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STRATEGIES FOR INCREASING THE SUSTAINABLE CONTRIBUTION OF SMALL-SCALE FISHERIES TO FOOD SECURITY AND POVERTY ALLEVIATION

SUMMARY

This paper outlines characteristics of small-scale capture fisheries, and considers the constraints and opportunities that may affect their contribution to food security and poverty reduction. It is suggested that there are now good reasons to re-consider the role of small-scale fisheries in contributing to food security and poverty alleviation, and the Committee is invited to review a number of strategies aimed at increasing this contribution. Governance issues are considered fundamental to the success of these strategies. In addition, special attention is recommended in the collection of adequate information and assessing the trade-offs between policy options. The costs and benefits of different policies must be carefully articulated in terms of their absolute and distributional impacts on food security and poverty alleviation. Finally, the importance of cross-sectoral and inter-agency approaches and solutions for addressing poverty and food security issues is recognized.

INTRODUCTION

1. The purpose of this paper is to highlight the contribution of small-scale capture fisheries (SSF) to food security and poverty alleviation, outline strategies, the adoption and implementation of which could significantly increase this

contribution. The paper also aims at encouraging governments, other stakeholders and the international community to increase their support/assistance to the small-scale capture fisheries sub-sector.

2. The paper is structured as follows: the key terms and concepts in the paper's title are explained, followed by a succinct presentation of important past and on-going FAO executed field programmes in SSF, and a discussion of poverty and vulnerability in small-scale fishing communities. The paper then highlights the contribution of SSF to food security and poverty alleviation and summarizes the issues/scenarios that tend to limit the contribution of SSF to food security and poverty alleviation. In the last sections of the paper, the rationale for revisiting small-scale fisheries as a discussion item is undelined. The paper then suggests possible strategies that could be adopted and implemented by stakeholders and the international community and concludes by inviting the Committee to address a list of suggested actions.

EXPLANATION OF KEY TERMS AND CONCEPTS

3. Small-scale fisheries can be broadly characterized as employing labour intensive harvesting, processing and distribution technologies to exploit marine and inland water fishery resources. The activities of this sub-sector, conducted full-time or part-time, or just seasonally, are often targeted on supplying fish and fishery products to local and domestic markets, and for subsistence consumption. Export-oriented production, however, has increased in many small-scale fisheries during the last one to two decades because of greater market integration and globalization. While typically men are engaged in fishing and women in fish processing and marketing, women are also known to engage in near shore harvesting activities and men are known to engage in fish marketing and distribution. Other ancillary activities such as net-making, boat-building, engine repair and maintenance, etc. can provide additional fishery-related employment and income opportunities in marine and inland fishing communities.

4. Small-scale fisheries operate at widely differing organizational levels ranging from self-employed single operators through informal micro-enterprises to formal sector businesses. This sub-sector, therefore, is not homogenous within and across countries and regions and attention to this fact is warranted when formulating strategies and policies for enhancing its contribution to food security and poverty alleviation.

5. During the 1996 World Food Summit, food security was defined as:

*Food security exists when all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life*¹.

An important indicator for monitoring inter-country comparability of food security is per capita consumption based on the average daily dietary energy supply in calories per year. Per capita consumption is calculated on the basis of national food balance sheets and population data. This indicator is a national average and needs further information and refinement, often provided by food consumption surveys, to assess the spatial, temporal, age and gender differences in food security within countries.

6. Poverty in fishing communities and elsewhere, for long was considered to be simply a matter of an income too low to meet basic subsistence needs and an international poverty line of US\$1/caput/day is still used as a simple index to define the poor. Currently it is increasingly recognized that poverty is a complex, multi-dimensional concept and process characterized

by low income, poor health, low literacy levels, under-nutrition, inadequate housing and living conditions and that people move in and out of poverty. Poverty is also seen as a symptom of structural imbalances in society, and is highly correlated with social exclusion, marginalization, vulnerability and lack of power. Because of this complex nature it is difficult to define but even more difficult to measure.

7. A significant high proportion of small-scale fishers are poor and unable to influence their operating constraints. However, some small-scale fishers can exert considerable control over such constraints and generate significant levels of income.

Although the level of poverty in many small-scale fishing communities remains high, there are few empirical studies² that focus on assessing and identifying the specific causes and manifestations of poverty in fisheries.

8. The FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries is concerned with food security and poverty alleviation, as demonstrated by §6.2. This article links fisheries management with food security, poverty alleviation and sustainable development, stating:

Fisheries management should promote the maintenance of the quality, diversity and availability of fishery resources in sufficient quantities for present and future generations in the context of food security, poverty alleviation and sustainable development. Management measures should not only ensure the conservation of target species but also of species belonging to the same ecosystem or associated or dependent upon the target species.

9. Furthermore, §6.18 of the Code is directed towards the welfare and social and economic security in fishing communities:

Recognizing the important contributions of artisanal and small-scale fisheries to employment, income and food security, States should appropriately protect the rights of fishers and fishworkers, particularly those engaged in subsistence, small-scale and artisanal fisheries, to a secure and just livelihood, as well as preferential access, where appropriate, to traditional fishing grounds and resources in the waters of their national jurisdiction.

MAJOR PAST AND ON-GOING FAO FIELD PROGRAMMES IN SMALL-SCALE FISHERIES

10. The 1984 FAO World Conference on Fisheries Management produced a Strategy for Fisheries Management and Development, which included a section on *The special role and needs of small-scale fisheries and rural fishing and fish-farming communities*. The Strategy recommended that the sector be given priority in fisheries development policies, and emphasized the importance of increasing the incomes of those in small-scale fisheries. It also stressed that small-scale fisheries have "an important role in providing income and employment to large numbers of fishermen and their families, who form part of the poorest and most disadvantaged communities in society". The Conference and the resulting Plan of Action emphasized an integrated approach, and this concept influenced many donors and member nations in their efforts to support small-scale fisheries.

11. For FAO, the 1984 conference led to a number of field programmes, *inter alia* the Bay of Bengal Programme (a regional marine small-scale fisheries programme funded by the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA) that began in 1979), and the Programme for Integrated Development of Artisanal Fisheries in West Africa (1983-1998), which was funded by the Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA). Currently, the Sustainable Fisheries Livelihoods Programme (SFLP) is funded by the United Kingdom Department for International Development (DFID) and executed by FAO in partnership with 25 countries in West Africa. It aims to reduce poverty and improve the livelihoods of the poorer fishing communities, both inland and coastal, in the region. SFLP is involved with attempts to include explicit mention of small-

scale fisheries in Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs), and in poverty profiling of small-scale fishers based on the Sustainable Livelihoods Approach (SLA).

12. In inland small-scale fisheries, FAO, in association with the Mekong River Commission and the Governments of Thailand and the Netherlands have started a process to improve information on inland fisheries, especially small-scale fisheries in the Mekong Basin³. FAO, together with NACA, DFID and VSO, is also involved in the Support to Regional Aquatic Resources Management Programme (STREAM) in South East Asia. This programme focuses on capacity building and improving policies and processes for the assessment of the impact of policies on artisanal fishers' livelihoods, the monitoring and evaluation of different management approaches, and improved information exchange and networking between countries of the region.

POVERTY AND VULNERABILITY IN SMALL-SCALE FISHING COMMUNITIES

13. The general description of paragraph 6 stresses the need to raise living standards in small-scale fishing communities, and to overcome the lack of influence and ownership over production and other aspects, which may constrain ability to contribute to food security and poverty alleviation. Many small-scale fishing communities, particularly marine fisheries, are isolated from land-based society, not only geographically but also socio-economically, culturally and politically, demonstrated by the often disproportionately low investment in management, research and support for the sector relative to the many people involved.

14. Small-scale fishing communities are vulnerable, leading to poverty and reduced food security. Examples include climatic and other natural events, such as yearly and seasonal fluctuations in stock abundance; poor catches; bad weather and natural disasters such as cyclones and hurricanes; economic factors, such as market price fluctuations and variable access to markets; policy factors affecting the rights of small-scale fishers; and occupational factors such as the dangers of working at sea. Environmental degradation from natural or human-induced causes further increases vulnerability. Those in small-scale fishing communities may also be vulnerable to poor health and other wider determinants of poverty.

15. Globalization processes may have adverse effects, especially among poorer groups:

*...improvements in communications and transportation as well as the liberalization of trade have now brought most producers and consumers into a global market. ...while textbook accounts suggest that trade liberalization will lead to greater overall welfare, some actors have the wherewithal to take advantage of global markets to a far greater extent than others, owing to their access to capital, expertise, technologies and policy-makers. Conversely, others benefit much less and even suffer losses, often through no fault of their own. Furthermore, only in a few situations are people who are unfairly denied access to these means compensated or provided with alternative opportunities to help themselves.*⁴

CONTRIBUTION OF SMALL-SCALE FISHERIES TO POVERTY ALLEVIATION AND FOOD SECURITY

16. However, while currently many small-scale fishing communities are poor and vulnerable, small-scale fisheries can generate significant profits, prove resilient to shocks and crises, and make meaningful contributions to food security and poverty alleviation, in particular for:

- those involved directly with fishing (fishers, traders, processors, etc.);

- the dependents of those involved directly with fishing (fishing-related households and communities);
- those who buy fish for human consumption (consumers);
- those who benefit from related income and employment through multiplier effects; and
- society in general and those who benefit indirectly as a result of national export revenues from fisheries, re-distributive taxation and other macro-level mechanisms.

17. Small-scale fisheries exploit a renewable and potentially sustainable source of food that provides animal protein, fish oils and essential micronutrients such as calcium, iodine and certain vitamins. Although the perishable nature of products, often produced in remote locations, can present obvious problems, production from many small-scale fisheries is consumed locally, and can be processed into forms that do not perish easily. Fish has historically played an important role in food security in many countries and continues to do so globally, providing 15-16 percent of animal protein intake. The importance of fishery products in many coastal, lake and floodplain areas is very much greater than this global average. Given that small-scale fisheries supply about one half of the fish used for direct human consumption, supporting sustainable earnings can ensure sustainable supplies to consumers, many of who are themselves poor.

18. Small-scale marine and inland fisheries play a vital role in food security through the preservation and processing of fish for trade to inland markets. Inland fisheries may contribute more to national and local food security because of the subsistence nature of much of the fishing activity. Marine small-scale fisheries, in contrast, often play an important role in local and national poverty alleviation through profits being made from the sale of fish, the generation of export revenues, formal economic benefits, income and employment multipliers in upstream and downstream activities, and perhaps to a lesser extent from taxation that can be used for re-distributive purposes. Small-scale fisheries are providing increasing amounts of foreign exchange earnings in many countries, and the last decade has seen a significant increase in the amount of products exported from small-scale fisheries.

19. Small-scale fishing, marketing and processing provide an important means of income generation for many of the poor and food insecure who are not officially categorized as small-scale fishers. Research into livelihood strategies has illustrated that household well-being is generally maintained in the face of shocks and crises, through a wide variety of strategies and coping mechanisms. The role of access to common property resources such as fish is especially important in this regard. The poor agro-ecological characteristics of much coastal land, and the vulnerability to degradation of land adjacent to inland water bodies, means that fishing can play an important role as a safety valve when agricultural production or livelihood strategies in non-fishing communities are under threat.

SCENARIOS/ISSUES LIMITING THE CONTRIBUTION OF SMALL-SCALE FISHERIES TO FOOD SECURITY AND POVERTY ALLEVIATION

20. Resource constraints in terms of stock availability can reduce the ability of small-scale fisheries to contribute to food security and poverty alleviation. Other constraints include lack of access to capital, limited alternative employment opportunities, and a lack of appropriate technology. However, probably most important are constraints in the form of governance and policy issues over access to and control over aquatic environments and resources, markets, and the

distribution of benefits accruing from those resources. Marine and inland fishers tend to display different vulnerabilities to these types of constraints. In inland fishing communities, vulnerability related to access, control and distribution is often linked to conflict with other, equally poor, groups of water resource users, as well as with rich and politically powerful groups. In marine small-scale fisheries, access, control and distribution issues are more often linked with competition from industrial and foreign interests.

21. Conflict between small-scale and industrial fishing activity may stem from, or be reinforced by, governance and policy issues, such as inadequate enforcement capability or a lack of will for enforcement, or preferential treatment of industrial fisheries. Examples include long delays in processing complaints about incursions of industrial vessels into small-scale fishing areas, exclusion of small-scale fishers from fishing grounds, subsidies for industrial fisheries, and the payment by industrial fishing interests of arbitrary, informal incentives to obtain access to resources or markets.

22. Such conflict shows the importance of improving policies, institutions and processes and orienting them towards the reduction of the vulnerability of those in small-scale fisheries and defending their rights. It also demonstrates the need to make conscious and explicit choices between trade-offs through transparent decision-making mechanisms when trying to maximize food security and poverty alleviation, as well as need for a clear commitment to fulfilling these objectives. Trade-offs that might have to be considered when creating improved policies, institutions and processes include:

(i) ***An increase in equity for a decrease in efficiency.*** At the level of the individual vessel operator, changing the balance in the factors of production in favour of labour over capital inputs might result in greater employment but reduced profitability, although some studies suggest that because labour is relatively cheap in many small-scale fisheries, substituting labour for capital inputs (which tend to be expensive) can increase both profitability and equity. At the macro-level, some management regimes may directly trade efficiency against equity, e.g. open access or community-based management rather than systems of private property.

(ii) ***Supporting exports versus production for the national market.*** Increased exports to increase revenues in small-scale fisheries and enhanced foreign exchange earnings may lead to a decrease in availability of fish for sale in local markets. Such a trade-off may have important effects on the distribution of poverty and food security.

(iii) ***Supporting foreign or local fisheries for enhanced national income.*** A government may obtain licence revenue or royalty payments from foreign industrial fishing companies, or encourage export earnings from its own semi-industrial or industrial fleet. Both policies may result in small-scale fisheries catching less fish, thereby decreasing their contribution to food security and poverty alleviation. However, this may be viewed as acceptable if it increases revenue for food imports and national poverty reduction programmes. Again, important distributional effects in food security and income may result from such trade-offs.

(iv) ***Short-term and long-term interests.*** Short-term initiatives to reduce poverty and improve food security may have a negative impact on long-term sustainability. Small-scale fisheries might be supported through credit provision or subsidies in an attempt to increase food security and earnings, but could result in overexploitation, falling catches and declining profitability.

23. In addition to the trade-offs between policy choices, there is the risk of unintended effects from certain policies or changing management regimes. Disbanding commercial or powerful fishing monopolies to improve access of small-scale fishers to fishing grounds may actually remove a form of "management" of a water body, leading to conflicts between small-scale fishers and possibly even overfishing. Habitat restoration, rehabilitation and conservation should have positive benefits on living aquatic resources, but such efforts may affect small-scale fishers by temporarily denying them access to resources, or by encouraging large-scale fishing interests to exploit the improved habitat. Therefore, even after policy choices and trade-offs have been considered and decided upon, there is a need to continuously monitor their impact on poverty and food security, and modify them as necessary.

THE IMPORTANCE OF RE-CONSIDERING SMALL-SCALE FISHERIES AND THEIR CONTRIBUTION TO FOOD SECURITY AND POVERTY REDUCTION

24. The last decade has seen a significant reduction in the extent of support for the small-scale fisheries sector by development banks, bilateral and multinational donor agencies. This decline has in a large part been due to (i) the need to move away from production-oriented projects towards projects that aim at more sustainable development activities and fisheries management, and (ii) the difficulties that most development banks and donors encounter in funding such projects, *inter alia* because they require significant institutional support, much flexibility and a long-term commitment.

Trends in food security as related to fisheries

25. At an international conference on the Sustainable Contribution of Fisheries to Food Supply (Kyoto, Japan, 1995), the 95 participating states approved a Declaration and a Plan of Action to enhance the contribution of fisheries to human food supply, noting the shortfall in the supply of fish relative to demand, but recognizing that this shortfall could be addressed if appropriate steps were taken to conserve and better manage fish resources. The need to ensure food security was further emphasized at the World Food Summit (Rome, 1996) and re-iterated at the recent World Food Summit - five years later (Rome 2002), which stressed the need for sustainable management of natural resources.

26. The predicted rises in global population, and corresponding increases in demand for food, including fish, mean that many of the food security problems of today are likely to persist. The effects of the imbalance between supply and demand are not likely to be evenly felt across the world. Indeed, while many countries and regions have made considerable progress in reducing food energy deficiencies, many others (notably in sub-Saharan Africa) have either experienced a worsening of food security, or have only managed to display improvements through a greater reliance on food imports from developed countries.

27. In reconsidering the role of small-scale fisheries in food security, it is also important to recognize and support the contribution that they already make in many countries. This contribution is widely underestimated due to scarcity of appropriate data. This scarcity of data is particularly marked in inland fisheries, where there are large numbers of fishers, who are often widely dispersed and fishing on a part-time and seasonal basis to supplement other activities. This often means that, for the purpose of employment statistics, they are not counted as working in the fisheries sector.

Trends in fisheries-related poverty

28. In the past, while many development interventions in small-scale fisheries were implicitly aimed at reducing poverty, most were not explicitly focused on improving the living conditions of the poor, but aimed rather at accelerating economic growth through technology and infrastructure development, and through market-led economic policies. The lack of an explicit focus on poverty and the distributional impacts of development programmes may explain the limited results of many interventions. Certainly, the continued levels of poverty in small-scale fishing communities require all those concerned to take a fresh look at the problem. This re-examination is also motivated by the broadening of the poverty concept, a better understanding of the causes of poverty, and the recognition of the significance of vulnerability, which mean that new strategies for poverty reduction are required.

29. While economic growth has helped to reduce the number of poor people in the world, the positive impacts of growth on poverty have been less than expected, in part because of inequitable distribution of the benefits, population increases, and the effects of the HIV/AIDS epidemic. As a result there has been a re-focusing on poverty by many governments and donor agencies. The United Nations World Summit on Sustainable Development (Johannesburg, 2002), the World Bank's 2000 World Development Report, the 1995 UN World Summit for Social Development, and the UN Millennium Declaration, adopted in 2000⁵ - all these considered poverty eradication to be a primary priority.

WHAT CAN BE DONE?

Linking with other sectors

30. A number of strategies and areas of research could be pursued that would help to increase the contribution of small-scale fisheries to food security and poverty alleviation. Some strategies lie within the fisheries sector, and can therefore be tackled by fisheries-specific initiatives (covered in this paper), while others require action by planners, policy-makers and practitioners in other sectors. An example of the latter is the promotion of alternative employment and livelihoods when faced with widespread overexploitation problems. Those involved with fisheries-specific initiatives must balance the need to implement achievable strategies that lie within their own expertise against an acknowledgement that the determinants of food insecurity and poverty often lie in social, cultural and political variables in other sectors. Those working in fisheries and other sectors need to collaborate and coordinate their activities to ensure an inter-sectoral and inter-agency approach.

Data collection and research for strategy development

31. To develop effective fisheries-specific strategies, it may be appropriate to, first, better measure and understand the causal factors of poverty in small-scale fishing communities, and, second, clarify the real contribution of small-scale fisheries to food security and poverty reduction. Such activities could demonstrate the validity of assisting the small-scale fisheries sector, not only because of absolute and relative levels of poverty in the sector, but also, because of its current and potential contributions to food security and poverty alleviation at the local, regional and national levels. Certainly, the quality is inadequate of small-scale fisheries statistics collected in many countries, and especially for inland fisheries, characterized as they are by many unlicensed, part-time and seasonal operators. The motivation for collecting data on marine small-scale fisheries is often greater because of their significance for export revenues. Better data may be necessary simply to identify how many people are actually involved in small-scale fisheries, as, without such inputs, it is clearly impossible to measure their real contribution to food security and poverty alleviation. For example, a recent FAO study in Southeast Asia suggested

that the figure reported to FAO for the number of inland capture fishers worldwide (4.5 million, full-time, part-time or occasional) is easily exceeded by those fishing in inland waters in the eight countries covered by the study⁶.

