

# Shaping an international network for women in the seafood industry

## A round table discussion

Vigo, 7 October 2015

14:00–16:30

ARVI, Puerto Pesquero, Vigo-Pontevedra

### Background

Women are essential contributors to the seafood industry, including primary activities, secondary industries and services related to fisheries and aquaculture. At the global scale, estimates illustrate that every one seafood worker out of two is a woman.

In many countries, research has shown that women are frequently disadvantaged in their professional development and in their contribution to the industry. Although there has been slow improvement over the past decade, there is still much more to be done to achieve equality within the industry.

The *GLOBEFISH report: The role of women in the seafood industry*, published in May 2015, illustrated the lack of consideration for women's role and work in the industry, their invisibility to industry players and policy makers, and their surprising absence in the board rooms and executive positions of major seafood companies. This is occurring even as women's management positions in compatible global food industries is visibly improving. Out of the world's 100 top seafood companies, only one company is currently run by a woman as CEO. This compares with 8 percent of top positions held by women in Fortune 100 US companies. At a time when the industry must sustainably scale up production to meet a growing demand, companies need to select the best candidates and cannot afford to exclude 50 percent of tomorrow's potential leaders.

The time has arrived to set up a pragmatic and ambitious platform to facilitate fruitful connections, stimulate exchanges of experience and facilitate the necessary changes for women to fully contribute to this vital industry.

### Objectives of the meeting

FAO and partners will be collaborating with the seafood industry, member countries, gender and management experts, and other partners on the launch of an international network for women in the seafood industry in early 2016. This round table discussion is an

opportunity to obtain information and ideas from industry experts, and to learn about the experiences of national and regional networks.

The panelists and participants are invited to:

- Share experiences of what works/what doesn't for attracting women to the seafood sector and encouraging their career growth to attain leadership positions.
- Explore the best ways to provide visibility to women in within the seafood industry, with a special focus on attaining more leadership positions in seafood companies and attracting more female professionals to the sector.
- Discuss the major barriers to retaining women in the sector and guiding their career growth to management positions. Why are there so few women at the top? Is the seafood industry somehow less attractive to professional women than other comparable sectors? If so, what could be done to change this?
- Examine whether many of the changes to the seafood industry today, such as the consumer demand that the industry address such issues as sustainability, a greater emphasis on traceability, nutrition, decent work in the sector, supporting small-scale fisheries, and supporting sustainable livelihoods could be areas in which may be areas better served by a more equitable gender balance within the industry.
- Consider options for developing an international network to support and promote women's participation in the seafood industry. These could include: awareness program with the help of media, mentoring programs, information sharing/best practices among networks of seafood professionals, learning opportunities through targeted management programs (possible collaboration with the UN University program in Iceland, executive business administration classes/training), internship programs targeting young female graduates.

## Agenda- tentative

14:00–14:10	Gender inclusiveness in the seafood industry
14:10–14:20	FAO Introduction Presentation of the research: Why an international network? – <i>Audun Lem and Marie-Christine Monfort</i>
14:20–14:50	Examples of networks – <i>RAFEP West African Fisheries Women Network</i> – <i>Spanish organization for women in the seafood industry</i> – <i>Regional Government of Galicia initiatives</i>
14:50 – 15:40	Roundtable with an international panel of seafood professionals, academics, and graduate students considering opportunities in the sector. Discussion moderated by Elisabeth Fischer, Journalist, Intrafish – <i>Introduction by Elisabeth Fisher about findings from her series of interviews with women managers in the industry</i>
15:40 – 16:15	Question and answer session from the audience Discussion moderated by Jackie Alder, FAO
16:15–16:30	Closing: wrap-up of main points and way forward

## Conxemar and FAO

This event is arranged by FAO and will take place within the framework of the First International Fisheries Stakeholder Forum and the 20th anniversary of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries, jointly organized by the Spanish Ministry for Agriculture, Food and Environment (MAGRAMA), Conxemar and FAO. For the last three years, FAO's Fisheries and Aquaculture Department has been directly involved in the co-organization of international congresses on seafood commodities, together with Conxemar, a national association representing 222 companies involved in processing, importing, exporting and distribution of frozen seafood in Spain. In 2014 more than 375 professionals from 24 different countries attended the event in Vigo, Spain. FAO facilitated the attendance of different Ministers and country representatives from developing countries.

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#Vigo15

# First International Fisheries Stakeholder Forum – 2015

20th Anniversary of the  
Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries