

## Asian Fisheries Society forms world's first Gender in Aquaculture and Fisheries Section

Meryl Williams, Chair/Coordinator, GAFS Inaugural Officers

*As professionalism has grown in fisheries and aquaculture, groups of experts have grown up to better share their knowledge, and, in their special fields, improve the depth of studies and policy advice. Where scientific advice for management is needed, these groups have been formalised by management bodies, such as the Scientific Committee of the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission, while other groups have formed sections and interest groups in larger professional societies. The latter pathway has been taken by the gender in aquaculture and fisheries group in association with the Asian Fisheries Society (AFS).*

Since its first women in fisheries activity, held in 1990,<sup>1</sup> the AFS has slowly increased its attention toward women and the gender dimension in aquaculture and fisheries,<sup>1,2</sup> along with growing global attention to gender equality challenges and opportunities. In 2016, the AFS approved the creation of the Gender in Aquaculture and Fisheries Section (GAFS) to more formally promote equitable and effective cooperation among gender in fisheries and aquaculture experts in the Asia-Pacific region and the world. This section is a world first. No other fisheries or aquaculture society has a formal women or gender group.

AFS gender in aquaculture and fisheries activities were led by an informal group of interested experts who have now been charged by the AFS Council with fully developing the GAFS. To date, initial bylaws for GAFS have been written, membership has been opened (see brochure), and Inaugural Officers established<sup>3</sup> to oversee the election of Executive Committee members and ratification of the bylaws.<sup>4</sup>

The Inaugural Officers have begun their work on how to increase membership, services and strategic partnerships of GAFS. Young career scientists and students are particularly welcomed to become members of GAFs, as are women and men from all regions. The Inaugural Officers particularly want to help establish a broadly based membership and Executive Committee to help GAFS work closely with other regional and national efforts, such as those that are starting to grow in the Pacific, such as the Women in Fisheries Network in Fiji.



The objectives of GAFS are to promote equitable and effective cooperation among scientists and academics, technicians, fisheries officers and non-governmental organisation experts involved in issues related to gender in fisheries and aquaculture so as to advance research and practices in the Asia-Pacific region as well as in other regions of the world. GAFS will build on past gender and women's activities of AFS, namely periodic symposia, publishing research and expert opinion, basic training introducing experts to gender concepts, and maintaining an active website and social media presence. GAFS may also play a role in promoting new research opportunities, based in existing institutes.

We greatly welcome GAFS members from the Pacific, a region where fisheries are particularly important to all people. If you join before the end of 2017, you will become a Founding Member of GAFS.

Website: <http://genderaquafish.org/>  
Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/pages/AFS-Gender-in-Aquaculture-and-Fisheries/181176555231544>  
Twitter: @Genderaquafish

<sup>1</sup> Gadagkar S.R. 1992. Women in Indian Fisheries. Proceedings of the Workshop on Women in Indian Fisheries, 27 May 1990. Special Publication 8, 51 p. Asian Fisheries Society, Indian Branch, Mangalore, India.

<sup>2</sup> Gopal N., Williams M.J., Porter M. and Kusakabe K. 2016. Guest Editorial: The Long Journey to Equality. Asian Fisheries Science Special Issue 29S:1-17.

<sup>3</sup> See the milestones for the AFS gender in aquaculture and fisheries activities - <https://genderaquafish.org/gaf-section/about-us/history/>

<sup>4</sup> <https://genderaquafish.org/gaf-section/about-us/executive-committee/>

<sup>5</sup> For more details see our webpages - <https://genderaquafish.org/gaf-section/>