32. However, while baseline data may be required to assess the fulfilment of objectives, better data and information are not the only prerequisite for bringing about improvements in small-scale fisheries. Probably equally important in terms of international assistance is support for a better understanding of: (i) the process by which people move in and out of poverty; (ii) corresponding solutions in terms of *ex ante* risk management, and *ex post* support; (iii) the strategies required to increase the contribution of small-scale fisheries to local, national and regional food security and to poverty alleviation; and (iv) how to put such strategies into action.

33. A better knowledge of the process by which people move in and out of poverty, and options for amelioration, requires specific focus on governance issues and power relations. Understanding of such issues is currently limited, but is required to assess, *inter alia*: which types of coping mechanisms are used in small-scale fisheries and to what effect; whether fishing is more risky than other sectors; how vulnerability has changed over time and why; how policies and trends affect fishers' livelihoods; through which mechanisms fishers do, or could, influence policy and power relationships; and how service provision and support to small-scale fishing communities can be improved.

Reducing vulnerability and increasing value

34. A number of actions can be, and are being, undertaken to address vulnerability. The destruction caused by natural disasters, such as hurricanes, can be reduced through disaster preparedness programmes and early warning systems. Occupational hazards can also be reduced: for example, accidents at sea can be addressed through sea safety programmes, while health problems such as those resulting from fish smoking can be lessened through the use of improved ovens. Another strategy to reduce vulnerability is to officially recognize and enforce the rights of fishers to the fishery resources and land that they live on or use, and the facilities they use (as stated in §6.18 of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries), whether they are sedentary or migratory. Vulnerability can be further reduced when better information is available to decision-makers to guide development decisions. Finally, vulnerability can be reduced by developing fishers' organizational capacity and by introducing methods that facilitate their effective participation in decisions regarding the sector, their livelihoods and work conditions.

35. Value-added can be increased through improved infrastructure and management of landing sites, storage facilities and market buildings, as well as through better access to information about markets, enhanced processing and reduced post-harvest waste. Ensuring timely access to credit under realistic reimbursement conditions is a further means of improving the marketing of fish and other small-scale businesses. Reductions in post-harvest waste can also add value, and can be achieved through improved handling, processing and distribution of both by-catch and targeted species. Finally, more cost-benefit analysis of small-scale business operations could be used to identify strategies to increase returns.

36. Where stocks may be underexploited, food security could be increased and poverty decreased through (i) increased landings from more fishing effort, better fishing skills, etc., and (ii) marketing and value-added initiatives to generate higher revenues. This requires development planning, improved catching and processing technology, better access to markets, and strategies to achieve better prices. It may also require an assessment to show that stocks offer additional potential, and good resource management measures to ensure sustainability.

Resource allocation and management

37. In the more typical case - overexploited stocks - the contribution of small-scale fisheries to food security and poverty alleviation may be increased by:

- improving the resource base through management;
- marketing and value-adding initiatives, or changing the factors of production;
- allocating a greater share of resources to small-scale fisheries; or
- providing alternative livelihoods.

The issue that remains is that of addressing the trade-off between equity considerations and the production of a sustainable flow of benefits from a limited resource base.

38. The resource base can to some extent be improved through better resource management (e.g. through reductions in destructive fishing practices), and the rebuilding of stocks (e.g. through more aquatic protected areas, restoration, or through stock and habitat enhancements). It is also likely to require constraining commercial and industrial fisheries in competition with small-scale activities, and addressing conflicts between different types of artisanal fishers. This will involve improving legal and policy frameworks, Monitoring, Control and Surveillance (MCS) activities, conflict management systems, and effective enforcement.

39. Changing the balance in the allocation of resources from industrial to small-scale fisheries can be achieved through (i) more explicit allocation through quotas, (ii) wider area allocation (wider reserved zones), and (iii) the use of fish aggregation devices (FADs) to increase stocks aggregation (and accessibility) in coastal areas. However, this is more difficult for many small-scale inland fisheries as their dispersed and informal nature make this type of intervention impractical. Ensuring access to, and control over, fish resources by small-scale fisheries is also likely to be achieved more through support for co-management and related systems, such as the creation of fishworkers' associations, improved MCS, conflict management and enforcement systems. However, to assess the impacts of different forms of access arrangements and property rights on poverty and food security, more research is required. To reduce poverty it is likely that the fisheries management regime must, first, generate economic rents, and, second, allow for some form of redistribution of these rents. Without this latter condition, wealth is likely to be concentrated and levels of poverty largely unaffected. However, to affect such redistribution, it will be necessary to tackle the existing micro- and macro-level institutions and elites that benefit from such concentration of wealth.

40. Providing alternative livelihoods under effective governance structures is also an important associated strategy required to reduce pressure on overfished resources and aquatic environments - both for those already active in the sector, and to prevent those from other sectors from moving into the fishery. Education is a crucial element in increasing the occupational mobility of fishers, thereby enabling them to make the most of employment and livelihood opportunities in other sectors, and improvements in occupation mobility are likely to be gradual rather than instantaneous. The provision of alternative livelihoods can reduce poverty in fishing communities, and allow stocks to recover. Stock recovery - supported by effective

access control - can then generate possibilities for increased supplies of fish for human consumption , enhanced earnings in small-scale fisheries , generation of income and employment multipliers, and increased export revenues and taxation from small-scale fisheries .

41. Successful strategies for resource management and allocation are and will continue to be supported and underpinned by the implementation of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries. The Code can itself be used as an essential guide (as noted in paragraphs 7 and 8) and is being enhanced through publication of technical guidelines⁷, including the development of guidelines on poverty alleviation in fisheries.

Explicitly addressing trade-offs and impacts of different policies and strategies

42. The trade-offs often implicit in policy decisions designed to combat food insecurity and poverty (such as those mentioned in paragraph 22), must be based on information from data collection and research (paragraphs 31, 32 and 33). Apart from the trade-offs, the costs and benefits of different strategies must be assessed. Currently, there is little hard data and information on which to base decisions. For example, what would be the cost of reducing industrial fishing activity with corresponding decreases in foreign exchange earnings, in favour of small-scale fisheries catches with increases in small-scale fishing profitability, multiplier effects and so on? What would be the comparative benefits of changing the balance of enforcement resources between land-, sea- and air-based operations, or between government and community policing? What would be the cost of decommissioning hydroelectric plants to re-establish small-scale riverine fisheries, thus creating benefits through income and employment? How does the potentially high cost of small-scale fisheries management compare to the cost of resource depletion, loss of employment, income and food security resulting from no management? The estimates of such costs should be wider than economic costs alone, and include societal and cultural values.

43. Many strategies will need to be case-specific, depending on the strategy itself, the nature of the small-scale fisheries, the stakeholders involved and the geographical area (size and location) to which it might apply. Importantly, the distributional effects on food security and poverty of trade-offs are particularly poorly understood. With further investigation into these trade-offs and the need for different strategies, it may then be possible to develop guidelines for implementation of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries that specifically deal with food security and poverty alleviation.

Improved governance: inclusiveness, lawfulness, transparency and accountability

44. It is clear from the foregoing that governance issues and power relations are critical to the success of the strategies suggested. Understanding the importance of governance issues is crucial in designing and implementing effective solutions.

45. Good governance in essence requires three elements: promotion of inclusiveness; promotion of lawfulness; and promotion of transparency and accountability⁸. If such conditions prevail, strategies aimed at increasing the contribution of small-scale fisheries to food security and poverty alleviation, and at reducing poverty in fishing communities, are likely to be effective.

46. Inclusiveness relates to issues of both empowerment and decentralization. Empowerment enables poor stakeholders to make meaningful contributions to research and strategy implementation, such as through the use of local and indigenous knowledge on stock status, incorporation of traditional technologies, extension and education, mobilization and political

organization. Decentralization (e.g. co-management) is also thought to promote inclusiveness as it brings the decision-making process closer to local people. This may be the case, but evidence also suggests that the link between local governance and pro-poor outcomes require (i) the confluence of central and local commitment to pro-poor reform, (ii) adequate financing from central government, and (iii) long-term support to build up institutional capacity.

47. Lawfulness requires governing structures at both local and national levels to abide by, and enforce, the rule of law. This relates to enforcement of fisheries legislation and regulations, and also to appropriate legal reform to eliminate laws and practices that are identified as anti-poor. It may also require conflict mediation and resolution between resource users.

48. Finally, accountability requires that governing structures at all levels are answerable and open to sanction if they violate the principles of inclusiveness and lawfulness. It therefore relates closely to issues of corruption, transparency, access to information, and social and political capital. Poor small-scale fishers are often unable to enforce accountability, and therefore to effect pro-poor changes. For small-scale fisheries to contribute to food security and poverty alleviation, accountability needs to be increased, through better access to information and more participatory monitoring and evaluation of initiatives aimed at supporting small-scale fisheries, such as through the use of "social" audits.

SUGGESTED ACTION BY THE COMMITTEE

49. The Committee is invited to review this paper and provide guidance to Member Nations, FAO and other agencies and international organizations, as to strategies that might be promoted to ensure significant improvement in small-scale fisheries development, with particular reference to the sector's contribution to food security and poverty alleviation. The Committee may wish to emphasize the importance of:

- gaining a better understanding of the nature, extent, and causes of vulnerability and poverty in small-scale fisheries and improved information on and indicators for monitoring the contribution of small-scale fisheries to food security and poverty alleviation;
- improved cross-sectoral and inter-agency collaboration and development of effective strategies and policies to address poverty and food security issues, and, where appropriate, inclusion of small-scale fisheries in national poverty reduction strategies and policies;
- better management through the allocation of secure fishing rights backed by appropriate legislation to small-scale fishers in coastal and inland zones and their effective protection from industrial fishing activity or activities that degrade aquatic resources and habitats;

implementation of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries, and development of technical guidelines on increasing the contribution of small-scale fisheries to food security and poverty alleviation; and lastly,

the encouragement of the formation of fishermen's organizations at community level and the facilitation of their representation at local, regional and national levels thereby creating a sense of ownership and accountability by the small-scale stakeholders in the decision-making process.

¹ FAO World Food Summit, 1996. World Food Summit Plan of Action, §I.

- ² Literature review of studies on poverty in fishing communities and of lessons learned in using the SLA in poverty alleviation strategies and projects. G. Macfadyen and E. Corcoran, 2002. *FAO Fisheries Circular*. No. 979.
- ³ FAO/MRC/Thailand/Netherlands Ad Hoc Expert Consultation on New Approaches for the Improvement of Inland Capture Fishery Statistics in the Mekong Basin, 2-5 September, 2002 (see also footnote 11).
- ⁴ Ethical issues in food and agriculture. *FAO Ethics Series*, No. 1. 2001.
- ⁵ The Millennium Declaration contains the commitment to halve, by the year 2015, the proportion of the world's population whose income is less than one dollar a day
- ⁶ Inland capture fisheries statistics of Southeast Asia: current status and information needs. FAO Regional Office for Asia-Pacific, Thailand. February 2002 (Covers: Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Thailand , and Viet Nam).
- ⁷ For example, Inland Fisheries. *FAO Technical Guidelines for Responsible Fisheries*, No. 6. FAO, 1997.
- ⁸ New Thinking on Poverty: Implications for Poverty Reduction Strategies. P. Shaffer, 2001

November 2004

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COMMITTEE ON FISHERIES

Twenty-sixth Session

Rome, Italy, 7-11 March 2005

SUPPORTING SMALL-SCALE FISHERIES THROUGH AN ENABLING ENVIRONMENT

SUMMARY

This paper explores the importance of the context in which small-scale fisheries operate, and argues that only through the creation of an enabling environment can these fisheries fulfil their potential to contribute to reaching the important goals of poverty alleviation and food security as stipulated in the World Food Summit and the Millennium Declaration. There are a number of strategies that can be employed to facilitate small-scale fisheries operations, including initiatives aimed at making changes to fisheries policy and legislation, improving non-fisheries policy and legislative environment, tailoring fisheries management regimes, facilitating financial arrangements, improving information, developing human capacity and making markets work for small-scale fishers.

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1. At its Twenty-fifth Session in 2003, the Committee on Fisheries “strongly advocated that more efforts be made to support the small-scale fisheries sector, both inland and marine” and requested that technical guidelines on increasing the contribution of small-scale fisheries to food security and poverty alleviation be prepared. The Committee indicated that “such guidelines should, *inter alia*, stress the importance of national fisheries development strategies that promote good governance and inclusiveness....”.

2. Practical strategies are outlined in this paper, the adoption and implementation of which could significantly improve the conditions in which small-scale fisheries operate. Governments and non-governmental stakeholders, as well as the international community, are encouraged to improve these conditions.

3. An explanation of key terms and concepts is provided at the outset to justify the facilitating of the overall conditions in which small-scale fishers operate. Some possible strategies are then suggested, which could be adopted and implemented by stakeholders and the international community. The document concludes by inviting the Committee to address a list of suggested actions.

KEY TERMS AND CONCEPTS

4. The FAO Advisory Committee on Fisheries Research (ACFR) Working Party on Small-scale Fisheries, at its Second Session held in Bangkok, Thailand, in November 2003, agreed on a vision statement and a characterization of small-scale fisheries as follows:¹

Small-scale fisheries can be broadly characterized as a dynamic and evolving sector employing labour-intensive harvesting, processing and distribution technologies to exploit marine and inland water fishery resources. The activities of this subsector, conducted full- or part-time, or just seasonally, are often targeted on supplying fish and fishery products to local and domestic markets, and for subsistence consumption. Export-oriented production, however, has increased in many small-scale fisheries during the last one to two decades because of greater market integration and globalization. While typically men are engaged in fishing and women in fish processing and marketing, women are also known to engage in near-shore harvesting activities and men are known to engage in fish marketing and distribution. Other ancillary activities such as net-making, boat-building, engine repair and maintenance, etc., can provide additional fishery-related employment and income opportunities in marine and inland fishing communities.

Small-scale fisheries operate at widely differing organizational levels ranging from self-employed single operators through informal micro-enterprises to formal sector businesses. This subsector, therefore, is not homogenous within and across countries and regions, and attention to this fact is warranted when formulating strategies and policies for enhancing its contribution to food security and poverty alleviation.

5. The **vision for small-scale fisheries** is one in which the contribution of these fisheries to sustainable development is fully realized. This vision affirms that:

- they not be marginalized and that their contribution to national economies and food security be recognized, valued and enhanced;
- fishers, fish workers and other stakeholders have the ability to participate in decision-making, be empowered to do so, and have increased capability and human capacity, thereby achieving dignity and respect; and
- poverty and food insecurity do not persist; and that social, economic and ecological systems be managed in an integrated and sustainable manner, thereby reducing conflict.

6. Furthermore, the ACFR Working Party on Human Capacity Development, in April 2004,² considered an **enabling environment** as a societal context that allows for development processes to take place. Some of the features that define “enabling environment” are coherent sector policies and strategies as well as coordination across sectors, good levels of human capacity development and organizational development, good governance, and a lack of conflict.

Why is an enabling environment so important for small-scale fisheries?

7. Small-scale fisheries play an important role with respect to such key issues as poverty reduction and food and nutritional security. Their contribution, at the macro-economic level, is seemingly very small in comparison to other sectors, such as agriculture, and only in SIDS economies and those of a few countries is GDP significantly increased by the contribution of the

¹ Advisory Committee on Fisheries Research, Report of the Second Session of the Working Party on Small-scale Fisheries, Bangkok, Thailand, 18–21 November 2003, *FAO Fisheries Report* No. 735.

² Advisory Committee on Fisheries Research, Report of the First Session of the Working Party on Human Capacity Development in Fisheries, Rome 19–22 April 2004, *FAO Fisheries Report* No. 745.

small-scale fisheries sector. However, the role of small-scale fisheries in the household and local (community) economies may be quite substantial. Through direct and indirect food security mechanisms, income and employer multipliers effects, small-scale fisheries and related activities play a significant role at the micro-levels especially for the poorest households who depend more heavily on these activities. At household level, small-scale fisheries represent the difference between starvation and food security and fishing becomes the “bank in the water”.

8. Given the appropriate conditions, small-scale fisheries can contribute significantly to pro-poor growth in particular through its capacity to play the role of buffer and labour safety valve for increasing rural and unskilled population. In addition, small-scale fisheries, through their redistributive capacity, could be a very powerful way to reduce rural inequity and set up the institutional and economic conditions of a pro-poor growth for those who are chronically unable to engage in the productive economy. This may, in turn, favour faster economic growth which can then trickle down to the poorest households. Finally, small-scale fisheries, fish processing and trade provide the population with important and sometimes crucial safety-net alternatives as part of a multi-activity, reducing vulnerability and risk. In terms of livelihood-based strategy toward sustainable development, small-scale fisheries play the role of substitute and/or complement to other economic activities to help the households sustain their standard of living in the absence of formal unemployment and/or insurance schemes.

9. Despite these crucial roles and contributions of small-scale fisheries, the sector is still largely neglected by decision-makers and planners and absent from discussion relating to national poverty reduction strategies. The successful creation of favourable conditions would enhance small-scale fisheries contribution to the themes/subjects/aspects alluded to in paragraphs 6 and 7 above but also allow the sector to contribute to both a) ensuring implementation of the Code of Conduct and the appropriate International Plans of Actions, and b) poverty reduction and food security, two issues highlighted in the goals of the Millennium Declaration, and particularly relevant to goal 1 (eradicate extreme poverty and hunger).

WHAT CAN BE DONE?

Making changes to fisheries policy and legislation

10. Frequently small-scale fishers and fishworkers, and especially when they are poor, are unable to initiate and carry out the changes that would be to their own benefit, and this is because they are economically, socially and politically marginalized. They therefore require special protection and assistance. Fisheries policy must provide a long-term vision for small-scale fisheries (rather than just a short-term development plan) through the clear specification of objectives and policy tools employed to achieve these objectives. Legislation should provide the mechanisms for implementation and enforcement of these objectives. Together they will provide the overall framework in which small-scale fisheries can operate and they must therefore be formulated to include specific ways of supporting small-scale fisheries; it is not sufficient just to control activities of an industrial nature (although this may be important). And because small-scale fisheries have significant potential to alleviate poverty and food insecurity, unlocking this potential also requires policy and legislation that is specifically targeted at the poor and food insecure.

11. It may be necessary to consider how small-scale fishers and fishworkers are defined in legislation. A broad definition of artisanal/small-scale fisheries is required which, for example, includes fishworkers/fishers involved in processing and marketing activities so that their work can be formally recognized. A failure to do so can have adverse implications for accessing financial assistance, membership of unions or organizations, etc., and can disadvantage women, whose involvement in many segments of small-scale fisheries but particularly post-harvest activities is significant.

12. Policy and legislation supporting small-scale fisheries may cover a wide range of issues, and the following should be considered for their appropriateness in different situations:

- Management measures specifying seasonal or area restrictions for foreign/domestic industrial activity;
- Priority access by small-scale fishers to coastal land and near-shore areas of sea;
- Security of rights to resources more generally. This is especially important for poor small-scale fishers, whose rights are often easily eroded in the absence of such legislation;
- Community-based fisheries management and co-management;
- The ability to make local bylaws which can support particular local circumstances;
- Movement of migratory fishermen and access to fish resources (although care needs to be taken over migratory rights coming into conflict with indigenous fishing rights);
- Bycatch utilization in industrial fisheries, and support for the small-scale post-harvest sector and ensuring access to catch by small-scale processors and traders;
- Safety at sea (small-scale fishermen may be especially at risk to accidents due to type of vessels being used, so legislation should focus specifically on safety at sea in small-scale fisheries);
- Rights of small-scale fishers to access straddling stocks, recognizing the fact that in many countries small-scale fishers now operate far offshore; and
- A process for redress by small-scale fishers and fishworkers, e.g. the appeals process.

13. Including small-scale fishers and fishworkers (and especially the poor and food insecure) in policy and legislative processes is also likely to maximize the potential for a supportive policy and legislative environment that reflects fishers' real needs. Improving such processes can be achieved through:

- More consideration of the stakeholders to be involved;
- Formalization of processes to ensure appropriate involvement by small-scale fishers;
- Careful planning to allow sufficient time and budgets for wide stakeholder involvement to become a reality;
- Working with small-scale fisheries organizations and unions to strengthen the ability of their representatives to participate meaningfully;
- Adaptation of workshop tools to cater for different educational levels and experience of technical issues, and to encourage contributions to be made by small-scale fishers at policy meetings;
- Formalization of methods to ensure transparency; and
- Decentralization involvement, and accountability, by bringing decision-making closer to the people.

