European women participate actively in the fisheries and aquaculture sectors. Women’s contribution is more important within the small-scale enterprises in both sectors. A great number of European fishing boats and shellfish aquaculture vessels are small-scale units. In the small-scale enterprise, women’s work is important for the survival of the family and of the business. Women play diverse roles: they can be directly involved in the production (fisheries and aquaculture); in mending nets (Spain, Greece and Portugal); selling fish or shellfish (France, Portugal and Spain); processing fish (Finland, France); and operating restaurants. Nowadays, women are also responsible for the management and the administration of their husband’s enterprise. Women’s contribution is rarely paid and never appears in statistics. Their work remains informal and without legal recognition. In 1986, a European Council adopted the Directive 816/613/EEC on “the application of the principle of equal treatment between men and women engaged in an activity, including agriculture, in a self-employed capacity, and on the protection of self-employed women during pregnancy and motherhood”. This directive asked member states to recognize a spouse’s contribution within self-employed activities. Fisheries and aquaculture can be included in the category of self-employed activities. A few years later, European fisherwomen submitted claims to national authorities for the legal recognition of their contribution. Some of the European Union (EU) member states, like France, recognize women’s work. From 1997, French women contribute, if they wish, to the social and pension funds. But until today only a few of them opt to contribute. More recently, Portuguese women also have the possibility to pay social and pension contributions. This paper presents the tasks carried out by women and discusses the issues related to the legal recognition of women’s contribution to fisheries in some European countries. The data used for this paper were from the FEMMES Programme, financed by the Fifth Framework Programme of the European Union.
Introduction

In Europe, only a few women are involved in the capture fisheries sector but this does not mean that women do not play an important role in the European fisheries industry. Women play an important shore-based supporting role and are responsible for activities such as bookkeeping, marketing and keeping track of employment regulations. The term “collaborating spouse” taken from the French, is often used to describe women who play an important supporting role in the fisheries sector. The number of women who participate in fisheries harvesting or in shore-based fisheries enterprises is unknown. Statistics are not available on women’s employment or participation for both the sectors. This is due to the fact that gender-disaggregated statistics are not available in the fish harvesting sector. Women also seldom pay social contributions to the state and nobody knows how many women work in the fisheries sector. But the following quotation gives an idea on the number of women involved in the fishing enterprise: “behind each fishing boat, there is a woman”. This is especially true for fishing enterprises managed on a family basis.

The only disaggregated data on the employment of men and women in the fisheries sector in the European Union (EU) are found in a study conducted by MacAlister and Partners (2001) and financed by the European Commission Directorate General for Fisheries (DG-FISH). Table 1 gives the gender patterns of those employed in the fisheries sector in the EU. The numbers do not include collaborating spouses and women who work on fishing boats without any salary. This paper focuses on the role of women in the fisheries sector, especially in small-scale enterprises. The legal recognition of fishers’ wives contribution within the fishing enterprise is also discussed.

Table 1. Gender patterns in the EU fisheries sector in 2000.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Women</th>
<th>Men</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Percentage of women</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fishing overall</td>
<td>4,711</td>
<td>147,890</td>
<td>156,661</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aquaculture overall</td>
<td>6,487</td>
<td>19,182</td>
<td>25,669</td>
<td>25.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Processing overall</td>
<td>42,162</td>
<td>38,218</td>
<td>80,396</td>
<td>52.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administration and management*</td>
<td>7,897</td>
<td>12,179</td>
<td>20,075</td>
<td>39.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sample totals</strong></td>
<td><strong>61,317</strong></td>
<td><strong>217,469</strong></td>
<td><strong>278,801</strong></td>
<td><strong>22.0</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*E.g., government and producer organizations, trade unions, scientists, trainers and fisheries NGOs.

Women’s Role in the Fisheries Sector

Historically, European women were more involved in shore-based activities than activities at sea. Women collected shellfish, seaweeds or fish on the shore during low tides. They also contributed to the development of oyster and mussel farming. Nowadays, apart from these activities, a few of them are even working on board fishing boats. Women’s participation in fisheries differs from country to country. Women are more active in the small-scale fishing enterprise and the aquaculture industry. Enterprises based on family management need more help from women than the larger commercial enterprises.

Fisheries at sea

Women, together with their husbands, work on the small, family fishing boat. This arrangement offers the women some flexibility and allows them to take care of the children, when the need arises. Among the European countries, Portugal has the highest number of women involved...
in fishing. They work on boats which operate close to the coast, particularly in estuaries and bays. Women make daily fishing trips and have the opportunity to return home every day. Women said they carry out more tasks on board the vessel than their husbands. They set and pull in the nets, sort and auction fish, while men’s only task is to steer the fishing boat. The majority of women possess the necessary qualifications to operate fishing boats, but allow the men to handle the boat because according to them, “Men enjoy driving the boat so we leave them to do it.” Women also have to take charge of the administrative work related to the boat such as accounting, auctioning and payment of invoices. They also need to do domestic chores. While women are cleaning the house and looking after the children, men spend the rest of the day in the coffee shop.

In some fishing communities, close to Lisbon, not only women but also children are on board the fishing boats. During the fishing trips in the estuary, family members fish together. This is the traditional way of life in those communities and women learned how to fish from their parents. Fishing boats are small, between 7 and 10 m, and living conditions are hard. In these cases, women have the same knowledge and capability to operate boats and possess the same fishing skills as men. But for many years, women were not considered professional “fishers” because they did not have the necessary diploma required for such recognition. In Portugal, women were not registered as fishers until the end of the 1990s. In another Portuguese fishing village, the women traditionally did not fish. It was the lack of other employment opportunities in the area which pushed them to work as crew in their husband’s boat. The family boat was their only employment solution.

In France, women fish with their husbands on small boats. This family enterprise offers some flexibility. As the enterprise involves only the two of them, the couple has the flexibility to choose the scale of the fishing they prefer. The work can be organized in a way that the wife has the time to take care of the children.

In Europe, one category of women works on bigger fishing boats. These women are usually young and have just graduated from fisheries schools. They have the necessary qualifications to work as crew or skipper but boat owners do not want to employ them since they think that women are not strong enough for jobs at sea. Women who have gained employment in the bigger vessels have to deal with other difficulties, for example, the lack of facilities on board the vessels, including the absence of toilets. Young women sometimes cannot get employment on fishing boats even when boat owners complain about the difficulty of filling job vacancies. Unlike the younger women, older women take on a fishing career because they did not have other options or because it is a family tradition.

Shellfish collection on shore

There are more women collecting shellfish on the shore than those working at sea. Women practising shellfish fishing originate from the southern regions of Europe: Galicia (Spain), Algarve (Portugal), Bretagne (France) and Italy. In these countries raw shellfish consumption is common. In Galicia, fishers from shallow waters are exclusively women known as mariscadoras. Collecting shellfish on the shore at low tides is done only by women. Men collectors operate from a boat. In Algarve, women are the main shellfish collectors, too. They use more or less the same fishing techniques as mariscadoras from Galicia; the only difference is that in Algarve, women use boats to get to the shellfish beds.

In both countries, women collect shellfish because it does not require any special skills. This activity is easily combined with domestic chores and children. A few years ago, shellfish collection was done in an informal manner. Women collected shellfish when they had the time or when they needed to increase the family income. Access to the shellfish beds was free and the number of mariscadoras was high, putting the shellfish stocks at risk from collapse. In Galicia, women obtain their fishing license through the fishers’ organization. Licensees are required to follow regulations and to sell their catches through the auction system. Women
attend training courses organized by the regional authorities, and they learn the importance of shellfish stock management and why they should pay social security contributions.

In Portugal, women shellfish collectors are not formally organized. Informal organizations exist and often women operate in groups or share the same fishing boat to get to the shellfish beds. They consider themselves professionals because they possess a fishing license and pay social security contributions. In France, women shellfish collectors also have a fishing license and they are members of a fishers’ organization.

**Aquaculture**

Oysters and mussels have been cultivated for several centuries in Europe. French women have contributed their labor extensively to shellfish farming but they have no legal right to lease concessions for farming under their names. Historically, only men have this right. For centuries, French fishermen were obliged, during the wars, to join the Royal Navy. As a reward for their service, the kings gave some privileges to them. They have the right to use the public maritime waters for shellfish storage. From that time onwards, only fishermen registered as “sea men” had the right to lease the shores and the adjacent waters. As women could not join the Royal Navy they did not have access to this right. However, in 1983 with the implementation of the new legislation concerning shellfish farming, women could become co-leaseholders of a shellfish farm. In practice, only a few of them are using this legal right (Goulletquer 2000).

Fish farming is more recent than shellfish farming but here too, women play an important role in its development. Fish aquaculture in Norway was started by fishermen as a family enterprise. At the beginning, women participated in all the activities and there was no distinction between women’s and men’s tasks. Some tasks that required more physical strength were usually done by men. Later, when fish farming was taken over by big international companies, women saw their roles reduced.

Today the organizational structure is changed. All tasks performed at sea are done by men as these tasks are physically demanding. Women are confined mainly to activities on land. For example, women are perceived to be better workers in the hatcheries. They are considered better than men in feeding and looking after small fish (Pettersen 2004).

**EU Directives Towards Equality between Men and Women**

The EU, through the Council Directives (CD), called on member states to provide a national legal framework for the equal treatment of men and women (including spouses who are not employees or partners but who assist a self-employed worker) in matters pertaining to employment such as salary structures, working conditions, social security and vocational training. Table 2 provides the key EU decisions concerning equality between men and women in employment regulations and working conditions.

All CDs are aimed at women with a salaried position working in the fisheries sector and not the collaborating spouse who rarely receives any payment. Only the Directive 86/613/EEC is directly related to collaborating spouses and the recognition of their contribution.

**Equal rights for men and women working in fisheries**

Today in the EU, all women working as crew on fishing boats have the same rights as men. But differences exist from country to country. French women obtained the right to be fishers only in 1963. Since then, French women have the same working rights as men. Spanish women have the right to contribute to the social security systems from 1970. Portuguese women obtained this right in 1999, but usually women helping their husband do not have any personal salary.
Table 2. Main EU directives towards equality between men and women.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Directive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1975</td>
<td>CD on the approximation of the laws of the member states relating to the application of the principle of equal pay for men and women (75/117/EEC).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1976</td>
<td>CD on the implementation of the principle of equal treatment for men and women as regards access to employment, vocation training and promotion, and working conditions (76/207/EEC).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1979</td>
<td>CD on the progressive implementation of the principle of equal treatment for men and women in matters of social security (79/7/EEC).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>CD on the introduction of measures to encourage improvement in the safety and health at work of pregnant workers and workers who have recently given birth or are breastfeeding (92/85/EEC).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>CD on the framework agreement on parental leave concluded by UNICE (Union des Industries de la Communauté Européene), CEEP (European Centre of Enterprises with public participation and of enterprises of general economic interests) and ETUC (European Trade Union Confederation) (96/34/EC).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>CD on the burden of proof in cases of discrimination based on sex (97/80/EC).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Collaborating spouse’s contribution on shore

European fishers’ wives play an important role in onshore activities. Wives carry out all the administrative work of the fishing enterprise: they go to the bank, oversee harbor administrative duties and take charge of fish auctions and book-keeping. They also sell fish or mend fishing nets. Women’s contributions to the fisheries enterprise increase when the industry or the family business is faced with a crisis. Women see their contribution as a good way to save money because the husband does not need to employ somebody else to do the job. Women do not perceive this contribution as a real job because they can do it at home while they look after the children.

Today, three possibilities exist for women working in the fishing enterprise. They can be employed by the fishing enterprise, and be entitled to a salary with all the social benefits; they can work without a salary and social benefits; they can also be registered as self-employed and achieve some social protection in this manner. This paper discusses how and why EU member states harmonize their national legislation to the EU legal framework.

Legal recognition of informal contribution of fishers’ wives

In some member states, wives who actively contribute to their fisher-husband’s business have a recognized status. This means that national authorities recognize that without the efforts of the wife or partner attending to the accounts and other administrative work, it would be difficult for the fishermen to run a successful business. These member states recognize the role that the fishermen’s partners perform and permit the partners to benefit from the social welfare insurance in their own right. By doing this, the member state gives recognition to the status of the partner as someone who makes a valid and independent contribution to its society.

Directive 86/613 of the Council is particularly pertinent, as it focuses on the application of the principle of equal treatment for men and women working in a self-employed capacity, including agricultural workers.
First and foremost, this directive is aimed at equal treatment for both men and women who work in a self-employed capacity, and second, it is about recognition for work carried out by a spouse. The directive specifies what it means by “self-employed worker” in Article 2. A self-employed worker is somebody who carries out a paid job on a self-employed basis, and includes farmers and other professions. The directive also takes into account “their spouses, not being employees or partners, where they habitually, under the conditions laid down by national law, participate in the activities of the self-employed worker and perform the same tasks or ancillary tasks” (Article 2). Through its directive, the Council requests member states to take into consideration the role played by the spouse in a self-employed enterprise and furthermore, to study the conditions necessary for her legal recognition. Initiatives for this aspect are also requested (Article 7). The same directive requests member states to take the necessary steps to encourage the replacement of independent workers in the case of pregnancy or maternity leave (Article 8). Article 6 states: “where a contributory social security system existed, to take measures to ensure that the spouses of such workers who assist them in their work and who are currently not protected under the self employments scheme have the opportunity of joining such a scheme.”

In 2003, the EU Parliament recognized that some but not all member states had responded in a positive fashion to this directive. The EU parliament, by 74 to 8 adopted a resolution, which among other things, called on member states to be obliged to register assisting spouses and called on the Commission to revise and strengthen Article 6 of the directive. This was to be strengthened to ensure that it covered all the risks faced by the assisting spouse particularly in relation to social security, health care, old-age pension, maternity benefits, replacement services, disability and incapacity benefits. The resolution called on the amended directive to be more binding in all its aspects on member states. The resolution was passed in June 2003.

The next section reviews the current situation in different EU member states. The main difficulty faced is the lack of a comparative study on the different European fisheries social systems, which is related to national histories and policies.

**The Situation in Different EU Member States**

**Ireland**

In Ireland, since 1893 there have been a number of court actions to determine whether a fisher is a share fisher or an employee. The latest court action was in 2001, and it ruled that fishers, who are self-employed and pay taxes and social security cover will be classified as share fishers. Such a ruling does not prevent a vessel owner from employing crew as employees but in doing so he must comply with employment law, redundancy notice, payments, etc. as applied to all other workers. However, if the vessel owner opts for his crew to have self-employed status, they are eligible for capital tax allowances. No special status for fishers exists in the Irish tax and social welfare systems.

Irish fishers’ wives have never thought about their own status in the same way as the Irish farmers’ wives. The latter have and are still campaigning to secure benefits under the social security system. Currently, only their husbands have cover and protection and then only on the limited self-employed status level. A recent improvement is the partnership route, which also applies to fishers. If the husband and wife become a partnership, then once each partner’s reckonable income exceeds €3,174 this income would be reckonable for pay-related social insurance purposes and contributions would be payable at a rate of 3% or €253 minimum payment (5% if over €18,512). Not all fishers or farmers are interested in the partnership route. The official response of the Irish government 5/5/04 was: “There are no special provisions in social welfare legislation to provide for social insurance cover for collaborating spouses of a sole trader who is not a partner in the business. Nor, are there any immediate proposals to provide it” (O’Doherty and Frangoudes 2005).
United Kingdom

In Britain, fishers’ wives are not accorded legal status as in other EU countries. In the United Kingdom (UK), fishers are recognized as a special category. Self-employed people in the UK pay a basic contribution of £2.05 per week plus Class 4 National Insurance contributions if their income goes above a certain limit. This means in effect they pay 4% of their profits over a base level. The special category for fishers requires them to pay £2.70 per week plus Class 4 National Insurance contributions if their income goes above a certain limit. For the extra 65 pence per week, UK fishers have the potential to apply for unemployment benefits.

In practice this benefit is becoming increasingly difficult to access due to more rigorous interpretation of the written rules governing the circumstances under which a share fisher is deemed “unemployed”. A share fisher is not deemed to be unemployed if he is doing essential work on the boat or gear but is deemed to be unemployed if he is engaged in “maintenance work which is not essential at the time” or if he is working on spare nets, lines, pots or other equipment and was not part of the work which had to be done at the start or end of a season.

