts.

### Development Justice:

To avoid social and environmental disaster a new strategy of development is desperately needed. Development Justice is a development framework that challenges the prevailing neoliberal economic model and promotes a rights-based approach to development. .

Development Justice acknowledges the important role of women in the fisherfolk community particularly their enormous potential as stewards of their environment and as leaders of their communities. Women make up half of the work force in fisheries especially in extraction, processing and trading fish. They are vital to the resilience of their families and communities. Despite their crucial role in fisheries efforts to systematically engage women in coastal fisheries co-management are scarce and their participation in decision-making processes, even those that directly impact their livelihoods, is limited.

Women need to be made leaders in the fisherfolk community. Women need to have greater participation in community development. Through a greater participation they will be able to address lack of access to resources as well as other social, political and economic barriers to ensuring secure livelihoods.

Civil society organizations working with the fisherfolk community must use Development Justice as a strategy to enable women to manage their resources sustainably without any unneeded restrictions created by the private government collaboration system.

The Sustainable Development Goals are another tool the fisherfolk community can use to influence the policy making process on sustainable fishing. Policy influence would include ensuring governments and the stakeholders to commit to the environmental aspect of the SDGs. As well bringing the SDGs into the agendas of national governments it will ensure women and men fisher folks can improve fisheries management and resilience.

**Redistributive justice:** Acts, policies and regulations that benefit corporate exploitation of fishing grounds and marine resources should be deregulated. This deregulation will enable fisherfolks to live and benefit from resources that fit to their economic needs sustainably. A marine and coastal act is an example of legal standing material that should be reviewed and revised.

**Economic justice:** Programs launched by national governments as well as international development agencies should focus on people oriented goals. Cooperation between the two, national and international development agencies with people and civil society organization is a must on empowering fisherfolks to increase their capacity to generate more income. Innovative tools and models are something that to be consider by the two agencies as well as civil society organizations.

**Gender and Social justice:** The budget of politic mainstreaming should be used as a resource to establish gender and social justice. Building of a social safety net for a short term solutions, and social security for long term security of living standard of fisherfolks, strategically should be done by allocating government budgets particularly in the area of national government and the house of representative decision and its conduct.

**Environmental justice:** Civil society organizations need to start working on measuring the scale of corporation's contribution to environmental degradation. Governments should implement a tax and monetary policy on big corporations. These taxes and policies could include their use of energy and the volume of fish caught. A long term plan or programs on this issue should be projected steadily from 5 to 25 years to help guide this transition. Moreover the institution and policies to deliver a new ecological future can and must be built over the next decade starting from now.

**Accountability to the peoples:** To be well informed in a world occupied by the interest of capital owners should not be taken for granted. The strategic role of civil society is to make each Government guarantee easy access and participation of small scale fisherfolks, marine society, the elderly and children living in coastal areas. Processes of planning, implementation and reviewing development at all levels will assist in achieving transparency within governmental programs. A system must be created to make people and civil society able to participate in transparent development. Aggregated data must also be available and valid in order to measure ongoing development.