Improving non-fisheries policy and legislative environment

14. Small-scale fisheries are impacted by policies outside the sector, and those wishing to support small-scale fisheries should strive to engage in policy and legislative processes in other sectors so as to influence them in favour of small-scale fisheries. Some important examples include:

- National policies and legislation relating to public sector reform and decentralization which may be supportive of co-management, and devolution of policy formation and management responsibilities to small-scale fisheries communities;

- National policies on poverty contained in national poverty reduction strategies and PRSPs, which may include reference to, or impact on, small-scale fisheries, poverty reduction in coastal communities and gender and equity issues;
- National policies and legislation on trade enabling the ability of small-scale fisheries to export fisheries products;
- National policies and legislation on finance and credit that support the activities of small-scale fishers;
- National level policy and legislation on social security, labour rights, and migration;
- Supportive national policy/regulations on cooperatives and organizations;
- National policy and legislation on human rights such as the right to food, the right to earn a living, the right not to be discriminated against, and the right to education, either through specific legislation on issues which will support such rights or by enshrining such rights in constitutions, to which all national legislation is subsidiary;
- Policy and legislation in other sectors, for example environment, water and forestry, to address marine pollution, water levels in inland water bodies, and mangrove deforestation, respectively;
- Local policies and legislation on planning and infrastructure provision acting as a catalyst for small-scale fisheries where they facilitate business activity and do not disproportionately benefit the better off, larger-scale interests; and
- Local policies on granting and protecting rights of ownership to coastal/shoreline land. (Many small-scale fishers live in conditions of poverty because they do not have legally recognized tenure to the land on which they settle. With insecure tenure, fishing communities have no incentive to invest in improving their housing conditions and are often found in ‘unofficial’ settlements that lack access to basic state-provided infrastructure, e.g. schools, clinics, water drainage and sanitation.)

Tailoring fisheries management regimes

15. A management regime supportive of small-scale fishers can be created through a number of means. As alluded to above in considering changes to fisheries policy and legislation, one way is to define and enforce a rights-based management system, and one ensuring preferential access for small-scale fishers and/or the case of passive gear in areas in which they can operate (for instance through zoning or seasonal trawl bans). Preferential access can be also achieved, for instance, through the use of artificial reefs (recommended in the Code of Conduct) since, in addition to creating new habitats for fish, they hinder industrial trawling in inshore areas.

16. Decentralized management responsibilities assigned to the local level (where local capacity exists) can improve the representation and accountability of the management system, thereby enhancing the chance for small-scale fishers to see their needs and priorities integrated into the decision-making process.

17. Co-management is also likely to improve the conditions of small-scale fisheries for similar reasons. Given recent pilot studies and research on co-management suggesting its benefits, there is now an urgent need to mainstream these activities where they have been successful, or have the potential to be so. This can be achieved if there is the political will and incentive for central government and fisheries departments to relinquish control over resource management, and if actions plans are well specified. Action plans for co-management should pay attention to *inter alia*: existing management and decision making processes; the different management functions required of different parties under a co-management regime; necessary human capacity developments; ensuring support at the local level; the costs and sources of finance to ensure sustainability; strong representation of all interest groups; and an appropriate policy and legal

framework. With respect to this latter point, if co-management initiatives are to be successful, basic issues of government action to establish supportive legislation, policies, rights, and authority structures must be addressed. Policies and legislation need to: articulate jurisdiction and control; provide legitimacy to property rights and decision-making arrangements; define and clarify local responsibility and authority; support local enforcement and accountability mechanisms; ensure that rights are provided for under the co-management regime; and provide fisher groups or organizations the legal right to organize and make arrangements related to their needs.

Facilitating financial arrangements

18. Fisheries Ministries and Departments, as well as Ministries of Finance and national treasuries, must ensure sufficient and specific budget allocations if strategies to support small-scale fisheries are to be successfully implemented. This might include funding for inshore Monitoring Control and Surveillance (MCS) of industrial fishing activities and recruitment of small-scale fisheries experts, as well as adequate financial support for social security, and appropriate technologies and practices within the small-scale sector. In providing funds to support small-scale fisheries, it is also necessary to look outside of fisheries sector budgets. At the national level, ensuring the inclusion of small-scale fisheries in national poverty reduction strategies can help access poverty-related funding. Support for small-scale fisheries can also be provided indirectly at the local level, for example, through support/finance for local administrations or NGOs working in fisheries and more generally in rural development. Decentralized management of funds may help to enhance their effectiveness in supporting the small-scale sector.

19. There are moves towards greater ‘market discipline’ in the sector as a way of contributing towards a transition to responsible fisheries. This is evidenced by recent focus on issues such as withdrawal of subsidies, strengthening of use rights, substitution of grants with loans, and cost-recovery programmes with greater emphasis on capture of resource rents (although this may be less relevant for small-scale fisheries than for industrial fisheries). The move to responsible fisheries will in many cases have significant impacts on small-scale fishers. As a result, targeted assistance for small-scale fisheries may be necessary to ease the impacts of this transition. For example, while subsidies and wider incentives (in fisheries and other sectors) which may lead to over-exploitation should be guarded against, incentives and subsidies should be considered where appropriate but their use requires careful justification and specification of the period over which they are to be used. Subsidies might be appropriate if they enhance or diversify livelihoods without leading to increased fishing capacity or trade distortions, or are used to facilitate a structural change to assist with the move towards responsible fishing.

20. Many small-scale fishery enterprises would need access to credit or seed capital to start. Both capital investment and working capital loans are required. This is all more important in the context of the application of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries in small-scale fisheries, when small-scale enterprises may need to acquire appropriate gear and adopt proper fishing methods, invest in value addition to make better use of scarce resources and, if necessary, move from capture fisheries to aquaculture or non-fishing enterprises.

21. Informal/traditional credit schemes have positive attributes in terms of providing access to capital or assets because they are ‘closer’ to the users, more flexible, and more adapted to their needs. However, in the absence of schemes run on a collective basis, these informal schemes tend to lack transparency and accountability, and money-lenders typically charge high interest rates and often enter into exploitive relationships. As a result, establishing rural credit institutions in the form of cooperatives, or encouraging commercial banks to provide cheap/subsidized credit to fishers, can be used as a strategy to support small-scale fishers. However, evidence from evaluations suggests that many formal credit programmes are often unsuccessful, both in terms of the viability of lending institutions, and the ability of intended beneficiaries to access credit. Some reasons for these failures include borrower-unfriendly products and procedures, inflexibilities and

delays, insufficient levels of collateral held by the poor, high transaction costs as opposed to interest rates (both legitimate and illegal), and high rates of non-repayment.

22. The problems of informal credit markets and rural credit institutions discussed above have led to a growing recognition of the importance of microfinance as a crucial development tool for poverty alleviation. Microfinance is the provision of a broad range of financial services such as deposits/savings, loans, payment services, money transfers and insurance, and is characterized most commonly by small loans. Globally, women constitute the majority of microfinance clients, possibly because of their better repayment records. Targeting women in microfinance programmes in fisheries is equivalent to investing in their empowerment and improving livelihood diversification and well-being of their families and communities. FAO recently published a Technical Paper³ that provides a contextualization of microfinance, and a consideration of lending and savings models. It contains many practical suggestions that should be followed about ways of ensuring that micro-finance initiatives are successful.

Improving information

23. Facilitating optimal conditions for small-scale fishers depends on access to good information on which appropriate policies and strategies can be based. This requires improved data collection, as well as further research on small-scale fisheries that is participatory in nature and seeks to learn from indigenous knowledge.

24. Information systems are also needed that are low on data requirements. These systems should however monitor and evaluate small-scale fisheries and levels of poverty, vulnerability and food security in fishing communities. Improvements in systems of information exchange can also increase the ability of those in fisheries and non-fisheries administrations to appreciate the importance of small-scale fisheries. But getting relevant information across to the right parties in the most effective manner requires planning and budgeting for carefully-planned communication strategies. The resulting impacts of successfully demonstrating the importance of small-scale fisheries might, for example, be the inclusion of small-scale fisheries in national poverty reduction strategies.

Developing capacity

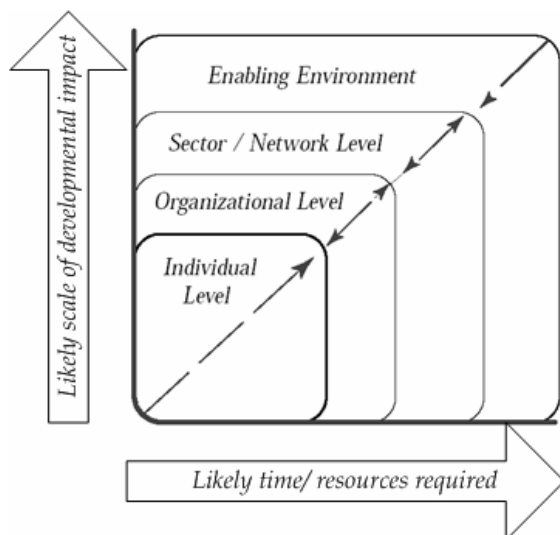
25. Once appropriate information is available on which to base policies and strategies, they must be successfully implemented. Successful implementation can be underpinned by a process of human capacity development, which is “the process by which individuals, groups, organizations, institutions, and societies develop their abilities – both individually and collectively – to set and achieve objectives, perform functions, solve problems and to develop the means and conditions required to enable this process”.⁴

26. As shown in Figure 1, there are four levels of human capacity development. It is desirable to conduct, at each level, a capacity needs assessment followed by training needs analysis and curriculum development for key capacity needs, and then selection and use of appropriate delivery mechanisms (a fully developed strategic framework for human capacity development is presented in COFI/2005/Inf.11). Human capacity development at all levels may require a focus not just on fisheries-specific skills and knowledge, but also on improvements in more general management skills such as conflict resolution, planning, administration, etc.

³ Technical Paper 440 on Microfinance in fisheries and aquaculture: guidelines and case studies (Tietze and Villareal, 2003).

⁴ FAO Fisheries Report No. 745, Rome, FAO, 2004.

Figure 1. The four levels of human capacity development



Source: Adapted from Bolger, 2000.⁵

27. For capacity development in the overall environment in which the fisheries sector operates, a focus on good governance is especially relevant. The key aspects of good governance would include inclusiveness, lawfulness, transparency, and accountability. At the sector/network level, increasing the ability to ensure coherent sector policies and strategies, as well as coordination across sectors, can enhance capacity. At the organizational/institutional and individual levels there is the need for a) more fisheries experts specializing in small-scale fisheries in fisheries departments and Ministries, donor agencies, and non-governmental organizations, b) a greater emphasis on social, economic, and livelihoods skills in such organizations while not neglecting the natural sciences including resource assessment, and c) enhanced capacity in organizations representing and working for small-scale fisheries, e.g. those concerned with technical fisheries management issues, social welfare, credit/savings and marketing, and/or political negotiation or lobbying.

Making markets work for small-scale fishers

28. When considering “markets” it is important to consider both “input” and “output” markets. Input markets can be made to work for small-scale fisheries through some of the means discussed above, e.g. micro-finance to address issues of credit and enabling migration legislation to address issues of labour requirements. Other input markets, especially those for imported items, need to be carefully monitored to assess their impacts on small-scale fisheries, with logistical, and in some cases legal, interventions ensuring easy and equitable access to the inputs needed. Examples might include encouraging good competition between companies supplying small-scale fishers, facilitating the swift movement of imported items through customs, or facilitating transport of input items for sale in remote locations.

29. In terms of output markets, both domestic and international markets can offer huge benefits for small-scale fisheries. A first step would be to raise awareness about the importance of marketing and trade of fish and fishery products produced by a small-scale fisheries as a component of fisheries (and other sectoral) policies and programmes (see discussion above on

⁵ Bolger, J., Capacity Development: Why, what and how? CIDA, *Occasional Series* Vol. 1, No. 1, May 2000.

improved information and the use of communication strategies). Such a step is especially needed given a) the strong historical emphasis on export-led growth from industrial fisheries, b) the important gender component of post-harvest activities.

30. Another step would be to recognize the global changes in fish trade, which are currently underway and will facilitate change in the overall conditions of small-scale fishers. Such global changes include: rapidly increasing levels of production in developing countries and increasing net receipts of foreign exchange; more fish and fish products being sold in fresh, chilled or frozen form as opposed to traditional forms of preservation in developing countries of salting or drying; and increases in certification and branding based on environmental and/or social criteria as evidenced by Corporate Social Responsibility, the Marine Stewardship Council and many other initiatives (although their overall market share is still small).

31. Although such changes provide positive opportunities for small-scale fisheries, they may also impact negatively on some of those small-scale operators traditionally involved in fish trade. In many countries, changes have resulted in greater potential profits, and new investment and technology in the catching sector are resulting in concentration of ownership in fewer hands, and landings at fewer landing sites. Likewise, the greater use of ice and sale of fresh and chilled products, coupled with improved transport, has important implications for traditional processors and those supplying inputs such as fuel wood, traditional packaging materials and so on, to such activities. These developments have also increased the ability of external buyers to access fresh fish from remote landing centres, increasing competition with traditional traders and processors. There may be gender impacts too, with women especially affected by concentration of ownership, where traditionally they had gained access to supplies of fish from husbands working in the catching sector.

32. Appropriate initiatives to ensure that small-scale fisheries can respond to opportunities resulting from global trends can involve lobbying for, and providing information on, changes to international trade policy and regulations, strategic marketing advice to assist with expansion into new markets based on the specific requirements of those markets, technological and practical support to facilitate greater levels of fresh/chilled sales, and assistance for compliance with certification criteria. Capacity development is also required so that small-scale fish workers, and especially women and the very poor, can adapt/mobilize to minimize any potential negative impacts of global trends and local situations.

33. On a national level, ensuring reliable access by processors/traders to both fish and markets is essential. Access to fish by small-scale traders and processors can be enhanced through support for sustainable resource exploitation coupled with support for the small-scale catching sector, as small-scale processors depend to a large extent on this sector for supplies of product. Access to fish can also be enhanced through greater levels of bycatch utilization from industrial fisheries. Appropriate facilities at harbours and landing sites where fish can be purchased can also increase access by small-scale traders and processors, particularly women, to fish. Such facilities include running water, storage facilities, sanitation and toilets, and night shelters.

34. Improving access to markets by poor traders can be achieved through initiatives that support appropriate technologies in processing, preservation, transport, and storage, all of which can help to increase value-added, and reduce fish spoilage and wastage. Free movement of fish products without unnecessary harassment at checkpoints and borders is another important issue for many small-scale traders and can be facilitated through greater awareness of current problems and overall improvements in levels of governance. Provision of appropriate facilities at market sites for traders themselves (e.g. toilets, running water, child care facilities, market stalls at low rentals, etc.) is as important in ensuring access to markets as it is to ensuring access to fish.

CONCLUSION

34. It should be recalled that the Expert Consultation (convened on the recommendation of the Twenty-fifth Session of COFI on the Role of Small-scale Fisheries in Poverty Reduction and Food Security) held in Rome in July 2004 recommended the development of a new Article on 'Small-scale fisheries and Poverty Alleviation'. Such an Article should include the following elements:

- Responsible fisheries that address the Millennium Development Goals
- Integration of fisheries into national development and poverty reduction strategies
- Strengthening the rights of small-scale fisheries
- Empowerment through communication, capacity building and organization
- Fisheries and related policy favouring the poor
- Legislation in support of the poor
- Appropriate financing for poverty reduction
- Pro-poor fisheries management approaches
- Reducing vulnerability through better coping mechanisms and social safety nets
- Making markets work for the poor.

SUGGESTED ACTION BY THE COMMITTEE

35. The Committee is invited to review the paper and provide guidance to Member Nations, FAO and other agencies and international organizations as to strategies that might be promoted to ensure an enabling environment for small-scale fisheries. Agencies and international organizations may wish to indicate specific areas where they might be involved. The Committee may also wish to recommend amending the Code of Conduct to include an article on small-scale fisheries.



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COMMITTEE ON FISHERIES

Twenty-seventh Session

Rome, Italy, 5 - 9 March 2007

SOCIAL ISSUES IN SMALL-SCALE FISHERIES

SUMMARY

This paper argues that more attention should be given to social issues in small-scale fisheries. Fishing communities often lack awareness, opportunity and cohesive social institutions to be able to self-organise, articulate their demands, negotiate with government agencies and actively participate in the planning of their own future. Poverty, vulnerability and low levels of social development compromise the ability of small-scale fishers to adopt responsible fishing practices and participate in co-management and community-based fisheries management regimes.

Social development issues can be addressed through various sectoral policies relating to education, health, social insurance and others. A human rights perspective provides an overarching approach to addressing social development which has been widely adopted in the UN system. The Committee is invited to provide guidance on the kind of policies and measures that could be taken by countries and development agencies including FAO in support of social development of small-scale fisheries.

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1. Fisheries make important contributions to meeting the Millennium Development Goals on poverty reduction and food security and can be a source of wealth creation, supporting national economic development. In order to sustain and enhance these contributions, a policy environment that enables responsible fisheries in the small-scale sector is required. Legal recognition and protection of small-scale fishing and fish marketing interests as well as strengthening community fishing rights are key elements of this enabling environment. The current trend towards devolving fishing rights to resource users will have greater benefits if there is a simultaneous effort to reduce vulnerability and social exclusion in small-scale fishing communities.

2. The promotion of human rights is critical for the social development of fishing communities. These rights include legally-mandated rights to decent working conditions, gender equality, children's rights and the rights of migrants and other potentially vulnerable groups. In seeking to provide an enabling environment for responsible fisheries, fisheries sector governance would benefit from making greater use of the rules and principles of international law on human rights. Small-scale fisheries would also benefit from stronger links with national and local poverty reduction policy actions to ensure that fishing communities have equitable access to social service provision, including health, education and judicial services.

3. This paper builds on two previous COFI papers on small-scale fisheries, presented at the Twenty-fifth and Twenty-sixth meetings, in 2003 and 2005, respectively. The paper from the 25th session of COFI identified "the need to raise living standards" and emphasised fishing people's vulnerability to natural, occupational, economic and health risks and their geographical and political exclusion from wider development processes. The COFI 26 paper identified the need to improve governance in the sub-sector, focusing on practical strategies to create an enabling environment in which these fisheries could "fulfil their potential to contribute to the important goals of poverty alleviation and food security". This paper combines these concerns by linking improved living standards in fishing communities with improved governance of fishery resources.

WHY IS SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT NECESSARY FOR RESPONSIBLE FISHERIES?

4. Recent research on poverty in fishing communities concludes:

- The *income and asset-ownership status of fisherfolk is highly variable* within communities. Boat and gear owners and larger-scale traders can be among the wealthier members of their communities. Working as a crew member on a fishing boat or processing fish for sale can provide better financial returns than other wage-labour options. However, incomes are often uncertain and seasonal, and where fisheries resources are in decline, incomes are also declining.
- Fisherfolk are often excluded from access to other employment opportunities, from equitable access to land, social services such as health and education, and may have weak political representation. They may also be poorly served by roads, markets and other infrastructure. These factors lead to *marginalization of fisherfolk* in development processes.
- Marginalization, insecure rights of access to resources and dependence on uncertain production systems, as well as the risky nature of many fishing operations, make fishing people *vulnerable*. They are exposed to risk; their livelihood systems are sensitive to those risks; and their marginalization makes it difficult to adapt to the impacts of 'shocks' and adverse trends in the natural environment, the economy or to policy and governance failures.

