

DOSSIER:

Interventions and key speakers

I International Conference of Women in Fisheries

5, 6 and 7 November 2018
Santiago de Compostela, Galicia



CONFERENCIA
INTERNACIONAL
DE MUJERES
DE LA PESCA



GOBIERNO
DE ESPAÑA

MINISTERIO
DE AGRICULTURA, PESCA
Y ALIMENTACIÓN



Organización de las Naciones Unidas
para la Alimentación y la Agricultura



XUNTA
DE GALICIA



UNIÓN EUROPEA
FONDO EUROPEO MARÍTIMO
E DE PESCA (FEMP)

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INTRODUCTION:

Last 5, 6 and 7 November 2018, the **I International Conference of Women in Fisheries** was held in the Conference and Exhibition Centre of Galicia, located in Santiago de Compostela. This conference hosted around 300 people from different countries and fishing and aquaculture activities in order to exchange experiences, ideas and insights regarding the position of women in this sector, with the aim of improving their social, economic and labour conditions.

With this purpose, different workshops were carried out to address issues relating to the main demands of women in this industry, such as the recognition of their role in fisheries and aquaculture; their involvement in fisheries diversification; female associations and leadership; working conditions; professionalisation and training, or the opportunities that blue growth offers. The conference also offered spaces for the exhibition of videos, projects and initiatives on equality carried out in different countries.

The third day of the conference enabled attendees to know in situ the work which is currently being carried out by women working at sea in Galicia through guided tours to different fishing places or facilities.

The conference was attended by governmental authorities from Spain, Portugal, France and Morocco, and representatives of international entities, such as the United Nations (UN), the International Labour Organisation (ILO) or the European Commission, among others. Likewise, representatives of women's organisations within the fisheries and aquaculture sector from the five continents have actively participated.

They have all subscribed the ***Santiago de Compostela Declaration for Equal Opportunities in the Fisheries and Aquaculture Sector***, which establishes the strategic basis and guidelines to implement the gender perspective in this area of activity; to enhance the working conditions of the different female groups, and to boost their empowerment and leadership.

The following is a summary of the issues and questions addressed during the first two days of the meeting, as well as the main conclusions which can be drawn from each of the different spaces of the programme (**ANNEX 1**).

5 NOVEMBER:

OPENING CEREMONY:

The representatives of the organising and host authorities of this conference who intervened in the opening ceremony highlighted the fundamental role played by women in the fisheries and aquaculture sector, despite their traditional invisibility and lack of recognition. They all urged the encouragement of their leadership.

In this regard, the Councillor responsible for Equality, Economic Development and Tourism of the City of Santiago de Compostela, **Marta Lois**, pointed out that “it is essential for us to improve the working conditions of thousands of women who work on the fisheries sector” – around 6,000 in Galicia, as she noted – everyday, mostly in activities as shellfish harvesting and the processing industry, which are characterised by hard working conditions: “long shifts, standing, relentlessly and without any recognition.”



Marta Lois, Councillor responsible for Equality, Economic Development and Tourism of the City of Santiago de Compostela.

For this reason, she stressed how important it is to value and to recognise the work carried out by these women institutionally, since “it has not been included in political agendas at the same level as the work carried out by men”. Similarly, she defended the need to facilitate the access and promotion of women to management positions within the sector.



Vera Agostini, Deputy Director of the Fisheries and Aquaculture Policy and Resources Division of the FAO.

For her part, the Deputy Director of the Fisheries and Aquaculture Policy and Resources Division of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), **Vera Agostini**, presented the global context of the situation of women in this sector, evidencing their active role around the world by means of specific examples –such as certain African territories “where women own the boats used by men to fish”– and highlighting their leading role in post-harvest activities.

According to the FAO, in 2018 around 59.6 million people work in the fisheries and aquaculture industries globally, of whom only 14% are women. However, when secondary sectors are included, the number of women increases and amounts to the 50% of the employment.

Despite their significant role in the sector, Vera Agostini pointed out that women are still facing numerous challenges, as lack of information, financial support or infrastructure.

They also have very limited access to resources; they are excluded from decision-making processes and leadership positions; they have fewer labour rights and privileges, and their companies are smaller and grow at a slower rate. “Ultimately, they lack decent work conditions and they are who suffer the most in this globalised market”, she noted.

Similarly, she highlighted that the role played by women within this sector is not isolated from that of men, since both sexes “have diverse and complementary roles”. For this reason, in order to guarantee sustainable fishing and to comply with the development goals adopted by the United Nations, particularly goal number 5, the FAO regards it as essential that both gender equality –understood as respect for the rights, responsibilities and opportunities of persons regardless of their sex– and gender equity –which implies treatment for men and women according to their respective needs– are reached.

With this purpose, the FAO has developed the *Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication*, which point out gender equality as a key principle, which is also included in the different projects carried out by the organisation.

The FAO representative finalised her intervention by noting that gender inequality is present in different areas of the fisheries and aquaculture sectors, so it is necessary to promote female empowerment in all areas globally. Likewise, she reiterated the need to recognise and support the role played by women in the sector; to guarantee their involvement in the decision-making process, and to facilitate their access to resources, as well as to include gender indicators in order to improve the data.

As institutions, “we must improve our understanding of this role and prioritise strategies related to gender”, so that eventually “gender will no longer be a special issue, but an element integrated in our work”, noted Vera Agostini.

The Spanish Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, **Luis Planas Puchades**, stressed not only the importance of women as a workforce in the Spanish fisheries sector as a whole –where they represent the 35% of the employment, with 47,500 employees–, but also their role as “social catalysers, entrepreneurship drivers and wealth and cohesion generators.”



Luis Planas Puchades, Spanish Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food.

Based on these statements, he provided general data from Spain on female presence within this sector, which is particularly relevant in areas such as the processing industry –where women represent the 67% of the

employment–, shellfish harvesting on foot –representing the 63%– or the auxiliary industry, particularly the production and repair of fishing nets –an 87%–. On the contrary, with regard to marine fisheries, he pointed out the need to increase the employment rate for women, which is currently around 5%.

This historical inequality between women and men evidenced by the data results from multiple factors, among which the Minister pointed out the traditional existence of prejudices and gender roles. However, he noted that this mentality has changed over the last few years, mostly thanks to the organisations of women within the sector.

In order to progress in this respect, he reiterated “the commitment of the Spanish Government to gender equality, fully and firmly, in all areas and sectors of society”, and particularly the initiative launched by his department regarding the promotion of measures encouraging equality in the fisheries sector by recognising the work carried out by women. “Committing to equality”, he said, “means committing to competitiveness and sustainability in the sector”.

In this regard, he assured that “female leadership is a key element to economic development, but also to the social cohesion of our society as a whole”, it being the basis for having sustainable fisheries and aquaculture activities in the future. In order to achieve said leadership, he underlined the relevance of female associations, unity among women and their visibility, noting the work carried out in this regard by the Spanish Network of Women in the Fisheries Sector in Spain as an example.

Finally, the Minister defended that the “work carried out by women internationally must not be considered as mere aid or as a complement to the household economy, but as a professional job”, and that the first step towards achieving this reality is the collection of statistics with data disaggregated by sex. As he pointed out, on the one hand we need to work on the improvement of knowledge on the working conditions of the different female collectives, but also to “establish a common global strategy for promoting equal opportunities and female leadership.” With regard to this goal, Luis Planas underlined the value of the *Santiago de Compostela Declaration for Equal Opportunities in the Fisheries and Aquaculture Sector* as an starting point for enhancing international cooperation.

The opening ceremony of this I International Conference of Women in Fisheries ended with the intervention of the President of the Regional Government of Galicia, **Alberto Núñez Feijóo**, who took this opportunity to recognise women who work in the fisheries and aquaculture sector, especially in the Galician industry, where women have a leading role in activities such as shellfish harvesting (representing a 75% of the employees), the auxiliary industry composed by different collectives, such as net menders (women represent the 85%), or establishments for processing fishery products and canneries (where the 70% of the employees are women).

Despite these figures, he also mentioned that regarding the managerial positions within the maritime sector, and particularly in the case of Galicia with regard to the most recent

elections in the guilds, women have lost representation as presidents, but are gaining it in councils and general meetings, where the number of seats has increased to 56%.



Alberto Núñez Feijóo, President of the Regional Government of Galicia.

Feijóo defended that the increase of equal opportunities is an indicator of the key and economic growth of the progress, since it implies the construction of a fairer society. Consequently, he has noted that defending equality must be a project shared by all, women and men. Although he has referred to the significant progress made over the past few years, as the strengthening of the role of women, which has traditionally been “underestimated, underrepresented, excluded from

the public sphere and lacking its own history”, he has also acknowledged that there are many challenges to be addressed, as supporting the promotion of women to decision-making positions. “Fisheries cannot be understood without women, so increasing their leadership is the fair thing to do”, he stated.

In order to achieve this goal, Feijóo and the Minister have both agreed on the importance of cooperating and sharing knowledge and experiences, noting that “it is time to build a global strategy on equality within the framework of blue growth.” This entails a declaration of intent and a combined effort by the different agents involved: administrations, international bodies, sectoral entities, seafarers, etc., “so we can all build a narrative which reveals the extent of the work carried out by women in this sector, the related problems and the initiatives launched to change their situation.”

During his intervention, the president of the Regional Government of Galicia has expressed his hope that this international conference will mean “a turning point that will lead to the creation of an international network of women within the fisheries sector which endorses said global strategy in favour of real and effective equality in the industry.”

PLENARY SESSION (First part):

- **Institutional block:**

The different governmental authorities and representatives of international organisations who intervened in this block highlighted the need to fight the traditional gender roles and to implement measures aimed at increasing the incorporation and promotion of women within this sector.

Firstly, the Director of the United Nations (UN) Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea, **Gabriele Goettsche-Wanli**, intervened via a video to emphasise the importance of

gender equality in all areas of society; she stated that this principle is “at the core of human rights and the UN values”, and that it should also be essential in the maritime sector, as provided in the *FAO Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries*.



Gabriele Goettsche-Wanli, Director of the United Nations Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea

The UN representative underlined that fishing is a sector traditionally linked to men, so that the role of women has usually focused on low-paid, irregular or supposedly secondary activities, or on less regulated or supported areas.

This situation is also evidenced by the lack of statistical data on female employment, which causes the contribution of women and men to this sector to be valued differently; sectoral regulations and policies also show lack of recognition.

As a result, female workers within this sector “have been excluded from decision-making processes for too long” –as she pointed out– and consequently, their rights have been diminished. “And denying women rights is not only a mistake that affects them as women, but also an issue that hinders our progress as a society.”

In this regard, Goettsche-Wanli noted that, when given the opportunity, women prove to be successful and excellent resource managers. They play an essential role in the transmission of values to future generations which will enable to preserve the environment and the marine environment, according to the goals established in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The UN representative defended the need to promote female leadership, equal access to economic resources and political participation, equal opportunities in the work sphere and in education, and other areas of activity in which the UN is focusing its efforts and on which she deemed it essential to work on an institutional level: “We should not row against the current, but rather change the current”, she concluded.

For her part, **Teresa Coelho**, President of the Board of Directors of Docapesca, Portos e Lotas, representing the Minister of the Sea of Portugal, highlighted the progress made over the last decades in this country with regard to the correct consideration of the gender and women rights issues.

In this regard, she detailed several governmental initiatives in that field, as the recent adoption of a national strategy called *Portugal más igual*, or the study requested by the Ministry of the Sea to the Universidad Nova de Lisboa to assess the situation of women in the economy of the Sea.

Said study shows a female representation of 9.6% in the fisheries sector, with that figure being 20.3% in the aquaculture sector. Likewise, it evidences a stronger presence of men in entities related to fishing and port operations, while women stand out in the management of resources and the education field.

During her intervention, Coelho emphasised the economic and social relevance of the fishing communities in Portugal, “where women have always played a fundamental role” as daughters, wives or mothers of fishermen, deeply involved in the management of the household economy linked to the sea or working in canneries, where the labour force has been essentially feminine. However, she has highlighted the change of paradigm produced, since currently “fishermen wives still play that traditional role, but they have acquired new skills.” As she pointed out, we are witnessing the “revival of a new generation of fisherwomen who are also linked to science, education, business management, R&D&I; who hold management positions in public administrations and NGOs...”.

In order to strengthen this trend of a larger female representation in management and highly qualified positions, the Docapesca representative highlighted Portugal’s commitment to support, defend and propose measures aimed at promoting equality. In this regard, she noted that the country is assessing the development of a platform which enables the creation of a network of women aimed at exchanging experiences and knowledge relating to the different areas of the fisheries and aquaculture sector.

During her intervention, **Christine Bader**, Maritime and Transport Specialist of the International Labour Organization (ILO) underlined that one out of two workers throughout the value chain in the fisheries and aquaculture sector is a woman, thus it is necessary for them to have a decent work under the same conditions as men.

In this sense, she noted that the ILO’s mission in terms of social justice within the work sphere is “to promote a decent work environment for women and men under conditions of freedom, equity, safety and human dignity”, and stated that equal opportunities are key to achieve said objective, which also complies with the Agenda 2030 goals.



Teresa Coelho, President of the Board of Directors of Docapesca, Portos e Lotas de Portugal.



Christine Bader, specialist from the Maritime and Transport Department of the ILO.

During her speech, she highlighted the existence of two essential conventions of the ILO which provide tools for eliminating discrimination in all areas of the workplace and in society in general, offering a basis upon which different strategies of gender perspective integration can be applied. Particularly, she referred to the *Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (No. 111)*, which requires signatory States to apply a national policy designed “to promote equal opportunities and treatment regarding employment and occupation, with the aim of eliminating any gender discrimination with regard to access to education and professional training; access to employment; working conditions...”. On the other hand, she mentioned the *Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951 (No. 100)*, which requires “the application of the principle of equal remuneration for men and women workers for work of equal value.” Finally, she stated that the *Work in Fishing Convention, 2007 (No. 188)* establishes the international legal framework for decent working conditions in fisheries “to guarantee that the 38 million fishers around the world who work in commercial fishing vessels can enjoy decent life and working conditions.”

In this regard, Christine Bader explained how the gender perspective has been integrated within the framework of this convention; for example, by means of the ILO’s decision to stop using during its negotiation the internationally accepted word “fishermen” and instead use the neutral term “fisher”, which includes both sexes. Similarly, she pointed out that said convention also includes requirements which affect resting places with the aim of guaranteeing the appropriate privacy for women and men on board, as well as references to issues relating to maternity or the need to adapt on-board security equipment to the needs of women.



Frédéric Gueudar Delahaye, General Director of Maritime Fisheries and Aquaculture of France.

Frédéric Gueudar Delahaye, General Director of Maritime Fisheries and Aquaculture of France, noted that in his country 224 women worked in 2016 as sailors or boatmasters out of a total of 16,000 people, which means a representation rate of 1.4%, although their participation is much higher in activities carried out on land.

During his intervention, the General Director detailed some of the milestones achieved regarding equality in the French fisheries sector, as the legal and regulatory recognition of the role of women in fishing family

businesses in 1987, which enabled to promote their presence in management positions. He also referred to a report prepared in 2015 in which women shared their experience within this sector and the difficulties and challenges they had to face to exercise their profession.

Among them, Frédéric Gueudar pointed out the hardness of fisheries as a brake to the incorporation of women into the sector, although he recognised that renovating the fleets

and improving the organisation and work systems has mitigate it: “female presence in this sector makes us to reconsider the ergonomics of the activities, which benefits both women and men.”

In this regard, he noted other challenges to the incorporation of women into fisheries, as the lack of flexibility in work times and its impact on their family life; prejudices which still hinder women contracting, etc. For this reason, he encouraged not only the modernisation of the fleets, but also the very concept of the works: “We must change our mindset, which is the main brake”, he stated.

In this respect, a meeting aimed at reflecting on how to make this sector more attractive to both women and men was held in France on 12 October 2018. During this meeting, it was agreed that revaluating this profession, as well as showing a more public communication and facilitating access to the labour market for women is the best way to promote a bigger incorporation of workers into this sector.

In addition to this, we must consider education in the maritime-fishing area as a key factor, “where women must be accepted without being influenced by any preconceptions” –as stated by the General Director-, as well as to guarantee equal opportunities regarding the access and promotion in professional careers for both sexes.”

The State Secretary of Maritime Fishing of Morocco, **Mbarka Bouaida**, who offered her country to host the next edition of this international conference, highlighted the female scope of the fisheries and aquaculture sector and acknowledged that the effective contribution of women “is barely known due to the lack of statistics, and is influenced by strong stereotypes.”



Mbarka Bouaida, State Secretary of Maritime Fishing of Morocco.

In order to overcome this situation, she explained the major institutional and legal reforms implemented in her country from 1999, which have resulted in the “establishment of the basis necessary to reach equal opportunities and equitable and fair access for women to their civil, political, economic, social, cultural and environmental rights.”

Among the measures adopted in this regard, implemented both by governmental entities and the different actors of the productive sector, the State Secretary pointed out the “creation at the beginning of 2000 of an structure aimed at addressing the gender issue in order to achieve an effective integration of women in the fisheries sector”, as well as the organisation, planning and improvement of the socio-economic conditions of this group which has since been carried out, especially in rural coastal areas.

Within this strategy for equality, the State Secretary of Maritime Fishing detailed several specific measures which are currently being implemented: education and accompaniment of female fishers so they can create cooperatives (as of today, there are 153 cooperatives in Morocco, 14 of which are female cooperatives, and 70 of which are of a mixed nature); enhancement of institutional, technical and commercial competences within the framework of these female cooperatives regarding empowerment and financial support; launching of a literacy programme for active workers in the fisheries industry, intended for fishers' wives and daughters (which has benefited more than 13,000 women); or the promotion of new income-generating activities for women, as well as the commissioning of facilities for seafood processing (5 female cooperatives and 1 mixed cooperative which help to improve the lives of over 500 women and their families have been created).

At a continental level, she also pointed out as a success the creation of the African Network of Women in Fisheries within the framework of the Ministerial Conference on fisheries cooperation among African States bordering the Atlantic Ocean (ATLAFCO), which promotes training in leadership and workshops on hygiene and quality standards for an easier access to the labour market.

Within the aquaculture area, the Government of Morocco has worked in different development plans that resulted in the selection of over 100 projects integrating more than 216 women, who have received practical and theoretical training on this area and also on security issues.

With regard to the Administration, Mbarka Bouaida highlighted the integration of the gender issue within the budgets and the fact that women hold a 45% of the senior positions in the fisheries sector in Morocco. Likewise, the 2011 Constitution includes parity as an institutional value, as well as the creation of a high authority in this regard, and the country has ratified the *Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)*. However, the State Secretary of Maritime Fishing has pointed out that "many challenges remain" and called for joint action among all countries: "fighting the unfair exclusion of women is a duty and a responsibility for all of us". Consequently, she raised the possibility of creating a relief fund for women in the fisheries sector as a specific measure for this area.

The institutional block of the plenary session ended with the intervention via videoconference with **Karmenu Vella**, European Commissioner for the Environment, Maritime Affairs and Fisheries, who stated that "women are the backbone of the global fisheries sector", although their work –which is tough and exhausting- is underestimated and they are frequently invisible.

According to data from the Commission, within the European area these women represent over a 25% of the whole value chain of the fisheries and aquaculture sectors, since they represent the 13% of the fisheries primary sector; the 26% of the aquaculture primary sector, and the 51% of the processed fish products industry. These figures increase at a global level: women represent the 47% of the 120 million people working in extracting fishing activities and related areas (as the transformation and sale), reaching a 70% of female presence in the aquaculture industry, according to the World Bank.



Karmenu Vella, European Commissioner for the Environment, Maritime Affairs and Fisheries.

