

Fisheries Cooperative Societies of Sri Lanka discuss fisheries business and resource management

The International Cooperative Fisheries Organization (ICFO) of the International Cooperative Alliance (ICA) and the Sri Lanka National Federation of Fishing Cooperative Societies Ltd. organised a four-day (20 – 23 March 2006) seminar on “Development of Fisheries Cooperative Societies in Sri Lanka in relation to Fisheries Business and Resources Management”. The seminar was held in Negombo, Sri Lanka.

Eighty-seven delegates took part. They represented 40 fisheries cooperative societies; the Ministry of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources and the Department of Cooperative Development, Government of Sri Lanka; and fisheries experts from Sri Lanka and abroad. Dr Y S Yadava, Director, BOBP-IGO participated as a resource person.



Mr Felix Perera, Minister of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources, Sri Lanka, in his inaugural address said that the fisheries sector contributes

immensely to the Sri Lankan economy. It is the main source of income of about 200 000 people living in 2 637 fishing villages in the

International Cooperative Alliance

Founded in 1895, the International Cooperative Alliance (ICA) has 222 members representing national and international cooperative organisations in all sectors of activity including agriculture, banking, fisheries, health, housing, industry, insurance, tourism and consumer cooperatives. These represent approximately 800 million individuals worldwide. ICA's activities focus on promoting and defending the cooperative identity, raising awareness about cooperatives, ensuring that the right policy environment exists to enable cooperatives to grow and prosper, providing its members with key information, best practices and contacts and providing technical assistance to cooperatives through development programmes. The ICA head office is located in Geneva, Switzerland, with four regional offices at Nairobi, Kenya (for Africa); San



Jose, Costa Rica (for the Americas); New Delhi, India (for Asia and the Pacific) and Brussels, Belgium (for Europe). For more details visit www.ica.coop or email ica@ica.coop

International Co-operative Fisheries Organisation (ICFO)

The ICFO is a specialised organisation of the ICA. It was originally founded in 1966, as a sub-committee of the ICA's Agricultural Committee. It became an independent body in 1976. Today, ICFO has 27 member organisations from 23 countries. ICFO objectives include creation of new co-operative fisheries organisations; promotion of co-operative training and education, including the production of educational material; exchange of technical information movements on a global basis; and promotion of trade. The headquarters of ICFO are located in Tokyo, Japan. For more details visit www.ica.coop/icfo or email kokusai-sato@r6.dion.ne.jp

country. Another 60 000 people derive their livelihoods from fisheries related industries. Mr Perera said that his Ministry together with the Ministry of Cooperatives has decided to re-organise the fisheries cooperatives in Sri Lanka. Other speakers in the inaugural session included Mr Jude Tissera, President of Sri Lanka National Federation of Fisheries Cooperative Societies; Mr Masaaki Sato, Secretary, ICFO; Mr Hideo Ishida, Senior Official for International Cooperation Division, International Affairs Department, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, Government of Japan; and Mr Yasuhiro Watanabe, Second Secretary (Economic Cooperation), Embassy of Japan in Sri Lanka.

The seminar included presentations by 15 experts and group discussions on topics such as coastal environment and fisheries resources management, institutional strengthening, marketing, gender participation, business planning and entrepreneurship development and post-harvest technology. The groups agreed on important recommendations, such as community participation in decision-making processes on resource management; strengthening mechanisms for effective communication between the community and the institutions; modernisation of fish landing centres to reduce post-harvest losses; development of business and business processes etc. Participants visited the Negombo Multi-Purpose Cooperative Society, and the Negombo Fishing Harbour and did boat-rides to see fishing activities in the Negombo lagoon.

Mr H L Tissera, Commissioner of Cooperative Development & Registrar of Cooperative Societies, Sri Lanka, presided over the concluding session. Mr Sato thanked the participants and said the recommendations adopted by the seminar were most useful.



Top: Mr Masaaki Sato (left) and Mr Shanta Bhandara (right)

Below: Group discussion in progress



BOBP-IGO Regional Workshop to discuss setting up of monitoring, control and surveillance programmes in the member-countries

The contribution of marine fisheries to the national economies of the BOBP-IGO member-countries is significant. Large numbers of small-scale and artisanal fishers are engaged in the sector. For many coastal communities, fishing is the chief source of livelihood. However, with the rapid increase in effort and an open access regime, fishing in coastal areas has become difficult with low catches and fishing rights conflicts. A large proportion of marine fish stocks are fully exploited, over-exploited, depleted or in need of recovery.

The BOBP-IGO member-countries have a strong commitment towards implementation of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries. The countries have also recognised that reducing fish stocks to biologically and ecologically harmful levels will result in loss of potential benefits as food, income, or employment, both immediate and in the long-term.

To address the above issues, a three-day Regional Workshop on Monitoring, Control and Surveillance (MCS) is proposed to be held in Bangladesh (Chittagong/ Cox's Bazar) during early June 2006. The objective of the Regional Workshop is to develop knowledge to establish an effective and implementable monitoring, control and surveillance regime for management and conservation of the marine fisheries resources in the member-countries. The Workshop participants will include representatives of the Ministries/ Departments of Fisheries, Transport (Mercantile Marine Wings), Coast Guard, Master Fishermen and Experts/ Resource persons from within and outside the region.