



The International Symposium on Fisheries Sustainability

MC Monfort speech, November 2019

Dear FAO team thank you to offer the International Organisation for Women in the Seafood Industry, known as WSI the opportunity to express our opinion,

Dear Colleagues,

Let's be straightforward. Women represent one in two seafood actors and they have been dramatically overlooked by fisheries policy makers. This negligence is one of the cause of the failure of global fisheries management. Let me give you just one example: Fishing activities run by men is allowed thanks to the invisible unpaid or underpaid auxiliary work of women such as making and mending nets, selling fish. Women's labour can be considered as hidden subsidies.

Not to say that women in this business have expertise and information rarely utilised. Though we are happy to note that this high profile symposium hosts 45% female speakers. An absolute record in the fishing world. Hats off to FAO.

Let us now turn to the questions. The second one is interesting. It aggregates women with vulnerable communities. No offense taken because this is the standard situation. The industry has been organised by men for men, and women are left in uncomfortable situations to say the least.

To guarantee access to women to economic and social benefits of fisheries they simply should be taken into account. They should be counted.

To administration in charge of fisheries, we recommend to redesign fisheries and aquaculture data collection to encompass sex-disaggregated statistics for the whole of the fish value chain.

To FAO specifically we advise to place gender on the FAO Committee on Fisheries agenda and use the COFI meeting to develop a strategy for mainstreaming gender equality.

Now question 3. We believe in the strength of laws, but in the absence of forceful laws, gender equality should be embedded in corporate social responsibility, CSR policies. Having a gender sensitive policy all along the value chain is not only a question of counting the number of women but of understanding the role they play and the reasons for unequal power relationships. At corporate level a trustful CSR policy should set the conditions to eradicate all gender based discriminations. Gender equality is indeed a complex issue, but not more than marine stock management. And it should be treated as seriously.

We at WSI consider that the "blue economy" will really mean a positive progress if SDG 5 is earnestly tackled by all stakeholders of the maritime communities.

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