For this reason, the European Commissioner advocated for recognition “which will grant an official status to the work carried out by women”. In this regard, similarly to the preceding authorities, he insisted on the need to modify the general mindset. “Tradition is noble, but when used as an excuse for keeping these workers in a situation of informal employment, it is time to change.”

In this sense, he stated that “an official job is a decent job, and this implies access to education”, skill training, new technologies training, etc. Consequently, “markets will also benefit if their employees receive recognition and knowledge. Additionally, this new training can result in a more entrepreneurial spirit, thus creating a win-win situation.”

With regard to the promotion of such female entrepreneurship, he noted the existence of entities such as the Fisheries Areas Network (FARNET), which promotes participatory local development through the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (FEMP). In this regard, around 1,800 out of the 13,000 projects promoted by the Fisheries Local Action Groups are estimated to focus on supporting women in the fisheries and aquaculture sectors and on gender.

In this sense, he provided specific examples of projects promoted by women in the Spanish fisheries sector which have been supported by the European Commission, such as initiatives for the development of new income sources for fishing communities in Andalusia, projects on fisheries-tourism or companies dedicated to tourism and nature.

In Galicia, as an example, he pointed out the experience of women in the processing industry, who have used European funding for training purposes and to equip their facilities, focusing them on local fishing products, as well as to create their own businesses. These examples prove that “recognising women in order to place them in the position they deserve within this sector means that they can access a decent job; implies education, and generates business opportunities and a better future for all of us”, he concluded.

PLENARY SESSION (Second part):

- **Social block:**

This second part of the plenary session included the interventions of representatives of women's organisations within the fisheries and aquaculture sector from the five continents. All of them detailed the real situation of women who work at sea in their respective territories and expressed their wish for this international conference –as well as the *Santiago de Compostela Declaration* they subsequently subscribed– to result in specific measures which help to improve the situation and the recognition of women within this sector.

The first to speak was **Sana Tatak Keskes**, President of the Association of Continuity of Generations (ACG) and representative of the General Secretariat of the Tunisian Association of Women Clam collectors and Development (AFPD). This entity has worked for years with Tunisian shellfish gatherers implementing awareness, consciousness and consultancy measures aimed at boosting the development of their competencies and enhancing their socio-economic situation, while contributing to preserving the environment and the maritime resources which generate their income. “The challenge we are facing is to make these women aware of their rights, of what they want to achieve and the place they deserve in this sector”, said Sana.



Sana Tatak Keskes, representative of the General Secretariat of the Tunisian Association of Women Clam collectors and Development (AFPD).

In order to adopt these measures, the entity has been supported by organisations such as the FAO, which has enabled them to implement projects resulting in important achievements for women in this sector. Among these accomplishments, she pointed out the achievement of legal and regulatory changes; making the work carried by women within the sector more dignified (“now these women sell their products at a cost 10 times higher”, she stated, “because they know what is the value of their work”); a greater awareness regarding the environment and its preservation through a rational management of the activity; increased security and self-confidence (“in order to speak to the press or the different agents involved in the sector, who are mainly men”), etc.

As evidenced by her story, professionalisation has been the key to this progress, since the informal activity carried out by these workers has been transformed into a formal job, and they “currently have permits and certifications for the development of these activities and have created professional associations” as the AFPD, which has been a difficult process, according to them.

Similarly, she noted the creation of the first women's union in the fisheries and aquaculture sector, "which is the first female union in all Tunisian sectors", as a major milestone.

In line with this progress, she also mentioned the formalisation of an agreement with the international private sector which enables these professionals to sell their products directly to wholesalers who export them to clients from around the world under the "fair trade" denomination and through their association.

By using this system, women who work at sea have managed to increase their income and to improve their socio-occupational situation; according to the President of the ACG, the fact that they have learned how to develop handicrafts (as producing fishing nets) when the fishing season is over has also contributed to this achievement.

In order to progress on other issues which affect their labour conditions, around 1,000 women have already participated in a socio-economic survey "and with the support of the ILO, they have health coverage in their jobs and a medical certificate, and they know the diseases from which they suffer" with regard to their activities, mainly due to cramped and recurring postures.

Throughout this process, female clam collectors "have learned to be persistent, patient and to believe in their self-worth, despite all the challenges they are still facing" in a male-dominated world –Sana Taktak concluded.



Graciela Pereira, President of the Latin American Network of Women of the Fishery Sector.

The President of the Latin American Network of Women of the Fishery Sector and Executive Director of INFOPESCA, **Graciela Pereira**, explained the mission of the intergovernmental entity which she manages and whose scope of action is Latin America and the Caribbean.

As her predecessor, she also highlighted the relevance of the institutional support when remarking that INFOPESCA was created from a FAO project 40 years ago, and that different measures on equality within the Latin American sector have been implemented thanks to its funding.

Since the beginning of this century, "we have detected problems suffered by women in the fisheries industry, and with FAO funding meetings were held to fight women's invisibility throughout the value chain."

Thanks to these meetings, work carried out by Latin American women started to be valued, not only in the fisheries and aquaculture sectors, but also in areas which are not frequently addressed. In this regard, Graciela Pereira also noted the relevant role played by women as fish consumers, nutritionists or prescribers, since "it is mainly them who teach children how

to eat fish at home”, she added; this consumption is now expected to be included in the afternoon snack of children in Latin America as a basis for a healthy diet.

In her opinion, gender is a transversal issue which affects many areas and aspects of the everyday life. For this reason, she stated that “it is important for women to gain positions” in all areas, including the fisheries industry.

The Vice Chair of the Gender in Aquaculture and Fisheries Section (GAF) of the Asian Fisheries Society, **Nikita Gopal**, reviewed the milestones and progress made by her organisation, created in 1990 as an initiative implemented through the Hindu branch of the GAF, which has since developed workshops, symposiums and conferences on women and gender in several Asian countries, such as India, Cambodia, Thailand, Taiwan, etc., “which have addressed different problems suffered by women in the fisheries and aquaculture industry, as well as the role played by women in these sectors”, she explained.



Nikita Gopal, Vice Chair of the Gender in Aquaculture and Fisheries Section (GAF) of the Asian Fisheries Society.

As major landmarks, she pointed out the organisation in 2004 of the first global symposium in Malaysia, which addressed the development and involvement of women in this issue. GAF continued its progress on equality in a symposium held in Kochi (India) in 2007, followed by subsequent meetings in China, South Korea, India...

The seventh edition of the GAF Conference took place between the 18 and 21 October 2018 in Bangkok (Thailand). During these conferences, parallel meetings were held and an active working group on gender was created; it was reinforced by the development of instruments and policies on an international level which include the gender approach, such as the *FAO Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries* or the Sustainable Development Goals of the UN.

Nikita Gopal explained that GAF is working to improve the conditions of workers of all genders within the fisheries sector in Asia in line with these instruments, “and we want to do the same work in other territories, such as Africa or South America”, she stated, “because we are aware of the challenges faced by women around the world”, as lower salaries, a job which is not valued, lack of data disaggregated by sex, etc.

“All over the world women must keep fighting to defend their basic rights and to participate in the decision-making processes”, and she acknowledged that this must not be their fight, but everybody’s fight, “because once we eliminate these obstacles, this sector will also benefit from women empowerment.” In this regard, she claimed that women must be integrated in all the actions carried out, including those relating to issues such as nutrition or climate change, since that “will benefit homes and communities.”

However, she noted that overcoming women’s invisibility cannot be achieved by means of specific projects, but through the incorporation of the gender issue into the agenda, policies and decisions. “We must cooperate in this regard, since together we can make a difference”, she stated.



María Christine Monfort, President of the International Association for Women in the Seafood Industry (WSI).

In her intervention, **Marie Christine Monfort**, Co-founder and President of the International Association for Women in the Seafood Industry (WSI), highlighted the work carried out by this entity to place value on the significant female contribution to the fisheries sector throughout the chain. For this purpose, WSI has implemented different actions such as the creation of a video contest on the role played by women in the fisheries industry (the videos were projected during the second day of the conference) or the preparation of a report on the situation of women in this sector (the conclusions of which were also presented at the exhibition space of the conference).

Due to this work and the work carried out by different women’s organisations within this sector, as of today “we all know the situation of women in this industry, so it is time for us to take a step forward”, she claimed.

Monfort expressed all this knowledge accumulated in numerous studies and publications on gender and fisheries in a brief global snapshot. “The diagnosis on the situation of women is correct, we have a lot of information and it is clear that, regardless of their geographical location or the industry’s development degree, too many workers have jobs requiring little education, which are underpaid and poorly valued, and that they are barely represented in the highest part of the value chain”, she stated; “public policies which ignore the gender issue” contribute to this situation.

This is one of the main conclusions drawn from the international survey executed by WSI this year, which considered the fisheries industry as a non-equitable sector regarding gender by the professional workers within it.

In view of this result, and with the aim of fighting this inequality and discrimination towards women, WSI proposes three possible solutions, including the awareness of the fishing communities; an invitation for men to discuss this issue, as well as the creation of international dialogue in this sense, and the creation of an international platform of women in fisheries which helps to safeguard women’s rights. “We should not waste any more time”, Monfort insisted. In this regard, she urged to set a date for the next edition of the International Conference of Women in Fisheries.



Rita Míguez de la Iglesia, President of the National Association of Women in Fisheries (ANMUPESCA).

The same idea was defended by **Rita Míguez de la Iglesia**, President of the National Association of Women in Fisheries (ANMUPESCA), an organisation which was created over two years ago but which currently gathers more than 30 Spanish associations with representation in Galicia, Madrid, Community of Valencia, Asturias, Cantabria and Andalusia.

ANMUPESCA is aimed at defending the economic and professional rights of women who earn their living from the sea; giving visibility to their work by supporting their empowerment and leadership; encouraging their participation in the sector governmental entities, and being an instrument and platform for the social dialogue with the different sectoral entities, both public and private, so as to agree upon policies which benefit women and enable to solve their problems.

According to Rita Míguez, these problems are basically based on the lack of visibility of the female work and presence in this sector, since “we have been completely unknown by society until recently, because nobody would link us to the fisheries activities, and we have not participated in the adoption of decisions which affected us as a sector and as professionals”, she noted. For this reason, her organisation is implementing different measures aimed at revealing this significant contribution, such as participating in forums for discussion, holding meetings in the different autonomous regions in order to defend the consideration of their members’ demands in said areas, or creating own communication channels in order to transmit their work to the society.

According to Rita Míguez, another major problem is the existence of significant gender inequality within the fisheries sector which ANMUPESCA is addressing, mainly regarding the reduction coefficients of the retirement age (which certain female collectives cannot benefit from, such as the net menders) or the existing difficulties for reconciling family life and work. In relation to the latter, she noted that reconciliation is frequently incorrectly considered as a question which only affects women, so she wondered how many seafarers have been forced to request reconciliation over the last years.

For all these reasons, she encouraged women in this sector to actively participate in the tables addressing issues which affect them, not only those related to working conditions but also to other major matters, such as the sustainability of the sea; the innovation and modernisation of the industry, or the increase of fish consumption. In this regard, she stated that Spanish women have started to give visibility to their contribution to this sector and that their intent is to keep supporting its professionals as a formula to maintain the seafarers’ way of life.

“We are here to support and strengthen this sector. We owe this to our predecessors, those women who broke their backs in a job which nobody acknowledged, and now we have to value their work”, she concluded.

For her part, **Marja Bekendam**, President of the European Network of Women in Fisheries and Aquaculture (AKTEA) explained the beginnings of this organisation, which acquired legal personality in Ancona (Italy) in 2006, but was actually born in Santiago de Compostela several years prior in a series of meetings organised by the Regional Government of Galicia.

Consequently, she mentioned the women of the Galician sector as a reference, and defended that “they have been able to organise themselves” and to carry out good practices and experiences that have been disseminated by AKTEA through Europe, as she pointed out. “You are a great example of what can be achieved”, she noted.



Marja Bekendam, President of the European Network of Women in Fisheries and Aquaculture (AKTEA).

After highlighting –just like the rest of the participants within this social block– the content and nature of the *Santiago de Compostela Declaration*, she appealed to the sector to not let this “be another paper on women in fisheries”, but to transform it into specific measures. In this regard, she noted that the FAO has its *Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries*, which indicate the important role played by women in leadership positions, and that AKTEA has also published several documents on this matter, as well as the existence of international guidelines which address this issue.

Inequality remains despite this framework, and she gave a specific example. “In Galicia we have visited women within this sector who told us that they must work for many more years than their male colleagues in order to be eligible for retirement pensions or benefits. Why?”. For this reason, she called for action to solve all situations of discrimination.

Leonie Noble, President of the Women’s Industry Network Seafood Community (WINSO), put the final touch on this social block. She shared her experience as “one of these invisible women” who work in the fisheries sector in a vessel with her husband, so she has fought to get a foothold in the industry.

Her organisation, WINSO, has been working for over 20 years in Australia to remember and place value on the role played by women in fisheries under the motto “wiser together”. Thus she defends the union of women and the need to make a change of mentality within this sector, which must include men.



Leonie Noble, President of the Women's Industry Network Seafood Community (WINSNC).

"Without them, we cannot make the change", she stated, "because they play an essential role in promoting the recognition of women and the achievement of equality."

With regard to this issue, she pointed out that her organisation aims for the fisheries industry in Australia to be more inclusive, particularly regarding on-board fishing, as well as to increase women's visibility in all the related activities, including research, and to include all the relevant populations, as women in aboriginal communities, "so that we have all female profiles represented when talking about fisheries."

With regard to the updates made by WINSNC, she pointed out those which are being carried out in areas like gender-based violence, depression or other mental health problems suffered by women within this sector, and which are being addressed thanks to the work carried out by different NGOs, as she noted. Similarly, WINSNC promotes other programmes on different issues, such as leadership, marine environment sustainability through beach clean-up campaigns or safety to prevent risks related to this activity.

Internationally, WINSNC is trying to build cooperation networks with the aim of sharing knowledge and learning from successful experiences in other countries. She also referred to women in the Spanish fisheries sector, expressing her willingness to promote this cooperation "because we want to know how you have managed to be successful in fronts which are still open for us" In line with this cooperation among women from different countries, she stated that "if we work together, we can make a difference and turn ideas into reality." In order to achieve this, "we must raise our heads and face these challenges courageously, without ever giving up", she stated.

PLENARY SESSION (third part):

- **Reading and approval of the Santiago de Compostela Declaration for Equal Opportunities in the Fisheries and Aquaculture Sector.**

After the interventions by governmental authorities, representatives of international bodies and leaders of women's organisations within the fisheries and aquaculture sector, a summary of this document was read by Rita Míguez de la Iglesia, President of ANMUPESCA, who was surrounded by the remaining participants of the social bock.

Summary the Santiago de Compostela Declaration for Equal Opportunities in the Fisheries and Aquaculture Sectors

Women are present in all fishing and fishing activities, however their work has scarcely been quantified and historically it has therefore been poorly recognised. Thus, favouring the disaggregation of data by sex in sectoral statistics is key in order to place value on their important role and contribution.

The traditional feminine invisibility in the sector has led to the lack of a suitable awareness of gender, impeding responding to the problems and challenges that affect these workers.

As such, all the participant countries and agents in this conference should work together in order to incorporate the gender perspective in sectoral policies and strategies, guaranteeing regulatory frameworks that endeavour to achieve equal treatment and non-discrimination, as well as instruments for monitoring and enforcing such principles.

Likewise it is necessary to fight against pre-established gender roles to enable women access to the sector, breaking down the structural barriers that hinder their incorporation to activities in which they are under-represented. In the same manner, mechanisms are needed which guarantee fair access to the productive and economic resources derived from these.

On the other hand, joint efforts must be increased in order to guarantee the protection of all workers in the sector (men and women) in social and safety issues, to thus contribute to their professional dignity. With particular regard to women, it is important to emphasise the improvement of their working conditions, fighting against precariousness, gender segregation, the wage gap and the barriers that hinder the reconciliation of work, family and personal life.

Formal training in fishing and aquaculture, as well as in other complementary areas of knowledge, is essential to promote the empowerment and professional development of these women. This would also encourage female entrepreneurship within the sector, for which public budgets must be established and the access to subventions or credit must be facilitated for these entrepreneurs.

Finally, it is important to boost female associations and leadership in the sector, guaranteeing the presence of women in the bodies of power and representation. This way, they will be able to actively take part in the decisions that affect them and to defend their rights and interests.

All these objectives are included in the Santiago de Compostela Declaration for Equal Opportunities in the Fisheries and Aquaculture Sectors that is presented within the framework of this I International Conference of Women in Fisheries.



Reading of the Declaration

As of 5 November 2018, the *Santiago de Compostela Declaration for Equal Opportunities in the Fisheries and Aquaculture Sector* was adopted by those present in the I International Conference of Women in Fisheries (the complete text is attached as **ANNEX 2**).

6th NOVEMBER:

On this second day, there were six technical workshops during which top-rate panellists in various areas of expertise (extractive fishing, diversification, industry and trade, business, academics and research, government, third sector, etc.) expressed their different points of view and shared their experiences related to topics of interest and concern to women in the sector.

WORKSHOP 1. THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE:

The participants in this workshop covered the different roles of women in the sector, their impact in the workforce and huge contribution to the economic, social and environmental development of the territories linked to fishing and aquaculture. However, they all agreed that, despite this contribution, they are still not sufficiently acknowledged or appreciated.



From left to right: Marja Bekendam, Tamara Guirao, Jennifer Gee, Nikita Gopal and Juan Ignacio Gandarias.

The workshop moderator, **Jennifer Gee**, a Fishery Officer and Gender Focal Point with the UN Food and Agriculture Organization, acknowledged—from her experience as an expert on fleet and employment statistics with the FAO—the importance of including a gender perspective in sector policies. Nonetheless, she clarified that “the role and needs of both sexes must be identified” in order to achieve a truly equitable policy that leads to a “positive and sustainable change” in equality issues in the sector. Yet this does not often happen and women are ignored in a mostly male-dominated sector in spite of all the data reflecting that nearly half of the work in the entire worldwide value chain is done by women.

On the other hand, the President of the European Network of Women in Fisheries and Aquaculture (AKTEA), **Marja Bekendam** talked about the importance of women recognising their own roles in the sector and not underrating themselves and she did so by referring to an example from her own experience. "Over time, I've learnt not to say that I married a fisherman but rather say that I manage a continental fishery company in the Low Countries along with my husband."

She spoke about the number of different roles women have taken on in the fisheries and aquaculture sector and how they are present in all areas and sectors (from extractive fishing to the auxiliary industry and even transformation and commercialisation). She also used a specific example to explain how these roles must be balanced with women's family roles. "When the men would return with the fish in Ancona (Italy), the women would go down to the market at night to get the fish ready for sale so the men could go back out to sea. And, then, they would return home just before their children would go to school which obviously affected their way of life."

Despite the many facets of women's fishery work, Marja observed that this role is still very much unknown to most of society and not only among the general population but also among politicians. To this end, she mentioned that she and her husband have taken politicians out on their boat to see what they do and find out about their problems first-hand.

Of these problems, she highlighted one that specifically affects her which is the lack of recognition for collaborative spouses who do not earn their own salaries but rather share the family income. In relation to this aspect, she indicated that the European directive establishing the legal status of collaborative spouses has only been adopted by France and, therefore, called upon all the other countries to endorse it given that it creates the foundation for many women to be able to access welfare benefits, wages, pensions, etc.

Along the same lines, she emphasized the importance of women participating in decision-making through their associations which must be integrated in all processes and actively involved in achieving sustainable fishing to guarantee the future of the business. Moreover, she reiterated the need to communicate the role of women in the sector to force a change. "Women significantly contribute to the fishery sector, add value to the products by transforming them, cooking them and making it possible to sell them... and spread the word about fishing to tourists which helps make it known..." Thus, she urged women sea workers to "feel proud" of this role to "make it so our children will also love this profession".

The next panellist to participate was **Tamara Guirao Espiñeira**, Secretary General of the Conference of Atlantic Arc Cities (CAAC). This Conference of Atlantic Arc Cities (or Atlantic Cities, as it is now known) is currently composed of 20 local authorities all along the Atlantic coast from Cherbourg to Las Palmas. It works to get all members to collaborate on projects financed with European funds as well as their own funds in addition to exercising as a lobby with European institutions on matters of interest such as improving the visibility of women

in maritime fields which is the aim of the *SheforSea* initiative. This programme involves interviewing women who work on maritime affairs and publishing the interviews at the [European blog BlogActiv](#).

Tamara spoke of her life and work experience, which has always been linked to the Ocean, international maritime law and cooperation. This experience has enabled her to see how women have gradually become included in the sector and valued. To illustrate this change, she referred to a cooperation project between Galicia and Central America she was involved with in 2008 to improve the fishing sector on all levels. With this project, the women participated in the training just as the men in the group. “The trainers were quite intelligent and had scheduled the module on handling a motor before the marketing module,” she said, “and when the men in El Salvador saw that a woman was capable of starting up a boat motor in the middle of the Pacific Ocean, they really started thinking differently about the women. So, when it came time for the marketing module, they weren’t so shy about putting on their aprons”.

To give some specific and illustrative examples of this gradual rise of women in the sector, she highlighted a meeting at the European Fisheries Control Agency she went to in 2013 as the only woman in the group of twenty participants. In 2015, she spoke at a workshop on how fishers help conserve our resources yet only two of the eight panellists were women. However, when she was part of a group of experts in 2016 discussing the obstacles to maritime literacy in schools aimed at bringing schoolchildren closer to the world of the sea, all of the participants except one were women.

That meeting led to the hashtag #SheforSea “as a shout out that women are here to stay and have things to do,” explained Tamara. Throughout 2017-2018, they have been interviewing women linked to the Atlantic Ocean in areas as diverse as creativity, communication, fishing, maritime law, oceanography, etc. The ideas behind this project were recently presented at two international conferences in Glasgow (United Kingdom) and in Brest (Brittany) with the participation of only one and two men, respectively.

The current lines of work for the *SheforSea* project include expanding in size to move from a communication campaign to an education-based action campaign to attract young people to maritime trades. “Above all, we’d like to give women a voice so they can speak to us and tell about their challenges and experiences and how they view the sector and the opportunities available for women in the present and in the past. That’s why we’re also researching the great women of the sea - the great unknowns,” she said.

In her speech, she reiterated the importance of women finding their own place in the sector. “The important thing is to be present. When you’re the second officer to the captain on a research ship, people really start to change what they think with regard to women.

It is in this spirit, she pointed out, that the *SheforSea* project aims to “learn by doing, attract talent with real examples to spread awareness among institutions on land, offer a positive image and get that image to be reflected by the companies, foster inclusive communication

and adapt training itineraries by promoting gateways between the various trades,” all with the ultimate goal of vindicating the role of women in the sector.

The importance of valuing the role of women in fisheries and aquaculture was also emphasized by **Nikita Gopal**, Vice Chair of the Gender in Aquaculture and Fisheries Section (GAF) of the Asian Fisheries Society. “When society thinks about fishing, it thinks about men yet without the women’s work, the number of fish captured would drop as would distribution among consumers and there would be less access to fish in general.”

Using images, Nikita showed how there are not very many women in India participating in onboard extractive fishing yet they are present -both formally and informally- in many other sectors of activity such as commercialisation (where they may even comprise 90% of the workforce), fish categorising, classification and cleaning as well as small-scale fishing, the production and repair of fishing gear and other post-capture activities, etc.

Thus, women are “essential drivers of the economy” in the country as concerns their work in the fishing business. Despite this, these women are affected by individual problems such as the lack of a generational shift as the very harshness of the activity dissuades many young people from dedicating themselves to it. They have also been affected by the inclusion of technology and mechanisation which, in her words, has had an impact on women’s employment as it has moved all fishing activity to the ports away from their homes where they had traditionally done their work. “Before, women had a larger production role as they were close to the fish selling places. Now they have to travel long distances to reach the ports and can no longer combine their housework with the sale of this fish,” she said. Nonetheless, the role of women continues to be important in travelling and retail sale as well as -although less visibly- at the fish markets.

In this context, GAF aims to formalise the contributions of these women to the sector. To this end, she explained, the organisation actually started off based on personal initiatives - with immense male involvement- to create an institution based on research into the role of women in fishing such as the projects carried out by Dr. M.C. Nandeesh in the 1990s and by Dr. Gupta in the field of aquaculture. Over the past 28 years, meetings, symposiums and conferences have been held to analyse the role of women in different Southeast Asian countries.

The Gender in Aquaculture and Fisheries Section of the Asian Fisheries Society (GAF) was formally organised in 2004 upon the first global symposium in Malaysia and ever since then, it has been organising different conferences. The most recent one was held in October 2018 in Thailand.

“Throughout this journey, we’ve realised that women are very much present in the sector and we’ve researched specifically where they’re present. We’ve analysed the gender dimensions in fishing, working to achieve greater equality, recognising the intersectionality of gender issues in development and trying to encourage change,” she summarised.

As a result of these conferences, research, reflections and conclusions from these meetings have been disseminated in scientific and academic publications making it clear why gender is important in fishing and this has made it possible to emphasize the work of these women who have not traditionally had a voice or any support for their work. “The needs of these women are ignored as they have little negotiating power to change their situation due to historically standardised gender bias at the workplace and in society at large,” she affirmed.

During her speech, Nikita explained that these gender inequalities not only put women’s financial and food security at risk, but also their personal safety and families’ nutrition. In short, they put the stability of entire communities at risk. To this end, she warned that this problem is becoming worse as a result of the pressure on the industry to minimise the costs of labour which particularly affects women.

The key to fighting this situation, according to Nikita, lies in “relying on women and making them visible. That’s why we hope the FAO will take a stand and lead this fight.” In relation to the foregoing, she mentioned the importance of statistics, the urgency of increasing the available funding for this gender in the sector and the need to include gender in all projects associated with development. She also highlighted that it’s necessary to promote women empowerment by fostering collaboration among organisations that work on this matter to facilitate access to financial, legal and support resources. “Gender equality must be a priority in public policy and programmes and we have to build up knowledge in the agencies that are key to the value chain.”

The final panellist at this workshop, **Juan Ignacio Gandarias Serrano**, Director General for Fisheries and Aquaculture Management at the Spanish Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Foodstuff, offered an x-ray of the situation of women in fishing and aquaculture in Spain as well as the work he has done for the Spanish government related to equality in the last ten years based on the creation of the Spanish Network of Women in the Fisheries Sector.

He explained that this work in favour of equality began with the need to spread awareness for the role of women in the Spanish sector by identifying activities involving women who - just as occurs in the rest of the world- are scarcely represented in extractive fishing yet participate more in the rest of the chain, especially the transformation of fish, seafood and auxiliary products as well as in aquaculture and the wholesale and retail trade.

Once this presence is identified, it’s essential to analyse the problems affecting women who work in these areas of activity as “dealing with the problems involves visualising solutions and this means contributing to gender equality, making it so the role of women becomes more and more important and leads towards more sustainable growth in the sector from an economic, social and environmental perspective,” he stated.

Delving deeper into this interrelation between gender and sustainable development, he pointed out that women have a prominent role in the European Union Common Fisheries Policy (CFP), which features one line of action –which began with the Integrated Maritime

Policy and is now progressing towards a blue growth policy— where women have a lot to contribute.

However, facilitating the development of this role of women to its full potential means tackling the problems affecting them which he summarised as first and foremost the precariousness and discontinuity of the activity in addition to intrusion and the economy as the most pressing issues related to production, indicating that governments (through their policies) and companies (through corporate social responsibility) are responsible for helping solve them. He also alluded to another series of problems related to the health and safety of these workers such as ailments deriving from their activities —some of which are still not acknowledged as occupational diseases— and the retirement age correction coefficients.

On the other hand and along the same lines as the panellists before him, he also highlighted other problems —affecting not only women, but the entire sector— the scarce generational shift and insisted on the need to resolve the limited presence of women on representative and decision-making bodies. This last issue has been historically connected with the absence of female associations in the sector which have begun to take off and consolidate over the last decade with the creation of organisations such as ANMUPESCA and the gradual increase of women in Fisher Brotherhoods. He then called for continued support for these types of associations.

Throughout his speech, he outlined the keys to the government's equality strategies that seek solutions to help change these issues. He emphasized that this equality strategy “essentially involves reinforcing the gender perspective and making women's work visible and valuable”. This strategy also advocates enhancing knowledge of the situation of women in the sector and fostering specific training for women in the sector, a conditioning factor to promoting a generational shift and sustainable growth.

Finally, he mentioned the importance of international cooperation as a means for interrelating and exchanging experiences to continue this work “and not only in Spain, but also in the world in general because the role of women in the fishing sector worldwide must be great and given the consideration it deserves”.

Ever since the Spanish Network of Women in the Fisheries Sector was created in 2010, there has been progress with these issues, mainly as concerns three areas: legislatively/institutionally (with the introduction of the principle of gender equality in the Spanish State Maritime Fisheries Law); strategically (with the development of plans and a specific framework for equality in the sector and the inclusion of equality policies in the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund Operational Programme with specific gender-related goals and indicators; and, finally, on an analysis level with more studies and knowledge generated on the problems faced by different groups of female professionals and increased training and professionalisation also motivated by greater unity among professionals creating associations.

All of this progress has led to “a much higher enterprising capability for women, greater visibility and recognition by the sector and a higher presence of women in sector organisations with more decision-making power,” he explained. Nonetheless, he also pointed out that there are still several pending challenges. “Yet I believe the Spanish government agencies are working in this direction. Joint effort is the foundation for this work because it will be difficult to keep moving forward if we’re not all doing so shoulder-to-shoulder (government agencies, the private sector, companies and sector women’s associations). That’s why I encourage all associations to keep up their work in this line and would like you to know the Spanish government supports you,” he concluded.

DISCUSSION:

During the debate following workshop 1, those in attendance raised the following questions:

- A demand from the head of a fishers’ guild in Galicia for recognition of retirement age reduction coefficients for the groups of women who still do not benefit from them and an increase for those who do to match what is offered to men, particularly considering the harshness of their work. Along these same lines, she called for the recognition of work-derived ailments currently considered common illnesses as occupational diseases.
- A sector representative pointed out that there is no unfair disadvantage between men and women when it comes to retirement age correction coefficients. The problem is that the higher coefficients are allocated to extractive fishing due to the particularly harsh conditions of this activity and especially deep-sea fishing which is a segment with little female presence. The representative pointed out that the coefficients are established based on the activity and have nothing to do with the gender issue as women who work in deep-sea fishing benefit from the same coefficients as men.
- In line with the foregoing, the secretary of a Mediterranean fishers guild indicated that there is no discrimination with respect to retirement age corrective coefficients within a single sector like extractive fishing.

However, there is discrimination between activities onboard a ship and those that take place on land, which have been historically dominated by women and are just as gruelling, not to mention that there are still groups such as net operators who do not benefit from any coefficients. “We advocate that all women should have the same rights and that everyone should be considered part of the sector whether they are fishers, seafood catchers or net operators”.

- “Out of sight, out of mind” is the big problem in the fisheries sector according to another attendee who urged the ratification by Spain of ILO Convention 188 “which protects seafarers’ occupational health and safety in much the same way as is done for all other workers in the country,” endorsing it. On the other hand, an academic-backed proposal was brought up which recommends sector professionals collect plastic and waste from the sea during extractive fishing downtimes as it would have a positive impact on employment and the environment.

- A Galician net operator spoke of the harsh conditions of her work (exposed to the elements and bad weather, the scarce generational shift, an increasing workload, etc.). She said, therefore, that this sector of activity should also have the right to a retirement age corrective coefficient. Likewise, she claimed that there is a gender wage gap for the same work such as the production of fishing nets where men make more even though they work the same hours. She believes true equality will not be possible until these issues are resolved. "A male maritime worker on the ground working to repair nets just like we do benefits from a reduction coefficient, but we don't," she indicated.

PANELISTS - SESSION SUMMARY:

- **Marja Bekendam:** "Women are well aware of the problems and needs they and the sector face. They are experts in their respective professions and their voices need to be used to encourage decisions that help maintain fishery activities in the future for a sustainable sector that both men and women can continue to live off of."
- **Tamara Guirao:** "Let's make noise, let's make our voices heard. Let's go to Twitter, Facebook... let us be heard in different communication channels and let's do it together".
- **Nikita Gopal:** "I'm surprised at the inequality problems mentioned in a country I thought to be developed. This is why it's important to pressure policy decision-makers. And it's also important for women to be in positions to make these decisions because we have to include our perspective. So, we have to support each other and make progress and not only among ourselves but also with the men as men also don't have much of a voice sometimes in many countries. We've been working on the same problems in different parts of the world for the last 20 years. In the end, it's a common fight and if we fight together, we'll achieve our goals".
- **Juan Ignacio Gandarias:** "Working together within government, working together within the private sector with sector associations, defining the problems and strategies to solve them and offering total and absolute support to women's associations and your vindications. Those are the keys to bringing value to the role of women in the sector". He also mentioned that the Spanish Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Foodstuff fully supports the ratification of ILO Convention 188.

WORKSHOP 2. THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN FISHERIES DIVERSIFICATION

The participants in this second workshop, moderated by **Gilles van de Walle**, Team Leader of the European Fisheries Areas Network (FARNET), discussed the role that women carry out in fisheries diversification, the lack of social awareness about their important contribution in this area and innovative initiatives, among other aspects.



From left to right: María José Cacabelos, Marielle Philip, Ilmi Askli, José Vicente Palmero and Gilles van de Walle (standing).

Gilles started the workshop by showing a bag made by net menders from the town of Corme (Galicia) as an example of diversification, and suggesting the fact that these types of initiatives, at times, are being positioned not as a secondary activity, but as a main source of income; as such diversification activities act as an important tool for the empowerment, autonomy and visibility of women at a local level.

To liven up the presentations and later discussions, he raised three questions:

- To what extent are women really driving the diversification of local economies in fishing communities?
- What factors could explain this?
- How can this role be better supported; how can women boost this diversification?

María José Cacabelos Domínguez, President of the Cultural Association “Mulleres do Mar de Cambados” (GUIMATUR), was the first to recount her experience, explaining how and why her association’s initiative came about.

In her speech she got to the grain of the origins of “GUIMATUR”, as well as its main objectives and the activities it carries out in order to achieve these.

One of these objectives is focused on portraying the traditional culture of the Galician coast, making the work of women, such as net menders and shellfish gatherers, known, revaluing the role of women in fishing and shellfish harvesting, contributing to beat the invisibility that women have been suffering from in the fishing sector.

Another one of its objectives lies in promoting its products, placing value on all the work that goes beforehand, as well as the toughness that activities such as fishing and shellfish harvesting entail. According to her experience, this leads to customers becoming more loyal and being able to come to understand the effort that is involved.

Likewise, they aim to transmit the importance of taking care of the marine environment by educating visitors, as the environment is the basis for their main activity- seaweed harvesting.

In order to reach these objectives, they undertake different tourist routes, some of which for school children, who perhaps have a particular importance, as they are taught to appreciate these types of activities and the environment in which they are carried out, contributing to the generational handover.

Besides these routes, the association organises different gastronomic and cultural events, it creates informative guides and collaborates with tourism companies. As such it has been awarded on different occasions.

María José also wanted to underline the important advances achieved by women to make their contribution visible, as these days they are found in all the decision-making bodies that affect them, they see that their profession and contribution to the sector is recognised, but obviously this has not always been the case.

When ending her intervention she pointed out the importance of caring for the natural environment and the need for society to be implicated in this, stating, "shellfish harvesting on foot is a guarantee of the care and maintenance of the natural environment and the shellfish gatherers are those that constantly monitor this as their continuation depends on it", as it is there main livelihood.

After this speech, Gilles highlighted that diversification "is a way of breaking the curse of invisibility and a way of generationally renewing the work and balancing the work of women in the sector and reconciliation".

Marielle Phillip, founder of the "Femer Peau Marine" project was next to speak. Her idea started to build after a trip to Finland where she met a fisherwoman who was tanning fish skin. This idea in itself is not innovative, as tanning other skins, or leathers, is an age-old practice, but to do so with 100% natural fish leather with eco-responsibility is something that had not yet been done in France.

In Aquitaine, the region in which Marielle works, there is enough prime material obtained from fish and shellfish farmers that they were already producing other types of by-products such as fertilisers, bait, creams and other cosmetics, although they were not using the fish skin, leaving it as waste.

So Marielle found a niche in the market, being able to introduce fish leather as a raw material to use in the luxury sector, much like crocodile skin, but in this case it is obtained in an ethical way as the animal does not need to be killed for this purpose. It is with this idea that she has launched two commercial brands "Femer" and "La Pilataise", through which she distributes tanned fish skin and other products such as sandals and belts.

Her business model is based on four premises:

- Circular economy sector with the added challenge of creating zero waste in the production chain.
- Sourcing of local, raw material.
- Eco-responsible way of tanning and dyeing the leather using 100% natural material and focusing on invasive species in the area, such as mimosa and gall so as to not use more polluting agents.
- Social implication. They collaborate with a local social insertion entity, offering work to people with different disabilities that completely integrate in their production line.

In short, they position in the market as “an ethical and eco-responsible fashion”, as stated by Marielle, working both with small artisans and large companies dedicated to sectors such as luggage manufacturing, watch and jewellery making, accessories and even artists, and for this they have had to constantly research and develop their own production. They offer a quality, local prime material.

Ilmi Askli, fisherwoman and representative of the Fisheries Local Action Group “Hiiukala” (Estonia), explained her life and professional experience regarding fishing.

She started her speech by clarifying that “in Estonia the word fisherman is gender-neutral, it is the same for men and for women”.

She explained that the men in her family; fathers, grandfather, great-grandfathers, had traditionally dedicated themselves to fishing, but her brother was not up for the task, so she decided to step forwards and continue this family tradition, which she is passing on to her children, proving, just as she stated, “that women can also be leaders in the change of the tradition in a good sense”.

In her local area, the Island of Hiiumaa, women have been positioning themselves in the sector with a very active profile, launching different entrepreneurial initiatives, restaurants, transformation and commercialisation of fishing products, tourism activities, etc.

In her speech she described some local and specific examples in which women are leaders, among which she highlighted the initiative of a woman who introduced the use of survival suits, which also entailed training courses and related activities. Initially the men were reluctant, but they are becoming increasingly more aware and this is all thanks to a woman’s initiative.

According to Ilmi, “one of the most important things that women do in this world is give brightness to daily life”, this is important and extensive to everything they decide to launch, exercising increasingly more leadership within the sector.

José Vicente Palmero Jorro, Department Manager of the Unit of Support to the Directorate-General for Fisheries and Aquaculture Management (MAPA), was the last of the

speakers to present themselves. He started by explaining the aim of the Spanish Fishing Groups Network (REGP), which he is responsible for on behalf of the Administration.

The Network is a platform, promoted by the Directorate General of Fisheries Management and Aquaculture of the General Secretariat for Fisheries of the MAPA, which facilitates cooperation and team work, placing the spotlight on the contributions of local action groups, management authorities and public and private institutions implicated in consolidating a sustainable present-day and a viable future, encouraging the local development of fishing communities.

Diversification, understood as a supplement for family economies, plays an essential part in this local development.

With its growing implementation, local development has been able to counter diverse negative aspects that were occurring in areas depending on fishing, such as the loss of purchasing power, the risk involved in depending on a single economic activity or the downturn that the local economies in these areas were experiencing.

Likewise, local development has been able to implement a greater integration of the fishing sector in the social area of these towns, reverting the isolation that the fishing sector had been suffering from in recent years, whilst also encouraging the use of new opportunities offered by blue growth.

José Vicente emphasised that women stand out in these kinds of activities, saying that it seems to him that “it is women that have driven the diversification in fishing areas”, fundamentally because men have dedicated themselves to fishing and they were not interested in other aspects surrounding extractive fishing, unlike women; possibly due to their nature of being less afraid of failure and of originality and initiative when it comes to taking on the position of leader in these sorts of initiatives.

He also stressed the evolution of the role of women in the sector, as although they have always been present in the production chain, these days they make up part of the decision-making bodies that affect them, integrating associations as a tool of empowerment.

As an example of female participation in terms of diversification, according to data gathered by the REGP of the 240 projects undertaken in the period of the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF), women are the main promoters in 17%, while also being present in other projects. Going back to funding, 21% of the total investment and 22% of public aid has been granted to initiatives driven by women.

In his speech, José Vicente wanted to highlight one of these projects undertaken by a women taking into account for its originality, and which involves making chocolates with seaweed. Likewise, according to the data obtained, women are the leaders in launching tourism activities.

These examples, among many others, prove that local development is promoting the integration of women in the job market in the areas that depend on fishing.

The moderator took to the floor again, highlighting that in the development of his work he could confirm “that Spain and in fact Galicia are leaders in supporting local women” through the projects backed by the Fisheries Local Action Groups.

Gilles, as a manager of FARNET, also wanted to offer some statistical data on a European level regarding the participation of women in diversification, assessing the support that FLAGs (European Fisheries Local Action Groups) give to women.

The FARNET Network is a community of people that apply Community-led local development (CLLD) of the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF) It is made up of local action groups, intermediary management authorities, citizens and experts from throughout the EU.

Recently a study was undertaken, “FLAG Support to Women in Fisheries and Aquaculture”, and some of the data gathered from this was summarised:

- 15% of local businesses are supported by female business managers, but without official employment.
- 27% of employees in the fishing value chain on a local level report to women.
- Of the 1,851 projects supported by European FLAGs, approximately 14% correspond to initiatives that have benefited women.
- A direct correlation has been established between the number of women present in the FLAGs’ decision making process and the number of projects that are going to be selected and that are going to be managed by women.

There are 368 FLAGs on a European level that give a lot of support to women on a local level. This Network can reinforce the work that is undertaken at a local level; as such Gilles encourages women to approach these groups in order to receive help when it comes to launching an initiative.

DISCUSSION:

In the discussion after this workshop, Gilles went back to the questions raised at the beginning, undertaking a survey among the speakers and the attendees, electronically in the case of the latter.

To what extent are women really driving the diversification of local economies in fishing communities?

Asking both the speakers and the attendees, an average greater than 8 was established, on a scale from 1 to 10.

What factors could explain this?

- María José Cacabelos indicated that based on her experience “women have more initiative and are more open to diversifying”. The momentum and excitement to demonstrate what they are worth, their ability to open up to other activities and having a greater vision of the future than men could be reasons for this.
 - Marielle Phillip claimed that “women want to do more creative projects”.
 - For Ilmi Askli women “multi-task, they cannot do just one thing, they have that specific need to do many things at the same time”
 - José Vicente Palmero agreed and added “that women have more initiative, they are less afraid of the new; they have a far more open mind and are not afraid of paperwork”, unlike men who have not paid attention to these aspects.
- The audience highlighted the need to diversify and the energy that women provide, as key factors.

In the discussion, the audience raised the question of why women tended to diversify more than men, if this is something inherent to the human race.

María José Cacabelos answered that men and women can diversify, although it is true that due to their nature, women are more open to this. However she clarified that men can do it, and if they try they can do it just as well as women.

She also stated the fact that diversification could be perceived as entrepreneurial for women, and not a necessity, as if women were the last resort to bring money home, indicating that it is not an individual development activity by the woman, but rather because it is necessary to take care of the family. In short, more value should be placed on entrepreneurship than need in these kinds of activities.

How can this role be better supported; how can women boost this diversification?

- Ilmi Askli highlighted the importance of networking, noting that these days there are many examples in different countries and different organisations that can be a great help, in order to learn and exchange experiences. Just as she said, “the wheel doesn’t need to be reinvented”.
- José Vicente Palmero wanted to place value on the ability of women to diversify, not because it is an obligation, but rather understanding this ability as a quality. He added that “this way they have more of a role in society and more financial independence”.
- Marielle Phillip listed three aspects, the support of maritime innovations, “as innovation is at the core of all problematic economies”; the support and visibility of projects that are launched; as well as the creation of networks; networking in other words.
- In the words of María José Cacabelos, “a very important tool is the Women’s Network; being able to exchange experiences, being able to share experiences, seeing that new initiatives are being undertaken, it is essential”. She also highlighted the fact that women believe in themselves, they have a vision of the future and she

reminded that we learn from mistakes and that we should not be afraid of making them.

As a final conclusion, the moderator indicated that the need to diversify has evolved and has become a momentum; it is dynamic, which is the next level.

WORKSHOP 3: FEMALE ASSOCIATIONS AND LEADERSHIP

Female empowerment and the power that associations have was the focus of this workshop, in which moderator **Marie Christine Monfort**, co-founder and president of International Association for Women in the Seafood Industry (WSI) highlighted that she is “fascinated by the dynamism of female associations in Spain, it is a unique example, [she does] not know any other country in the world that has such a vivid association environment”.



From left to right: Rita Míguez de la Iglesia, Graciela Pereira Rodríguez, Marie Christine Monfort, Freyja Önnundardóttir and María del Mar

Before giving the floor to the first of the speakers, **Rita Míguez de la Iglesia**, president of the National Association of Women in Fisheries (ANMUPESCA), Monfort also added that “there is a link between the dynamism of your associations and the fact that this International Conference of Women in Fisheries is being held in Spain, and [she thinks] that it is the consequence of the work of Spanish associations”.

Míguez wanted to thank the Conference Organisation for the opportunity to talk about female associations in the sector, indicating that “Spain, and particularly Galicia, has great experience with regard to associations in the fishing sector”. The president of ANMUPESCA referred back to the end of last century which was when a movement of associations started to be forged among all the women in the sector, “motivated, in our view, by two factors: on the one hand, the need to shine light on the women working in the dark to society; and on the other, to call for improvements and employment benefits given the

importance the work has and being aware that they were essential for the future". She added that "at this point, women took a huge step showing that they wanted to emerge from their anonymity and knowing that they should leave individualism to one side and bet on collective formulas".

She also remarked on the Prestige disaster, which was a turning point for the workers in Galicia as "it was a decisive factor so that net menders, shellfish harvesters, *neskatillas* [workers who unload the inshore fishing fleet catches] and retailers showed themselves to be determinants for the sector and it was the boom of associations in the fishing sector in our Autonomous Community".

At this point, professionals started to group together in associations, "firstly to show society that they were part of the fishing sector, and then to claim their socio-occupational rights. From this movement, other Autonomous Communities started to look towards Galicia and hold us as a reference for association formulas", commented Míguez. "The truth is that there were many meetings with administrations, with the agents from our sector in order to convince them that we are a fundamental part of the fishing sector, that we fight for survival and that every day was strategic in the development of our regions. Looking back, as women today we see the advancements achieved and we remember the snubs and slights that we were subjected to", she recalled.

Indeed, the result of this movement - the National Association of Women in Fisheries- was born two years ago; in 2016. This is an entity that has taken firm steps forwards towards the visibility of women. "We went from being the 12 funding entities to the 30 that currently make up ANMUSPESCA, and we are present in six Autonomous Communities. Similarly, we have made this association formula rub off and new female associations have been set up, one in Andalusia and another in Valencia", the speaker commented. Following that, she broke down some of the important data regarding the presence of fishing in Spain: "There are 60,000 workers in the fishing sector, of which around 16% of us are women. By Autonomous Community, Galicia has the largest number of workers, with more than 20,000 professionals, 1 in every 4 of which are women, and this is followed by Madrid, the Autonomous Community of Valencia and the Balearic Islands".

She also highlighted the problems faced by women in the sector, from their repetitive work to their salary, furthermore, "we can barely participate in the planning of our work and we do not have expectations of professionally improving or being promoted. In light of this, at ANMUPESCA we are working in order to reduce some of the inequalities that will lead to an improved employment for our associates and all women that live from fishing", she claimed. Other problems that she mentioned are the reductive coefficients for the group of net menders, the recognition of occupational diseases and the generational handover, because "future generations need to be made aware that being dedicated to fishing in Spain is profitable, professionalising the sector, fighting for dignified salaries, in line with our effort and what we provide to society", she added.

“Associations for us are a means, not an aim, and the fact that they are a reality these days in practically all our Autonomous Communities is also due to the institutional support that we have received. Without said support, this situation would not have arisen”, commented Míguez. In the fishing sector, it should be highlighted that women are, above all, in the foundations of the sector, but very few reach positions of management and responsibility. “It is necessary to advance and make a leap so that future policies have a gender perspective and so that these policies improve our quality of life and, consequently, the section in which we work and for which we live”, the president of ANMUPESCA commented.

To end her speech, Míguez stated: “At my organisation we perfectly know the sector’s strategic objectives, but we also know our responsibilities and duties as women. We have a double responsibility: on the one hand improve our conditions and consequently participate in the social and economic development of our regions; and on the other, advance in higher rates of equality in our society. Our commitment and our efforts, I can assure you, go in both directions”.

When Míguez concluded her presentation, the moderator presented **Graciela Pereira**, president of the Latin American Network of Women of the Fishery Sector and executive director of INFOPESCA, as a representative from Latin America and from her experience at the helm of her organisation. “In the year 2000, when I started in the projects department, one of the deficiencies that was seen in the post-catch organism where I work for all of Latin America was that women were completely forgotten and when the Latin American Network of Women of the Fishery Sector was created that same year it was a problem talking about a network of women, everyone looked at you and said ‘feminism’, they thought that I was a feminist in search of a revolution”.

Pereira commented that women in fishing were associated with those women that would wait at the port for their husband to return from sea. “Now, in contrast, women are present in the selling of fish and this addresses all of the production chain, that is why we see women in catching, in the case of aquaculture, in sowing and harvesting, processes in the landing sites, in the commercialisation of fishery products, in teaching, in universities... we also see them making decisions, something that was impossible twenty years ago, and we must take advantage of women being in power in order to bring about rules that help the sector”, she commented.

Another one of the problems that women in the fishery sector in Latin America face are the social taboos, such as that having women on-board brings bad luck, that they have less physical strength or that they have physiological problems regarding what all women suffer with once a month, “but this is not just in fishing, but rather in all activities, that is why sometimes less women are hired than men, in case they end up pregnant”, she added.

Pereira requested greater political support and awareness of power with issues regarding gender, hoping that “the more women in Government, the better”. She also noted that

changes in government involve a change of ideas, which normally involves going back to the starting point.

To end, Pereira highlighted that, “the problem with the projects is that, once international collaboration goes away, if there is no monitoring, either the association is strong or it can end up as nothing. It should be monitored by the government”.

The next speaker, **Freyja Önundardóttir**, came to the Conference from Iceland, as a representative and former president of the Association of Women in the Fisheries Industry of Iceland Konur í Sjávarútvegi (KIS) and director of Önundur ehf, to raise awareness about her organisation at the International Conference of Women in Fisheries.

She started stating “fishing has always been a part of my life and I have played different roles within the sector, but we needed to have our perspectives and points of view understood and after some initial meetings of women in the sector, the association was formally created in September 2013 and held its first meeting in February 2014. But as always happens when something is launched, nobody knows what to expect, but to our satisfaction things turned out better than we thought. Some one hundred women attended the meeting where they wanted to share their stories or experiences regarding feeling a little isolated in a world dominated mainly by men. At present we have around 300 members and we are becoming aware of how important it is to make networks and associations as well as the importance of the feeling of belonging to an association or a group”, she commented.

The aim declared by KIS is to strengthen and promote the participation of women in the fishing industry and make women more visible, both inside and outside the framework of the fishing sector, but Önundardóttir’s organisation questioned: “how can this be done?”, to which she answered, “we know the environment, many men and very few women, nothing surprises us in this regard, but where were the women in the sector and what was their role? We wanted to discover what their real status was and how and why the fishing industry was headed and principally dominated by men”.

To find out they undertook a large study (they asked 445 people from the sector and had a fairly high response rate) in order to determine the role of women in the framework of the fishery sector. This study enabled a series of important data and information to be collected regarding the role in order to build a better future. She highlighted that 71% of the people that were surveyed thought that there was a need for more women and many more thought that they should have more influence in the area of fishing. “This was very positive news and a good starting point to build a greater dialogue on this issue within the sector and to take measures to try and change things, commented Önundardóttir.

The Icelander highlighted that in her organisation they “sometimes invite men to join, to participate as well. We get together, we talk among ourselves in conferences, talks and meetings, creating a solid network. This work is producing results as these days there are increasingly more women in fishing, public speakers receive invitations to participate in

seminars, symposiums, congresses and they are interviewed by the media. Often they are also exclusively invited, as a group so that we participate in different events that take place within the framework of the fishery sector”.

When asked if she thought that her work in Iceland had changed at all, she replied, “we think so; the people in the fishing sector are aware of our existence and we are respected for what we do. In general, people in our country recognise our organisation, we have lots of invitations and we are welcome wherever we go”, she concluded.

The last speaker was the representative from the Secretariat of the Spanish Network of Women in the Fisheries Sector (REMSP) from the General Secretariat for Fisheries from the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, **María del Mar Sáez Torres**, who looked back to 2010 to commemorate the creation of this platform in order to start placing value on what women are doing.

The network is currently made up of 60 professional female associations, groups and organisations dedicated to fishing activity, all of which have subscribed as entities. “I think that throughout the years we have promoted associations in Spain, but we need to continue advancing. We are now in all Autonomous Communities, but the regional governments of the Autonomous Communities are endeavouring for work to continue to be carried out in these groups”, commented Sáez. “At the Secretariat for Fisheries we believe that the awareness of equality on a political level in Spain can go further, I have been in the network since it was created, and every time the Government changes, the next one is more interested in equality than the previous one, we should congratulate ourselves, because this is not an issue that is getting smaller, but rather bigger”.

Female associations have also contributed to the visibility of the work carried out by women in the sector, enabling for the focus of public attention to be placed on their situation and problems. “Numerous awards, tributes and acknowledgements have been given to different female groups in the sector in recent years. We try to place value on both those who are retiring and young people or those with good projects, and to say that women put a lot of heart into work, they are innovative, creative and have tremendous drive”, defended Sáez.

There are countless advantages to associations, although they can be resumed in the increase of visibility and social awareness of the relevance of female work; the increase in the leadership and empowerment of women in the fishing activity; they enable for women to have greater negotiation power to claim their rights; they allow for dialogue, as female associations and organisations can act as a single interlocutor before the Administration and different sectoral agents, among others. “So that these benefits are truly passed on to those interested, associations must be driven by the women involved in the fishing activity themselves; they must create, develop, direct and manage their professional associations”, concluded the representative from the General Secretariat for Fisheries.

DISCUSSION:

In the discussion after workshop 3, the participants raised the following issues:

- The International Association for Women in the Seafood Industry asked about the workings of ANMUSPESCA. Its president responded saying “we work thanks to aid from institutions and administrations. At the beginning, everything came from our own pocket, but when the aims and goals are worth it...”, she acknowledged.
- The moderator asked Ölundardóttir the same question in order to know about her funding in Iceland, “KIS is a non-profit organisation where each of us pays an annual fee”.
- The Director General of Fisheries and Aquaculture of the Regional Government of Andalusia commented that their associations receive aid from the regional government, although “the moment will come when we are on our own”. She also highlighted that “the new European Maritime and Fisheries Fund has to especially recognise women. We are at the point in which this regulation is being worked on and I think it is of utmost importance that women bring forward this possibility of having a fund for women”.
- The Directorate of Fisheries and Aquaculture of the Government of the Basque Country commented that in their case “more top-down than bottom-up we are driving the creation of a single federation of women who work at sea, thinking that by gaining size and making them stronger they will be empowered and will be able to get to decision-making positions far more directly”.

WORKSHOP 4. WORKING CONDITIONS:

This workshop was focused on analysing the main problems regarding work that women in fishing and aquaculture face (occupational segregation, job insecurity, lack of access to productive resources, the wage gap, the lack of professional recognition or work rights, lack of access to social benefits, difficulties for reconciling family and work, etc.). Likewise, proposals were addressed in order to improve the health and safety conditions of women in the sector, based on the presentation of the main results and conclusions of the studies that have been undertaken with regard to risk protection of the different groups that work in this field.



From left to right: Helen Buni, Katia Frangoudes, Christine Bader, Sana Taktak and Nieves Lorenzo.

Before beginning the session, **Christine Bader**, moderator of this workshop and Maritime and Transport Specialist of the International Labour Organization (ILO), insisted that it is important to involve men in these types of discussions because “gender equality is not a female issue, it is a social issue and there are some men that are not aware, because privilege tends to be invisible for those that have it”.

For this reason, she insisted on “integrating them in the fight, as they are in the best position to influence and they are key agents for the change, just as the UN has acknowledged in its recent *HeForShe* campaign”.

In terms of work, extractive fishing is a sector with very hard working conditions, as it is an activity with a high accident rate, and workers experience isolation in an environment of danger and risk. “This risky nature increases when the working conditions are not suitable and, at times, in the sector the conditions that are given are not in line with the 21st century”, noted the ILO representative. In this regard, she noted that suitable living, health and food conditions, fair pay, sufficient protection equipment and medical assistance must be guaranteed”, among other necessary aspects in order to safeguard the dignity of the work undertaken by professionals in this sector.

Despite this, the moderator outlined some of the advances that are appearing on an international level with regard to working conditions. “The positive thing is that the ILO’s Convention 188 has started to work”, noted Christine Bader, “and for the first time we have detained a boat, in South Africa, due to its crew’s bad working conditions”. In this regard she emphasised that “thanks to this Convention 188, foreign vessels that are in ports in other countries can be inspected, and this is something crucial”, she ensured, “because it is going to be increasingly more difficult for these kinds of situations to occur”.

The hard work conditions are not only found in the area of extractive fishing, but rather in all the activities carried out on land, as the different participants pointed out.

The first speaker to intervene was **Helen Buni**, Assistant to the main programme, Technical Cooperation Division specialised in global programmes and associations of the International Maritime Organization (IMO). This UN specialised agency is responsible for the security of ships and of endorsing the adherence to suitable working conditions on board. In this regard, Buni presented the actions that this entity undertakes in order to promote equal opportunities in the sector and to improve the working conditions of the women who work in it. "Maritime transport has always been dominated by men, but one of the challenges of the IMO is to empower women. The conciliation of work and family life is another one of the challenges". That is why she assured that her organisation "has placed the human factor in the centre of her priorities, implicating all sectors of society".

The slogan of the IMO's programme regarding gender is "Training - Visibility - Recognition", three concepts that go hand-in-hand with the United Nations' 5th Sustainable Development Goal on empowering women and children. On this line, in order to support the participation of women in the sector, the IMO facilitates the access to training (for example in masculine disciplines such as port management) by means of partnerships, specific gender aid and collaboration with universities.

"We feel very proud to have 7 associations of women in the maritime sector", stated Buni, established in Africa, the Arab States, Asia, the Caribbean and the Pacific, which include 7 countries and more than 100 participants. These associations have discussion platforms in order to address different issues, and their central axis is the maritime administration within the IMO, "and through our gender programme we give them support so that they can access training, we promote their safety and we encourage the creation of regional networks", she indicated.