5. Securing the right to fish can be very important to people, but it doesn't protect fishers and their families from the effects of lack of access to health and social services, arbitrary taxation, theft of fishing gear, forced eviction from their house, or sex discrimination in the workplace. Assistance from other sectors (and other budget lines) in solving some of fishing communities' most pressing non-fishery problems would make it easier for them to solve their fishery-related ones. This would then help small-scale fishers to fish responsibly and continue to contribute to reducing poverty – both their own and that of those outside the sector to whom they provide food, revenue and economic opportunity.
6. Many people in fishing communities lack the power, education and cohesive social institutions to be aware of their rights, to be able to self-organise and articulate their demands, negotiate with government officials and to carry out their responsibilities. In short, they are in need of social development in order to participate effectively as partners with government in fisheries management.
7. Small-scale fisherfolk are often excluded from processes of development planning, either because they are mobile (including unregistered international migrants), living in marginal and remote areas, or simply because their role and contribution to the economy is poorly known and underappreciated. For these reasons, they may not be able to gain the support of external agents (e.g. governments, NGOs, donor agencies) to help them reduce their vulnerability and improve their rights and access to the basic social services. In turn, the lack of these services puts them at risk of ill health, to missing out on financial service and educational provision, to theft and conflict, and of exclusion from participation in social and political processes.
8. Development activities in fishing communities that help to address social exclusion can support the operation of community-based fishing rights. Recent community management institutions in some African fisheries have been designed to include the poor and those previously excluded from resource management institutions – including women boat owners and male crew labourers¹. Without wider investment in social development to address the factors that produced this exclusion, there is a risk that externally-enforced participation by these groups can be undermined and the benefits of community management are redistributed to favour the more powerful.
9. Where there are known violations of human rights in fishing communities, (such as failure of boat owners to provide crew members with acceptable working conditions, extensive use of child labour or systematic discrimination against women), or where there are recognised social development problems (such as lack of legal recognition of fish landing sites, or high prevalence of HIV in fishing communities), then addressing these issues, in partnership with appropriate social development specialists, can immediately become part of the fisheries development agenda.
10. Resource degradation is not necessarily the most important cause of poverty in fishing communities. Indeed, in many cases, the degraded fishery may nevertheless be a 'safety net' that prevents destitution, or continues to provide better economic returns than alternative livelihood sources. The risk of resource degradation or stock collapse may be perceived as low by many fishers in comparison to the exposure of their livelihood systems to the risks of ill health or death (particularly from Malaria, HIV/AIDS, waterborne diseases, and drowning and accidents), theft or loss of fishing gear, or lack of secure access to alternative productive assets, such as land.

¹ Nunan, F. (2006) Empowerment and institutions: Managing fisheries in Uganda. *World Development* 34(7): 1316-1332.

11. The small-scale fisheries sector is also vulnerable to external factors beyond its control. These include floodplain modification and damming of rivers, displacement by aquaculture, tourism and other coastal development, and pollution. Local systems allocating fishing rights can confront and prevent some of these threats, but not all -notably pollution and upstream modifications in river basins. Where fishing interests are historically overridden or unrepresented by competing claims, then people have no incentive to invest in managing their local fishery resources to optimise future yields.

12. The overall outcome is that, because of their continuing vulnerability and social exclusion, many fishing people currently lack both the incentive and capacity to claim and defend systems of access rights that aim to conserve stocks for their exclusive use.

13. An appropriate development response is therefore to address small-scale fishing people's vulnerability and social exclusion as important components of any programme that aims to define and strengthen rights of access as a means to improve the contribution of fisheries to poverty reduction and to rebuild fisheries to contribute to wealth creation and economic growth.

HUMAN RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBLE FISHERIES

14. Contemporary social development practice is informed both by development targets, such as the Millennium Development Goals, and by principles, rules and standards contained in instruments of international law, such as the Universal Declaration on Human Rights. The rights of fishworkers engaged in the small-scale sub-sector are identified in the 1995 FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries², although they are not explicitly formulated within the framework of a 'rights-based approach' to development, which did not emerge until the late 1990s. The Code does not refer explicitly to any international instrument on human rights, however it is to be interpreted and applied "in accordance with other applicable rules of international law" (Article 3). Among the relevant provisions of the Code are the following:

- Article 6.13 is supportive of "effective participation [of fishworkers and others]...in decision making with respect to the development of laws and policies related to fisheries management, development, international lending and aid", while;
- Article 6.17 urges states to ensure that "all fishing activities allow for safe, healthy and fair working and living conditions".
- Article 6.18 is most directly relevant: "States should appropriately protect the rights of fishers and fishworkers, particularly those engaged in subsistence, small-scale and artisanal fisheries, to a secure and just livelihood, as well as preferential access, where appropriate, to traditional fishing grounds and resources in the waters under their national jurisdiction".
- The Code also specifies that fishery management objectives should have a social and economic equity component (i.e. should not just specify economic maximisation criteria) and provide that "the interests of fishers, including those engaged in subsistence, small-scale and artisanal fisheries, are taken into account" (Article 7.2.2e).

² FAO (1995). Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries, Rome. www.fao.org/DOCREP/005/v9878e/v9878e00.htm

- Article 11.2.15 also urges states, multilateral development banks and other international organisations to ensure that policies and practices related to the promotion of international fish trade and export production do not “adversely impact the nutritional rights and needs of people for whom fish is critical to their health and well being and for whom other comparable sources of food are not readily available or affordable”.

Thus, the Code can be linked to the Universal Declaration on Human Rights³ (UDHR) in its support for rights to participation in governance (in accordance with Article 21 of the UDHR), rights to decent work (Article 23), an adequate standard of living and adequate food (Article 25).

15. The synergies between principles and more detailed technical provisions of the Code and human rights provide an opportunity to ‘mainstream’ fisheries in a wider development context, and this process has begun through the recent trend for inclusion of fisheries in wider poverty policy processes (e.g. Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers). The addition of a rights-based framework makes states responsible for addressing fisherfolk’s poverty, irrespective of the growth potential of the fishery sector.

16. Investing government revenues and development assistance budgets in social development in fishing communities will require justification that there is some comparative advantage to doing so, in terms of meeting MDGs, for example, relative to investment that could be made in other communities also subject to poverty and infringement of rights to food, decent work and dignified lives. The strength of this argument will obviously depend on the importance of the actual and potential role of fisheries in the national economy. Where fisheries employ large numbers of people, contribute to the tax base and to export revenues, and also contribute to national diet, there is a strong case for investing to maintain or enhance the productivity of the sector. Where fisheries are of minor national importance, fisheries still may provide localised ‘engines of growth’ or important ‘safety net’ occupations for the landless poor.

17. Even in the absence of cost-benefit data, there are some cases where the argument for investing in social development is compelling. In the case of HIV-affected fishing communities, the cost of not investing in targeted HIV prevention (in the broadest sense) goes well beyond the potential for lost revenues and efficiency in the fishery sector itself⁴;

A HUMAN RIGHTS PERSPECTIVE OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

18. Fisheries development will need to address the factors that most immediately and directly threaten the sustainability of fisherfolk’s livelihoods. Often, these factors are not related to their fishing activities and the status of the resource. Neither are most of them specific to fishing communities, but apply - to a greater or lesser degree - to the poor in general, especially to the rural poor living in remote areas with little access to social services, infrastructure and markets. Addressing social development issues in fishing communities requires ways of working and diagnostic tools for policy reform and planning that may be new to the fishery sector. Rather than

³ UNHCHR (1988) Universal Declaration of Human Rights. United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Geneva. (accessed from http://www.idir.net/~cnc/UN_UDHR.htm)

⁴ In Uganda, where HIV prevalence is high in fishing communities, the government is investing in addressing HIV in the fisheries sector as a matter of national priority - to prevent these communities becoming a reservoir for future epidemics and imposing the social and economic burden of the epidemic on yet another generation of its citizens. MAAIF (2004). Uganda Strategy for Reducing the Impact of HIV and AIDS on Fishing Communities. Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries, Kampala, Uganda. (available from http://www.mrag.co.uk/Documents/ug0672/ug0672_9.pdf)

being a burden on the sector, this can be seen as a series of new opportunities to engage with a wide array of development partners – and to broaden the funding base for fisheries-related development.

19. The normative justification for adoption of a human rights perspective to social development in fishing communities is that values and rights are placed at the very heart of development practice - it sets out a vision of what ought to be and, backed by international law, it provides a stronger basis for citizens to make claims on their states and for states to claim support for enhancing the access of their citizens to the means to realise their rights.

20. A human rights perspective can become a catalyst to transform the practice of development - from a focus on identifying and meeting needs, to enabling people to recognise and exercise rights⁵. The human rights perspective identifies freedom (including freedom from hunger), participation and empowerment as the ultimate ends for development.

21. In the case of small-scale fisheries, a broad human-rights approach to social development makes good use of existing legal and policy frameworks; provides a basis for investment and action that does not rely solely on cost-benefit analysis (for which data are seldom available); engages a wide range of development actors; and is compatible with the broad architecture of development assistance, including the MDGs. Adopting a rights framework also reminds fishery managers, community leaders, fish consumers and donors that small-scale fishers have a right to development, and that governments are accountable for helping them realise that right.

22. The vision statement for small-scale fisheries in COFI/2005/5 – that they not be marginalized, be empowered to participate in decision-making, thereby achieving dignity and respect, and that poverty and food security do not persist – is a vision drawn directly from a rights-based way of thinking. The key point to emphasise is that human rights frameworks are already in place – they do not require extensive new policy-reform. There are opportunities to proceed immediately with their implementation.

Strategy for action

23. A strategy to bring together responsible fisheries with social development to strengthen capacity and incentives of fisherfolk to invest in defending their fishing rights could be based on the following principles:

- Addressing over-exploitation that threatens resource sustainability and the flow of benefits from fisheries to the wider economy is the priority objective of a shift towards rights-based fishing.
- As well as defining rights to fish, the rights of present and future generations to benefit from the resources should be included. Building the value of the resources should be an explicit objective of fisheries management in the small-scale sub-sector.
- A rights-based approach, in defining and allocating rights to fish, would also address the broader human rights of fishers to an adequate livelihood and would therefore include poverty-reduction criteria as a key component of decisions over equitable allocation of rights, including in decisions over inclusion and exclusion, and the protection of small-scale fishworkers' access to resources and markets. It would also include addressing deficiencies in fishing people's rights of equitable access to health care, education, justice and the rule of law.

⁵ Cornwall, A. and Nyamu-Musembi, C. (2004). Putting the 'rights-based approach' to development into perspective. *Third World Quarterly* 25(8): 1415-1437.

- Transition to rights-based fishing requires relationships between fishing rights-holders and duty-bearers (such as governments) to be transparent and based on mutual trust and accountability. This requires empowerment of fishing communities, both through their social inclusion and building their capabilities.
- In countries where fisheries make significant economic contributions, integrating responsible fisheries policies with wider poverty reduction policies, such as Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers, is a necessary condition to achieve inter-sectoral policy coherence and maximise the contribution of fisheries to meeting poverty targets such as the Millennium Development Goals. It is also important for ensuring that fisheries agencies receive a fair allocation of central and local government budgets.

CONCLUSION

24. Providing development support to fishing communities in the form of strengthened human rights and better access to social services can help achieve poverty reduction and facilitate the adoption of responsible fisheries practices. Programmes like those designed to introduce rights-based fishing to the small-scale sector may fail at either poverty reduction, resource conservation, or both, if they are undertaken in isolation from a consideration of the broader social and cultural conditions in fishing communities and in societies at large.⁶ Treating co-management and property rights reforms as merely technical and organisational issues, and not also as political and institutional issues, risks the failure of genuine reforms.

SUGGESTED ACTION BY THE COMMITTEE⁷

25. The Committee is invited to review this paper and provide guidance to Member Nations, FAO and other agencies and international governmental and civil society organizations on appropriate approaches, strategies and measures in which a human rights perspective might be used to foster social development and more effective resource management in small-scale fisheries. The Committee may wish to specifically comment on the Strategy for Action outlined in paragraph 23 and recommend specific social development measures relating, inter alia, to the following:

- a legal framework that ensures access to justice for all individuals and groups within fishing communities;
- policies allowing for non-discriminatory, secure access to and utilization of resources important to small-scale fishing communities;
- assurance of access to natural resources and social sector support services by women and vulnerable, marginalized and traditionally disadvantaged groups, including migrant workers, indigenous peoples, displaced persons in fishing communities;
- legal provisions for representation in local decision-making processes by women and other vulnerable groups in fishing communities to allow them to participate fully and equitably in the economy.
- social protection measures such as direct cash transfers to the poorest and other safety net measures such as post-disaster food aid.

⁶ This point has been made effectively in two previous FAO technical reports, which also outline the importance of understanding social and cultural issues as an essential part of fisheries management: Townsley, P. (1998). *Social Issues in Fisheries. Fisheries Technical Paper 375*, FAO, Rome and McGoodwin, J.R. (2001). *Understanding the Cultures of Fishing Communities: A key to Fisheries Management and Food Security. Fisheries Technical Paper 401*, FAO, Rome.

⁷ These recommendations are compatible with those given in FAO (2006) *The Right to Food: Putting it into Practice*. Rome.



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COMMITTEE ON FISHERIES

Twenty-eighth Session

Rome, Italy, 2 – 6 March 2009

SECURING SUSTAINABLE SMALL-SCALE FISHERIES: BRINGING TOGETHER RESPONSIBLE FISHERIES AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

INTRODUCTION

1. The contents of this document are largely based on the presentations, panel statements and working group discussions of the Global Conference on Small-Scale Fisheries - Securing sustainable small-scale fisheries: Bringing together responsible fisheries and social development, 13-17 October 2008. The Conference was held in response to a request by the 27th session of the Committee of Fisheries (COFI) that FAO convene a broad-based international conference focussing specifically on small-scale fisheries.
2. The Conference was co-organized by FAO and the Royal Government of Thailand and convened in collaboration with the Southeast Asian Fisheries Development Centre (SEAFDEC) and The WorldFish Center. It was financially supported by several donor agencies.
3. The Conference was attended by more than 280 participants from 65 countries representing fishworkers, fisheries managers, academics, government officials, representatives of professional associations, NGOs and other civil society organisations, the private sector, and international and regional development partners and agencies.
4. The Conference covered a wide range of issues including wider social and economic development and human rights issues. A special focus of the Conference was on securing access and user rights by small-scale fishers and fishing communities and indigenous peoples to coastal and inland fishery resources that sustain their livelihoods.

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The main Conference themes were:

- Securing sustainable resource use and access rights
- Securing post-harvest benefits
- Securing social, economic and human rights

5. Each theme was introduced by three plenary presentations and panel statements by participants from different stakeholder categories. Subsequently, specific aspects of each theme were discussed in-depth in working groups.

6. A Civil Society Preparatory Workshop was held on 11-13 October 2008 by civil society organisations and fishworkers representatives. It produced a comprehensive statement that was introduced to the Conference and is reproduced in the full Conference Report.

OVERVIEW

7. The Conference re-enforced the claim that small-scale fisheries have yet to fully realize their potential to significantly contribute to sustainable development and the attaining of the UN millennium development goals (MDGs). In many developing countries small-scale fisheries contribute directly to food and livelihood security, balanced nutrition, poverty reduction and wealth creation, foreign exchange earnings and rural development.

8. The latest estimates indicate that small-scale fisheries contribute over half of the world's marine and inland fish catch, nearly all of which is used for direct human consumption. They employ over 90% of the world's about 28 million capture fishers and support another approximate 84 million people employed in jobs associated with fish processing, distribution and marketing. At least half of the people employed in small-scale fisheries are women. The importance of the small-scale fisheries sector is of global reach and its diversity in culture and traditions are part of humankind's heritage.

9. In spite of their economic, social and nutritional benefits and societal and cultural values, small-scale fishing communities often face precarious and vulnerable living and working conditions. There are various factors contributing to these conditions, including insecure rights to land and fishery resources, inadequate or absent health and educational services and social safety nets, vulnerability to natural disasters and climate change and exclusion from wider development processes due to weak organizational structures and representation and participation in decision-making.

10. Small-scale producers, processors and marketers face various constraints in realizing benefits from globalization including expanding trade in fish and fishery products. These include inadequate access to markets, financial services, know-how and capacity to make better use of and add value to their catches and meet increasingly demanding sanitary requirements. This situation is aggravated by fishery resource declines, coastal habitats loss, and by user conflicts both within and outside the fishery sector.

11. The Conference was informed of several **regional initiatives and programmes** that aim to build human capacity to introduce co-management and promote participation of small-scale fishers in decision making and management of their resources.

12. The Conference did not produce a unanimous statement but identified several critical ways forward in securing sustainable small-scale fisheries that integrate social, cultural and economic development, address resource access and use rights issues guided by human rights principles, and recognize the rights of indigenous peoples. It reaffirmed that human rights are critical to achieving sustainable development.

CONFERENCE THEMES

Theme 1: Securing sustainable resource use and access rights

13. There are significant **challenges of sustainable resource use** in small-scale fisheries which often cannot be adequately addressed by the standard methods of management applied to large commercial fisheries. The difficulties often include, for example, widely dispersed landing sites; the multi-species nature of resources; fishery resources shared with other communities and sectors; and others. In inland and coastal fisheries external impacts on resources are also often more significant than those from the fisheries themselves. In these circumstances, proactive management for optimal resource use is generally unattainable. Instead current approaches propose focussing simply on maintenance of the viability of resources and strengthening the resilience of dependent communities through an adaptive management approach with an important contribution from traditional knowledge and practices of the resource users. However, the level of precaution required by such an approach means that potential benefits may be lost. Therefore this approach should be seen as a minimum necessary level of management. The long-term solution should be to reduce uncertainties as much as practically possible to enable proactive, rigorous co-management with the goal of optimal, sustainable benefit. Full participation of the fishers and other stake-holders is essential in both approaches.

14. Considering that small-scale fisheries continue to be an employer of last resort in many instances, access and use rights need to be considered within a wider development context. For many fishing communities, livelihood priorities are access to clean water, basic health and education services and social safety measures. Better stewardship of fisheries resources is often secondary to meeting these immediate livelihood needs.

15. Economic diversification is vital for reducing the pressure on limited fishery resources, **sustaining livelihoods** and reducing vulnerability and poverty. Fishing rights need to benefit the right people including migratory fishers who, as temporary or new residents in an area, are often marginalised from democratic decision-making structures.

16. It was recognized that it was necessary to address **fisheries governance** in the context of governance in general. Principles of good governance, including consultation and participation, transparency and accountability, were needed in order to ensure that stakeholders are informed and policies and management measures supported. Policies needed to be underpinned by clear, specific and consistent objectives which had to be shared, agreed on and understood.

17. In establishing the institutions that promote good governance the role of the different actors needed to be defined. For example, it was suggested that governments should primarily concentrate on creating an enabling environment and should delegate power of policy implementation to the local stakeholders, based upon the recognition that effective management cannot usually be delivered at a national level scale.

18. Customary **access rights** are often based on social and cultural norms and have their specific legal and ethical bases within each region or country. There is a major concern about the various factors that are leading to loss of access to traditional fishing areas, including the establishment of protected areas, tourism and development of aquaculture and infrastructure.

19. Concern was also expressed about current management policies that commonly favour large scale industrial production over small-scale fisheries. Specific reference was made to the various instances where individual transferable quota (ITQ) schemes negatively affected the fishing opportunities of small-scale fishers. In this connection, the importance was noted of observing the provisions of Article 6.18 of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries.

20. Customary access rights and entitlements do not always equitably apply to women. Thus long held traditional practices may have to be changed to remove gender discrimination. Where poorly enforced, even equitably allocated fishing rights may not deliver any benefits to small-scale fishers.

21. **Fisheries livelihoods and culture** were reported to be inadequately recognized and valued. Small-scale fishing communities are not inherently poor, but the modernization process has tended to erode traditional values and livelihoods including customary practices of allocation and sharing of resource benefits. Traditional cultural values and holistic governance practices including concepts such as resource sacredness are not easily translated into monetary value and adapted into modern management policies.

