**Suggestions for Critical Areas to be considered at FAO Special Workshop on Future Directions for Gender in Aquaculture and Fisheries Action, Research and Development**

**Targetted, comparative qualitative communities studies**. This suggestion arises out of my theoretical concern that we have not yet applied the full power of sociological and feminist thinking to the problems that women fishers face. We have begun to supply the missing perspective of gender and have recognised that if, as Williams has indicated, we start by looking through a ‘gender lens’, we change what we look at, how we interpret it and how we address the issues it raised. but we are not yet equipped with an overall understanding of gender and fisheries, which means that we also lack a way of fully conceptualising the impact of globalisation and other macro processes on the situation.

I would like to see enough resources to initiate a large scale, qualitative and comparative inquiry to show how dimensions of power, inequality and discrimination take different forms as different social, cultural and economic contexts interact with different fisheries. Such studies would draw attention to exactly how changes in the pursuit of marine resources are constructed in different situations, and thus obtain a greater understanding of how gender is one (very important but not exclusive) dimension in how power, culture and economy interact.

We all quote from numerous small scale studies of particular fishing communities to make points about how women’s situations could be improved but we lack systematic, overall, comparative studies that would parallel the large scale quanititative scientific studies and would enable us to create realistic and substantial policy frameworks to help women fishers and women living in fishing communities.

**Women feed the World** Oxfam, and other large NGOs have paid increasing attention to the food shortages that now imperil many populations. The number of people who live in chronic hunger is already rising and is likely to rise more as climate changes take effect. in response to this, NGOs have drawn attention to the role of women as food providers for their families. While most of this attention has focused on women as farmers, we should argue that women can also provide nutrition from aquatic sources – fish, shellfish, seaweed etc. My thoughts on this are not well developed, but it seems worth developing as a theme. How can we enhance women’s access to fish as a food source for their families, rather than as a form of employment or for sale. But at the moment, most projects and policies are directed at increasing women’s access to fish as income; there is much less done to ensure that women have access to fisheries that provide food directly or to methods of fishing or processing that might not be economically viable for sale but would provide good sources of nourishment.