

## **Gender Justice on Stage – Participatory Theatre for Social Change in Fisheries and Aquaculture**

**Purpose:** This session will highlight participatory theatre as a transformative tool for promoting gender justice, as well as intersecting dimensions of climate, blue, and social justice in aquaculture and fisheries. By blending performance, expert insights, and audience engagement, the session will showcase how theatre can amplify marginalized voices, challenge social norms, and inspire transformative change in aquatic food systems. Participants will gain practical insights into the use of theatre for advocacy, education, and community empowerment, while exploring successful case studies of participatory theatre initiatives that have addressed gender inequalities.

### **Session Objectives:**

- Raise awareness of gender-related challenges in fisheries and aquaculture.
- Demonstrate how participatory theatre can foster social change and inform policy.
- Facilitate dialogue between theatre practitioners, gender experts, and sector stakeholders.
- Promote integration of theatre-based approaches into gender mainstreaming strategies.

**Moderator: Rachel Matheson – FAO**

### **Outline, Participants & Abstracts:**

#### ***1. Opening, Grounding & Context Setting (15 mins)***

In this section, welcome and introduction remarks will be shared with participants to share with them session expectations and objectives – icebreakers will be included to set the stage for the participatory session.

#### ***2. Participatory Theatre in Action (50 mins)***

In this section, participatory theatre methodologies will be shared and directly experienced through participants' direct involvement and interaction, with the aim of sharing practical skills, methodological insights and explore how participatory theatre can drive awareness, policy engagement, and community mobilization. This will include 2 segments:

- Theatre Games to Theatre (25 mins)
- Image Theatre: Exploring Gender Injustice (25 mins)

The 2 segments will propose interactive elements that will invite the audience to engage with the narrative and reflect critically on the issues presented.

#### ***3. Action Mapping (25 mins)***

By referring to real-world experiences of women working in fisheries and aquaculture, facilitators and participants will collectively engage to explore the impacts of the issues discussed during theatre activities and actively identify key action points supporting the achievement of gender justice.

#### ***4. Reflection & Analysis (20 mins)***

In this section, there will be an open space for discussion where, based on the experiences gained in the previous activities, participants will be able to ask final questions, share their thoughts and perceptions, as well as sharing perspective on how participatory theatre can be key to support their work towards the achievement of gender justice, blue justice and climate justice.

## 5. *Closing Remarks & Call to Action (10 mins)*

*Keynote Speaker:* Dr. Moenieba Isaacs – Gender Justice

The session will end with a keynote address exploring to reflect on how theatre has empowered women, challenged discrimination, and shaped inclusive policies in aquatic food systems to achieve gender justice in fisheries and aquaculture.

The closing will be an opportunity to share a summary of key insights, and a call for participants to adopt participatory theatre approaches within their own organizations, communities, and projects to promote inclusive change in aquatic food systems.

### **Contributors (with short bios):**

#### **Facilitators:**

**Ms. Michelle Barrow (Voices from The Shore Theatre Collective)** is a Barbadian artist and educator who has spent over 30 years educating and entertaining audiences through acting, directing, playwriting and storytelling. She currently facilitates Theatre for Development with youth and the Voices From The Shore Theatre Collective in Barbados. Ms. Barrow is a graduate of the Edna Manley College for the Visual and Performing Arts in Jamaica and the University of Bradford in the UK. Michelle believes in the power of Theatre to change and inspire lives. Through Theatre for Development, she creates a safe space for people/communities to explore and engage in dialogue, critical thinking, edutainment and activism, with experiences in the Caribbean and Africa, to name a few.

**Ms. Mercy Kambulu (Circus Zambia)** is an artist and a trainer with 12 years of experience in theatre and circus performance, as well as in community work, with a focus on direction, script writing, performance and choreography of art-based initiatives. Ms. Kambulu has applied her skills in various context in Zambia, particularly acting as theatre facilitator for the implementation of awareness raising, inclusion and empowerment initiatives targeting youth, women and marginalized groups, including children with disabilities.

**Dr. Moenieba Isaacs (PLAAS)** is the Academic Coordinator and Senior Researcher at the Institute for Poverty, Land and Agrarian Studies (PLAAS), University of the Western Cape. Her research focuses on blue justice for small-scale fishers, gender, fisheries reform, and the blue economy in Southern Africa. She has extensive experience working with fishing communities and civil society to influence policy and governance. Professor Isaacs leads and contributes to several international projects on small-scale fisheries, food systems, and conservation, and has served on global expert panels, including the UN Committee on Food Security's High-Level Panel of Experts.

**Moderator: Ms. Rachel Matheson (FAO)** is a Gender Specialist working in NFISG. Rachel holds a Bachelor's degree in Global Development Studies from Queen's University, Canada, and a Master's degree in International Development Studies from Dalhousie University, Canada. During her career, Rachel has focused on supporting gender equality and social inclusion across fisheries, aquaculture, and agricultural supply chains. As a member of NFISG, she is works on assessing and analyzing gender issues and contributing to mainstreaming gender in the Fisheries and Aquaculture Division of the FAO.

#### **Facilitators;**

**Ms. Jennifer Gee (FAO)**

**Mr. Matteo Luzzi (FAO)**