The IMO representative also highlighted the importance of communication when making society aware of the actions that all types of organisations undertake in terms of gender. "We have to give visibility to what we do; we cannot complain that we are not listened to if people simply do not know what we do".

To promote sustainable development, the UN has established 17 priority goals related to social prosperity, the fight against poverty and the protection of the planet, which include 169 targets or specific actions, "which should be cross-disciplinary to all worldwide, national and regional programmes and should also include the gender component". In this regard, Helen Buni explained that the gender programme being developed by the IMO is largely related to SDGs 4, 5, 8, 13, 17 and 14. With regard to the latter, the IMO tries to promote the blue economy and the sustainable use of sea resources in order to increase prosperity, as it is estimated that, annually, between 2.4 and 2.6 billion dollars of the world economy comes from the sea.

Last of all, in relation to goal 5, she noted that the targets that the IMO programme is aiming for regarding gender equality are: to end discrimination against women and gender-based violence, to recognise the non-remunerated work that women undertake and

to guarantee their access to all levels of decision making. For this, the organisation promotes actions in favour of female empowerment; especially in continents such as Africa, as well as small island States. “Why have a specific goal dedicated to gender equality?” she asked the audience, responding that it is necessary “because women represent 47% of the 120 million people world-over that work in the area of fishing, and there are more women than men in small-scale fishing. That is why female empowerment makes a lot of sense, not just on a social level, but also on an economic level”, she argued.

With regard to that, she highlighted that synergies can be made use of in order to reach gender equality, as the organisations and agents involved (FAO, ILO, IMO, etc.) have enough knowledge and experience in this matter, as well as funding available in order to drive programmes that address this issue. “What is important is to know what to do with this funding”, she clarified.

Just like many other speakers, the IMO representative particularly emphasised the lack of data and statistics broken down by sex, which enable for the true importance of women in the sector to be portrayed. “For this reason we should work together, get to know each other, coordinate ourselves and share this information so as to spread it”, thus contributing to making women in the sector visible.

Finally, Helen Buni referred to a new UN programme, focused on the marine environment, which aims to minimise the presence of invasive species, in which a transversal gender component has also been included in order to strengthen the weight and role of women in the fishery sector. “Therefore, it would be interesting to come out of this conference with proposals of this type”, she concluded.

Secondly, the researcher from the University of Brest (France) and representative from the Cluster of Women and Gender from the Network Too Big To Ignore (TBTI), **Katia Frangoudes**, explained her view on the work situation of women in the sector, based on studies that she has undertaken with regard to this group within the TBTI project, but also as a member of the European Network AKTEA and of the EU Cost Action Ocean Past Platform’s (OPP) Work Group on Seas with a Gender Perspective.

She noted that in the past 20 years the invisibility of women involved in fishing activity has been addressed to a large extent. “We have different regulations, agreements and international conventions that talk about employment and dignified work conditions in fishing. But do we truly know if women are carrying out dignified work?” she asked.

To analyse this she referred to the ILO’s definition, according to which dignified work is that which is undertaken in conditions of equality, safety and human dignity. And on that basis she considered that, “if as women we carry out a productive job, we should have a fair income, social security, social protection and freedom to express our concerns, to organise ourselves and to participate in the decision making processes”, ensuring that this situation is not the case in many places. “In many countries, the activities undertaken by women are

not considered as productive, given that only the fishing itself is classified as a job within fishery”; a job in which women are infrequently found.

This lack of productive consideration is made worse by the lack of data as “we do not have statistics and those that we do have are almost certain to be incorrect”, the TBTI representative noted. However, beyond the figures, it can be seen that women are mainly involved in “pre-harvesting” activities, such as the creation of fishing nets, the preparation of bait, etc.; “and in many countries these are unregulated or even illegal activities”, she confirmed. In this regard, she referred to the conference held in Santiago years ago in which the net menders discussed how much an hour of their work should cost. “And it was a very difficult, very hard negotiation. An example that the industry puts pressure on women so that they do not demand the salary that corresponds to their work”, she reflected.

In addition to the above (lack of professional recognition and thus, lack of wage recognition), there is also the circumstance that many women have special difficulties to reconcile work life with caring for their children (another activity that is not considered productive), thus the majority can only dedicate themselves within the sector to those activities that allow them to combine this with the role of care giver. All of this, noted Frangoudes, has driven women to look for new means of income. In this regard, she stated that “women in fishery economically diversify through necessity”.

In many regions, women also face problems when accessing resources, for example, those that dedicate to continental aquaculture, especially in southern territories, where they have difficulties finding spaces where they can farm fish. “Yesterday a woman from Morocco told me that this is why the Ministry gives them a certain privilege in this scope”.

In addition, there are other factors that also limit the presence of women in the sector and condition their work which, she explained, are related to cultural rules or gender prejudice that have traditionally existed in the sector.

Likewise, in the “post-harvesting” activities where there is a far greater presence of women, one of the main hurdles linked to the work is also the access to fish. As an example of this, she mentioned that “in Lake Victoria, in Tanzania, women cannot access the fish to sell it because this fish is exported to Europe by means of trade agreements with third countries”. She even alluded to more dramatic situations in some territories where “women have even had to prostitute themselves in order to gain access to the fish”. In other places, such as the case of Iceland, Frangoudes noted that female work in the processing industry “has been replaced by the migrant population”.

Through this account, Katia confirmed that in the sector these days there are still many challenges in terms of work that particularly affect women. In her opinion, one of the main challenges is the lack of a dignified income and “when there is the possibility of accessing this income, it is often a supplementary income”, she claimed, “in some countries women even have to emigrate in order to find sources of income”.

Finally, Katia Frangoudes also wanted to mention the often forgotten work that the wives of fishermen carry out. "In Europe since 1996 we have had a Directive which requests Member States to recognise the contribution of fishermen's wives, granting them the same social benefits (health, leave, pensions, etc.) as men. However, she acknowledged that "some Member States have transposed this Directive (which was modified in 2010) into their national legislation; however they do not apply it". Despite this, "at least [the Directive] does acknowledge that fishermen's wives are effectively contributing to the work of fishing".

After highlighting the prior constraints, Frangoudes wanted to again point out the lack of data as one of the factors that limits the gaining of occupational improvements for women; a factor which negatively impacts the integration of the gender perspective in the funds that finance the sector. "Due to the lack of statistics, politics is blind to gender, it doesn't see women. That is why I think that we must all stand up and clearly say to politicians that there are a lot of us and they should do something so that we are represented in the next European Maritime and Fisheries Fund programming period", she concluded.

Sana Taktak Keskes, president of the Association of Continuity of Generations (ACG), was the next to take the floor. As Secretary General of the Tunisian Association of Women Clam Collectors and Development (AFPD), she presented her experience in the Gulf of Gabes, on the east coast of Tunisia, in order to improve the social, economic and working conditions of the shellfish harvesters, by means of reinforcing the capabilities.

The gathering of Mediterranean clams, by means of the traditional method on foot, entails an annual production of some 1,000 tonnes. This shellfish harvesting is undertaken during regulated seasons and in the management of which the directorates of the Ministry of Fisheries, the research organisations and the workers dedicated to this activity, some 4,000 women, are involved, explained Sana, as "there are no real statistics because no exhaustive work has been undertaken counting this group".

In 2012, her organisation started to analyse the work problems that affected these female workers and they observed that there were no professional organisations that brought them together, which translated into a significant marginalisation of this group.

They also faced problems relating to the value chain, a strong domination of the intermediaries that affected their remuneration, scarce possibilities of valuing production, a reduction in negotiation power, a low educational level and a lack of development of the activity from a technical perspective. "Furthermore, this is a very patriarchal society, as such all women suffer from these problems", she added.

Over the years, the organisation that Sana directs has been undertaking a diagnosis of the situation and profile of this group, which she summarised as follows. "They are women that work 12 hours a day, exposed to severe weather conditions, they lack social and health security, they have a lack of training and awareness regarding the environment and therefore they have difficulties facing the challenge of climate change". Likewise she noted that this is "temporary work, with a six month season and then six months of inactivity".

In order to face up to these bad working conditions, her organisation has committed to improve infrastructures, introducing walkways to facilitate these women accessing their posts, and they have made small boats available so that getting to the islands where the clams are collected is easier. The main advances that she highlighted were that “these women have also signed an environmental conservation charter, and they have created a structure similar to a guild or association of female clam collectors in order to improve their visibility”.

After the study on work conditions, awareness raising and training sessions and ground meetings were carried out. In this regard, Sana emphasised the lack of places in which to undertake this task. “We don’t have meeting rooms; we do it in their own work spaces or very precarious facilities”. This awareness raising task also involves men; the husbands, brothers and cousins of these women “because we have seen cases in which there has been great reluctance. They said to us that *what you do here with our women, this doesn’t involve us*”, she assured. “That is why we have decided to do these practical exercises so as to ask them, interact with them, and provide them a very basic level of training”. In short, “we have found an audience for the integrated management of this sector and to put this under the protection of the ministry and we have also found many problems, such as the amount of people that support us in the fight”, she recognised.

Despite this, she thanked the implication of some institutions in this process, such as the Regional Union of Fishing and Aquaculture, “this union training already had a national structure and from there, they created the first female fishery union” which she claimed, “is the first female union in Tunisia”. Achieving this also involved a great effort in terms of awareness raising. For this they were supported by different resources where they addressed “their right to work, a right that many people did not recognise, rather it was simply an activity they did in order to earn a bit more money”, she explained. “But shellfish harvesting is a work activity with complete recognition. That is why we wanted them to recognise that it is a job, a form of employment that should recognise all of their rights as workers. As when they are convinced of this, it will be far easier for them to be respected”, she claimed.

The temporal nature is one of the main characteristics of shellfish harvesting, in order to face this the organisation has driven- with the support of the FAO- the training of these women in other craft trades, such as making fishing nets or creating basketwork, so that they can undertake this during the periods of shellfish harvesting inactivity; “this is one of the ways of helping them to supplement their resources”.

With regard to their occupational health, Sana noted that “many of these women have a fishing permit, but do not attend medical appointments” and she added that “the product, must also be supervised from a health perspective because it is destined for consumption, for exportation”. In this regard, they promote raising awareness and, by means of a health campaign, they undertake medical examinations in order to issue a professional aptitude certificate. “2016 was the first time that a woman received this certificate in order to

exercise as a clam collector". However, she clarified "we have had to fight for this certificate to be standardised by the administration".

With regards to social protection, "we went to ask those responsible for the administration of social security to make these women aware and to explain to them what, according to the Tunisian recommendations, are the means that they have available to be able to access this social coverage: how much do they have to pay, what their contribution should be, etc.". And she stressed, "they are entrepreneurial women that sell their product, although they do not know where it goes, as they sell it to intermediaries who are often not even in the value chain or even authorised to carry out that job in the framework of the Tunisian regulations". These intermediaries, she explained, "buy at a very low price and sell and a very high price".

To avoid this precariousness, the issuing of the first professional permits and certificates was promoted, "with the support of the union and of the administration, which now started to listen to us", noted Sana, and they worked with the women in order to raise their awareness about the fact that they should have said permit, given that "they could not collect clams any old way; a product destined for consumption, for exportation, that has a significant value as it can be sold for 25 euros abroad, when here it is sold at 3 euros a kilo".

Throughout this process Sana assured that women gained a greater empowerment. "Despite having a low educational level, they start to talk to all the involved parties and even with the media" to explain their demands. "They are small but firm steps", she claimed.

As part of this visibility work, the Clam Fair was also created, "we made a bit of noise to be heard, and from then people started asking about who these women are". Through these actions, explained the AFPD representative, they started to raise greater challenges and, with the collaboration of the FAO, a proposition was established for a trade fair trade link, with the implication of civil society and the support of the Association of Continuity of Generations (ACG), in order to carry out a tripartite agreement between private clients (Italians), a Tunisian molluscs scrubbing company and an association that represents the women in the sector. Through this agreement, she explained "women are going to sell their product directly to the centre, without the intervention of an intermediary, and afterwards this product will be traded abroad. There is a small subsidy that is given to these women to improve their social and economic conditions".

With actions like this- "which continue to be modest, because there is a lot of intrusion and people who oppose the initiative because they think their interests are compromised", she noted- she considers that slowly but surely the women in this group are advancing in the development of their working conditions. Likewise, in the framework of this fair trade plan, and with the support of the FAO, other actions have also been carried out, such as the supply of suitable clothing for working and baskets for collecting, etc.

One of the association's new projects is the establishing of a database of all the female clam collectors in Tunisia. "We started in a small region and now we're working along the

whole coast". This database comes from a survey, of which 1,000 questionnaires completed by women have already been collected, which aims to undertake a socio-economic and health study, "and we have added the environmental aspect in order to find out the perception these women have on the issue and the new focus that climate change requires". The results of this study and the database will be available soon.

On the other hand, workshops have also been undertaken on female entrepreneurship, emphasising the need for these women to integrate in a professional organisation and to learn to sell their product. Therefore, she insisted, "we must provide them with training in this activity and other artisan activities that than can undertake".

Sana Taktak highlighted the following as the main lessons that can be taken from this experience working with these women: the importance of establishing synergies between different projects, the effort when it comes to establishing relations with institutions ("for example, a doctor visiting them to talk about fishing was not well received, but we made them see that we are not there to save them, but rather to support them", she explained), the importance of working with professional organisations, the participative focus as a key to the project's success and the impact that reinforcing the capabilities in the mobilisation of communities involves, etc.

"But a lot of perseverance and enthusiasm is need, and being aware of the risks", she noted. "When we started to work we did not try to assess the risks, and this was a mistake, and afterwards we found problems that were not there at the beginning". That is why, as advice, when launching an initiative with these characteristics, "it is important to understand people, listen to them, understand their traditions; it is important to work on all of this from the perspective of awareness. And above all, it is important to educate women, to give them the means and instruments so they can fight and advance", she noted. "These women's know-how, their expertise at recognising the clams that must be valued, knowing how to sell them, in tourism routes or other separate activities. And creating confidence amongst us all, which is not always easy because there are husbands, cousins, etc. who are sometimes reluctant", she added. These are the keys to generate a change such as that experienced by these women.

Sana also highlighted the sustainability of this activity, underlining that "a balance must be found between all the social, economic and environmental issues, because many of these women sometimes see the obligation to go and collect clams out of season because they need the money. And so, how do we achieve this balance? More communication and transparency in terms of the administration is needed, and women that are involved, committed and aware of the role they play in these issues must be sought".

To end, she summarised the project's results in terms of an improved clam management, the increase of the value of the product, converting the women into an agent in her community by means of her organisation in professional bodies and the impact generated. With regard to the latter, she referred to the national acknowledgement that this initiative

received in 2016 for its contribution to the promotion of rural women, as well as an award for good practice, which was granted to them this year in Malta. But, fundamentally, the achievement has been that “these women that used to be unknown have now gone into the centre of public attention and they have increased their empowerment, contributing to reaching the development objectives”, she stressed.

The last to speak in this workshop on working conditions was **Nieves Lorenzo Espeso**, Team Leader of Occupational Medicine at the Galician Institute of Occupational Health and Safety (ISSGA) of the Regional Government of Galicia and member of the National Institute of Health and Safety at Work.

Since 2009 the ISSGA has been developing, alongside the fishing sector, a series of actions to improve the health and safety conditions of people that work at sea. Among these, the creation of a health monitoring guide for the whole sector stands out, created in collaboration with other institutes along the Cantabrian coast, as well as a series of studies on occupational health with regard to the different groups of women in fishing, such as shellfish harvesters (carrying out a sample of some 1,000 workers) and also regarding net menders.

During her speech she addressed the working conditions that affect the health and safety of women in the sector, the occupational risks they are exposed to and the prevention and damage management actions that can be undertaken; clarifying the concepts related to each of these issues.

With regard to the correction coefficients of retirement age (a traditional complaint from the different professional groups), she explained that these occur more often in fishing, and particularly in deep-sea fishing, due to the high accident rate that goes hand-in-hand with this activity and because it is acknowledged that there are certain determined health risks associated with it. “The important thing is to make the health damages, illnesses and accidents visible, and for that they need to be appropriately channelled”.

Working conditions, she explained, are those characteristics that may have a significant influence in the generation of health and safety risks for the worker, as may be, for example, the characteristics of the places of work, “these cold terminals, these ports where the female net menders sit in children’s chairs, exposed to the damp and the other adverse weather conditions”. On the other hand, the nature of the physical, chemical and biological agents in the atmosphere are also considered as working conditions. “The physical agents are associated with repetitive movements, forced posture, the handling of loads and the application of force, etc. And the biological agents are to do with the agents that the fishing nets may contain and that may cause damage from a pinprick, a contagious infection, etc.”.

The procedures that are carried out are also work conditions, “how to weave a net, how to extract a cockle..., as well as other aspects linked to the psycho-social risks associated to time-frames, time pressure, workloads, occupational stress, etc.”.

With regard to women in the fishery sector, one of the problems in terms of prevention is “that the majority of these women are freelance workers”, she explained, “so it has to be them that know what their risks are and to act on that to not try and cause health problems”. That is why she reiterated the need to “act on prevention and risks, to the extent that we can, in order to improve these and prevent harm, improving the working conditions”.

In Spain there is a specific law for the prevention of occupational risks and the General Social Security Act defines the damage to health derived from work, distinguishing between accidents at work, illnesses derived from work and occupational diseases. On this point she clarified that “those disease that get worse as a consequence of an accident at work are also considered as harm derived from work. In other words, if arthritis in the knee gets worse due to slipping because of the tide, this would be a disease derived from work, even though the accident was not traumatic”.

Delving further into the issue, Nieves outlined some factors to take into account in the study of working conditions of the groups of women in the sector, noting that “the working conditions are different depending on the type of activity and in some posts a certain risk predominates over others”. In this regard she wanted to highlight that “women in the fishing sector suffer a horizontal segregation by tasks, because it is expected that we have better capacities to undertake certain activities”.

This explains that traditionally there have been very few women in the area of extractive fishing; as such the majority of studies that take gender into account are with regard to other areas of activity with a greater female presence. “Furthermore, there are difficulties in obtaining reliable statistics on occupation and data regarding harm to health”, an issue on which, she insisted, it is necessary to continue working.

In the case of employees, such as those dedicated to preserving tuna - a group to which the ISSGA also directed a good practice guide- she noted that it is easier to act in terms of prevention, given that it is the business owner that must assume the risk assessment and improve the work conditions. In this activity sector there are also ergonomic, hygiene risks linked to the damp, cold conditions; and said risks tend to lead to frequent muscle/bone problems.

In the year 2012, the ISSGA published a study on occupational health in on-foot shellfish harvesting, which later motivated the development of a good practice guide “with and for the sector”, as for its development the work was analysed at ground level, as well as the ways of shellfish harvesting (on-foot on the beach and in the water in the subtidal zone) and all the tasks carried out in this activity were outlined with the workers themselves.

“We analysed the work tools and saw which of them, from those used, entailed the greatest risk”. From this study a series of occupational risks and diseases were extracted. In this regard, she wanted to highlight that many of those referred to in said study “already figured in the table of occupational diseases. Because this table does not limit the activity”,

she explained. "In other words, if I suffer from carpal tunnel syndrome and I am exposed to forced postures, repetitive movements and application of force, this is obviously an occupational disease", she claimed.

As examples of harm to the health of this group of shellfish harvesters, she highlighted the existence of heat stroke, mycosis, chilblains, hypothermia, cramp or physical exhaustion, among others. Added to all of this is the lack of suitable protection equipment to face the risks that cause this harm.

In collaboration with the Galician net menders associations, the ISSGA also undertook a study on this group and a good practice guide in which the risks that these professionals are subject to were taken into account, as well as the ergonomic conditions, static and forced postures with exercise of pressure, repetitive movements, application of force, manipulation of loads, etc. "Furthermore these women work with gloves that they have designed themselves with reinforced cotton to avoid being cut, and it has not been possible for any company to design a more efficient glove prototype to protect them. And I am convinced that is because there is not many of them and it is not profitable", she explained.