22. **Sustainable local management** of small-scale fisheries resources requires legal, practical and community based prerequisites in support of decentralized and shared management. It was proposed that legislation and policies should support (i) empowerment of fisherfolk to formulate bylaws and regulations, (ii) judicial recognition of local institutions and structures, (iii) devolution of enforcement authority to community structures, (iv) legal protection of landing sites and delineated fishing grounds, and (v) legal recognition of the role of women and other shore based workers. A major challenge is to provide fishing communities and fishery institutions with the capacity to actively and on equal terms participate in the partnership with government.

23. There are generally **high interdependencies** of small-scale fisheries with other sectors including tourism, agriculture, energy, industry and infrastructure. Tourism can lead to displacement of small-scale fisheries. Large hydropower projects alter river hydrology and can cause negative effects on fisheries productivity and sustainability. The use of chemicals in agriculture can adversely impact small-scale fisheries and curtail, for example, rice-fish cultivation.

24. In order to maximize inter-sectoral synergies and mitigate negative impacts, actions are needed to: (i) improve valuation of the social, economic and cultural contribution of small-scale fisheries and create greater awareness among policy makers and other stakeholders on their importance; (ii) formulate coherent policy for integrated multi-sectoral investments and development, considering existing interdependencies, (iii) build capacity of stakeholders to engage in policy debates, and (v) enable appropriate communication strategies at all levels.

25. **Marine protected areas** (MPAs) are tools for both biodiversity conservation and for fisheries management. Many protected areas are located in inshore areas that overlap with the fishing grounds of small-scale fishers. At one end of the spectrum, MPAs may be initiated and managed by fishing communities. In these instances, the participatory procedures can be time consuming but such MPAs are seen as tools by the communities to secure their resource use rights also vis-à-vis detrimental impacts by large-scale fisheries and aquaculture. At the other end of spectrum, MPAs may be established through a top-down process by governments and large international environmental NGOs without community consultation. In these latter instances, MPAs are often not beneficial for local fishing communities even though they may benefit tourism. It was recalled that the Civil Society Preparatory Workshop called for binding involvement of local and indigenous communities and small-scale fishers in the designation, establishment and management of MPAs.

26. The promotion of appropriate and **energy-saving technologies and practices** can be achieved through increased fuel efficiency of engines, use of renewable resources (e.g. solar power, wind turbine, wave power) and alternative fuels. Energy savings can also be achieved by optimizing the catch per effort through rebuilding of over-exploited stocks; better identification of fish stocks in space and time; improved gear selectivity to reduce bycatch; modern navigation equipment (i.e. GPS); and the use of carrier boats.

Theme 2: Securing post-harvest benefits

27. **Post-harvest benefits** arise in a variety of ways including increased incomes, improved health, better food security, sustainable resource use, reduced vulnerability to poverty and improved sustainable livelihoods in fishing communities. The areas where greater post-harvest benefits could be sought include the **reduction of post-harvest fish loss** through improved post-harvest technologies and practices, infrastructure development, production of value-added products and increased access to rewarding markets and trade. The growing sanitary demands to access international markets were of concern to many small-scale processors and traders.

28. Women constitute a high percentage of those active in the post-harvest sector. **Empowering women** and increasing their income is a recognized best practice to address poverty within households. Women and young girls continue to face marginalization and discrimination in their work place. They urgently need better alternatives to exploitative and degrading practices and the risks of HIV/AIDS.

29. There is concern that post-harvest developments that expand external markets and trade can have negative repercussions on local life and customs including cultural diversity, social development and biodiversity. Measures that foster economic growth should not become a cause for economic and social disparities as these carry the risk to destroy the social fabric of local communities and their traditional activities. While **international trade** generally contributes to economic growth, there is a risk of inequitable and unsustainable trade leading to higher levels of poverty and reduced food security. There was recognition that **effective fisheries management** was needed for sustained benefits from expanding markets and trade.

30. **Regional trade** could be expanded and yield large benefits to producers and consumers alike if the impediments are removed that still prevail in many regions including poor roads, frequent check points, cumbersome custom documentations and corrupt practices.

31. An example from Lake Victoria showed how small-scale fishers were able to secure greater post-harvest benefits. While all fishing is undertaken by small-scale fishers, large commercial interests engage in fish processing that targets export markets. The concerned governments have invested in sanitary infrastructure especially at fish landing sites and testing laboratories to meet stringent requirement of sanitary standards to guarantee quality and safety of fishery products.

32. The **working group discussions** on the post-harvest theme addressed various critical issues for ensuring that benefits accrue equitably and sustainably to small-scale fishing communities and help empower women.

33. There were different views on the desirability and benefits of **certification and ecolabelling** schemes. They were seen as an opportunity by some and as a threat by others to securing sustainable small-scale fisheries. The merits of different types of certification and labelling schemes needed to be carefully examined in relation to the specific small-scale fishery and its potential to reap benefits from international market access. In relation to the statement developed by the Civil Society Organizations to the Conference rejecting ecolabelling schemes, it

was underlined that many fishworkers and their organizations are not against area-specific labelling or branding schemes that identify socially and ecologically sustainable fisheries. It was recognized that while not all small-scale fisheries wish to access international markets, those wishing to become certified and enter an ecolabelling scheme face a range of challenges. These include the complexities in complying with the schemes' standards, meeting certification costs, getting organized to acquire market access to large retail chains and capture economies of scale, and ensuring that expanding markets and better prices do not incite unsustainable levels of fish harvest.

34. The **women's roles in post-harvest activities** and their socio-economic contribution needed to be better recognized and their status better defined (as fishmongers, fish processors, etc). The need was stressed for gender segregated data and statistics. As small-scale fisheries have become increasingly commercialized and cash oriented, the role, duties and contributions of women have significantly expanded in many regions. Women fish traders constitute an important source of credit and often pre-finance fishing trips. Moreover, they are often partners in fishing operations, a responsibility that often remains invisible. Income of women earned in post-harvest activities generally contributes a major share to household income (e.g. a study in Guinea indicates a figure of up to 80 percent). The role of women as workers in processing plants has become increasingly important and they should be encouraged to ascertain their trade union rights. Women's working conditions in these factories need to be better documented and abuses prosecuted.

35. Women's post-harvest work and contribution to family well-being, local food supplies and national economic growth should be appropriately reflected in government policies. For instance, they need to get, as a minimum, the same access to credit and microfinance services as men do. They also need equitable allocations of use rights to fishery and other natural resources such as agricultural land.

36. While for historical reasons the term "**cooperatives**" can have a negative connotation, it is generally accepted that cooperatives could improve the resilience and stability of fishing communities. They could increase the price negotiation power of fishers vis-à-vis middlemen, help stabilize markets, improve post-harvest practices and facilities, and help with marketing logistics and market information. Cooperatives can encourage higher levels of market competition by setting up auctioning systems, helping with market information and purchasing of supplies and where appropriate, investment in joint cooperative structures such as ice plants and fish processing facilities.

37. As the scale of fish harvest determines the scale of post-harvest activities, there are strong **links between the management of fisheries and the post-harvest sector**. It is therefore essential to integrate post-harvest policy into fisheries management plans. Value addition and enhanced returns on fishing should become an incentive to comply with fisheries management measures and not act as an incentive to overfish. In some cases, markets recognized more selective fishing gear and techniques which could lead to better compliance with fisheries management measures.

Theme 3 Securing social, economic and human rights

38. Given the international consensus to achieve **human rights** for all, the adoption of a human rights approach to improving the life and livelihood of fishing communities should not be seen as a matter of choice but as an obligation. It would provide a strong basis for citizens to make claims on their States, and for holding States to account for their duties. At a fundamental level, it requires strengthening the capacity of rights holders—fishing communities in this case—to be aware of, and to claim and exercise their rights effectively, and of duty-bearers to fulfil their human rights obligations.

39. **Securing social, economic and cultural rights of small-scale fishing** communities, in the main, seeks the implementation of provisions that already exist in international legislation and agreements, especially the 1986 United Nations Declaration on the Right to Development, and also including customary law. For small-scale fisheries collective, community based access and management regimes are commonly more appropriate than private rights, which are often the goal of more prevalent “rights-based” fisheries management approaches. A wide range of rights, including securing the rights of women to participate fully in the fisheries are needed. Securing participation in fisheries and coastal management was seen as a critical step.

40. Using the existing legal framework that supports the **Universal Declaration of Human Rights** provides a potentially effective means of guiding investment and development action in securing sustainable small-scale fisheries. In doing so, it aligns what fishery sector analysts call the ‘rights based approach’ with the same terminology used by those involved in economic and social development.

41. Development investments focussed narrowly on aquatic tenure reform will not gain effective support of fisherfolk who live insecure lives and do not perceive the decline or possible collapse of fish stocks as the most immediate threat to their well-being. A broader social development agenda is needed that is based on a human rights framework and supported by cross-sectoral partnerships with government agencies, non-governmental organisations and international and bilateral agencies.

42. An example was presented to the Conference how the indigenous coastal Samis of northern Norway, for more than one hundred years, have been in a constant struggle to safeguard their traditional and customary fishing areas, and right to fish. It was not until 2008 that this issue was adequately addressed, when a high-ranking coastal fishery commission stated that historical utilization and international law concerning minorities and indigenous peoples had to be taken into account in Norway’s fisheries management regime. A change in law is expected soon establishing that everybody in the Sami region will have the right to fish enough to make a decent living for a household, without having to buy a quota.

43. The multi-stakeholder panel on this theme re-iterated the need to abolish all kinds of gender discrimination and give special attention to securing the rights of women who make up one half of those working in fisheries and contribute largely to household well-being.

44. The notion was dispelled that there was nothing to be worried about regarding the fate and rights of small-scale fishing communities in the western world. Given the global dimension of rights issues faced by these communities, there was a call for an international declaration similar to the 2007 United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. As this may take many years or even decades to achieve, full use needed to be made of the provisions of existing international treaties that are binding on States. In this regard, reference was made, for example, to Article 1 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, and Article 1 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights which both provide that “All peoples have the right of self-determination, including the right to determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development.” It was also suggested that UN agencies such as FAO had a special responsibility to ensure that States met their international obligations.

45. The main conclusion from the panel was that by putting human rights on the fisheries agenda, the Conference was certainly a step in the right direction. In particular, reconciling human rights and natural resources management should be a major area of future work in fisheries.

46. The **working group discussions** focussed on critical aspects of securing social and economic rights and applying the human rights approach in small-scale fisheries. A fundamental concern was ignorance about human rights principles at various levels and inadequate information flow between government and fishing communities. The links between poverty and abuses of human rights were noted as in the case of child labour. While the principles of human rights are universal, the implementation approaches needed to reflect the specificities of countries. The interrelationship between individual and community rights was noted as was the special importance of collective rights to fishery resources.

47. A matter of priority is the protection of the **economic, social and human rights of women**—women as community members, self-employed, or paid or unpaid workers. The importance was stressed of mobilizing and organizing women into groups. Organization and mobilization are key to enabling women to make claims on the State and secure their full freedoms and rights. Having a strong organizational structure can facilitate the recognition of women's organizations by governments and enable women to demand the right to participate in decision making. Organizations generally benefit greatly from being legally constituted.

48. Women's groups need to have a clear vision or mission and a good understanding of their goals and targets for advocacy and lobbying. Women's groups in fisheries could benefit from networking and building alliances with and learn from other women's groups in a variety of sectors to identify key strategies such as reporting on compliance with especially the 1979 Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women and the Work in Fishing Convention.

49. There is a need to look at women's rights in the broader context of their roles in the community and community needs. Women often need training and awareness-raising about their rights. However, in many contexts, more basic educational needs have to be addressed first. Illiteracy can constitute a key obstacle to women realizing their rights. Women's lack of access to basic infrastructure and services in general, including health services, adds to the difficulties of asserting their rights. NGOs can often play an important role in addressing such needs.

50. In other situations, the possibility to effectively implement women's rights, even when commitments have been made at the political level, is compromised by religious and customary practices. Women should not be organised in isolation; women and men need to work together to achieve women's rights and change gender relations and men may also need support and training.

51. Data collection on the roles, type of work women do and on access to and control over resources can be used as an empowering tool to educate women and advocate for rights. The use of the media to highlight women's roles – for example women's role in key harvest processes such as fish smoking – is another strategy that can make important contributions in the field of women's rights.

52. The **working conditions** in fishing and post-harvest activities are often harsh and mentally difficult, also often because of a situation of geographical and social isolation from the rest of society. Formal work contracts and social security systems are not usually found in small-scale fishing and post-harvest activities. This causes high levels of insecurity and economic hardship in times of illness, accidents and old age. Where pension schemes exist, incomes are often far too low for a decent life.

53. Education and health care facilities, even when available in a country, are not always accessible by geographically remote fishing communities. Additionally children may be taken away from school to assist in fishing during peak seasons.

54. The entry of inexperienced workers displaced from other sectors including agriculture pose special risks as fishing and navigation needed special skills. Further, as coastal resources are depleted, fishers increasingly operate in offshore waters, at times in small and unsafe vessels. Thus, safety at sea needed to be addressed at all levels including the international level.

55. The plight of immigrants, often illegal workers, is of great concern. These workers commonly form a large part of a low-paid workforce and are not covered by social welfare support and their human rights are frequently grossly violated.

56. The group recommended that FAO and ILO should give priority to ensure decent working and living conditions in small-scale fisheries and seek that the relevant ILO conventions are applied, especially the 2007 Work in Fishing Convention (ILO Convention No. 188). It was also suggested that the working conditions in each country be analyzed and minimum goals be established that can be subject to regular monitoring and reporting.

57. In general terms, the recognition of **rights of indigenous peoples** has made progress, in particular in terms of international legal instruments. Among international instruments, most important are the 2007 UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the 1989 Convention concerning indigenous and tribal peoples in independent countries (ILO Convention No. 169).

58. The progress made in international legal instruments has not been matched in practice by effective recognition of indigenous rights by governments and society in many countries of the world. In reviewing the situation, it is necessary to distinguish indigenous peoples issues from those affecting ethnical minorities. While recognising that they may have many problems in common, their status differs in international legal instruments and therefore different strategies of action apply in securing their rights.

59. Indigenous people who depend on fishing for their livelihood are more vulnerable to outside intrusion because of their special cultural, social and religious dependence on their traditional (ancestral) land and resource base. These indigenous peoples are often threatened, inter alia, by other fishers, especially of last resort, trying to obtain their livelihoods from indigenous fishing grounds.

60. A two-fold approach was recommended by the working group: (i) a firm and ongoing fight for the recognition of indigenous fishing communities rights to their territories, land and waters (and their fishing rights) in the judiciary system; and (ii) an on-going political mobilisation to raise social awareness and to influence political decisions at all levels. In these processes, the working group recommended that indigenous people should be in the drivers' seat and NGOs, academics and other interested groups should play supporting roles.

61. *Creating and enhancing democratic governance* and policy spaces for fisher community representation (including women) would usually require a policy decision leading to the relevant legislation and appropriate implementation structures such as fishery policy advisory committees or beach management units. The process should be bottom-up rather than top-down.

62. The importance of transparency and accountability in governance was highlighted. To be heard is not sufficient, if the voices raised by a representative are not reflected appropriately in the decision-making process. The importance of capacity building of the community, their leaders and representatives was underscored. In this context, the significant role of civil society organizations was highlighted in, for example, providing information to the government on what is happening in reality on the ground. The role of the media in generating awareness about the situation prevailing in small-scale fisheries was also underscored.

63. There are **growing problems with the arrest and detention of small-scale fishers when undertaking trans-border fishing**. Numerous examples were mentioned from Africa, Asia and Central America. Events leading to detention of small-scale fishers are of varied nature. Unintended border crossings can occur because of adverse weather conditions, engine failure or ignorance about the geographical coordinates of the border. However, encroachments are often intended and undertaken for various reasons including following the fish stocks on their migration, seeking to access historical fishing grounds, search for better fishing grounds in view of locally depleted resources, seeking to benefit from better fish markets or cheaper inputs, and also various illegal activities (smuggling, illegal migration, etc.).

64. UNCLOS Article 73 addresses the enforcement of fisheries laws and regulations of the coastal State in its EEZ. While law enforcement requires deterrence, Article 73 (2) and (3) require States to promptly release arrested vessels and their crews upon the posting of reasonable bond or other security. Penalties for violations of fisheries laws and regulations in the EEZ may not include imprisonment and, in the absence of agreements to the contrary, no form of corporal punishment. Prompt information shall be sent to flag State about vessel and penalties. The working group noted that these UNCLOS provisions were rarely complied with. Fishing crews are imprisoned and the flag State and family members are often only informed after a long delay.

65. It was acknowledged that it sometimes could be difficult for the enforcement personnel to know what had been the actual reason for the small-scale fisherman violating the border, but a generally more differentiated approach to violations was encouraged. States subject to frequent border violations by small-scale fishers are encouraged to set up more informal interstate bodies from both States, which would be able to handle violations more reasonably and quicker. There were examples of consultative workshops among coastguards from different countries that subsequently resulted in bilateral agreements and a communication “hotline”. These have proven beneficial for all parties concerned. Informal arrangements set up by NGOs or fishworkers’ organizations on both sides of the border are known to have been quite successful in obtaining the release of arrested fishers.

66. The working group recommended that the provisions of UNCLOS Article 73 are followed by governments in letter and spirit, mechanisms be set up to provide timely information on arrests and detention to affected families; structures be set up at lower levels for direct communication between countries and measures to build rapport between relevant offices/officials across borders to reduce chances of unjust treatment; and longer-term measures be taken to address the root causes of border encroachments including sensitization of policy makers, better fisheries management, bilateral and multilateral agreements that allow for regulated cross-border crossings; and facilitation of regional and multilateral mechanisms by agencies such as FAO and the regional fisheries bodies.

THE WAY FORWARD

67. A multi-stakeholder panel provided an overview of the Conference and presented views on the way forward. A common tenor of the panelists was that small-scale fisheries had been neglected for too long and that more national and international efforts were needed to recognize and protect their traditions, values and societal roles and support their rightful place in development as it was them that contributed most directly to achieving the UN MDGs.

68. Various areas were identified for priority action at **national level** including the adoption of a human rights framework for social development; the empowerment of community organizations, giving more decision-making power to women; support to adaptive co-management that accounts for traditional knowledge and customary rights; protection and legislation of the rights of small-scale fishing communities to fishery resources and land;

promotion of market access through improved post harvest handling and marketing and better access to credit; support to diversified if not alternative sustainable livelihoods; access to basic social services; and overarching capacity building and networking.

69. At the **international level**, there was a call for an international instrument on small-scale fisheries. This could be a special chapter on small-scale fisheries in the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries or an international plan of action (IPOA) or international guidelines. There was also the call for a dedicated global programme on small-scale fisheries under the purview of FAO which would be guided by COFI or if members so wish a special Sub-Committee on Small-Scale Fisheries.

OTHER RELATED FAO ACTIVITIES

70. In addition to the Global Conference, there were several other important activities that FAO undertook in support of sustainable small-scale fisheries. These included the development of a global programme and an Africa regional programme on fisheries and aquaculture for external funding. Both programmes prioritize support to small-scale fisheries to enhance their contribution to food security and poverty alleviation and achieving sustainable practices within an ecosystem approach. FAO is further expanding its cooperation with regional and international partners in securing sustainable small-scale fisheries. It is collaborating with World Fish Center and the World Bank's PROFISH Program in a number of activities including the development of integrated assessment guidelines for small-scale fisheries and a global review of the respective contributions of small-scale and large-scale fisheries to a range of socio-economic indicators including employment by men and women. FAO has a longstanding cooperation with ILO on working conditions in fishing including safety at sea and has commenced cooperation in the development of guidance materials on policy and practice in respect to child labour in fisheries and aquaculture. FAO has also setup a special topic area on small-scale fisheries in its Fisheries and Aquaculture Internet site.

SUGGESTED ACTION BY THE COMMITTEE

71. The Committee is invited to review the outcomes of the Global Conference on Small-Scale Fisheries and to offer its guidance on the actions that should be taken at national and international levels to securing sustainable small-scale fisheries and enhancing their contribution to attaining the UN Millennium Development Goals.