It would appear that the easiest way for a fisher’s wife to achieve legal recognition in the UK system is to be registered as self-employed and pay the weekly rate of £2.05. For that, provided her income does not exceed £4,095 per year, she will receive a state pension, maternity rights, incapacity benefits and bereavement benefits all in her own right. Her pension entitlement will be £79.60 per week. Many fishers’ wives, however, do not know about this possibility. The question is why are so few fishers’ wives interested in claiming this protection?

France

The sea-people’s social insurance system, call ENIM (Etablissement National des Invalides de la Marine) is administered by the Maritime Affairs Department under the Ministry of Transport and Equipment. All fishers (owners, skippers and crew), shellfish or fish farmers, sailors of merchant and leisure boats, contribute to the ENIM insurance fund. There are 20 different categories classified according to a person’s diploma and the type of boats s/he possesses. The collaborating spouse falls under the third category, and members in this category do not pay a full contribution as they do not have any income.

In 1996, while the Fisheries Act, Law No. 97-1051 (dated 18 November 1997) was being discussed, women rallied together and demanded a legal status recognizing their informal role within the fishing enterprise. During parliamentary debates on the proposed law, women met with members of parliament from all political parties, with ministers and with the relevant authorities and put forward their demands. This law, supported by all parliamentary groups, partially accepted the demands made by the women’s associations.

To qualify for the collaborating spouse status, fishers’ wives must meet two conditions: they must be married, and they must play a genuine role in the company. She can act on behalf of the enterprise manager on administrative matters without being paid for this contribution. She can also be employed part-time in another job. Since 1998, fishers’ wives can apply for a collaborative spouse status if they meet the conditions. But the collaborative spouse status can only be obtained at the husband’s request.

The status enables:
- the right to a personal retirement plan, if contributions are made in the person’s own name; the amount of the contribution is 3.57 €uro per day or 1,303 €uro per year; women contribute a percentage of this amount under the third category;
- financial compensation for replacing women during maternity leave;
- the right to training;
- the right to represent the company, and also to participate in meetings of the board of directors of banks and cooperatives, as well as in professional elections to local fisheries
committees and producers’ organizations, as long as the husband does not delegate powers to somebody else.

Since its introduction, only 410 out of the 3,500 eligible women have taken up the status of “collaborating spouse”, either because they have not understood the benefits that it could bring them, or because their company does not have the financial means to pay for their social insurance. For small vessels (less than 12 m), it is financially impossible to pay the women’s social contribution, even if it is advantageous for them.

Spain

Fishers have their own social security system. In the past, the sea-people social security system was managed by the Social Marine Institute. Today, this institute is the responsibility of the national social security system but the former still retains some autonomy. The social security system covers sickness allowance, old-age pension and 1% of the health system. The remaining health coverage is provided by another fund (income tax) and all Spanish citizens have access to it. Fishers’ social security can cover the following categories:

- all persons working with salary on a share system in the merchant navy, fisheries, shellfish farm, leisure or transport boats, administrative office and fishers organizations associated with the above activities;
- owners of boats more than 10 t or if they employ more than 5 crew;
- self-employed persons under the following categories: owners of boats less than 10 t with less than 5 crew members, including the owner, persons collecting shellfish, persons mending nets on self-employed basis.

This system is extended to the wives and members of the self-employed fishers’ families who work in the family enterprise. Wives have benefited from the social security system since 1970.

Portugal

In Portugal, the fishers’ social security system is recent and it is an independent system. The social security subscription is based on the sales realized in the auction. Docaspesca, the organization in charge of the auction management, collects 10% of the amount of the total daily sales from each boat. About 3.5% of the 10% is for insurance and working accidents, and the rest is for social security. This system covers the old-age pension, sickness allowance and the pension for work accidents. The amount of the old-age pension is proportional to the contribution as well as the sickness pension. One hundred fifty-one working days must be declared per year to qualify for the benefits of the old-age pension. If the catches are not sold through the auction system, crew members are not eligible to become members of the social security system. In Portugal, all citizens have access to the health system, which is independent of the social security system. The health system is financed by the income tax and not by individual contributions.

Fishers’ wives contribute significantly in the fisheries enterprise, either by taking charge of the administrative tasks, or by involvement in chores like sorting and selling fish. Boat cleaning is also a task performed by owners’ wives and crew members’ wives.

