Ocean Grabbing

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An important difference from past Structural Adjustment Programmes, is that this time the World Bank has allied with powerful corporations of the West, governments from around the world, United Nations and international environmental organisations. The new alliance is named the Global Partnership for Oceans (GPO).

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The sea is no private matter

by Masifundise

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In the medium-term, the next 5-10 years, the GPO Africa Programme for Fisheries aims at “decentralising the allocation of user rights and the transition to rights-based systems”. In order to get there, the GPO will inject significant capital in fisheries programs.
Livelihoods at stake for the fisher people at Nangooma landing site!

by Vaal Namugga

In March 2013, Katosi Women Development Trust (KWDT) conducted an informal consultation around Nangooma landing site, a very remote area in Mpunge, Uganda.

They wanted to understand the issues of water and land-grabbing in fishing communities, which was limiting the community’s access to land and lake. A press statement by the Ministry of Water and Environment responding to allegations that the Government of Uganda was selling water bodies made this a matter of urgency.

A 2012 survey by KWDT, revealed that the community faced serious issues of land insecurity, hygiene, sanitation and water access. Many fisher people showed frustration and pointed out insecurity over land as one of the reasons why they could not even construct toilets/sanitation facilities but preferred to practise open defecation.

The situation has deteriorated, accounting for more insecurity not only over land but even access to the fishing grounds, threatening livelihoods of the poor rural fishing communities.

Discussed at length was the prevailing situation over land ownership, disposal and access to the lake. Community members emphasised that certain individual “investors” have bought land adjacent to the lake. The bought land is then demarcated all through the water body (fishing area) and restricted to only owners. From the community’s point of view, these waters are supposed to be freely accessible to whoever is carrying out the fishing activity in a rightful manner.

This is however, not the case in Nangooma. The local fisher communities are strictly forbidden to go in or anywhere next to these fishing grounds and are confined to a very small portion which can hardly satisfy their livelihoods. “If you think we are telling lies, you dare cross that red flag and see if they will not shoot at you!” explained one fisherman.

These individuals have destroyed the vegetation near the lake which famously acts as breeding grounds for the fish. They have on several occasions taken advantage of the situation by buying out the fisher people occupying land along the lake shores at prices as low as Ug Shs. 30,000/= an equivalent of US$12, to relocate to other areas. It has led to loss of jobs, homes and meaningful livelihoods. The situation has greatly impacted on the poor rural fisher women who entirely depend on the fishing activity to provide for their families. “I do not see any meaning in staying here anymore, I need to find another place to stay and something else to do, to be able to look after my family, but how do I get the money! The situation is difficult for us women”, lamented Kadimala who has been processing fish for the last seven years in this area. Denial of user and access to fishing grounds has left the communities with less or no employment opportunities despite the fact that fishing is the major economic activity and source of food in the area.

As KWDT we have been making contact with other NGOs focused specifically on addressing the issue of land rights and resource use, to see how together we can address this situation. We are also making efforts to raise our concerns with the relevant ministries, through our local authorities.

The situation calls for the implementation of the international instruments and empowering the fisher communities to protect their rights. Knowledge and implementation of the United Nations voluntary guidelines for the responsible governance of tenure of land, fisheries and forests and the United Nations guidelines for securing small-scale fisheries are essential to address such challenges. The underlying issue is how we get them to benefit the rightful people especially empowering the rights claimants.
governance reforms. West Africa is set to receive US$250 million over a ten-year period, whereas East Africa and the Gulf of Guinea have to do with US$200 million and US$100 million respectively.

The key partners for the GPO Africa Programme for Fisheries are the World Bank, Regional Fisheries Bodies, the African Union (AU), the New Economic Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD), UN Food and Agricultural Organisation and the World Wildlife Fund for Nature (WWF). In other words, the millions who depend on small-scale fisheries are effectively excluded and expected to align with the powerful, elite minority.

While we have no clear evidence, because of lack of access to information, we can only speculate that the partners of this GPO Africa Programme work hand in hand with the key players of the AU-IBAR reform (see the article on page 5). In fact, there is an almost identical match of key partners of the two programmes.

The GPO will implement regional programmes all over the world, and its Africa Programme for Fisheries is just one of several priorities. The programmes are designed without any meaningful participation or inputs from the small-scale fisheries sector. What is more disturbing is the fact that they use multi-million dollar injections and build on neo-liberal ideology to impose Rights-based Fisheries.

SO WHAT IS “RIGHTS-BASED FISHERIES”? The term “Rights-based” might at a first glance give the impression that it’s about human rights, but it’s far from that. Any use of the term “Rights-based Fisheries” refers to private property rights rather than human rights. Many supporters of this system openly refer to it as the “privatisation of the seas”.

In the African context the term “Rights-based Fisheries” is generally substituted for “Wealth-Based Fisheries” but the meaning is the same. The characteristic features of this system are that ‘rights’ are freely given to selected owners, are fully transferable (can be leased, bought or sold), and are effectively permanent.

In other words, public or state-owned fish resource, upon which small-scale fishing communities have depended for centuries, is now simply given away to private individuals and corporations.

All over the world we see a similar pattern when Rights-based Fisheries is introduced: a concentration of fishing rights in the hands of rich elites and corporations, and a sharp reduction in the number of boats and people who make a living from fishing. The belief held by those who support Rights-based Fisheries is that ‘private ownership promotes stewardship’, but in all the countries where Rights-based Fisheries has been introduced, including South Africa and Namibia, this assumption has proven false. In these two African countries, overexploitation of marine resources has either increased or remained unchanged, and even worse, the system is incompatible with sharing of national wealth as it has led to an extreme concentration of fish resources and capital in the hands of the few while small-scale fisheries are left with scraps.

The purpose of this article is to highlight the extreme threats and stress the urgency of getting involved in the struggle against the GPO and Rights-based Fisheries. For a more detailed account of the GPO we refer a ‘call on governments to stop supporting the GPO’ (find it on www.masifundise.org.za), released by the World Forum of Fisher Peoples (WFFP) and the World Forum of Fish Harvesters and Fish Workers (WFF). For a detailed description of Rights-based Fishing we refer to the report ‘Fisheries Governance for Food Security: What lies behind the concept of Rights-Based Fisheries?’ Simply paste the title in the Google search engine and you will find the report and a relevant YouTube video.

It is beyond the scope of this article to also unpack the ‘Human Rights-based’ approach, which is in sharp contrast to Rights-based Fisheries. Yet, it is important to stress that we do have the alternative and that this is also described in the above-mentioned reports.
**MEET Dawda Saine**

**Q** Where are you from and where do you currently reside?

A Gambia

**Q** Where and what did you study?

A Ghana, General Course in Engineering and presently Marine Biology at Cambridge College UK – an online course.

**Q** What are your interests?

A Fisheries management, policy harmonisation, Professional organisation taking practical co-management responsibilities, Fair Fisheries agreement and arrangements, women in Fisheries active participation and inclusion in decision-making processes. Marine mammal research (West African Manatee) Sea turtle, dolphins, etc.

**Q** Your favourite food?

A Fufu, rice, mbahal, benachin, kenkey

**Q** You listen to music I am sure, if so what kind?

A Mbalax, reggae

**Q** Do you fish? If so where and what do you normally catch?

A Not currently, but occasionally I used to go sport fishing, and manatee research in the mangrove ecosystem.

**Q** Any personal achievements?

A Manatee researcher, Executive Secretary National Sole fishery Co-management Committee (NASCOM) USAID/BA NAFAA project.

**Q** Tell us how did you grow up and how did you get involved in the ssf industry?

A I grew up in a fishing family, we used to go fishing when I was 15 years and then in 1983 proceeded to Ghana for higher education. I worked as a volunteer to organise artisanal fisher folk in Gambia.

**Q** You are currently the treasurer of the CAOPA, must be demanding work, what does the organisation do and what are some notable achievements of the organisation?

A Yes it is demanding. The organisation deals with fishing and other fisheries related activities, the role of women in fisheries, Marine Protected Areas ( MPAs). The organisation established one nautical mile closure along the coast of the Gambia between 1st May- October, 31st, Developed a Sole fishery co-management plan, which was approved by Minister of Fisheries in January, 2012.

**Q** What are you currently working on?

A Working with The USAID/ BA NAFAA (African Confederation of Small-scale Fisheries Professional Organisations) project on sole fishery certification with the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) eco-label scheme and we are now in the process of developing a catfish management plan, but in the meantime gathering local ecological and scientific knowledge of the catfish.

**Q** What issues do you think small-scale fishing organisations in Africa should be focusing on and why?

A Resource conservation, management, and development. Say no to industrial fishing as a way of introducing biological rest period on high sea fishing. Introduce an apex continental credit facility for African small-scale fishers. Overfishing should be made illegal. If resources are depleted, no one will be able to fish.

**Q** What are your thoughts, hopes and dreams about and for the African ssf industry?

A My thoughts are for African small-scale fishers to initiate actions to fight irresponsible fishing, fisheries agreement. My dreams will relate to artisanal operators taking the lead to stop industrial fisheries and harmonized policies. Minimising dependency on donor money as they always lend us eyes, therefore direct us on where to look (dictatorship).

**Q** Anything else you would like us to know?

A The fishery is now under a transition period and transition is a three phase process that people go through as they come to terms with the details of a new situation. The three phases are letting go the old way of doing things, the neutral zone and the new beginning. Foolhardiness that disputes all claims breaks under a combined pressure, meaning continuous hardness in fisheries agreement will break when all African small-scale fishers joined forces to fight fisheries agreement.

**Q** Favourite saying?

A Accusation like a pendulum, has a way of swinging back on accusers and every adversity carries with it the seed of an equivalent or greater benefits.

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**CAOPA**

CAOPA adheres to a vision where small-scale fisheries are recognised as a powerhouse of economic development in Africa and a priority investment sector, which contributes to food security and job creation for the most vulnerable groups (women and young people).

By working with governments, communities, national and international institutions in defining and implementing sustainable fisheries policies which contribute to poverty alleviation, CAOPA promotes and supports the small-scale fishing communities by furthering sustainable fishing practices and strengthening capacities to effectively utilise and benefit from the value of fisheries resources enabling fishing communities to get involved in implementing and taking advantage of fisheries policies, through empowering grassroots organisations.
African fisheries reform process under way, but where is the voice of the fishers?

Joshua Cox, Masifundise

The voice of the 10 million small-scale fishers in Africa must be heard in any process aimed at reforming fisheries governance on the continent. A process that doesn’t take on board the life experiences of those who depend on our ocean and lakes for their livelihood, will inevitably be a flawed one.

It is with this in mind that it is necessary to criticise the process being led by the African Union (AU) and the New Economic Partnership for Africa’s Development (Nepad) for developing a fisheries policy strategy for Africa. The development of such a strategy was a key outcome of the first CAMFA (Conference of African Ministers of Fisheries and Aquaculture) held in The Gambia in 2010.

Not only has this policy-making process been undemocratic, by not including the voice of the millions of small-scale fishers in Africa, but it is patent clear that the focus on profits is taking priority over issues such as livelihood opportunities, food sovereignty, local social and economic development, and democratic governance of fisheries.

At the first follow up meeting (called a “Think Tank” meeting) after the 2010 CAMFA and hosted by the AU in May 2012, only four small-scale fisher representatives from the entire continent attended. This is an indication of the apparent lack of the commitment on the part of the AU and Nepad to meaningful and inclusive consultation in this policy-making process. Masifundise was one of only two organisations, who work with or represent small-scale fishers, assigned to the five regional assessment teams tasked with preparing reports on the state of fisheries in the five regions of Africa during August and September 2012. At our insistence it was agreed that Masifundise compile a report on the basis of inputs from small-scale fisher organisations from across Africa. To read this report visit http://masifundise.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2013/01/AU-Report_Africa.pdf

“The focus on profits is taking priority over issues such as livelihood opportunities, food sovereignty, local social and economic development, and democratic governance of fisheries.”

A handful of additional fisher organisations attended a follow-up meeting in Cameroon in November 2012. The meeting focused on minor amendments to the assessment reports rather than dealing with substantive inputs included in the above mentioned report.

An overall, draft set of recommendations was to be developed by the process facilitator of the AU in the first weeks of 2013. This was then meant to be discussed by the members of the above-mentioned Think Tank before the final version is presented to the CAMFA ministers. As per July 2013, we still have not seen the draft set of recommendations and the process has gone alarmingly quiet.