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pour
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et
l'agriculture

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сельскохозяйственная
организация
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COMMITTEE ON FISHERIES

Twenty-ninth Session

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GOOD PRACTICES IN THE GOVERNANCE OF SMALL-SCALE FISHERIES: SHARING OF EXPERIENCES AND LESSONS LEARNED IN RESPONSIBLE FISHERIES FOR SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

SUMMARY

This document reports on the outcomes of consultative processes that have taken place in the last biennium on good practices in the governance of small-scale fisheries and on key principles and thematic areas that should inform the development of an international instrument on small-scale fisheries and the implementation of a global programme dedicated to these fisheries. The Committee is invited to give guidance on the desirability, scope and nature of such an instrument, comment on the principles and thematic areas identified by the consultative processes and advise on the next steps.

INTRODUCTION

1. The importance of small-scale fisheries for poverty alleviation and food security is increasingly being recognised. However, the situation of many small-scale fishing communities – especially in developing countries – remains precarious and the potential of the sector is not being fully realized. The Committee expressed the need for special consideration of the small-scale fisheries sector in its last several sessions and, in its Twenty-eighth Session in March 2009, called upon the FAO Secretariat to examine various options to carry forward suggestions for the need of an international instrument on small-scale fisheries that would guide national and international efforts to secure sustainable small-scale fisheries and create a framework for monitoring and reporting. This could comprise a new article in the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries, an international plan of action (IPOA) and/or the development of guidelines. Many Members supported the need for FAO to establish a specific global programme dedicated to small-scale fisheries.

2. This document recalls the characteristics and main challenges and opportunities of small-scale fisheries. It reports on the outcomes of the consultative processes that have taken place since the last Committee Session, in particular the global and regional workshops on securing small-scale fisheries¹ and the related development of an FAO Extrabudgetary Programme on Fisheries and Aquaculture for Poverty Alleviation and Food Security. The discussions in these processes have been structured around three main themes: (i) good governance and rights-based approaches; (ii) application of the ecosystem approach to fisheries (EAF); and (iii) the application of disaster risk management (DRM) and climate change adaptation (CCA) to reduce vulnerability of fishing communities to disasters and climate change. Gender has been given particular emphasis as a cross-cutting theme as well as overall key principles such as participation, local ownership and partnerships.

3. There was strong support in the consultative processes for the creation of an international instrument and the delivery of a global assistance programme for small-scale fisheries. Guidance on their scope, principles and contents was equally provided. This document draws strongly on the conclusions and recommendations from the consultative processes that are presented for the consideration of the Committee, together with a suggested way forward, including main activities to be undertaken by FAO and the Fisheries and Aquaculture Department, in collaboration with its partners.

IMPROVING THE INFORMATION BASE ON SMALL-SCALE FISHERIES

4. Small-scale fishing and associated activities are a way of living as well as a key livelihood strategy for many millions of households living near coastal and inland waters, particularly in developing countries. Many small-scale fishers are self-employed and engaged in both subsistence activities (food for the family) and in commercial fishing, processing and marketing. Fish supplied by small-scale fishers generally plays an important role in local and regional food supplies and represents a vital source of animal proteins and micronutrients in local diets. At the

¹ Inception workshop for the *FAO Extrabudgetary Programme on Fisheries and Aquaculture for Poverty Alleviation and Food Security* (see FAO Report of the Inception Workshop of the FAO Extrabudgetary Programme on Fisheries and Aquaculture for Poverty Alleviation and Food Security. Rome, 27–30 October 2009. *FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Report*. No. 930. Rome, FAO. 2010. 68p.) and Regional consultative workshops on *Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries: Bringing together responsible fisheries and social development* in Asia-Pacific, Africa and Latin America-Caribbean (October 2010). The workshops were attended by a total of 202 participants from 63 countries including representatives of governments, international and regional intergovernmental organizations and civil society organizations. The workshops were organized as part of a programme development phase funded by the Swedish International Development Agency (Sida) and implemented under the FAO FishCode Programme. The regional consultative workshops were co-funded by the Government of Norway.

same time, fish entering international markets provide much needed income and foreign exchange. The sector is diverse and dynamic, and traditionally strongly anchored in local communities reflecting their cultures and values.

5. In an effort to overcome the fact that reliable data on small-scale fisheries are often not readily available, making it difficult to correctly appreciate the importance of the sector, a study² was carried out in 2008-2009 to assess the relative importance of small-scale and large-scale fisheries and to demonstrate their social and economic importance. The results of the study showed that the production and number of people involved in small-scale fisheries are often underreported, especially in inland fisheries. Globally, over 90 percent of the estimated 120 million people employed in capture fisheries and related post-harvest activities are small-scale operators and some 97 percent live in developing countries. About half of the workforce is estimated to be women, predominantly employed in the post-harvest sector but also undertaking other activities along the whole production value chain. In addition to the large number of people working full-time or part-time in fisheries, seasonal or occasional fishing often provide vital supplements to other livelihood activities, in times of difficulties or as a recurrent side-line activity.

CHALLENGES IN ACHIEVING RESPONSIBLE FISHERIES AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

6. Small-scale fishing communities are often considered to be among the poorest population groups. While this is explained in part by their dependence on exploiting a limited natural resource and the inherent unpredictability of the fishing profession, there are also other important causes relating in particular to the vulnerability component of poverty. Situated in remote locations with limited access to social services – aggravating problems of ill-health (including prevalence of HIV/AIDS especially in Africa and Southeast Asia) and low levels of education – these communities often lack the organisational structures required to make their voices heard and are thus left behind in decision-making and development processes. In some places, conflicts with industrial fishing operations are an issue and there is increasingly high interdependence of and competition between small-scale fisheries with other sectors such as tourism, aquaculture, agriculture, energy, industry and infrastructure.

7. Pollution, environmental degradation and overexploitation of resources are other key concerns faced by fishing communities. Since 2006, for example, fishing communities in the inland waters of southern Africa (e.g. Chobe-Zambezi River system and tributaries) have been threatened by a serious transboundary aquatic animal disease known as the epizootic ulcerative syndrome (EUS).³

8. Many small-scale fisheries are effectively unregulated and poorly monitored, especially in developing countries and inland waters. Current regimes for zoning between small-scale or artisanal fisheries in the nearshore zone and larger-scale fishing operations are weakly enforced and do not resolve the inability to limit access and fishing effort. Customary practices for allocation and sharing of resource benefits that generally used to be in place in small-scale fisheries have often been eroded because of centralised fisheries management systems, technology development and demographic changes. There is a concern that these various factors, coupled with the increased competition for land, water and natural resources, will lead to the loss of access

² The study has been referred to as the *Big Numbers Project* and was a collaborative initiative by the World Bank, FAO and the WorldFish Center. See World Bank/FAO/WorldFish Center. 2010. The Hidden Harvests - the global contribution of capture fisheries. Conference edition, June 2010. 111p. Available at: <http://siteresources.worldbank.org/EXTARD/Resources/336681-1224775570533/TheHiddenHarvestsConferenceEdition.pdf>.

³ FAO. 2009. Report of the International Emergency Disease Investigation Task Force on a Serious Finfish Disease in Southern Africa, 18-26 May 2007. Rome, FAO. 2009. 70p.

to traditional fishing grounds. At the same time, it should be remembered that while customary systems for access rights and entitlements may have many advantages, they do not always provide equitable benefits, in particular for women.

9. While women participate equally in the fisheries workforce, they are often more disadvantaged and vulnerable than men, as many forms of social, political and economic marginalisation are gender specific. Work done by women, which includes reproductive, household and community services, in addition to economic activities more directly related to fisheries, is often valued lower than that of men. In a workshop organised by the International Collective in Support of Fishworkers (ICSF) from 7 to 10 July 2010 on Mahabalipuram, India on *Recasting the net: Defining a gender agenda for sustaining life and livelihood in fishing communities*, it was noted that although gender mainstreaming and empowerment of women are often included when planning projects and field activities, these experiences do not seem to always effectively feed into fisheries management plans, development strategies and legislation and sufficient reference to gender concerns is rarely made. Moreover, fisheries policy processes tend to focus on primary production, leaving the post-harvest sector and the women working in it in a difficult situation dealing with increased competition from large-scale actors, barriers to trade and limited say on access and use rights issues.⁴

10. Poverty and social inequalities are also two of the main causes behind child labour in the fisheries sector. Child labour in different forms exists in particular in the informal sector and children engage in both fishing (mainly boys) and post-harvest (predominantly girls) activities. Child labour 'hotspots' are often linked to situations with high levels of migration. Child labour tends to be part of a vicious circle of poverty where low levels or lack of education lead to continued marginalisation. Moreover, when child labour is used as a substitute for adult work because of economic constraints in situations where overfishing is causing low incomes, child labour can aggravate the fishing impact on resources and the environment. A workshop on *Child Labour in Fisheries and Aquaculture* in April 2010 noted the urgency to address child labour in these sectors, in particular to eliminate its worst forms (slavery, forced labour, etc.) and to implement national minimum age legislation in the fisheries sector⁵.

11. Many fishing communities are located in areas that are prone to natural disasters. Where land and water meet is one of the most environmentally dynamic environments that exists and it is often the hostility of these areas that provides opportunities for the poor. Climate variability and change are leading to generally more frequent extreme weather events and natural disaster hazards. Population growth and demographic changes contribute to increasing the effects of disasters. Growing pressure on land and natural resources as well as changes in agriculture production systems, are further amplifying risks and impacts. Climate change will also affect livelihoods in fishing communities, in particular in developing countries, as ecosystem productivity in tropical waters is likely to be reduced. This may lead to increased migration of fishers and their traditional knowledge – on resources, fishing and processing will become obsolete. The possibilities to effectively address these issues are hampered by the fact that there is often an institutional separation between disaster risk management (DRM), climate change adaptation (CCA) and sectoral agencies, including fisheries. Fishery administrations often lack the mandate, capacity and resources to respond to the changing vulnerability context that surrounds the livelihoods of small-scale fishing communities. The consequences of this are a weak integration of (DRM) and (CCA) into the fisheries sector and of fisheries into (DRM) and CCA. Consequently, humanitarian interventions in responding to disasters and climate change in fisheries are not addressing the needs of the sector effectively.

⁴ Workshop on *Recasting the net: Defining a gender agenda for sustaining life and livelihood in fishing communities*, July 2010, organised by the International Collective in Support of Fishworkers (ICSF), see <http://icsf.net/icsf2006/jspFiles/wif/wifWorkshop/english/proceedings.jsp>

⁵ Workshop on *Child Labour in Fisheries and Aquaculture in cooperation with ILO*. Rome, 14 -16 April 2010. FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Report. No. 944. Rome, FAO. 2010.

12. Food insecurity and hunger continue to be major concerns in many parts of the world. The recent global food and financial crises have been particularly severe for poorer population groups and the effects may be felt for some time yet. The Voluntary guidelines on the right to food⁶, which were adopted by the FAO Conference in 2004, aim to provide practical guidance to States and stakeholders on how to realise the right to adequate food in the context of national food security. In spite of such efforts, there is still, in many countries, a long way to go to meet the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) target of halving the proportion of people who suffer from hunger. While certain progress has been seen with regard to stalling the prevalence of hunger in some regions of the world, the number of people who are undernourished has continued to grow.⁷

GOOD PRACTICES AND OPPORTUNITIES

13. While the challenges to sustainable small-scale fisheries are numerous, this sector presents also an increasing number of opportunities presenting themselves. Progress has been made with regard to enhancing the understanding of the complexity of poverty, its vulnerability context and the range of coping strategies applied by fishing communities to address threats and sustain livelihoods. There is recognition that poor people's own perception of the sources of their vulnerability needs to be respected and that resilience should be strengthened building on existing adaptive advantages. Support and assistance interventions need to be firmly anchored in national and local contexts and decision-making should take place as close as possible to the people affected by them.

14. Accordingly, more recent developments in the governance arena in many parts of the world include decentralisation of resource management responsibilities and the introduction of co-management arrangements. Such good practices relate to rights-based approaches to fisheries management. When using the word 'rights' in the fisheries context, it has tended to refer to fishery rights defining who can have access to resources and fish, and who can participate in managing the fishery. However, more recent discussions have evolved to include a human rights perspective and the right to secure and just livelihoods, including social and economic rights. Linking fishery rights and human rights reflects a move towards an approach more in line with the reality of the diverse livelihoods of small-scale fishing communities and the complexity of poverty. To apply a rights-based approach in this sense to the allocation of rights to fish implies also addressing the broader human rights of fishers to adequate livelihoods and equitable benefits. Good access rights will balance social, cultural, economic and environmental goals, assist in reducing conflict, enhance food security and livelihoods for small-scale fishers and fishing communities, and facilitate the conservation of local ecosystems. In the regional consultative workshops⁸, strong support for applying a human rights approach in the small-scale fisheries sector was expressed. At the same time, a certain degree of caution was expressed to ensure that it does not become just 'yet another development framework' and to apply it wisely and in accordance with local requirements.

15. Although gender equality continues to be an issue in many countries, a number of good practices have evolved over the years to improve the situation of women. Often integrated approaches, including gender mainstreaming in planning and programming, together with specific activities directed both at women and men, generate the best results. Different activities for men and women (and for other groups) should be planned and implemented as required. Systematic and documented gender analysis needs to be incorporated in all project formulation and activity

⁶ FAO 2005. Voluntary guidelines to support the progressive realisation of the right to adequate food in the context of national food security. FAO. Rome, 2005. 44p.

⁷ United Nations. 2010. The Millennium Development Goals Report 2010.

⁸ See also footnote 1.

planning processes, including for DRM and CCA, ensuring that the different needs of men and women are addressed. Gender awareness-raising should be part of training and capacity development, and there should be gender balanced staff profiles.

16. Many governments are reinforcing the implementation of the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries by adopting an ecosystem approach to fisheries (EAF). EAF allows taking the complexity that often characterises marine, coastal and inland aquatic ecosystems into account and aims at balancing the human dimensions with the ecological aspects in fisheries in a way that makes the approach probably more suitable for small-scale fisheries than 'conventional' management arrangements. In emphasizing the importance of stakeholder participation in fisheries management, EAF is also fully consistent with the principles of co-management. In the regional consultative workshops, EAF was promoted as a key approach for resource management, with co-management as a suitable management arrangement for applying it in small-scale fisheries. In the African region, it was noted that although EAF is a relatively new concept for which practical experience is still limited, there are many elements of the approach that are already being implemented in other contexts and that can provide useful experiences. For example, the Sustainable Fisheries Livelihoods Programme (SFLP) that was carried out in West and Central Africa 1999-2006 applied an approach that addressed a broader range of development needs in connection with introducing fisheries co-management arrangements and thus created incentives for communities to participate in resource management. The work included assistance to capacity building and organisational development as a key strategy to ensure participation. In Asia-Pacific, community-based resource management is now tested in a fairly extensive manner and there has been significant progress in developing co-management. In Latin America and the Caribbean, the need to identify and start dialogue with other sectors that are concomitant users of the natural resources of ecosystems where small-scale fisheries thrive was identified as an important requirement in applying EAF and as an important step towards a multi-sectoral approach to management.

17. Experiences of combining resource governance with social development are hence becoming available and the need for holistic and integrated approaches is generally accepted. This requires cross-sectoral collaboration and the importance of partnerships at all levels was emphasised in the global and regional workshops. The need for concurrent consideration of environmental, resource and community rights and sustainability was highlighted, noting the importance of social and economic rights including, *inter alia*, market access and alternative income-generating activities allowing small-scale fishing communities to sustain livelihoods in particular in a context of change.

18. The need for policy integration and coherence was also discussed and it was noted that small-scale fisheries should be included in overarching national plans for poverty reduction, food security strategies and DRM and CCA plans, and vice-versa. There are close links between DRM and CCA and other development processes in small-scale fisheries, including governance and social development. DRM is a continuous process and it includes not only preparedness, prevention and mitigation but also emergency response, recovery and rehabilitation within a management framework. To strengthen resilience requires adequate integrated support and addressing the vulnerability context at large. It can be noted that, in line with FAO commitments in the context of the Hyogo Framework and climate change, the Fisheries and Aquaculture Department has started to address disaster risk management issues more extensively through a new corporate objective⁹. FAO has also begun work towards the development of guidelines on climate change adaptation with particular relevance to communities dependent on aquatic systems and related resources. Moreover, in collaboration with relevant agencies in the Global Partnership on Climate, Fisheries and Aquaculture (PaCFA), the Fisheries and Aquaculture Department is

⁹ FAO Strategic Objective I "Improved preparedness for and effective response to food and agricultural threats and emergencies worldwide."

exploring options for increasing its technical support to Members on climate change implications for fisheries and aquaculture.¹⁰

19. Throughout the consultative processes, there were calls for capacity and organisational development. In particular, attention should be given to enhancing people's self-determination capacity and promoting their right of choice. The lack of capabilities and capacities, both at the level of government administrations and communities, is a common constraint to effective participation and sustainable results. In situations of change – for example with regard to climate change adaptation – new skills may be required. Lessons learnt from around the world confirm that special efforts are needed at all levels, for a wide range of capacities and capabilities, and for different aspects of resource management and development, including, for example, gender, social development, and EAF implementation. In a currently on-going pilot project on the introduction of EAF in Estero Real on the Pacific coast of Nicaragua, capacity building and development of methods for improving knowledge and monitoring are key components of the implementation plan. One of the major outcomes of the project so far has been the degree of involvement of Nicaraguan institutions and local stakeholders and their level of ownership of the initiative.

20. In a workshop organised by the Asia-Pacific Fishery Commission (APFIC) and FAO in Colombo, Sri Lanka, in 2009, on the Practical Implementation of the Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries and Aquaculture¹¹ participants emphasized the need for more effective coordination between different sectors. It was noted that formal mechanisms for consultation and institutional structures are needed to make this possible. Institutional capacity building efforts should be based on existing processes and institutional arrangements. The use of local and traditional or indigenous knowledge and local technologies and practices was also emphasized. Good practices with regard to knowledge and information involve the participation of small-scale fishers in determining knowledge needs and in the resulting research itself. This reflects an increasing recognition that the participation of fishers in management is more effective if they are also involved in dealing with the underlying information base. The result has been a trend toward participatory research involving fishers and fishing organizations, in many locations. In the best situations, this becomes institutionalized (for example, within community-based fishery management) as a built-in participatory research component.

THE NEED FOR AN INTERNATIONAL INSTRUMENT FOR SMALL-SCALE FISHERIES

21. Throughout the consultative processes undertaken by the FAO Secretariat since the Twenty-eighth Session of COFI, there has been unanimous agreement on the need to pay more attention to small-scale fisheries. There is strong support by governments, civil society organizations and regional and national development partners for developing an international instrument on small-scale fisheries. Such an instrument and a related global assistance programme are considered important tools for securing sustainable small-scale fisheries. This view is based on the recognition that:

- The importance of inland and marine small-scale fisheries as a provider of livelihoods, food, employment and income is not yet sufficiently known and appreciated by policy-makers and the public at large.
- Poverty, remote locations, low educational levels, inadequate organizational development and institutional structures, marginalisation and limited access to social services, as well as to financial and physical resources, contribute to the vulnerability of small-scale fisheries communities, including to disasters and climate change. Small-scale fisheries

¹⁰ See also document prepared for Agenda Item 8 on Climate Change and Fisheries and Aquaculture (COFI/2011/6).

¹¹ APFIC. 2009. APFIC/FAO Regional consultative workshop "Practical implementation of the ecosystem approach to fisheries and aquaculture", 18–22 May 2009, Colombo, Sri Lanka. FAO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, Bangkok, Thailand. RAP Publication 2009/10, 96 pp.

also face serious threats due to growing overexploitation of fishery resources, conflicts from other sectors competing over land and water and other natural resources.

- Small-scale fisheries assessment and management approaches are often different to those used in large-scale industrial fisheries. The particular vulnerability context of the small-scale sector must be addressed; only then can long-term sustainable resource utilisation and livelihood outcomes be achieved.
- To realise the contribution of small-scale fisheries to poverty alleviation and food security, there is need to promote and provide adequate support to the sector and to ensure the access of small-scale fishers and fish workers to the resources necessary for sustainable livelihoods.