Likewise, in the area of aquaculture, there are also work conditions that she classified as "very improvable" and that entail risks such as repetitive movements, precise work with the application of force, lack of safety conditions in the pools, etc."

But there is a particularly dangerous sector, on-foot barnacle collecting, which has a significant number of female workers in Galicia, where in addition to the previous risks derived from repetitive movements and the application of force, there is also the fact that this work is undertaken on uneven ground and in an extremely dangerous environment due to the impact of the waves on the rocks. "In activities such as this, you find that allowances are not granted due to risks to pregnancy", she declared, "as such it is necessary for them to continue working in this regard".

In terms of this, she explained that the ISSGA "gathered all the illnesses that have been communicated, with the aim of showing if there are occupational diseases that are related to the risks in the sector. And the women in the fishery sector pay contributions for this professional contingency", she highlighted.

"These diseases appear and they must be channelled appropriately", she added, "that is why if you go to a primary care doctor and they tell you it is a common illness, you are going to get less money and, moreover, the damage is not visualised. And if there is no damage, it seems as if it is a profession with no risks".

That is why she encouraged all the professionals in the sector to communicate these ailments and to channel them appropriately through the Social Marine Institute (ISM). "This is about you going to the ISM so that they tell you the medical report and if not, the occupational disease", she stated. "Just like occupational risks, damage is the same". In this

regard, she concluded indicating that “the accidents due to overexertion in the sector are communicated, even if they are not traumatic, there are not many but their coding needs to be improved”, she concluded.

DISCUSSION:

In the brief discussion after workshop 4, the attendees raised the following issues:

- A shellfish harvester, who also acts as the patron of a Galician Fishermen's Guild, raised the issue that the situation that Sana Taktak explained in terms of the clam collectors in Tunisia reminds her a lot of the beginnings of the Galician shellfish harvesters. She highlighted the many similarities in both cases regarding the process followed by these workers in a context in which the activity is exercised simply in order to survive and there are many other difficulties with regard to the infrastructure and the valuing of products, etc. “With time we started to create shellfish harvesting associations, that started to have a greater awareness of these issues; in a process where the administration contributed a lot to make us aware that we had to be professionals. That is where everything started”. In this journey, she explained, a true inter-generational debate came about between mothers who “simply wanted to work to bring food home” and the new generations that were more aware of the need to protect the resource. “Getting social security was also very difficult for us, because we did not understand the need of registering for it for the few days that we work in the sea. But at the end of this entire struggle we achieved what we are now: professionals that truly fight for our rights”. In this regard, she wished the Tunisian professionals luck in this same process, despite the social constraints in that country.

On the other hand, in terms of the occupational health and safety, she requested a greater frequency of the medical examinations for the professionals in this group, “because men that go out to sea get a medical examination once a year, but we do not. We only get one when there is a project, and this is something that should be compulsory”, she declared.

- Another Galician shellfish harvester also noted that there were women from other generations, such as her mother, that tried to exercise a more controlled activity in order to extract a determined amount of molluscs and sell them directly. But she recognises that these women lacked support and were faced by the opposition of the purchasers “who saw their interests being threatened”. “It was only when the administration got involved that we achieved this”, she stated. In this regard, she also launched a message of encouragement to the Tunisian gatherers, stating that “you are even further ahead in some aspects, such as the examinations”. That is why she demanded that they “keep working with the administration because [they] will succeed”.

WORKSHOP 5: TRAINING AND PROFESSIONALISM

The workshop's moderator, **Marta Villa Hidalgo**, Director General of the Foundation Women for Africa, started her intervention by saying, "for me it is an honour and a very big personal satisfaction to be able to be here and participate in this workshop that I consider to be extremely relevant".



From left to right: Yayi Bayam Diouf, Susana Rodríguez Carballo, Marta Villa Hidalgo, Laura Rosa Requenez, Amaya Soto and Ana Ramos.

Before handing over to the speakers, the Director General of the Foundation Women for Africa wanted to propose some guidelines for reflection to frame the workshop: "According to data provided by international bodies such as the FAO and the World Bank, between 20% and 50% of the fishing sector is made up of women; however this is a variable percentage. We consider that it is between 60% and 70% in terms of areas such as processing and sales, and in contrast, in areas such as catching or technical management and responsibility, the female representation declines". And focusing on the African continent, she highlighted "that fishing activity is extremely relevant because it constitutes a pillar of local development and, above all, because it is also one of the main sources of food security for households. According to data from the FAO, somewhat more than 27% of people that work in the fishing and aquaculture sector in Africa are women".

And she added that "women's contribution to the fishing sector is crucial, but the input and contribution of women in this sector is not always quantified and, therefore, both them and their work are left invisible".

She referred to reports on gender and development, highlighting the sectors with a large female work force, such as processing, as they "tend to be undervalued due to suffering greater work and wage precariousness. An extreme case of this situation is the informal economy, which maintains 90% of the women in the continent of Africa", commented Villa.

In this framework, Villa invited the attendees to try and reflect upon "what the role is that the training and professionalization of women in the sector should play; how can the range of possibilities for the professional fulfilment of women that allow for the development of

their abilities be expanded; how can they be encouraged to take spaces in professional areas that until now have been off limits to them because they have been mainly or exclusively occupied by men; how to make the work of women more visible; and also how to achieve for their social and economic work in the fishing sector to be dignified”.

Likewise, she also commented how to make the sector more attractive so that new generations of women have professional and work possibilities in this area.

She highlighted that the I International Conference of Women in Fisheries enabled women in the sector to exchange ideas that can be matched on both an inter-sectoral and international level. “This is a space where women’s challenges, the needs and professional opportunities specific to women in the sector, can be brought together”.

Following this, the Director of the Professional Training Centre for Women and Young People in the District of Thiaroye, Senegal, **Yayi Bayam Diouf**, started her speech, explaining that her association is made up of women that are victims of illegal migration in their country “because our children want to come to Europe through Spain, but many have disappeared at sea, my son being one of those. This was the turning point that made me start out on my fight”, she commented.

Bayam Diouf continued saying “the basis of my proposal is in the aquaculture in Senegal, we know that fishing and aquaculture is a very important source of income for my country, but it is also sustenance for thousands of people”. And she recalled a very significant piece of data: women represent 52% of the population of Senegal, according to the 2008 report by the national agency of demographics and statistics, which is an important development, “the majority of these women are employed in catching positions and this involves a very important income for the country’s food security”, she added.

“I am part of a fishing community and we do not know how to do anything else, it is our socio-economic activity, but there are also fishing agreements that our governors sign with politicians that affect our fish”, she commented. “As women we have numerous problems, such as for example that our interests are not taken into account in terms of fishing policies; but we do not have the technical, organisational or management capacity either”, the Senegalese women stated.

Other problems in their area are the lack of infrastructure for transformation, conservation and distribution, the overfishing and having no access to international markets, etc. She also highlighted the lack of funding for their professional activities as “the interests are very high and to request credit women need a guarantee from their husband”, she commented. Furthermore, the high rate of illiteracy among them makes it even more difficult to access credit.

“That is why I decided to put my training centre for women and young people into operation; a place where social power is given to women that are active in the fishing sector and that have the ambition to offer a suitable response to the modernisation of women in

the national planning process”, highlighted Bayan Diouf. “But it is a difficult task; we are missing equal promotion before institutions, the lack of female empowerment and for fishing policies to take into account for women’s problems, issues and concerns. With this centre we also try to train young people with the aim of preventing illegal migration, so they do not go and lose their lives in the Mediterranean”, she added.

Her training centre launched a system of autonomous micro-credits for women. They are autonomous and managed by the fisherwomen and thus they have access to these credits and can pay them back “thanks to this professionalization”, she admitted.

In the framework of the Training and Professionalism workshop, the Senegalese woman recalled that she was “the first women in Senegal to go out and fish as this activity had been limited to men ever since our ancestors”. Bayam Diouf stated, “I had to request authorisation from the community in order to be able to go on board and we have a very large hierarchy and no women could go to sea, but I got that authorisation and I was able to convince them”. She claimed, “if they didn’t let me fish, I would not have been able to access many other things”. In the end she gained the authorisation, “I go out to fish in my pirogue, I pay men and women the same for their work load”, she commented. The word soon got out to other towns and “that is why some women can go out to sea now”, she added.

This whole situation “has reinforced my authority and thus I am able talk to other communities and enable women to achieve this. We are the key for social change, but it’s not at all easy”, she concluded.

The next speakers were **Laura Rosa Requenez Alvarado**, president of the Network of Women in Fisheries and Aquaculture of Nicaragua and president of the artisan fisherwoman cooperative “El Sueño del Archipiélago El Nancital” and **Amaya Soto**, technician at the Technological Centre of the Sea foundation (CETMAR), who formed a tandem to present their projects as their institutions collaborate between Spain and Nicaragua.

Soto explained that CETMAR “is a non-profit foundation that works to improve the marine environment in all the sectors that live from it. We have developed projects in different countries, working with grassroots organisations, governments and research centres”.

Specifically, the aim of the Nicapez project is to improve the transformation and commercialisation of the fishing products, but “its aim is the empowerment and social participation of fisherwomen and women who sell fish in the traditional and rural environments in Nicaragua. Work is carried out by means of three pillars: the first is to increase the social participation of women in development strategies; the second to reinforce the professional capabilities for processing, commercialisation of the fish and the decision making; and the third is to increase income”, she commented.

“It was in this process of implementing the business plans in which I was lucky enough to participate, to highlight the effort, motivation and good organisation of the women’s

cooperatives. This project ended with the creation of a network of women in fishing and aquaculture in Nicaragua in order to give a greater visibility to their activity”, she added before handing the floor over to her colleague, Lara Rosa Requenez.

The Nicaraguan explained that “the Network of Women in Fisheries and Aquaculture of Nicaragua was founded in June 2017 in the framework of the second forum of Fisheries and Aquaculture in Nicaragua, organised in Managua within the Nicapez project”.

This network was organised with the aim of encouraging the alliance and exchange of good practice; in order to improve the quality of life of the partners of the cooperative; to exchange information and training; to strengthen women’s rights in the sector; to identify sources of cooperation and funding; to empower the work of women before public and private bodies. Although Requenez recognises that “our organisation has been at a bit of a standstill due to a lack of economic resources, but despite these problems we believe that this network is the solution to many of the problems faced by women in fishing and aquaculture in Nicaragua”, she added.

“El Sueño del Archipiélago El Nancital” was founded in 2007 with 34 partners, and after 11 years in action, it now has 39: “we are fisherwomen from a young age as we are born and grow up in the El Nancital archipelago. We are all daughters of fisherwomen and, despite being a primary school teacher, from a small age I have carried out this activity and, whilst being a teacher, I still continue fishing. In the archipelago, all the women fish in fresh water in Lake Cocibolca and I’m not sure if I’d dare to do it in the sea”, admitted Requenez.

The Nicapez project materialised creating the processing plant and all the equipment necessary to store and process products. “In the cooperative we make fish patties, ceviche... and we also sell fish without processing, selling between eleven and thirteen thousand pounds”, she concluded.

Following this, the lead researcher from the Spanish Oceanographic Institute (IEO) in the Oceanography Centre of Vigo, **Ana Ramos Martos**, took to the floor to explain her work as coordinator of the “EcoAfrik” project.

“We, the researchers, are also fisherwomen and we are part of the sector. I want to frame my talk within fishing research and make a reflection: right now there are many challenges with the sea, the marine problem is very large, resources are overexploited in nearly all fishing grounds, biodiversity has been lost at an enormous rate, there is the problem of climate change... there are many challenges in sea research at present and they can only be solved with appropriate scientific knowledge”, Ramos started.

She acknowledged that she represented a sector of the profession where “we are privileged, we do not have the problems that the fisherwomen that have presented at the conference have, but we are a high percentage of working women”. And she provided data such as the fact that in the institute in Vigo, 50-52% of the staff are women, of that percentage, those that are dedicated purely to research regarding fishing, for example in

the area of fisheries in European waters, reach 53%, “but I have to say that if we go to my work area, the fisheries of Africa, the percentage of women in my project raises to 73%. In other words, we are an important part of the fishing research in African waters”, commented Ramos.

She also mentioned that there are generally large conciliation problems because “we are not dedicated exclusively to being in our offices and laboratories doing research, we participate in many forums that require us to be away from our homes for a larger or smaller period of time”. And she added, “we as biologists work on oceanographic boats, in fishing boats that are set up as research vessels, and there are also women that embark as scientific observers on commercial boats that are not in a seasonal month as we do, but rather they can spend three, four, five or six months on a boat with an entirely male crew. These women have a lot of merit and I want to stand up to talk about them not just the women that work in research”, she stated.

“I have been a marine researcher for nearly 40 years, 30 of which my choice, since 1988 I have worked in the research of deep-bottom resources and the ecosystems of African waters, focusing particularly on the north east area, including: Morocco, Mauritania, Bissau, Gabon, Angola, Namibia and Mozambique. In 2004 I launched a project dedicated to the study of biodiversity, where there is a great lack of knowledge on an international level regarding marine fauna. This project is called EcoAfrik (Ecosystem of Africa) and we are developing it in collaboration with the University of Vigo”, explained Ramos.

This is a multidisciplinary project in which not only biologists participate, but also specialists in geology and physics, in such a way that they can take advantage and capitalise on the campaign, that has a priority objective to assess the resources to study biodiversity, and another secondary objective based on the study of collections of fauna of invertebrate animals that we collect. “The biodiversity study is something that is spoken about a lot, but that requires resources and a very specific specialisation as it is a study that requires an extremely long amount of time”, she added.

She also highlighted that more than 80% of her team are women, “and that is a great honour. I am representing all of them as they get involved in and attend the necessary forums and we all find the problems that women who have to leave their homes for a large period of time face.”

To end, Ramos commented that “our priority aim is to be able to transfer this experience of scientific knowledge to third world countries, above all in the north of the north western area of Africa”.

The final speaker was **Susana Rodríguez Carballo**, Director General of Fishing Development of the Regional Government of Galicia, who highlighted her department's work, clarifying that “in order to get professionalization, training is a key tool”. Fishing Development has the responsibility of training, depending on three sailing fishing schools: one dedicated to maritime fishery training; an aquaculture school for the access to training;

and the polytechnic institute of Vigo, “a leading national school for this professional family”, she added.

Rodríguez noted “in the 90s when we started this journey towards the shared professionalization, at first with the sector, the shellfish harvesting area decided to head for professionalization because out of the twelve thousand shellfish harvesters, only 10% were registered with social security”. She added that “shellfish harvesting was a marginal and temporary activity, there was not a commercial vision of what to do with the product, there was no investment, no investment in work areas was made, or in the profession to improve performance, the work was completely disorganised even with regard to guilds, but there was not an effective work organisation”.

The problem also lay in the fact that 95% of the shellfish harvesting professionals were women; in terms of the fishing profession they were the weakest link, with less income from work, returns were minimal and there was a concept that accompanied the sector throughout the entire journey: ‘the sea is everyone’s’. “So this professionalization process started from an academic perspective in two ways: one, through meetings with the shellfish harvesters; and the other through training. In 1995 the first meeting was held in with 64 shellfish harvesters that represented the 32 guilds in Galicia. And in 1996 we entered a new process called ‘Plan Galicia’ in which we tried to turn on foot shellfish harvesting into a professional activity”, commented Rodríguez.

“In this second meeting, the shellfish harvesters came together again and explained their problems and that they are capable of showing their situation. This discourse changed, as now the sea is not for everyone, it is for who farms it. It was complicated work but at that point it acted to united the women”, admitted the director general.

This way they started to think as true professionals, with a future and lines of work. They also valued what training was giving them. “I think that these days in Galicia a training activity is mentioned and the shellfish harvesters sign up to whatever is necessary, to courses on all sorts of proposed activities. They need courses that solve their problems, it’s not about spending hours in training, but rather courses adapted to their specific needs”, outlined Rodríguez. Moreover, they started to be represented in governmental bodies. In the year 2000 a definitive step towards professionalization was taken with the registration with Social Security.

Begoña Marugán was responsible for writing all this process, “and it was truly a marvellous idea because thanks to this woman, and how she saw our process, we have written documentation of everything. As she said: ‘Information and training opened their eyes, and by opening their eyes they saw the possibility of a different future which they couldn’t give up on’”, she commented.

The case was repeated later on with the net menders, who were always supported and who, with a basis of training and organisation, were able to achieve visibility in order to recover the name and word; to understand that organisation is key to any transformation; to create

local associations and a Galician federation to defend their interests and social recognition of their work.

“My final reflection is that I think that we all need to continue training ourselves in empowerment, in knowing that we are capable and that we can achieve everything we put our minds to”, the director general concluded.

DISCUSSION:

In the discussion after workshop 5, the participants raised the following issues:

- The owner of a local fishing boat in Tenerife: with regard to Ana Martos' speech, she commented that biologists from the Spanish Oceanographic Institute of Tenerife and from private companies go on her boat and that they collaborate with the University of La Laguna. “I think that the union between sea workers and these studies that are done on board fishing boats is essential”.

She also highlighted the need to improve the studies because “a lot is lacking with regard to education, we're talking about public education, because when something basic is failing, we are not professionalising the fishing sector. We need to start from scratch, from an early age, but we also need to support this cooperation between administrations, professional training institutes, and marine biology studies with the fishers themselves that are on board the boats. I think that is essential, as well as to increasingly improve the programmes that are seen in schools because, in my opinion, they have become completely obsolete”, she commented. And she admitted that “at school I learned 10% of what I know, but you learn from everything. Everything else I learned on board a boat without studies”.

She highlighted that she had to buy ready-made nets because there was nobody on the Canary Islands that could teach her to make them. “If I want to know how to do it, I have to go to the old people on my island to see how it's done. Thanks to this conference I have spoken to some net menders from the mainland so that they come to the Canary Islands and teach us. Training and professionalization are essential”, she concluded.

- A patron of a Galician Fishermen's Guild added that “in on foot shellfish harvesting there is starting to be a male presence, it's no longer going to be exclusively women and this makes us lose ground in this regard”.
- One fisherwoman commented that “in Galicia, people that come from the training centres have had work experience on a boat, because we have one boat for this, but the experience is not enough. But we do have enough resources so that this training is of a moderate quality”.
- The Director of Fisheries and Aquaculture of the Regional Government of the Basque Country responded, saying that “we have three fishery training centres in the Basque Country that are full of students, the places are covered and there are even some students that don't get a place because there are not enough. But we realised that of

these students, those that were really going to dedicate themselves to marine fishing were very few. Many validated their qualifications with nautical training in order to sail boats and charter large yachts, above all in the Mediterranean, the Balearic Islands and even in the Canary Islands. And many, when we went to speak to them, told us that the real reason they were studying there was because at the beginning they did not know if they were going to like fishing or not, but they had no idea of what marine fishing was. As such, we put a series of grants into place. As they are two-year courses, in the summer between the first year and the second year, they board a fishing boat for one month and we give each student €800.

This way, as the boat owner from the Canary Islands mentioned, when they finish their training in the second year, they have at least had previous experience in a purely fishing environment so that they can decide if they want to dedicate themselves to fishing or another type of sea-related activity in the future”, she concluded.