The outcomes (policy recommendations for the CAMFA ministers) of this process will have potentially far-reaching impacts on fisheries governance in Africa. Yet, from the beginning it has been abundantly clear that insufficient time and resources were allocated to ensuring that small-scale fishers were adequately included in this process. Cursory attempts to include a handful of fisher organisations might be enough to “tick the box”, but can hardly be considered a democratic process.

So what does all this tell us besides from the fact that the process has been undemocratic? The lack of inclusion of the biggest sub-sector in fisheries creates space for the complex of African neo-liberal policy makers, the World Bank, the economically powerful and politically connected fishing industry, and big international environmental organisations such as World wide Fund for Nature (WWF), to push forward fishery policies that are, at best, insensitive to small-scale fisheries. At worst, and far more likely, this will lead to concentration of fishing rights with the political and economic elites and the expropriation of rights from tens of thousands of small-scale fishers across the continent.

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Fisherfolk from Port Nolloth, South Africa, landing their catch.

Industral-scale plunder of the seas.

Pic courtesy of Bing.
Mauritius is an active member of various regional and international organisations, like the Indian Ocean Commission, Southern African Development Committee (SADC), and the United Nations, and has entered lateral and multilateral agreements with friendly countries, including the United States, India, South Africa, France and the European Union (EU). These agreements have been entered with a view to promote and develop economic partnership among parties and to stimulate economic development of the country. The relations between Mauritius and the European Union (EU) has witnessed a continuous intensification over recent years. This has contributed to a shift from a monocrop economy based on sugar in the pre-independent era to a diversified and dynamic one composed of tourism, textile, financial services, information and communication technology, sugar, and seafood hub among others.

Together with other countries of the Eastern and Southern Africa (ESA) group, Mauritius negotiated an interim Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) with the EU and signed it in August 2009. The agreement entered into force in May 2012. Negotiations for a comprehensive and permanent Economic Partnership Agreement between the EU and the entire Eastern and Southern African group are ongoing. The EPA will, among other things, open up for more foreign investment and takeover of natural resources in Mauritius, including fisheries resources.

In February 2012, Mauritius and the EU initiated a new Fisheries Partnership Agreement (FPA) and it is expected to be ratified by the Council of the European Union shortly. While this agreement stresses the importance of the national small-scale sector and ‘sustainable’ fisheries, it opens up for increased, foreign fishing on fish stocks that are already under severe pressure.

CRITICISMS OF THE FPA

The Fisheries Partnership Agreement is being criticised on the following grounds:

1. Given the high importance of the issue, no wide consultation has taken place. The fisher communities as well as many other stakeholders have been kept apart from all consultations.
2. The overexploitation of fish stocks by industrial vessels is to the detriment of newly established local fishers operating around the Fish Aggregating Device (FAD) and those engaged in semi-industrial fishing targeting the same species.
3. The financial gain is negligible in comparison with the market value of tuna (the price of tuna on the local market is Rs 120 (Euro 1.5) per kilo, whereas the EU only pays 120 per tonne or Rs 9.6 (Euro 0.12) per kilo to fish. Considering the much higher price of tuna on the European market, the profit made by the European vessels is enormous. It is therefore not equitable.
4. The number of job opportunities is insignificant, 10 posts for 86 vessels whereas the number of unemployed qualified seamen amounts to thousands.
5. Allowing tuna seiners to operate in Mauritian waters, whereas net fishing in the lagoon is being phased out, on the basis that it is destructive is discriminatory towards local fishers.

continued on page 12
Approaching from the distant waters...

At an African Union meeting in Nairobi...

- **How can we make the most profit on fisheries?**
- **By privatising the fish and giving it to multinational companies.**
- **Yes, private ownership also promotes responsible fishing.**

Money rules...

- **But how do we do that?**
- **We will give you and other African governments hundreds of millions of dollars if you change your policies!!**

Meanwhile...

- ** Aren't we lucky our government protects our human right to fish?**
- **Yes, but I heard some politician say that our government wants to change that to allow the rich elite to make even more profit!**

More breadwinners...

- **What would this community do without the fish caught by our small-scale fishers?**
- **I wouldn't be able to afford the protein and nutrients my family needs!**
- **Many of us would be out of a job. We should demand from our government that our right to the fish is protected!**

Further offshore...

In a few years...

- **Why did our government privatise the fish and allow big companies to steal our fish?**
- **And now my daughter has left for the slums in the big city to look for a better life.**

Unless...