22. During the consultative processes, there were no strong views expressed on the nature of an international instrument. In its Twenty-eighth Session in 2009, COFI considered various options including a new article in the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries, an international plan of action (IPOA) and/or international guidelines. However, there was a consensus that any instrument should be voluntary in nature and build upon what is already available in the Code of Conduct and other relevant international instruments.

23. A decision to develop an international instrument for small-scale fisheries should be accompanied by an agreement on key areas of a global programme dedicated to this fisheries, in particular in relation to the assistance to be provided to that sector. This programme would ideally support the development of the instrument itself, including consultations and expert inputs, as well as promote its implementation. It was recognized in the consultative processes that the provision of assistance need not await the adoption of an instrument. However, an instrument could form the basis for the development of regional and national plans of actions on securing small-scale fisheries and also inform local actions by communities and fishworkers' organizations.

PRINCIPLES AND GOOD PRACTICES

24. In addition to the provisions in the Code of Conduct, the regional workshops concluded that the instrument should embrace human rights principles and existing instruments relevant to good governance and sustainable development. Moreover, the instrument should include EAF as a guiding principle for resource management and development. It should draw on available experiences of good governance practices in small-scale fisheries at national, regional and global levels. DRM and CCA should be incorporated as an integral part of the instrument.

25. Within this overall framework and aiming at combating poverty, ensuring food security and promoting sustainable resource use, the regional workshops noted that the instrument should be informed by the following principles and good practices:

- Formal integration of small-scale fisheries into rural development policies.
- Embrace of transparency and accountability as well as holistic, integrated and adaptive management and development approaches that promote social responsibility, protection and solidarity.
- Adoption of inclusive and participatory approaches, promotion of cross-sectoral linkages and fostering of an environment that promotes collaboration and conflict resolution mechanisms among stakeholders.
- Promotion of gender equality, integration of gender concerns and perspectives and empowerment of women.
- Free, prior and informed consent by affected small-scale fishing communities before adopting and implementing projects, programmes, or legislative and administrative measures which may affect them in order to avoid adverse development impacts.
- Equal consideration of environmental, resource and community rights and sustainability, and promotion of co-management and community-based management arrangements,

including for marine reserves and protection areas that are informed by the precautionary approach.

- Encouragement of participatory decision-making at the lowest possible decentralized level (principle of subsidiarity).
- Use of a wide range of information for decision-making, including bio-ecological, social and economic data, from scientific and local and traditional sources.
- Respect of cultures, existing forms of organization, traditions, local norms and practices as well as customary or otherwise preferential access to fishery resources, land and territories, by small-scale fishing communities, including indigenous peoples.
- Recognition of the need for capacity development in all areas and at all levels, and support to awareness-raising, empowerment and cohesion.
- Assurance that disaster risk reduction/management and climate change adaptation policies and interventions respond to the specific needs of small-scale fisheries, recognising that special considerations must be given to fishing communities living on small islands which are particularly vulnerable to disasters and climate change.

26. The human rights approach to development encompasses many of the principles listed above and provides a strong basis for citizens to make claims on their States and hold them accountable. The human rights approach recognizes that everyone, including disadvantaged groups, have legally mandated and recognized rights and the basis to claim them – not as charity, but as a right – and creates the basis for individual and collective action and participation in governance for positive change. Moreover, the human rights approach seeks to expand the capabilities and the freedoms enjoyed by vulnerable people, to provide them the opportunity to fulfil their potential and remove obstacles to their development, such as lack of access to education, health services and social protection.

MAIN THEMATIC AREAS

27. The regional workshops called for an instrument that is global in scope but contains provisions for the development of plans of action at regional and national levels that are specific to local conditions and needs. The instrument should be relevant to small-scale fisheries in **both inland and marine waters** and recognise the interactions between small-scale fisheries, large-scale fisheries and other resource users. All parts of the **fishery system**, i.e. up and downstream activities and actors in addition to fishing operations and fishers, should be addressed. Good practices should hence be promoted with regard to the availability and access to inputs, fishing operations and access to resources, and post-harvest activities including processing, distribution and access to markets.

28. Among the main thematic areas to be dealt with by the instrument, the promotion of holistic and integrated approaches that combine **resource management and social development** will be an important element. These should incorporate **cross-sectoral issues** and coordination, cross-cutting issues – such as **gender** (role of women) and migration (integration of migrants) – and **community development** (health, education, microfinance, etc.). These issues need to be explicitly addressed by the instrument considering their importance to sustainable small-scale fisheries livelihoods.

29. Within this context, the regional workshops emphasized the need to address fisheries management issues, including aspects relating to **governance systems, access regimes, management measures and enforcement**, promotion of co-management and other participatory arrangements, closed areas and marine protected areas (MPAs) managed in cooperation with local communities, development of environmentally friendly fishing gear and post-harvest technologies, and strengthening of monitoring, control and surveillance (MCS).

30. Related to social development is the need to ensure **security and safety** and combat crimes against fishers and their families (piracy, theft, mafia activities in fishing communities), improving working and living conditions, as well as improving safety at sea. In the context of gender, it is particularly important to secure an environment of safety and freedom from violence and sexual abuse for women within households and communities. Child labour should be addressed and equitable benefits for all stakeholder groups and community members should be among the fundamental premises.

31. The consultative processes highlighted the need for **policy coherence** through linkages between small-scale fisheries, overarching fisheries sectoral policies and strategies and national planning processes such as Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs), national development plans, and the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) and One UN processes. Policy coherence should be an integral part of the instrument and also be advocated with regard to the integration of DRM and CCA in fisheries policies and strategies, and the inclusion of fisheries in DRM and CCA frameworks.

32. Enhanced **international, regional and sub-regional cooperation** should be encouraged. This would include, among other things, establishing transboundary information-sharing and resource management protocols and systems, and combating illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing by promotion of integrated enforcement arrangements between States as are already fostered by regional fisheries bodies and addressed in recent international instruments including on Port State Measures.

33. The availability, flow and exchange of **information** should be improved through the establishment of platforms and networks at community and national levels. Horizontal and vertical two-way information flows (among communities or countries; between communities and national and regional structures) need to be promoted. The instrument should also support the collection, compilation and analysis of disaggregated data allowing for an improved understanding of the importance of small-scale fisheries and its different components, including gender roles. For the application of EAF, the generation of ecological, socio-economic and institutional baselines should be called for. The use of a wider range of information, including bio-ecological, social and economic data, from both scientific and local and traditional sources, should be promoted.

34. With regard to **income and economic aspects**, the regional workshops stressed the need for complementary or alternative income-generating activities. Post-harvest losses should be avoided and value addition created for increased product availability, quality and value. Small-scale fishing communities should equitably benefit from developments such as tourism and aquaculture. In the area of trade, greater benefits for small-scale fishers and fish workers should be sought by improving their access to regional and international markets while taking local food security needs into consideration and the development of domestic markets. The instrument should support the elimination of harmful and inequitable subsidies and other unsustainable economic practices.

35. **Capacity development** is needed at all levels and the instrument should give guidance on how these needs can best be effectively addressed. The ability of different stakeholder groups within small-scale fishing communities to effectively participate in relevant institutions and decision-making processes – on resource access and use rights as well as other issues – should be given special attention. Organisational development and support to community networks and organizations that promote sustainable small-scale fisheries should be encouraged. Building the resilience and adaptive capacity of fishing communities in relation to DRM and CCA is another important aspect of capacity building. Special considerations must be given to fishing communities living in small islands which are particularly vulnerable to disasters and climate change.

A GLOBAL SMALL-SCALE FISHERIES ASSISTANCE PROGRAMME

36. The regional consultative workshops recommended that a global programme of assistance should be informed by the principles and thematic areas that have been prioritized for consideration in the envisaged international instrument. Other assistance programmes in support of small-scale fisheries at national, regional and international levels should equally take account of these proposed principles and themes.

37. The global assistance programme should support the development and implementation of the international instrument on small-scale fisheries. It would cover a broad range of initiatives undertaken by the FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Department on small-scale fisheries and would benefit from additional extrabudgetary funding to become effective. More specifically, it would include provisions for (i) the development of the instrument, including stakeholder and expert consultations and inputs, and (ii) direct support to small-scale fisheries in line with the principles and contents described above. The programme would be based on the relevant components of the *FAO Extrabudgetary Programme on Fisheries and Aquaculture for Poverty Alleviation and Food Security* and draw on the outcomes of the recent global and regional consultations. Accordingly, it would consist of three main components addressing (i) good governance and rights-based approaches; (ii) application of EAF; and (iii) disaster risk management (DRM) and climate change adaptation (CCA) in the small-scale fisheries sector.

38. The programme would be global in scope and – capitalising on FAO’s comparative advantages – concentrate on outcomes that can be achieved by the provision of normative information, guidance and guidelines, and tools and systems. Partner collaboration, case studies, capacity building and empowerment, and communication and outreach activities will form the pillars of the implementation approach. Accordingly, it would include selected field interventions that can contribute to the normative outputs as well as create impact at the local and national level. The programme would promote outreach and partnerships including with civil society organizations and the private sector to ensure uptake and further implementation of its results on a broader scale. This approach would promote aid effectiveness in line with the Paris Declaration and ensure a significant contribution to the achievement of the MDGs.

PROCESS AND WAY FORWARD

39. The Fisheries and Aquaculture Department recommends consideration of the following for the process of developing the instrument and delivery of the assistance programme:

- Reference should be made not only to “States” but also to other stakeholders, recognizing the shared responsibility with regard to resource sustainability and livelihoods security.
- Local, national and regional ownership should be ensured and involvement of relevant organisations warranted.
- Implementation aspects should already be considered at the design stage, including the need for technical guidance and supportive mechanisms.
- Results monitoring based on well-defined impact indicators should be an integral part of the implementation modalities.
- The need to take a long-term perspective, which requires political commitment and sustainable resourcing, should be recognised.

SUGGESTED ACTION BY THE COMMITTEE

40. The challenges to advance the small-scale fisheries poverty alleviation, food security and resource sustainability agenda are considerable. Concerted efforts and partnerships at different levels and scale (between donors and partner countries, governments and communities, and among stakeholders) are required. It is also vital to build up national and local ownership in accordance with the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness.

41. The Committee is invited to:

- a. give guidance on the desirability, scope and nature of a dedicated international instrument on small-scale fisheries;
- b. comment on the principles and thematic areas identified by the global and regional consultative processes that would inform the contents of the instrument as well as prioritize the areas of a global assistance programme for small-scale fisheries;
- c. give guidance on the eventual process of developing the instrument and the implementation of a global assistance programme ;
- d. provide recommendations and guidance on other activities to be undertaken by FAO in relation to small-scale fisheries



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COMMITTEE ON FISHERIES

Thirty-first Session

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SECURING SUSTAINABLE SMALL-SCALE FISHERIES: UPDATE ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE VOLUNTARY GUIDELINES FOR SECURING SUSTAINABLE SMALL-SCALE FISHERIES IN THE CONTEXT OF FOOD SECURITY AND POVERTY ERADICATION (SSF GUIDELINES)

Executive Summary

This document recalls the consultative processes that informed the preparation of the draft Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication (SSF Guidelines) by the FAO Secretariat. Referring to the Chairperson's report, it recounts the progress of the two sessions of the Technical Consultation on the SSF Guidelines held on 20-24 May 2013 and on 3-7 February 2014 and the Chairperson's text discussed by the Technical Consultation is submitted to the Committee for finalisation. Moreover, in response to previous recommendations by the Committee on the need to develop implementation strategies for the SSF Guidelines at various levels as well as to establish and implement a Global Assistance Programme which would support this process, the document also proposes an outline and main features of such a Global Assistance Programme.

The Committee is invited to:

- consider the Chairperson's report of the Technical Consultation on the International Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries (COFI/2014/Inf.10)
- consider and finalize the Chairperson's text of the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication included in Document COFI/2014/Inf.10.
- consider the proposed outline of a Global Assistance Programme and advise on activities to support secure and sustainable small-scale fisheries, including the future implementation of the SSF Guidelines – subject to their finalization - and the mobilization of extrabudgetary resources within the new strategic framework of FAO.

INTRODUCTION

1. Following the recommendation of the Twenty-ninth Session of the Committee on Fisheries (COFI) in 2011 calling for the development of an international instrument for securing sustainable small-scale fisheries, the Chairperson's text of the *Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication (SSF Guidelines)* is hereby presented to the Committee together with the Chairperson's report of the Technical Consultation held on 20-24 May 2013 and on 3-7 February 2014 (COFI/2014/Inf.10).

The present document refers to this report, provides a summary of the contents of the Chairperson's text of the SSF Guidelines and recalls its development process during the last biennium.

2. In response to the recommendations of the Committee during its previous Sessions, key elements and features of a Global Assistance Programme have been identified and an outline of an overall implementation strategy has been drafted. Once endorsed, the SSF Guidelines will only be effective if they are recognized, understood and widely accepted by stakeholders and systematically applied in accordance with the guiding principles established therein. Awaiting the finalization of the SSF Guidelines, this document seeks the advice of the Committee with regard to the way forward, in particular concerning the implementation framework proposal and its funding as well as more generally with regard to activities to undertake in support of sustainable small-scale fisheries under the reviewed strategic framework of FAO.

3. Funding for the stakeholder and government consultations that have taken place since the Thirtieth Session of the Committee in 2012 (including the Technical Consultation) and for activities related to the preparation of the implementation proposal has been provided by several donors and host countries. The broad based collaboration by Member States and partners, including Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), is acknowledged.

REVIEW OF THE DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

4. The recommendation of the Twenty-ninth session of the Committee to develop an international instrument in support of small-scale fisheries was driven by the outcome of a number of global and regional conferences and consultative meetings exploring how to bring together responsible fisheries and social development in coastal and inland small-scale fishing communities. For the preparation of the draft of the SSF Guidelines, this consultative process was continued in 2011-2013 and directly engaged more than 4 000 stakeholders across all regions of the world¹. In addition, the Secretariat promoted the SSF Guidelines development process in presentations, round tables, side events etc. during over 20 related events.

5. The draft text of the SSF Guidelines was submitted to a Technical Consultation which took place in two consecutive sessions held on 20-24 May 2013 and on 3-7 February 2014. Eighty-seven FAO Member States and the European Union participated in these negotiations and a significant number of observers (4 international non-governmental organizations, 11 international governmental organizations and 59 representatives from CSOs) assisted in the process.

6. The Technical Consultation reviewed the draft and agreed on final text for all paragraphs except paragraph 6.18. The document as a whole therefore is presented as a 'Chairperson's text' as final agreement could not be reached.

7. Referring to the parts of the Chairperson's text that were agreed upon and following the Committee's recommendations, the instrument will be voluntary in nature, focus on the needs of developing countries and apply to small-scale fisheries in marine and inland waters covering fishing as well as related pre-harvest and post-harvest activities. It will complement the 1995 Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries (CCRF) and be based on international human rights standards, responsible fisheries governance and sustainable development in line with the outcome document 'The future we

¹ More information and reports of the consultation process can be found at www.fao.org/fishery/ssf/guidelines/en and <https://sites.google.com/site/smallscalefisheries/events>.

want' of the UN Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20), and other relevant instruments, e.g. the Voluntary Guidelines on Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security (the VG Tenure)², endorsed by the Committee on World Food Security in 2012, and the Voluntary Guidelines on the Progressive Realization of the Right to Adequate Food in the Context of National Food Security (the Right to Food Guidelines)³ that were adopted by FAO member states in 2004.

8. Drawing on these instruments, the Chairperson's text of the SSF Guidelines contains a number of key guiding principles that should underpin their future implementation: i.e. human rights and dignity; respect of cultures; non-discrimination; equity and equality including for gender; consultation and participation; rule of law; transparency; accountability; economic, social and environmental sustainability; holistic and integrated approaches; social responsibility; feasibility and social and economic viability.

9. With regard to subject matter content, the Chairperson's text of the SSF Guidelines addresses:

- Five main thematic areas in relation to responsible fisheries and sustainable development:
 - Governance of tenure in small-scale fisheries and resource management;
 - Social development, employment and decent work;
 - Value chains, postharvest and trade;
 - Gender equality;
 - Disaster risks and climate change.
- Four areas related to ensuring an enabling environment and supporting implementation:
 - Policy coherence, institutional coordination and collaboration;
 - Information, research and communication;
 - Capacity development;
 - Implementation support and monitoring.

10. The Chairperson's text of the SSF Guidelines aims to enhance the contribution of small-scale fisheries to global food security and nutrition, to contribute to equitable development and poverty eradication, to achieve sustainable utilisation of fishery resources, and to promote an economically, socially and environmentally sustainable future of our planet and its people. It proposes guidance that can be used by States and stakeholders for the enhancement of sustainable small-scale fisheries governance and development. It also promotes awareness raising and the advancement of knowledge on small-scale fisheries⁴.

TOWARDS IMPLEMENTATION

11. During its Thirtieth session, the Committee noted the need to develop implementation strategies for the future SSF Guidelines at various levels including related policy reforms. It was also recalled that the Twenty-ninth session of the Committee had agreed to the establishment and implementation of a Global Assistance Programme that would support this process. In accordance with the Committee's recommendations, the FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Department started a process of considering implementation issues more explicitly during the last biennium, including through several specific activities:

² The Tenure Guidelines are available at www.fao.org/nr/tenure/voluntary-guidelines/en/.

³ The Right to Food Guidelines are available at www.fao.org/righttofood/right-to-food-home/en/.

⁴ This paragraph attempts to summarise the objectives of the Chairperson's text of the SSF Guidelines objectives – see the document COFI/Inf.10 for the full text.

- A workshop on *Strengthening Organizations and Collective Action in Fisheries: a way forward in implementing the International Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-scale Fisheries*, held in March 2013, explored the roles of different types of collective action and organizations in small-scale fisheries and proposed elements for a capacity development strategy to strengthen these. The types of collective action and organizational forms discussed included customary community-based organizations, cooperatives and societies, and advocacy groups and networks. The workshop recognized that organizations provide a platform through which small-scale fisheries stakeholders exercise their right to organize, participate in development and decision-making processes and influence and contribute to fisheries management and development outcomes. The workshop stressed the importance of supporting knowledge mobilization and transfer, leadership capabilities (of both men and women), research partnerships, use of effective communication tools (including new technologies and social media), and platforms and networks for experience sharing and collaboration. These aspects were mainly discussed in the context of strengthening existing organizations and ensuring that the necessary institutional structures and capacities are in place to secure sustainable small-scale fisheries.
- An e-consultation⁵ on *Implementing the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication* was held on 11 November – 2 December 2013 to collect and share views, experiences and contributions on how the SSF Guidelines can be implemented effectively once finalized and adopted. The consultation was hosted by the discussion facility of the Global Forum on Food Security and Nutrition (FSN) and was structured around three related topics: (i) Partnering for implementation – roles of different actors and stakeholders; (ii) Information and communication – promoting experience sharing and collaboration, and (iii) Challenges and opportunities – needs for support and interventions. The e-consultation received a total of 71 contributions from participants from all regions of the world, representing governments, academia and research institutions, CSOs and NGOs, cooperatives and associations, technical cooperation agencies, UN and international organizations, the private sector as well as independent experts.

12. Other events contributing to the understanding of how the future SSF Guidelines can be implemented include the *First Regional Symposium on Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea*, organized by the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM) in Malta on 27-30 November 2013⁶, and the *Sub-regional Workshop to Strengthen the Capacity of Artisanal Fisheries Professional Organizations in the Countries of North Africa* held in Tunisia in September 2013⁷. Both these meetings emphasized the need for creating and supporting regional and national platforms for small-scale fishers and fish workers as part of the future implementation of the SSF Guidelines once finalized and approved.

13. There are also several highly relevant ongoing initiatives with which synergies are being explored and that will inform the implementation process, including, for example, the Too Big To Ignore (TBTI) research network and knowledge mobilization partnership. The TBTI was established to elevate the profile of small-scale fisheries and to develop research and governance capacity to address global fisheries challenges⁸. There will also be continuing links to and collaboration with the implementation of the VG Tenure and the Right to Food Guidelines. Lessons learnt from these initiatives will inform the future SSF Guidelines implementation as will the content of the Tenure and Fishing Rights – A Global Conference on rights-based approaches for fisheries (UserRights2015).