SPEAKERS' SUMMARY OF THE SESSION:

- **Yayi Bayam Diouf:** “Without training we will not achieve anything. Together we must achieve it”.
- **Susana Rodríguez Carballo:** “Training is the foundation for any activity. Training is an investment”.
- **Ana Ramos Martos:** “As a repository of knowledge, we have a responsibility, and that is to offer our experience and ability to those that do not have this, in this case in the environment in which we work in African countries”.
- **Laura Rosa Requenez Alvarado:** “For all women to unite to fight for organised, professional fishing”.
- **Amaya Soto:** “Highlighting the cooperation among people, men or women, that unite for the exchange of knowledge aimed at action. More than differences, I’d rather continue talking about equal opportunities”:

WORKSHOP 6. BLUE GROWTH AND SUSTAINABILITY:

The participants in this workshop moderated by **Javier Garat Pérez**, President of Europêche, covered the opportunities offered by the circular economy to develop business models that help with environmental and resource conservation. Opportunities that women are proving to see and exploit, thereby contributing to the development of original initiatives with a clear commitment to blue growth –in the broadest sense of the term-- and sustainability.



From left to right: Javier Remiro, Fatou Sock, Irene Díez, Javier Garat, Mariana López and Lucy Gilliam.

The first panellist was **Fatou Sock**, the UN Food and Agriculture Organization Focal Point for Fisheries in Senegal, who explained the goals and actions of the *GEF - Coastal Fisheries Initiative (CFI)* programme, which was begun by FAO in 2014 in collaboration with other stakeholders. It works on five projects involving six Global Fund for Employment agencies developed in several countries: Ecuador, Indonesia, Cape Verde, Ivory Coast and Senegal.

The aim of this project is to highlight the importance of coastal fisheries in overcoming today's sustainability challenges. The ultimate purpose, she said, is to demonstrate — through holistic management of ecosystems and enhanced governance of shallow-water fishing— that we can get environmental benefits if responsible artisan fishing is supported in addition to maintaining services linked to the ecosystems. The benefit will be even more development based on the increase in economic and social value generated by shallow-water fishing which will support human wellbeing and the means for survival.

The three continents involved in this initiative are affected by common issues and, therefore, they share experiences and performance indicators in search of an integrated approach and innovative solutions that respect the environment. Thus, the *Coastal Fisheries Initiative (CFI)* seeks collaboration among the various stakeholders and development authorities to promote an exchange of experiences and knowledge to add value to already-existing initiatives in this area.

In Western Africa, the project aims to offer environmental, social and economic benefits through good artisan fishing management as well as incentives for innovation. It is therefore based on three cornerstones: promoting enhanced governance in fishing, reinforcing the sea product value chain and creating incentives for the strategic communication, tracking and dissemination of best practices.

This programme has a significant gender dimension which focuses on reducing the inequalities between men and women by fostering their participation in fishery governance

and decision-making processes, their access to resources for financial security (through the equitable distribution of economic and social benefits) and reinforcing their capabilities in terms of education and vocational training as well as facilitating access to social protection services.

It is with this approach that the programme has developed by relying on the active participation of women. Specifically, they are trained in entrepreneurship and leadership and gender is contemplated systematically in all project activities. Likewise, the programme indicators are broken down by sex to measure the differences between men and women.

The *Coastal Fisheries Initiative* experience makes it clear that the gender perspective is essential to the success of any project related to protecting resources and the sustainability of the fishery sector, especially artisan fishery where women are very much present. Therefore, the idea is to include the gender issue with a “holistic and eco-systemic approach that is committed to human wellbeing, biodiversity conservation, enhanced sector management and the creation of wealth all along the value chain”.

Fatou Sock continuously emphasized that women have a lot to say when it comes to finding innovative solutions to environmental issues, an idea all of the panellists agreed with. One clear example of these types of innovative solutions is the *Upcycling the Oceans* project, which was presented by **Irene Díez Ruiz**, General Manager of the ECOALF Foundation.

ECOALF is a sustainable fashion company dedicated to producing clothing made from recycled materials, some of which comes from marine rubbish such as that which is pulled up with fishing nets. The ECOALF Foundation initiative *Upcycling the Oceans* came about after realising the amount of rubbish and plastic fishers were extracting every day.

After visiting the ports in the Comunidad Valenciana region —and talking with fishers about what to do with certain materials like the Styrofoam used for fish boxes— they saw a need and the opportunity to transform waste materials similar to what they were using to make their clothing by collecting it from the bottom of the sea.

The pilot project began in 2015 with this aim at 9 ports and three main objectives: to help clean the sea, valorise the waste (with an upcycling process) and spread awareness among society of the problem of rubbish in the seas all while highlighting the role of the fishery sector and acknowledging the free sea cleaning work they do.

As part of the project, fishers collect the waste they encounter in their daily work and sort it into bins at the ports. This content is managed at a waste separation plant by type of material (plastic, glass, textile, aluminium...) or fractions. The ECOALF project uses PET plastic bottles as a raw material, transforming it into flakes which become pellets and then top-quality thread through a mechanical transformation process used to produce clothing.

The project is currently being carried out at 37 Spanish ports across practically the entire Mediterranean basin as well as the Gulf of Cadiz, Coruña, etc. This collaboration from the fishermen and women makes it possible to recover around a tonne of rubbish a day and give all this plastic a second opportunity which would otherwise just be laying on the bottom of the sea for another 400 years, deteriorating the marine ecosystems.

Irene Díez emphasized the idea that it is a project that may easily be replicated in other countries like Thailand, for example, where the Government has committed to developing the initiative. "In the end, what we're trying to do is promote a circular economy and a local economy by giving a second life to this rubbish through added value which also helps spread awareness for the problem. We're working on the tip of the iceberg. The definitive solution is not turning marine debris into clothing as work on prevention is necessary, but we are contributing to awareness".

Similar work in sustainable fashion is being done by environmental artist **Mariana López Henen**, founder of *The Ocean Corner* platform. Through this creative project, waste collected from the Atlantic and Mediterranean beaches is transformed into clothing to spread awareness of the effects of water pollution with their designs.

"My work," she said, "is sewing the water's memories." "I clean beaches all over the world and ask women around the world to send me the rubbish they find on their beaches. My work is sewing it so, together, we can tell the history of the water." "Because water has no borders and it's everyone's rubbish".

During her speech, she insisted on the need to "educate the young and old alike to see and touch the things we find in the sea. We need to ask them if they can recognise some of these objects in their homes and how they think it all got there."

The women who are connected to this environment have an essential role in this awareness, she assured. That is why she has implemented the initiative with a gender perspective, *Women Who Live Next to the Sea United for Diversity*. "I sew their stories -stories that happen in different parts of the world- and they share them with people."

Mariana makes designs that can include up to 200 pieces of rubbish.

Later on, these designs are shown at schools, conferences and fashion shows and are used in different ways to promote environmental awareness and fight the rubbish problem. Nonetheless, Mariana explains, "when I participate in workshops, I never talk about rubbish. I ask the participants to share their stories related to water and now, I'd like to ask all of you: What are your memories of water? Telling our own stories can help us remember the importance of conserving what makes us happy: nature and water," she concluded.

This spirit of environmental awareness and defending the oceans is also the underlying principle of *eXXpedition*. The Co-Founder and Director of the initiative, **Lucy Gilliam**, talked about the origins and evolution of this project which is based on collecting marine debris

with a team fully made up of women who conduct on-board environmental campaigns throughout the world.

The founders (Lucy Gilliam and Emily Penn) shared this environmental concern with other women with different professional backgrounds to find solutions to approach the issue of plastic and its impact on oceans and health. With this goal in mind, they took a first trip from Lanzarote to Martinique (in the Caribbean Sea) collecting marine debris across the Atlantic.

The rubbish removed —as well as water and air samples— was quantified, sorted and analysed and the results were shared worldwide with scientists from all over the world and toxicity experts. “This part is very important to us and also for decision makers as far as getting a real idea of the scope of the problem of plastic in the world’s seas.”

In Lucy’s words, one of the key aspects of the project is that it is based on citizen involvement and works with the scientific community. To this end, the eXXpedition team works with marine debris tracking software developed by Jenna R. Jambeck, an Associate Professor at the University of Georgia who has done major research in this field, the findings of which –published in 2015— prove that 8 to 10 million tonnes of waste fill the oceans each year. If this trend continues, said Lucy, there may be more plastic than fish by 2030. “This research was a critical point in the awareness process and produced a data collection programme to evaluate marine debris.”

This project also includes lines of collaboration with NASA to develop labelling devices that can identify and track materials thrown into the sea. Likewise, the initiative analyses and makes clear the impact of plastic in the food chain when swallowed by fish.

With this work, *eXXpedition* seeks to influence environmental decision-making authorities through awareness campaigns and their presence in debate forums to foster the implementation of measures to fight this problem.

The final panellist to speak at this workshop was **Javier Remiro Perlado**, Area Coordinator of Sustainable Fishing and Aquaculture with the Biodiversity Foundation (FB) under the auspices of the Spanish Ministry of Ecological Transition, who talked about the opportunities available for funding environmental projects –like the ones discussed at the workshop— through FB facilities like the *Pleamar programme*. “My work here is to encourage all of you to submit your project ideas and see how we can help you finance them.”

FB, which was created in 1998, is dedicated to approaching biodiversity challenges on land as well as in the seas and on the coastlines, climate change and fostering a green and blue economy, all through third-party projects granted aid and subsidies and by developing first-party environmental projects. The foundation has a board comprised of various public organisations and entities.

In 2017, the foundation published seven calls for aid totalling 16.7 million euros. It received 824 applications and funded 288 projects. Much of this aid is related to structural funds and European investments. Since 2013, the foundation has been a processing agency for the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF), through the Pleamar programme, as well as for the European Social Fund (ESF) since 2001. Calls for grant proposals for these two funds were allocated with 4.1 and 7.8 million euros, respectively, in 2017.

In 2018, six calls for proposals were published with 543 applications received. Of these, 211 projects have been pre-selected for funding. The ESF grant budget has risen to 8.9 million euros and the EMFF subsidy budget to boost the fishery and aquaculture sector totals nearly 4.9 million euros.

The calls for this aid also include the gender issue as equal opportunities is one of the horizontal principles of ESF and EMFF. This horizontal principle is transferred to all programming documents: the operational programme, documents approved by the EMFF Monitoring Committee as well as the selection criteria for said committee that establish what can be funded and how.

The FB *Emplea Verde* programme funded by ESF has been allocated with 67 million euros to support 300 initiatives that job enhancement and creation and companies that operate in the green and blue economies. This programme seeks to support some 50,000 people and 3,000 companies in addition to helping 4,800 unemployed persons enter the job market and more than 3,000 companies secure support to create and/or improve their business. Moreover, it helps 24,000 people earn or improve their professional qualifications and more than 6,000 workers improve their job market situation.

For its part, the Pleamar programme, which is funded by EMFF and focused more towards projects, is allocated with 30 million euros and seeks to support around 200 initiatives that help protect and recover marine biodiversity, promote more sustainable fishing and aquaculture activities, reduce undesired capture and reinforce the management of protected marine areas. Another objective is to support around 70 environmental consulting firms and 35 collaboration and networking projects involving scientists and sector stakeholders.

The foregoing programmes will involve 6 calls for grant proposals and revolve around specific areas of action. The ESF programme features two lines aimed at the unemployed (*Crea* and *Innova*) and two lines aimed at entrepreneurs (*Impulsa* and *Conecta*). For its part, EMFF has 6 lines of work focusing on innovation, networks, waste, consulting, protected areas and awareness.

These programmes integrated gender in their calls and projects. “In the case of *Emplea Verde*, women are one of the priority groups considered when granting aid,” he said. “And in the case of *Pleamar*, one of the criterion we assess is whether the projects include a gender equality plan and not just that the requesting entity has one.”

Finally, Javier Remiro presented *Red Empreverde*, a platform that includes 8,600 entrepreneurs who promote green and blue economy businesses “where 32% are women,” he highlighted. In 2017 alone, 7 training, guidance and networking programmes were organised with 317 people participating, 49.62% women. Investment forums are also organised specifically aimed at women. These resources have also been used to support projects with a clear gender focus such as the *REDMAR II* initiative, for example, run by the fishery and seafood foundation Fundamar, which encourages on-board experiences and a better exchange of best practices relating to equal opportunities, on-board safety and the environment.

DISCUSSION:

During the debate following workshop 6, the participants raised the following questions, all very much connected to marine waste recycling:

- The secretary of a women’s association asked about the gender component of the project *Upcycling the Oceans* and explained that other scientific-based pioneer marine rubbish collection initiatives have been carried out at other Spanish ports such as Motril together with fishermen and women to take advantage of synergies: they bring in the waste and receive a lot of information on the sea conditions in exchange deriving from the quantification, classification and research of the waste. Waste hot spots in the Alboran Sea are even being mapped.
- Irene Díez clarified that, despite not being a gender project per se, *Upcycling Oceans* does receive collaboration from many women as even though the trawling fleet they work with does not have many women seafarers onboard, women are present in all the other fishery processes. She also pointed out it’s not just a scientific rubbish classification project (as may be the case of initiatives like *Eco-Puertos* in Motril or *Mar Viva* in Catalonia), but rather it’s a rubbish management and recycling project operated in collaboration with fishers that is compatible with scientific projects.
- A representative from the University of Brest asked what type of compensation is offered to fishers when they collect and separate the rubbish extracted from the sea given that it’s sometimes thrown back into the sea with discarded fish. Is it a matter of awareness?
- Irene Díez said fishers do not receive any economic compensation for collecting the waste. It’s a matter that is currently subject of debate and emphasized that ECOALF is open to regulations and other ways to articulate this activity in this direction as some regions offer fishing for litter compensation. “In our case, we get them to do so with a whole lot of please and thank you,” she stated. “It’s a volunteer project but it has been accepted in an extraordinary way as it’s also a way to highlight the value of the work done by fishers and their contributions to the environment as most of them are already doing it (collecting rubbish) and what we do is provide them with the bins to do so and try to reach those who are still not doing this. We always believe that volunteerism secures a much more loyal commitment. Moreover, many fishers say they themselves

are the first ones to benefit from resolving this problem so they're proud of the project and we're very thankful." Likewise, she pointed out that ECOALF is currently managing all the rubbish they get, not just what they use to make clothing (PET plastic).

- Lucy Gilliam added that the matter of compensation for fishers for collecting waste is currently under debate by the International Maritime Organization. "Regulations have changed and instead of paying by the tonne, the choice is being made to remove a tax fishers once had to pay. This is also a way to foster this recycling."
- The roundtable moderator, Javier Garat, expressed his dissatisfaction that fishers who remove rubbish from the sea and take it to port are being charged a management fee. "And despite the fact that EMFF provides for aid for fishers who collect this waste, this aid is not being included in operational programmes and it's not being given out."
- A representative from the Association of Net Operators of La Guardia said that her organisation has also been engaged in this recycling for some time in collaboration with seafarers. "We recycle everything, the waste at port and ours as well. We clean ropes, sort them and remove any lead inside to recycle it elsewhere. A recycling company then handles all that rubbish later." To this end, she stated that up to three tonnes of waste is collected every three months. "We're paid for this work. It's not much, but we do get paid. However, we're more motivated by our pride than the money we get for it," she assured.
- The secretariat of the fishers guild of Barcelona, which promotes the *Mar Viva* project, emphasized the importance of the work being done by fishermen and women on rubbish recycling projects - work they believe must be voluntary "because fishermen and women are the eyes of the sea, the ones who truly know what is happening and the first to benefit from the collection of this rubbish. It's another thing to have the necessary aid to be able to continue doing it, for example, from the European Commission so we can pay less taxes. That type of aid would be more than welcome. But, it should always be volunteer-based".
- A representative from the Mexican fishing sector pointed out that in the era of the UN Decade of Ocean Science 2020-2030, these actions in favour of the environment are the result of sector mobilisation to overcome these problems. "In the case of Mexico, we don't know what to do with gulfweed (a type of algae) considering the thousands and thousands of tonnes that reach the beaches. Therefore, one of things we'd like to do is make people aware this is not rubbish." In order to do so, she suggests ideas involving creativity and innovation. "What's been done in my country to approach the problem is take photos of naked women on the beach with the gulfweed all over their bodies. So, after seeing what's being done here (what has been explained at this workshop), I'm thinking *what a difference* and why not make dresses with gulfweed?"
- "I really appreciate the fishers' work, but believe that the plastic we see in the seas is not actually everything in there," said another workshop participant from India. "That's why I think we shouldn't wait for fishers to voluntarily clean all that plastic." In this regard, she says that in her country, "we have a project where the State supports fishers who bring in the waste they find in the sea. The fishers are paid for this and plastic

pellets are made and they are upcycled, not for the fashion industry, but to surface the roads. So, I think that if workers are dedicating their time to this cleaning work and, thus taking that time away from their real work, they should receive economic compensation.”

- Lucy Gilliam clarified that most of this waste comes from the land, not the work on the boats; however, a significant portion in some regions does come from fishing. Therefore, there are regulations which have been promoted by authorities like FAO and IMO that provide for economic compensation for the fishermen and women. “Moreover, the fishing gear and nets thrown into the sea must be repaired so they don’t end up adding to the debris in the sea.”
- Javier Garat indicated that, according to Spanish Ministry of Agriculture, Fishery and Foodstuff data, the contribution to marine debris cleaning by fishing boats is around 3%. “That’s why I think the fishery sector is not the problem but rather part of the solution to the problem of marine debris,” he insisted.
- An oceanographer told of her experience as a participant in a project developed at Oxford by the Government of the United Kingdom to fight illegal fishing after which she thought: What can be done to work against pollution in international waters and whether the IMO is doing any type of project in this area?
- In relation to the foregoing question, the ECOALF Foundation representative pointed out that they work nationally and that “we’re currently considering working with Cantabrian boats that fish off the Sole Bank and spend most of their time abroad; however, “one of the main problems we’re seeing is how to store the rubbish onboard. The space it occupies on the boat and all that is involved with that, the additional expense in diesel fuel, the odour... It’s an issue we’re trying to resolve. But, right now, we’re just working with fishers who return to port each day as it’s easier to just provide them with a bin to make it easier for them to bring in the rubbish,” she explained. “We’re open to suggestions,” she concluded.
- In consideration of the foregoing, the representative from *eXXpedition* indicated that “in terms of the work, it’s much easier to do research on pollution in the high seas than in coastal water,” and justified this by explaining that “we have to ask for permission from all the nations involved when working in coastal waters in order to trawl for plastic in the exclusive economic zones”. In relation to the projects, she said that “we have an environmental protection committee that met two weeks ago and it’s in the process of drafting a marine protection strategy along with other United Nations agencies”. Along these same lines, she stated that “it’s a problem that transcends national jurisdictions. We have initiatives related to the management of rubbish from deep-sea fishing, challenges deriving from the quantity of waste produced by cruise ships and issues like discharging highly-contaminated blackwater with toxins and microplastics. It’s very complicated to fit all of this into a single jurisdiction, but I believe that throwing out fishing gear is a shared responsibility that needs joint efforts from different international organisations (because managing deep-sea fishing in international waters would correspond to IMO and managing fishery activities is under

the competency of FAO). Therefore, it's a complicated issue. But, I think it's really great that there are women at the table making political decisions on these matters."