- **No to privatisation and colonisation of our fish!**
- **No to ocean grabbing!**
- **No fish to eat!**
- **Ocean privatisation destroys our nation!**

Supported by: The World Forum of Fisher Peoples
Small-scale fishers can broadly be defined as the fishing sector that includes those who harvest mainly for their own household use, those who sell to the market but retain a portion of their catch for local consumption, and those who harvest almost exclusively for the market but on a small-scale compared to large-scale industrial fisheries. Small-scale fishers account for over 90% of the world’s fishers.

Small-scale fishers typically use non-industrialised methods of harvesting (passive gear or manually hauled). The above descriptions do not include pre-, and post-harvest workers, such as boat builders, fisher processors and fish traders.

It is estimated that four additional jobs are created for every person involved in harvesting the resource.

**NUMBER OF FISHERS**

According to estimates, 10 million Africans rely on small-scale fisheries as their primary livelihood, and a further 90 million (farmers and resource poor) depend on fishing as part of a diversified livelihood strategy. Below is a table indicating the approximate number of fishers (including those involved in post-harvest activities) in the countries for which we have data:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>No. of fishers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Southern Africa</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Angola</td>
<td>700 000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DRC</td>
<td>2,400 000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malawi</td>
<td>400 000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mozambique</td>
<td>350 000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Africa</td>
<td>100 000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>West Africa</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ghana</td>
<td>650 000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senegal</td>
<td>600 000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sierra Leone</td>
<td>230 000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>East Africa</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kenya</td>
<td>145 000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uganda</td>
<td>1,000 000 – 1,500 000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tanzania</td>
<td>2,000 000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Figures based on data from FAO, the EU, research papers and fisher organisations*

**FOOD SECURITY AND FISH SUPPLY**

Some 200 million Africans rely on fish as their primary source of protein and important micro-nutrients. In Sierra Leone fish accounts for 80% of the animal protein intake. In Senegal 75% of animal protein consumed, is fish, and the annual per capita fish consumption is 26kg, compared to the global average of 18kg. In Ghana these figures are 60% and 20-25kg respectively. A similar pattern is seen in most other African countries where populations traditionally have been dependent on fish as a source of protein.

In many countries in Africa the great majority of fish landed is consumed locally. Fish “landed” is not necessarily the same as fish “caught” and in many countries fish caught by industrial vessels is either transshipped or landed in a neighbouring country from where it is exported. In such a case the figures for fish landed don’t reflect the total harvest of fish within a country’s Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ). In Angola 94% of all fish caught in the EEZ is landed in Angola and only 5% of all fish landed is exported to foreign markets.

In the DRC there is no foreign export of fish, although there is some regional trade, primarily with the Central African Republic and the Republic of Congo. Fish landings in the DRC are not sufficient to meet local demand and the country also relies on fish imports for food security. The same is true of many other

*continued on page 9*
African countries, including Ghana where domestic supply is largely seasonal and food security is further threatened by exports which are increasing domestic fish prices.

In Sierra Leone, 95% of the fish landed by artisanal fishers is consumed locally and only 5% is exported. In Mauritius all of the fish landed by the domestic sectors is consumed locally, besides a small quantity of high value species which are exported to nearby Reunion Island. Namibia is a notable exception where 97% of marine fish caught – all harvested by industrial vessels - is exported.

There is a lack of information available on small-scale fisheries in Namibia. However, Masifundise’s sources indicate that small-scale fishing contributes significantly to livelihood opportunities (jobs) and food security in the northern interior of Namibia.

In most African countries, small-scale fishers account for the bulk of the local fish supply. In the DRC, for instance, about 90% of the national fish production is by small-scale fishers. Similarly, in Mozambique about 93% of the tonnage landed comes from small-scale fisheries, which gives some indication of the crucial role that the sector plays in providing local communities with an affordable source of protein.

There is also significant underreporting of landings made by small-scale fishers in Mozambique. In Malawi, 95% of fish landings are made by small-scale fishers and in both Senegal and Nigeria the figure is 80%. Much of the fish caught in Nigeria is sold in Cameroon, Benin, Chad and Niger, contributing to food security in those countries. About 70% of the fish landed in Sierra Leone is caught by artisanal fishers of which 10% is sold in Guinea Conakry, Liberia, Ghana and The Gambia.