Since 1999, Portuguese fishers’ wives contribute to fishers’ social security system not as collaborating spouses but as members of the crew. This does not mean that women have a salary or a share of the business like the crew members. The contribution permits women to have an old-age pension. By giving women access to the system, it can be considered a positive action in response to the European Council directives asking for equal treatment between men and women concerning employment.
Finland

Fishers are covered by the Agricultural Pensions Act (LFÖPL). The compulsory LFÖPL insurance scheme includes accident insurance. Fishers or their family members employed in the family business are required to hold LFÖPL insurance if they are aged between 18 and 64 and the value of their work or earnings is at least €2,628 per annum. The insurance scheme therefore covers all fishers aged 18–64, their wives or partners, and working members involved in the family business.

The LFÖPL insurance scheme will pay fishers for sickness or incapacity benefit, rehabilitation allowance, disability pension, early-retirement pension, part-time pension, unemployment pension, early-old age pension or standard old-age pension. The scheme also includes family pension entitlement for surviving relatives and group life insurance cover. As well as fishing, LFÖPL applies to activities such as fish processing (gutting, salting and smoking), repairing and maintaining fishing gear, and marketing the catch.

There are two complementary pension systems: the state pension and the occupational pension. The normal retirement age is 65. Fishers are covered by the Agricultural Pensions Act, which provides them with the statutory occupational pension. The size of the occupational pension depends on the length of time and amount of income for which the fisher was insured. Each year's working income is reflected in the amount of occupational pension.

An independent status of collaborating spouses does not exist in Finland. Fishers’ wives must take out their own LFÖPL insurance if they take part in fishing or associated activities (e.g., processing the catch, repairing fishing gear, marketing), irrespective of whether they receive a wage, provided their earnings or the estimated value of their work exceeds €2,628 per annum. If the value is lower, they can take out insurance voluntarily. This insurance provides them an old-age pension and also coverage for incapacity to work, unemployment or death. In the case of illness, it also entitles them to sickness allowance. The amount of benefits or pension payable depends on their working income. The annual premium is around 10% of taxable net income. The amount payable in accident compensation, sickness allowance and future pension depends on how long the members have been insured and the size of their working income throughout the insured duration. Many fishers fail to optimize the benefits from their contribution, preferring to pay as little as possible. But the problem is that a fisher’s wife, even though entitled, may not be insured.

All residents of the country are insured under the Health Insurance Act, which entitles them to reimbursement of the costs of necessary medical treatment, a daily allowance in the event of incapacity for work, maternity, paternity and childcare allowances. The Social Insurance Institution of Finland handles the payment of these benefits.

Discussion and Conclusions

In theory, women working with their husband and doing similar work enjoy the same rights as men. These rights are enshrined in the working laws, especially in countries with strong welfare benefits like in Finland, Norway, Sweden and France. This does not apply, however, in countries like Portugal where laws do not permit boat owners to employ their wives. In this country, the only personal benefit for women is the contribution to the social security system.

Fishers’ wives working in the family business do not have access to any personal economic or social benefits. Women do not realize that their contribution deserves a wage. French fishers’ wives claimed recognition of their contribution during the fisheries law discussion in 1996. Subsequently the state gave women the status of a collaborating spouse. For the first time, women’s invisible contribution to fisheries became visible legally.
But the access to the social security system cannot be interpreted as total success because in practice many fishers’ wives choose not to pay social contributions. In France, for example only few women had opted for the collaborating spouse status. One of the reasons may be that the operation lacks the money to pay two social contributions. This reason may apply to the very small companies but it cannot be the reason for the others. The main reason may be that many women still do not perceive their contribution as work and they do not understand why they should pay a social contribution for something which they willingly undertake, usually within their home environment. On the contrary, Portuguese women understand why they should contribute to the social security system, and they would like to have their own retirement pension. For women to improve their present status, they need to view their efforts in fisheries as work and not as part of the marriage contract, for their own sake as well as for the sake of the industry. It is important that women’s work in fisheries is recorded; that women become statistics, that they have rights, responsibilities and protection. When women’s contributions to the fisheries and aquaculture sectors are fully recorded statistically, then and only then will women be able to participate fully and at all levels in decisions affecting the industry that shapes their lives.

References