- The roundtable moderator asked panelists who presented marine debris collection projects at the workshop if one can earn enough money with these initiatives not to have to work in something else.
 - ❖ The Coordinator of *Upcycling the Oceans* said that, to date, the project is short on support. "We're not in the red, but we need assistance from Ecoembes, for example, American sponsors who support us, the Foundation... because it's a very expensive transformation process and it's very expensive because we work with many small ports and we collect a lot of rubbish and not just PET plastic (which is what we actually use) due to the cost of transporting and separating all the waste. And all of this is a local economy process done in Spain. Nonetheless, we believe it has a pilot role and a very powerful innovation spirit that is worth continuing to support and explain from a demonstrative perspective even though the Mediterranean Sea collection is quite small in terms of the company and it's not *the* company's business. But, we'll continue working so it can be because the project is too atomised right now," she said.
 - ❖ "Little by little, I'm improving," said Mariana López Henen. "You have to realise that starting a business is not a one-day thing and I personally get involved in things that are a bit complicated. If I tell people I use rubbish for my clothes and that I transform clothes that were in the rubbish or that nobody wanted and charge for this, sometimes it's difficult for them to understand. But, I always get assistance for projects and I'm being invited to more and more places. I get paid for presentations... little by little. I don't think you can start a business in just one day and we sometimes get moved more by passion. I often wonder: Is all this time you spend -we spend- with water up to our waists worth what we get out of it? Yes, it is."
 - ❖ The work done with *eXXpedition* is not paid and most of the people who work on this project either pay to be a part of the initiative or contribute what's needed to continue. We have 14 people on the ship, some of them licenced professionals to operate the ship and the other 10 are simply volunteers who even pay a small fee towards the trip expenses. We also raise money through grants for the project promotion and dissemination side and organise beach cleaning campaigns and talks to be able to cover the costs of our volunteers' travel. Therefore, most of the people who work on eXXpedition are not paid. But, we have thousands of volunteers in the places we travel to. We looking for 200 volunteers who would like to travel the world with us in the coming years."

VIDEO PROJECTIONS:

After the workshops were held, there was a projection of various videos made by bodies and entities linked to the world of equal opportunities in the fishery and aquaculture sector.

Firstly the four winning videos of the competition organised in 2018 by the International Association for Women in the Seafood Industry (WSI) were projected. This audiovisual project was also supported by the AFD (Agence Française de Développement) and the research and development company Matis Icelandic. In total 15 videos were submitted to the competition, from Ireland, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Mexico, Spain and the United States (including Alaska).

The first of the winning videos, ***Puntada invisible*** (Invisible Stitch) is produced by the Foundation for Fishing and Shellfish Harvesting (Fundamar) in Galicia. This video shows the work of Beatriz, a net mender in the Port of Vigo, and it clearly displays how women carry out important but undervalued roles within the fishery sector, facing tough conditions when undertaking a traditional and essential job that has been very affected by the decline in the industry in recent years.

With the title ***Mujeres del Mar de Cortés*** (Women from the Gulf of California), this video is narrated by a selection of female voices that show the underlying values and main motivations that are behind a cooperative of women that work in mariculture in Bahía Kino, in the region of Sonora (Mexico). These women's testimony precisely expresses the importance of preserving the environment, betting on sustainable fishing activity, committed to the future of the communities and the local environment. This cooperative has been supported by the COBI organisation, within its Strengthening Fishing Leaders and Organisations programme.

The third video projected was ***Girls Who Fish in Petty Harbour***, which gives the testimony of Kimberly Orren and shows her work and that of other fisherwomen that, like her, undertake their work on-board in Newfoundland, a Canadian island located off the east coast of the North American continent. In her account, Kimberly talks of the stereotypes that are still around in a sector dominated by men, and she particularly emphasises the need to encourage women and young people to pro-actively participate in this sector; a true example of female empowerment.

The final winning video of the WSI Video Competition is titled ***The Invisible Hands*** and it is a tribute to all those women that work in the fish trade in Visakhapatnam, a port city in the Indian state of Andhra Pradesh. This graphic file portrays how Ratna and other families of fishers are making efforts to expand their business through subsidies and initiatives such as the selling of fish through "Fish Nutri Carts". Their experience is inspiring, as they shed light on the fact that women, through their imagination and courage, are levelling the playing field and discovering new ways of relieving their financial problems through their activity in the fishery sector.

Finally there was a projection of the animated video ***Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication*** (SFF Guidelines). This audiovisual project, undertaken by the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO), aims to promote the awareness and discussion on gender equality in small-scale fishing. The objectives of the FAO's voluntary SSF guidelines are to promote a change in the discriminatory gender laws, policies, customs and practices by means of transforming the institutional agreements in order to facilitate equal opportunities in small-scale fishing.

PLENARY SESSION: WORKSHOP CONCLUSIONS:

In this session, presided by the General Secretariat for Fisheries of the MAPA, Alicia Villauriz Iglesias, the moderators from the different workshops presented the main conclusions drawn from each of the work sessions, all of which are detailed below:

Workshop 1 Conclusions. The Role of Women in Fisheries and Aquaculture:

Firstly, the FAO representative, Jennifer Gee, highlighted the need to offer support to women, particularly through the "legal recognition" of the work they carry out in the sector, this is very important work, although it is not always visible or valued; a historical invisibility that is highly linked to the **absence of statistics that precisely reflect the ways in which women are involved and participate in the sector**. Because, just as was seen in this workshop, **women are present in all the processes of the value chain and they are dominant in the industry or in the on-land activities post or prior to the fishing**.

This recognition of their work, she noted, will not just benefit them, but it will also **enable for the entire fishing and aquaculture sector to place value on their contribution to economic, social and environmental stability**. In this regard she insisted that on an institutional level "we need to keep working to achieve gender equity and equality".

The speakers in this session all coincided in signalling that this **female role is starting to be increasingly more socially recognised**, as important steps have been made in terms of visibility in recent decades. Therefore, **the next step is "to give women more presence at the tables where the decision that affect them are made"** and for them to hold more positions of responsibility. In this regard, she noted that we cannot talk about women in the sector without simultaneously addressing their specific needs and problems, "and this is not going to happen if they are not present; there cannot be a discussion about women without women", she declared.

The workshop also concluded that the institutions involved in the fishery and aquaculture sector should also be committed to **include the gender perspective in all public policies**

and sectoral strategic frameworks, also raising the awareness of men so that they defend the principle of equality in the workplace.

And this should be done by means of collaboration between the different organisations and entities. And being committed to a **work planning where gender is an intrinsic part of the projects and data collection**. “I hope that this conference is an opportunity so that we can continue collaborating and improving our work in fishing and aquaculture with the aim that, in the near future, gender is not a special issue, but rather a built-in, inherent part of all the activities and actions carried out in the fishing and aquaculture sector”.

Workshop 2 Conclusions. The Role of Women in Fisheries Diversification:

The Head of Area of the Unit of Support to the Directorate-General for Fisheries and Aquaculture Management of MAPA, José Vicente Palmero, who explained the conclusions of this workshop on behalf of its moderator Gilles van de Walle, highlighted that based on the example of the projects and initiatives presented in this workshop, the **diversification promoted by women is characterised by “great creativity when it comes to launching new businesses”**, in so much that women have “an open mind to new possibilities, as well as a huge capacity to work and undertake simultaneous activities”, he noted.

Likewise, the participants in this session demonstrated that **in recent years, women are having a significant importance in the economic fishing activity through diversification, which is enabling for a greater visibility of their work. These new diversification activities**, which involve new means of obtaining income, “**also favour an increased economic independence and, often, help to achieve a greater balance between work and personal life**”. Additionally, José Vicente Palmero highlighted that **these diversification activities**, which may involve those linked to marine tourism, **are contributing to transmit the fishing tradition and culture among younger generations**.

The speakers in this workshop all coincided in underlining the **need to encourage working in a network** in the area of activity, with the aim for people that bet on diversification to be able to **share experiences and ideas** in order to launch businesses. As an example of this type of network, Palmero referred to the Spanish Fishing Groups Network (REGP). Similarly, he noted the **need to boost increased innovation** through novel projects such as, for example, chocolates made with seaweed.

During this workshop, the spotlight was placed on the **important role played**, on a European level, by the **Fisheries Local Action Groups (FLAG) as promoters of the diversification led by women** enabling the development of projects through funding by the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund.

Workshop 3 Conclusions. Female Associations and Leadership:

María Christine Monfort, President of the International Association for Women in the Seafood Industry (WSI) was responsible for presenting the conclusions from this workshop, and she started by highlighting that **the associations of women in fishery and aquaculture are necessary world-over**. “It is not an issue that depends on the development or the economic status of the specific country”, she explained, rather it is a generalised necessity given that the women in the sector all around the world face specific, and often shared, problems.

Just as the speakers demonstrated, **these associations are necessary** because they are the means that women in the sector have **to join together and fight against their invisibility in the sector, and also against inequalities**. “A list of inequalities which, as we have seen, is very long. It varies from country to country, but all the women in the sector are seeing that they are not being treated equally nor do they have the same opportunities as men”, the WSI representative commented.

To make these associations efficient when it comes to expressing the voice of the women in the fishery and aquaculture sector, the participants in this workshop all coincided in signalling the **need to have human resources with sufficient training**, abilities, **professionalism and**, above all, **leadership**. But to access this training and professionalism **the associations also need funding**, “and this is, perhaps, the weakness of many of them”, she noted, referring to the professionalism of the human resources and the existence of the economic resources that go alongside these.

In addition to these two factors, which are essential for female associations, **women’s associations in the sector also need institutional support**. “Public institutions need to know that the women’s associations in the sector need their financial support, which also means political support”, she concluded.

Workshop 4 Conclusions. Working Conditions

The moderator, Christine Bader, Maritime and Transport Specialist of the International Labour Organization (ILO), explained that during this session an assessment was made of the issues that were also addressed in the other workshops, such as the invisibility of women in fishing, the undervaluing of the contribution to the sector, the lack of professional recognition, the scarce inclusion of the gender perspective and the lack of women in the decision making processes.

“This lack of recognition and consideration has a very negative impact on the women’s working conditions, which are already difficult in the sector”, she indicated.

She explained that this means that **women**, in addition to the precariousness and difficulty of the fishing activity itself, **also face other specific work problems: wage gaps, lack of protection in terms of social security, health and safety risks, scarce coverage for occupational diseases and the difficulty for work and family life conciliation.**

The different speakers that took part in this workshop noted some measures to relieve these problems, which were summarised as **more visibility by means of communication, more work in networks and more associations** (which would be a greater organisation of the group so that women's voices are listened to and they gain greater representation), **more access to and presence in decision making processes, more participation, social dialogue and collaboration** among organisations or workers or unions, associations and governments, etc.

She also noted the need to be committed to **increased awareness raising and training** in business spirit, but also training for seasonal workers in other types of supplementary activities. And above all, **"a legal framework on a national and international level is needed in order to guarantee dignified working conditions in the sector, with emphasis on the execution of different regulations with regard to women"**, claimed the ILO representative. In this regard she expressed that "the Santiago de Compostela Declaration should not be a list of unfulfilled actions, but rather they should be monitored in the short-term". Delving into this, she revealed the need to face up to those key issues contained within this declaration through means of cooperation, adopting them and making them known through International Women's Day, World Oceans Day and the World Day for Decent Work. "These are occasions that we can take advantage of to continue working in this regard".

Workshop 5 Conclusions. Training and Professionalism

The **decided commitment to updated training and the professionalism of the sector** is something shared by the speakers in this workshop, regardless of the sector they belong to (civil society, the academic world or public administration) and their territorial context. This was expressed by this session's moderator Marta Villa Hidalgo, Director General of the Foundation Women for Africa.

"This training and professionalism is perceived as an **added value that is necessary to strengthen the role of women in fishing; a key tool in order to drive the empowerment of women in the sector**", she claimed. In this regard, she explained that the **training directed** at women in the sector is not only important with regard to the **skills known as "hard skills"** (in other words the most technical knowledge and professional qualifications), but **"also the soft skills such as self-confidence and other skills that enable them to access a job position**, especially in those areas that are traditionally held by men".

Likewise, she explained that, **“training also enables women in the sector to professionalise a job that has traditionally not received the corresponding economic, social or wage valuation,** as their contribution had not been quantified”.

Among the other conclusions, the speakers also spoke of the **importance of training with regard to leadership, in order to encourage a policy of presence and participation of women in the decision making structures in the sector.** “For this it is important to drive training programmes that enable women to take on this responsibility and leadership”.

During the workshop, and through interventions by the attendees, emphasis was also placed on the need to **consider contributions from scientific research when designing training and professional development programmes for women,** as well as the importance of designing training programmes based on a **close collaboration between public institutions, academic entities and professional organisations in order to attend to the real needs of women in the sector.**

Workshop 6 Conclusions. Blue Growth and Sustainability

The president of Europêche and the General Secretary of the Spanish Fishing Confederation (Cepesca), Javier Garat, presented the results of a workshop that he defined as “interesting, participative and very productive”, in which issues were addressed such as the **importance of international cooperation through bodies such as the FAO and between countries themselves, for the development of blue growth** throughout the world, and especially in developing countries; “the project presented by the FAO representative in Senegal is a good example of this”, assured Garat.

Secondly, it was concluded that **blue growth is a motor for employment and diversification in the fishing sector** “as such **it would be very convenient to make the most of the opportunities that circular economy offers women in the fishing sector**” in order to launch initiatives such as those presented in the session.

Thirdly, she highlighted as a conclusion, the conviction expressed by all of the speakers in the workshop that **the fishing sector is not the cause of the waste dumped in the marine environment, but rather part of the solution for its collection and subsequent recycling.** The representative from Europêche noted how projects such as *Ecoalf*, *The Ocean Corner* and *eXXpedition* are examples of how this waste is collected and ends up being transformed into products of value, such as clothing and sunglasses, etc. With regard to this issue, a large discussion was sparked among participants with regard to if the sector’s contribution to collecting rubbish should be financed by making use of existing or voluntary funds.

Concerning this, Garat indicated that “in the European Union there are lines of financing in the framework of the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund that can be used for this purpose”, highlighting that, in some cases, these resources are already being used.

In this regard, he concluded by making a call to all women in the sector for them to use this aid “to the maximum”, taking advantage of the opportunities offered by the EU, on a national level and from the Autonomous Communities with their respective lines of funding.

CLOSING REMARKS

The 1st International Conference of Women in Fisheries came to a close with three women from national and international fishery sector decision-making authorities offering their conclusions, impressions and future expectations as related to this event.



Vera Agostini, Deputy Director of the FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Policy and Resources Division.

Vera Agostini, Deputy Director of the Fisheries and Aquaculture Policy and Resources Division of the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), was first to offer closing remarks on the 1st International Conference of Women in Fisheries.

She began by highlighting the uncertainty that arises from events where gender matters is the main focus and how the purpose is no other than to ensure these types of encounters lead to sustainable and concrete outcomes. Even with an understanding of the difficulty of this goal, at this event she came away with a series of threats to keep in mind in her future work and FAO work, many of which had already been considered in the past.

She underlined that there had been discussion during the Conference on the need to make “the invisible visible” and, although this is important, she believes it’s necessary to use these forums to take a step further and design action plans that can solve these problems. To do so, she believes collaboration among all the different stakeholders involved is essential yet observed their heterogeneity and the different ways they communicate and work, asking the organisation and participants to take this aspect into account for future events in order to make the sessions more productive.

Likewise, she considered the male participation in the Conference very positive and, just as with her other observation, noted they have different communication and participation styles than women and that this must be taken into account to get more of them involved and achieve real collaborative efforts.

She stated that a broader scope to the gender in the workplace discussion is necessary so as not to cover only sector-related aspects such as ports, fishing communities, boats, etc., but rather apply this approach to other broader aspects such as decision-making and civil society which, in her opinion, have come up during the Conference and would like to see them included in future debates to a greater extent as those who set policy and establish credit lines in the sector come to these forums.

In her speech, she also emphasized the critical situation in relation to the lack of data disaggregated by sex and the importance thereof as they are essential to decision-making and measuring the success of decisions. She encouraged governments to make efforts to this end.

To conclude, she invited those present, both men and women, “to be brave, to move forward” because even though it may be a difficult goal to achieve, it’s highly gratifying as she herself has seen in her own experience.



Alicia Villauriz Iglesias, Secretary General for Fishery, Spanish Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Foodstuff

The next person to speak was Alicia Villauriz Iglesias, Secretary General for Fishery, Spanish Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Foodstuff, who offered congratulations for the great response to the Conference among sector professionals and the content, particularly highlighting the signing of the Santiago de Compostela Declaration on Equality Opportunities in the Fishery and Aquaculture Sector, the quality of the panellists as well as the chance to hear from women who are real examples of achievement and courage.

She summarised the challenges and opportunities mentioned throughout the event including the following:

The fundamental role women have in the fishery sector, not only in terms of numbers but also their immense contributions to economic growth and social sustainability.

How women are becoming pioneers in fishery diversification, contributing to the generation of wealth and employment especially in activities like marine tourism, artisan work and the use of by-products which is an aspect that can be fully extrapolated to the environment and sustainability where women are very much present with an immense capacity for entrepreneurship.

However, in order to develop all this female potential, the Secretary emphasized the need to seek the available resources and mechanisms as well as ensure dignified labour and living conditions for sector workers as exemplified by the Santiago de Compostela

Declaration on Equality Opportunities in the Fishery and Aquaculture Sector, which clearly establishes a commitment from the government to this end.

On the other hand, she did not want to forget to mention the importance of education and technical skills training to the full economic and professional empowerment of women as there is an obvious and close relationship between education level and job stability.

Along these same lines and as could be seen throughout the Conference, associations are essential and noteworthy. As made clear, women in the sector are joining forces and organising themselves to be able to put forth their demands, amplify their voices and attain positions of power.

The Secretary further highlighted that although women’s leadership in the sector is on the rise, people like her who are in privileged positions, particularly in government and other institutions, have a responsibility to smooth the path for women still without a voice, presence and representation in order to facilitate their empowerment.

She concluded by revealing her hope that the Conference would mark the beginning of an ambitious roadmap that “may set down the foundation for the future creation of the International Network of Women in Fishery and, in short, ensure that women in this sector as well may perform the role they deserve on the basis of merit and ability.”

Rosa Quintana Carballo, Conselleira do Mar de la Xunta de Galicia (Regional Minister of Maritime Affairs) offered the closing remarks at the Conference, focusing on women, their role and the work they have done and the progress they have made in the fishery sector as a sort of homage to all of them.



Rosa Quintana Carballo, Conselleira do Mar de la Xunta de Galicia (Regional Minister of Maritime Affairs)

She highlighted the Conference as a symbol of progress in the role of women in fishery, the very advancement of the sector in and of itself as well as a means to break down barriers and open minds to put women in the place they deserve, making it clear that, even though all achievements to date are important, there is still a lot to be done and that she hoped this Conference would be the first of many more editions to come.

Based on her own professional and life experiences, which have always been linked to the fishery sector and the sea, she stated that quite contrary to popular belief, fishing is also a woman thing and that they’ve always been present in this sector, participating in all the jobs to a greater or lesser extent.

The Regional Minister emphasized the case of the seafood hunters and net makers in Galicia which are both sectors that, with much effort and decisiveness, have risen from invisibility, disorganisation and social unawareness to recognition, co-management and the establishment of dialogue between citizens and the public powers.

She highlighted that history is full of women who had to fight for their place and to lead socially responsible change, particularly thinking of those who will do so after us and how this also occurs in the fishery sector. She stated that this Conference has been a way to meet to analyse the achievements made and determine new challenges in a view to collective transformation and recalling that, although the path left is still great, the progress made is more than deserving of praise.

This progress includes enhanced awareness of the role of women and their contribution to the sector with their participation reinforced in consultation and decision-making bodies, a boost in female associationism and entrepreneurship and the exchange of experiences and shared interests, needs and vindications, all of which benefits the present as well as the future of the fishery business.

She stressed that the success of these achievements lies in the unity and support of women themselves as well as all the men who believe in them, encouraging everyone to continue along those lines as it is the only way to enact the most effective measures.

She also mentioned how female unity is more evident now than ever before and that distance is no longer an obstacle as reflected in this Conference. It may be used as a new and powerful tool to stir sensitivity and increase awareness for gender issues as the best examples of what the sector is able to achieve comes from working in a coordinated way with government agencies and entities linked to equal opportunities.

Finally, the Regional Minister thanked all of the women present for their participation as they are essential to the success of the Conference, and ended with the following message: "It is up to us to ensure our future, today's women thinking of tomorrow's women, with more excitement, strength and trust in ourselves."