Migration of fishers is a common phenomenon, where small-scale fishers harvest fish in neighbouring countries. About 90% of small-scale fishers fishing in Gabonese waters are from Nigeria and many of the balance are from Togo and Benin. Similarly in Togo 70-80% of the fishers are foreigners, and in Mauritania the figure is 20%.

In the next publication, we will look at facts, figures and issues facing the organisation of fishers, including fisher governance and management within the African continent.

"MPAs must help, not harm communities"

Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) impact negatively on the lives and livelihoods of surrounding communities, say small-scale fishermen in South Africa.

This was a unanimous view that emerged from a workshop in Durban on Jun 26, where members of Coastal Links South Africa did a detailed assessment of various aspects of the MPAs.

Coastal Links is a mass-based organisation that represents thousands of small-scale fishers from coastal communities countrywide. Coastal Links works closely with Masifundise Development Trust.

Fishers support the idea of conserving marine resources, but are appalled at the way MPAs are conceptualized and implemented. They believe that both government action and private interests are denying them historical fishing rights. Ocean grabbing happens around MPA when private individuals secure access to exclusive areas and occupy land and property on the periphery of MPAs. This while small-scale fishers are pushed to the outskirts and persecuted for asserting their right to fish.

“Fishing communities expressed frustration at being removed from their fishing grounds, taking away their daily bread,” says Nico Waldeck, a Masifundise Development Trust Community Development Worker in the Western Cape.

“We, members of Coastal Links branches considered the impact that current MPAs have on our small-scale fishing communities. The lives and livelihoods of people living in or adjacent to MPAs are severely negatively impacted upon,” according to a meeting declaration.

Delegates said small-scale fishers had to endure harassment, arrests and forced removals leading to conflict with authorities and in communities.

The gathering resolved to embark on a proactive programme and taking deliberate actions that will lead to a radical reconceptualisation of MPAs so that they could:

• Protect the livelihoods and customary rights of fishing communities living in and adjacent to MPAs;
• Provide for the protection and conservation of natural habitat areas and the natural resources living in it;
• Ensure that MPAs are informed by the best available science and local knowledge
• Provide for democratic management processes that allows communities to be fully and meaningfully integrated into all decision making process that impacts on them;
• The workshop further resolved to set up a task team, profile each MPA community and gather as much information and knowledge on MPAs.

Coastal Links will hold provincial workshops to develop a national set of change principles and host a national conference to mainstream our proposals.
Political activists, fishers and fish processors from all over the world were in Italy for the Slow Fish event in May this year.

Thousands visited the old fishing harbour in Genoa, on the Mediterranean coast. They came to attend workshops and conferences or just to taste the delicious fish products and learn about the techniques used to conserve and process fish products.

The Imraguen, nomad fisher women of Mauritania were offering a taste of their smoked mullet and Icelandic fishers offered the curious visitors a bite of Cod fish dried on the north Atlantic volcanic island.

Besides being an opportunity for fishers to share knowledge and experiences in how to add value to fish products and expanding local trade and markets, the Slow Fish event was also used as a platform to discuss some of the most burning political threats to small-scale fisheries.

Approximately 100 fishers or people representing small-scale fisher organisations took part in the discussions.

The charismatic leader Lider Gongora of the national network for the defence of the mangroves ecosystem in Ecuador (C-CONDEM) explained how locals are being evicted and their mangrove forests are being destroyed in order for big business to produce shrimps for the North Americans or Europeans. As a political activist, Lider works tirelessly to empower fisher people to engage in the fight for their rights.

The Chilean government passed a new law that gave 93% of the fishing rights to just four companies, with only 7% going to more than 80,000 artisanal fishers, and zero to the indigenous fisher population.

Miguel Cheuqueman Vargas from Identidad Territorial Lafkenche in Chile spoke of similar oppression in his country. Recently the Chilean government passed a new law that gave 93% of the fishing rights to just four companies, with only 7% going to more than 80,000 artisanal fishers, and zero to the indigenous fisher population.

Miguel also explained how the Chilean University students have joined the fight against the gross injustice of an increasing concentration of wealth on the hands of just four companies owned by seven Chilean families and a small number of foreign fishing giants.

