

ASIAN FISHERIES SOCIETY: AN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE OF WOMEN IN FISHERIES

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It all began at the Bati Fish seed production and Research Centre, Cambodia in 1994, when a three-day National workshop on Women in Fisheries was organized by Partnership for Development in Kampuchea (PADEK) together with the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Fisheries of Cambodia.

The Asian Fisheries Society (AFS) became involved when I visited the Bati Station and met Dr. M.C. Nandeesh, just after he had organized the first meeting at the station in 1994. It was there that we planned the women in fisheries photographic competition. PADEK came forward to provide funds for the first competition that was subsequently held in Beijing in conjunction with the Fifth Asian Fisheries Forum in 1995 during my tenure as the president of the AFS. It was also at this meeting that Dr. Nandeesh and I requested Dr. Meryl Williams to participate in the Regional Women in Fisheries Meeting held in 1996 in Cambodia.

In 1996, the regional meeting on "Women in Fisheries in Indochina" was held in Cambodia with participants from Lao PDR, Thailand, Vietnam and the host country, Cambodia. Dr. Meryl Williams gave a keynote address at this meeting, which was also graced by the Princess Her Royal Highness Marie Ranariddh of Cambodia. This meeting, which was organized by PADEK and the Ministry of Agriculture in partnership with several other regional organizations, brought out several issues and participants suggested to organize a meeting at the Asian level to provide greater opportunity for wider participation from within the region.

In 1998, together with the second photographic competition on women in fisheries in Asia, the AFS held the first women in fisheries in Asia in Chiangmai, Thailand. This meeting saw a greater participation of women from several countries in the Asian region. This meeting was funded by ICLARM-The World Fish Center, PADEK, the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD), and the AFS. The Department for International Development (DFID) helped fund the publication of the proceedings.

So here we are today, at the first global meeting on women in fisheries, which is being attended by participants from Asia, Africa, North America, Latin America, Europe and the Oceania. This meeting is sponsored by ICLARM-The World Fish Center, DFID, the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) and the New Zealand Overseas Development Authority. We acknowledge all our supporters with gratitude.