For Masifundise, Slow Fish was an opportunity to learn from friends from all over. At the same time it confirmed our claim that corporations, helped by governments, are pursuing the privatisation and financialisation of nature. This is done at the expense of the millions of people who are dispossessed from their land or denied access to fishing grounds.

Masifundise also spoke about the South African Rights-based Fisheries policy which in 2005 cut off the livelihoods of thousands in the small-scale fishing sector, and about the threats of the World Bank project called Global Partnership for Oceans (GPO). For more information see our article on the GPO and Ocean Grabbing, on the front page.

The Slow Fish event proved a very useful platform to share knowledge and build solidarity. We at Masifundise recommend that small-scale fisher organisations keep an eye on the Slow Fish network. For more information visit http://slowfish.slowfood.it/en/
Ocean Grabbing

Apostleship of the Sea (AOS) in brief
AOS was first founded in Glasgow, Scotland in 1922 to support seafarers. In 1963, AOS established itself in Mauritius, and since then it has been providing support to lagoon and off-shore fishers, catering for their social and economic betterment. They are currently 27 cooperatives supported by AOS.

Katosi Women Development Trust (KWDT)
Is a non-governmental organisation, working with rural women in fisher communities in Uganda. KWDT works with 16 rural women's groups that bring together 365 women from communities in the sub counties of Nama, Mpunge, Ntenjeru, Mpata and Nakisunga of Mukono district in the south of Uganda along the shores of Lake Victoria.

Civil society can play the crucial role of watch dog, but when the small-scale fisheries sub-sector is left in the dark and alienated, this is extremely difficult. In this case, by far the greatest majority of small-scale fishers and fisher organisations on the continent have no knowledge whatsoever that a policy process is under way that is most likely to dramatically affect their livelihoods. How can small-scale fishing communities and organisations then possibly make meaningful contributions or hold decision-makers to account?

It seems that small-scale fishers across Africa are becoming increasingly marginalised, both economically and politically, in a process where neo-liberal policies lead to the accumulation of natural resources and wealth in the hands of the minority elites. The AU fisheries policy reform presents us with an opportunity to push for policies that give priority to small-scale fisheries. However, this is only possible if the organisations representing small-scale fisher peoples give clear messages to decision makers in their own countries and step up the fight for their rights.

About Slow Fish
Slow Fish is part of the Slow Food project. In their website, they describe their philosophy and outline some of the things they do.
Fish: It’s a slippery issue.
Hidden underwater, our marine resources are not easy to study or understand. What state are our seas in? What fish species are on the verge of extinction? Can we influence the market? Should we stop eating fish? Is there a future for small-scale fishers?
Just when we think land is in sight, we find ourselves out in the open sea again, unsure how to proceed, buffetted by contradictory advice, apocalyptic scenarios and a confusion of expert opinions, no longer sure what matters and what doesn’t, what’s allowable or even safe to eat. But if we stubbornly make the effort to investigate the subject, we can see strong currents of thought starting to form. Slow Food has been working in the field of sustainable fish for many years, raising awareness among seafood-lovers through the biennial Slow Fish fair in Genoa and developing projects to support responsible artisanal fishing communities. Our network’s members organize local initiatives all around the world.

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6. There is great apprehension that by-catch (species other than tuna) will be destroyed at sea thus contributing to stock depletion. Vessels may be tempted to save storage facilities for the main catch which has high market value by throwing away other species. With an average of 5 percent by-catch, one can imagine the volume of fish destroyed.

We, the Apostleship of the Sea of Mauritius, urge colleagues from around the continent to pay attention to bilateral and multilateral agreements and demand that the small-scale fisheries sector take part in decision making as an equal partner.

Details of the FPA

| Duration       | 3 years            |
| Species        | Tuna               |
| Tonnage        | 5,500 tonnes per year |
| Fishing area   | Beyond the 15nm zone |
| Vessels        | 41 ocean going tuna seiners, 45 surface long liners |
| Employment     | 10 Mauritian nationals to be employed |
| Compensation   | Euro 357,500 per year for access, Euro 302,500 per year for support and implementation of sectoral policies |

Senegal fisherfolk in the sea. Pic by Alexis Fossi.

Côte d’Ivoire: Big fishing vessels deplete much of the marine resources along the African coast. Pic by Alexis Fossi.

Fisherfolk from Senegal. Pic by Alexis Fossi.