⁵ See www.fao.org/fsnforum/forum/discussions/SSF_Guidelines.

⁶ See www.ssfsymposium.org.

⁷ This workshop was organised by the FAO Sub-regional Office for North Africa, WWF and *Association Tunisienne pour le Développement de la Pêche Artisanale* (ATDEPA).

⁸ See toobigtoignore.net.

SUPPORT TO SUSTAINABLE SMALL-SCALE FISHERIES: PROPOSAL FOR A GLOBAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAMME

14. At its Twenty-ninth Session, the Committee agreed to the establishment and implementation of a Global Assistance Programme along the thematic areas proposed in Document COFI/2011/8 on *Good practices in the governance of small-scale fisheries: sharing of experiences and lessons learned in responsible fisheries for social and economic development*. These thematic areas are reflected in the contents of the Chairperson's text of the SSF Guidelines and are in line with the outcomes of the Thirtieth Session of the Committee, the proposal described below suggests providing the recommended support to small-scale fisheries within the framework of the implementation of the SSF Guidelines subject to their finalization and approval.

15. The following is proposed for the implementation of the SSF Guidelines:

- The overall *strategic approach* for implementation of the SSF Guidelines should build on the inclusive and consensus-seeking spirit and environment that characterized the development process of the SSF Guidelines so far. Accordingly, future implementation of the SSF Guidelines should be based on participation and partnerships, with implementation anchored at the national and local levels within a framework of regional and international collaboration, awareness raising, policy support and capacity development. This will require support to and collaboration with many different actors including governments, development agencies and international financing institutions, NGOs, academia, civil society and the private sector.
- A Global Assistance Programme should be established covering *four main streams of activities*, which can be translated into interrelated programme components:
 - i) Raising awareness: knowledge products and outreach;
 - ii) Strengthening the science-policy interface: sharing of knowledge and supporting policy reform; and
 - iii) Empowering stakeholders: capacity development and institutional strengthening.

In addition, these components should be complemented by one dealing with overall implementation and coordination issues as well as with progress monitoring:

- iv) Supporting implementation: programme management, collaboration and monitoring.
- The FAO Secretariat has taken a lead role in facilitating the SSF Guidelines development process so far and it would appear opportune that FAO continues to play a role in their implementation. It is hence proposed that the Global Assistance Programme be *coordinated and implemented by FAO* in close collaboration with partners and supported by dedicated extrabudgetary funding. It should however be noted that the Programme would need to be complemented by collaboration with and support from other initiatives in order to bring about substantial and sustainable results.

16. The SSF Guidelines are global in scope and provide a broad policy framework. To facilitate their implementation, there will be a need for a *strategic approach* that includes practical guidelines at regional and national levels that take local circumstances into consideration. Governments, NGOs and CSOs should be encouraged to initiate such processes and to support collaborative and inclusive approaches at the national and local levels. Countries may consider creating special multi-stakeholder platforms at the national level that support and facilitate local SSF Guidelines implementation. Moreover, interdisciplinary partnerships will be required to ensure that the holistic approach promoted in the SSF Guidelines is implemented, i.e. considering all three pillars of sustainability (environmental, social and economic), involving men and women in the whole fisheries value chain and accruing benefits both within and outside fishing communities that contribute to food security and poverty eradication. This multidisciplinary and cross-sectoral perspective needs to be reflected in the national level processes of multi-stakeholder platforms and the development of national and sub-national implementation strategies.

17. Exchanges of implementation experiences and lessons learned will be important to optimize implementation effectiveness. Adaptive management should be applied to activities and initiatives in support of the SSF Guidelines. The Global Assistance Programme can play an important role in facilitating such processes and experience sharing as well as in supporting participatory monitoring.

18. The aim of the strategic approach should be to have the principles of the SSF Guidelines mainstreamed in policies, strategies and actions at international, regional, national and local levels. Progress has in fact already been made in this respect and the SSF Guidelines are referred to in several ongoing policy processes, e.g. in the African Union draft 'Policy framework and reform strategy for fisheries and aquaculture in Africa' to be presented to the 2nd Conference of African Ministers of Fisheries and Aquaculture (CAMFA II) in 2014, the report of the UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food presented at the 67th Session of the UN General Assembly⁹ in 2012, the Farmers' Forum¹⁰ of the International Fund for Agricultural Development since 2012 and in the Framework Document of the World Bank led Global Partnership for Oceans initiative¹¹.

19. Mainstreaming is also important in the context of FAO's work. The evaluation of FAO's support to the implementation of the CCRF, carried out in 2012¹², suggested that more efforts should be given to advocacy for implementation of the CCRF. The recommendations referring to CCRF implementation are also relevant for the implementation of the SSF Guidelines. Accordingly, elements of the SSF Guidelines implementation should be embedded in all relevant FAO projects so that they become an integral part of the FAO programme of work. It will also be important that FAO advocates for adequate consideration and inclusion of the small-scale fisheries perspective in the international arena, particularly in areas of FAO mandate and interest such as food security and ocean management. Donors of extrabudgetary resources should be sensitized in this respect. Collaboration with the implementation programmes of other instruments will be essential, in particular with the VG Tenure and Right to Food Guidelines.

20. Within the framework of the *strategic directions* discussed above and based on the SSF Guidelines development process and the e-consultation, it is proposed that the *structure of the Global Assistance Programme* encompasses three main components supported by an additional one component dealing with programme management and monitoring. These four components, related key activities and expected outputs are outlined below.

Component 1: Raising awareness and providing policy support: knowledge products and outreach.

21. The SSF Guidelines can in fact only be implemented if those concerned and able to make a difference are aware of their existence and understand their contents. Considerable efforts will be required to raise awareness of the SSF Guidelines and to enhance the knowledge among all relevant stakeholders at different levels. Partnerships will play a crucial role in this to ensure that all stakeholders are reached.

22. In line with the recommendations by the CCRF evaluation, FAO should engage strategically with actors and partners to influence their policies and funding priorities towards supporting SSF Guidelines implementation. Potential actors and partners include both those in the fisheries arena, such as regional fishery bodies, government fisheries departments and development assistance partners, and those in related fields, e.g., environmental and welfare NGOs, Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and national cross-sectoral planning and coordination agencies.

23. More specifically, activities under this component could include:

- Development of implementation guides (e.g. on different topics and for different countries and regions, as required).

⁹ See www.srfood.org/images/stories/pdf/officialreports/20121030_fish_en.pdf

¹⁰ See www.ifad.org/farmer/2014/pip_2.pdf

¹¹ See www.globalpartnershipforoceans.org.

¹² The report is available at www.fao.org/docrep/meeting/026/me173e.pdf.

- Translation of the SSF Guidelines into local languages and development of popular versions, videos etc. targeted at different stakeholder groups.
- Use of social media, including blogs and discussion groups, and ‘champions of change’ and ‘SSF Guidelines ambassadors’.
- Provide assistance and information to relevant meetings, conferences, etc. at international, regional and national levels.

24. The expected outputs from these activities would be to create a broad awareness and understanding of the SSF Guidelines, across regions and countries as well as among different stakeholder groups – including politicians, government officials, development workers and experts, NGOs staff, and small-scale fishing community members. This awareness will be fundamental for continued action and provide a basis for other impact-oriented implementation support.

Component 2: Strengthening the science-policy interface: sharing of knowledge and supporting policy reform.

25. In addition to enhanced awareness of the SSF Guidelines, there is also a need to better understand and recognize the importance of small-scale fisheries and their current and potential contribution to food security and poverty eradication. To elevate the small-scale fisheries sector on the policy agenda, argumentations should be supported by data and information. The promotion of knowledge generation and information sharing will be important. This would be another important remit of an FAO Global Assistance Programme but that would need strong support from partners in, inter alia, academia and close collaboration with initiatives such as the TBTI network.

26. This component will thus address the need for a strengthened knowledge base and promote policy reforms – using the available knowledge – for sustainable resource management combined with social and economic development. By adopting a holistic approach, activities will include the full range of perspectives, e.g. value chain analysis, gender equality, and disaster risk and climate change considerations. Accordingly, the Global Assistance Programme should contain activities to:

- Identify, analyze and document existing best practices and lessons learnt with regard to participatory management systems and holistic approaches integrating resource management and a livelihoods perspective, including traditional and local management systems and knowledge.
- Carry out case studies providing practical examples of human rights based approaches to fisheries management and local development (i.e. practical implementation of the SSF Guidelines in selected locations).
- Promote collaboration and exchange of experiences between different research initiatives on small-scale fisheries governance and development as well as increased interaction between researchers and fishing communities.
- Provide technical support and assistance for reviews and revisions of policy and legal frameworks creating enabling frameworks for SSF Guidelines implementation.

27. The expected output from this component would be an increased understanding of the issues, challenges, opportunities and approaches relevant to achieving the sustainable use of aquatic resources and secure livelihoods. This improved understanding should be translated into guidance that can be widely disseminated and utilised. Policy documents at national and regional levels would make reference to the SSF Guidelines and their principles and contents be mainstreamed in relevant governance, resource management and development strategies and plans.

Component 3: Empowering stakeholders: capacity development and institutional strengthening.

28. Small-scale fishers, fishworkers and their communities should be effective partners in implementation activities – both in their planning and when carried out. This will require attention to organizational structures and modalities for fair and effective representation. Capacity development should be the backbone of SSF Guidelines implementation. Developing capacity is closely linked to empowerment and to ensuring that small-scale fisheries actors and communities are able to take an active role in shaping the future of the sector and of their own livelihoods.

29. Capacity development will hence be required at different levels, for different stakeholder groups and with respect to different skills and abilities. It would appear that a basic requirement is the strengthening of organisational capacity among small-scale fisheries actors and communities but also capability development on behalf of government officials and others involved in the sector, its development and governance. Activities under a Global Assistance Programme in this respect could include:

- Identification of needs for organisational development and strengthening, at fishing community level as well as national and regional networks levels, and provision of support accordingly.
- Assistance to communities and their organizations to establish cross-sectoral linkages, partnerships and dialogue with government agencies, research institutions and other development partners as required for addressing identified development and resource management needs.
- Sensitization and training of government officials and development partners in issues related to SSF Guidelines implementation, in particular with regard to a human-rights based approach to development and participatory management of natural resources.

30. By providing support to capacity development and institutional strengthening, the Global Assistance Programme intends to create some of the key building blocks for a long-term process of continuous improvement of the situation of small-scale fisheries and increased contribution of the sector to food security and poverty eradication. Governments and fishing communities will be able to work jointly, and together with other stakeholder groups, towards ensuring secure and sustainable small-scale fisheries for the benefit of small-scale fishers, fish workers and their communities as well as for society at large.

Component 4: Supporting implementation: programme management, collaboration and monitoring.

31. For Programme management and for promoting joint efforts and experience sharing with partners, activities within this component could cover:

- Development of a results-based Programme management framework including baseline information and provisions for adaptive management.
- Promotion of implementation experience exchanges and collaborative planning through international and regional meetings and web-based information sharing applications. Accordingly, a mechanism to allow for participatory and inclusive discussions on best practices with a view to accelerate learning across countries and different regions of the world will be established.
- Support the development of a comprehensive implementation monitoring system and report on implementation progress to FAO Member States and through publications, as appropriate.

32. This component is expected to provide results in the form of transparent and efficient Programme management and strengthened collaboration leading to overall more effective implementation of the SSF Guidelines. Publicizing implementation outcomes is also expected to increase the awareness of the SSF Guidelines and hence create a virtuous circle of events.

33. With regard to *implementation modalities*, it is suggested that the Global Assistance Programme be established with a *Programme Secretariat* based in FAO. This Secretariat would consist of a core of dedicated staff who would plan and oversee programme activities on a day-to-day basis. The Secretariat would work closely with other relevant projects and programmes of FAO, other Rome-based agencies and other development partners. The Secretariat would encourage partnerships and support the preparation of project proposals to be submitted for funding, in particular with regard to demand driven technical support at regional and national levels.

34. It is expected that many activities would be implemented in close collaboration with partners and the role of the Secretariat would often be one of facilitation rather than direct implementation. However, at the same time, it would be important that the Programme Secretariat has access to

funding within the Programme budget to ensure that core tasks and functions can be carried out. Accordingly, it is proposed that the Programme has an initial duration of five years and includes funding for at least two professional staff, administrative support and consultants, and an operational budget for publications and knowledge products, travel, training, meetings, and pilot activities and case studies.

35. It is suggested that the Programme Secretariat would be guided by a *Programme Steering Committee* consisting of a selection of partners, including representatives from various stakeholder groups, including small-scale fishers, fishworkers and their communities.

36. *Monitoring and SSF Guidelines implementation oversight* will be required. With reference to the proposed component (iv) of the Programme (see paragraph 15 above), the Programme Secretariat will develop mechanisms for monitoring of Programme activities and results and also support reporting on overall implementation progress. Monitoring and evaluation procedures for the Global Assistance Programme itself will be based on FAO standards for results-based monitoring and comply with donor requirements. The Programme Steering Committee will also play a role with regard to Programme oversight in order to ensure transparency and accountability.

37. FAO will report to FAO Member States on progress in the implementation of the SSF Guidelines. The Committee on World Food Security could support the monitoring processes, complemented by monitoring mechanisms of the UN human rights system, such as the Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food and the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

WAY FORWARD

38. The Fisheries and Aquaculture Department solicits the Committee's support for the finalization of the Chairperson's text of the SSF Guidelines.

39. The Department also seeks advice on how to move the development, establishment and implementation of a Global Assistance Programme forward. More specifically, the Committee is invited to provide guidance on the following:

- the proposed strategic direction, components and implementation modalities of the Global Assistance Programme and its governance structure;
- the funding of such a Global Assistance Programme and
- any other SSF related initiatives FAO should pursue within its new strategic framework.

SUGGESTED ACTION BY THE COMMITTEE

40. The Committee is invited to:

- (a) consider the Chairperson's report of the Technical Consultation on the International Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries (COFI/2014/Inf.10)
- (b) consider and finalize the Chairperson's text of the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication included in Document COFI/2014/Inf.10.
- (c) consider the proposed outline of a Global Assistance Programme and advise on activities to support secure and sustainable small-scale fisheries, including the future implementation of the SSF Guidelines – subject to their finalization - and the mobilization of extrabudgetary resources within the new strategic framework of FAO.



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COMMITTEE ON FISHERIES

Thirty-second Session

Rome, 11-15 July 2016

SECURING SUSTAINABLE SMALL-SCALE FISHERIES: TOWARDS IMPLEMENTATION OF THE VOLUNTARY GUIDELINES FOR SECURING SUSTAINABLE SMALL-SCALE FISHERIES IN THE CONTEXT OF FOOD SECURITY AND POVERTY ERADICATION (SSF GUIDELINES)

Executive Summary

This document reports on progress towards implementation of the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication (SSF Guidelines), which were endorsed by the Thirty-first session of COFI in 2014. It also addresses the Committee's recommendation to further develop the Global Assistance Programme (GAP) in a participatory manner as a framework to facilitate a coordinated and coherent approach to implementation and the need for continued support to the implementation of the SSF Guidelines.

Complementary and additional information is provided in COFI/2016/Inf./13.

Suggested action by the Committee

The Committee is invited to:

Advise on how to move SSF Guidelines implementation forward. More specifically, the Committee is invited to:

- Consider the activities and developments in support of the implementation of the SSF Guidelines since their endorsement by the Thirty-first Session of COFI in 2014, share information on other related initiatives and advise on additional activities in support of small-scale fisheries.
- Advise on future support for SSF Guidelines implementation, in particular with regard to:
 - i) Mobilizing extra-budgetary resources through the FAO Umbrella Programme for the Promotion and Application of the SSF Guidelines, and

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| <p>ii) The steps that may be taken after the Session in developing an SSF Guidelines Global Strategic Framework (SSF-GSF) in accordance with FAO rules and procedures.</p> |
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INTRODUCTION

1. The Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication (SSF Guidelines) were endorsed by the Thirty-first Session of the Committee on 9-13 June 2014. The Committee noted the critical role of this instrument in improving the social, economic and cultural status of small-scale fisheries and highlighted the important role of the sector in contributing to the promotion of livelihoods and food security and nutrition in many countries.

2. The Thirty-first Session of the Committee also welcomed FAO's proposal for a Global Assistance Programme (GAP) to support the implementation of the SSF Guidelines. It was recommended that the GAP be further developed in a participatory manner and that the roles of different partners in the implementation of the SSF Guidelines be defined. The role of FAO in the implementation and monitoring through COFI was acknowledged as well as that of governments, regional and local fisheries organizations.

3. In response to these recommendations and to country requests, FAO has initiated a process to plan and support SSF Guidelines implementation. Global, regional and national activities have been completed or are planned. These activities are notable for the high level of engagement and collaboration by FAO Members and partners, including Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) as donors or hosts of the activities. It should also be noted that several FAO Members and other organizations and partners have taken their own important initiatives in support of the implementation SSF Guidelines; this is highly encouraged.

4. With regard to the further development of the GAP, FAO established an Umbrella Programme for the Promotion and Application of the SSF Guidelines in 2015. In addition, the need for broader collaboration within a mechanism for facilitating and guiding SSF Guidelines implementation, also foreseen within the GAP, has been confirmed by further consultations, and the development of an SSF Guidelines Global Strategic Framework (SSF-GSF) is being proposed.. These two mechanisms – both further described below – would together support partnerships and collaboration on SSF Guidelines implementation and are based on the original GAP proposal and outcomes of related events organized in 2014-15.

5. The SSF Guidelines are based on international human rights standards and align with FAO's integration of a human rights perspective into development with a particular focus on the right to adequate food. They are anchored within FAO's strategic framework, in particular strategic programme (SP) 1: Contribute to the eradication of hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition. As the SSF Guidelines are in support of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries, they are considered a key guiding document and will be reflected in existing and planned FAO marine and inland fisheries related programmes and projects. Through the FAO cross-departmental SSF Task Force, the mainstreaming of the SSF Guidelines is also promoted more broadly into FAO projects and activities, e.g., with regard to decent work and gender equality.

6. The SSF Guidelines will also serve as an essential pillar of the proposed global work programme of the FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Department on rights-based approaches for capture fisheries as described in the COFI/2016/7.2 and COFI/2016/Inf./15.

7. Moreover, the Global Conference "Freshwater, Fish and the Future", convened by FAO in January 2015, developed ten steps to responsible inland fisheries and recommendations to implement these. Inland fisheries are commonly small-scale and the SSF Guidelines are a key instrument underpinning the recommendations, which emphasize the need to recognize and incorporate the rights of fishers, women, traditional resource users, and indigenous peoples into all levels of decision-making (see COFI/2016/7.1 and COFI/2016/Inf./14).

SSF GUIDELINES IMPLEMENTATION ACTIVITIES BY FAO AND PARTNERS

8. The SSF Guidelines can only be implemented if stakeholders are aware of their existence and of how they relate to their area of interest and responsibility. Communication of the SSF Guidelines has hence been an area of priority for FAO, and the SSF Guidelines have been published and disseminated in all six official languages. A simplified at 'At a Glance' summary of the SSF Guidelines has also been developed¹ and other communication products are planned.

9. In line with the provisions of the SSF Guidelines themselves, their implementation should be through the participatory process that characterized the development and endorsement of the SSF Guidelines. To support this, and upon recommendation of the Thirty-first session of COFI, FAO convened a global multi-stakeholder Workshop on the Development of a Global Assistance Programme in Support of the Implementation of the SSF Guidelines² in Rome, Italy, in December 2014. The outcomes of the workshop provide important guidance on priorities and strategies for implementation of the SSF Guidelines (see also below).

10. CSOs play a major role in the current planning and implementation process, mainly through the Fisheries Working Group of the International Planning Committee for Food Sovereignty (IPC)³. Meetings and workshops have been held and are being organized at the global level and to provide feedback to fishing communities and grassroots organizations that were consulted in developing the SSF Guidelines to initiate a process of developing capacity towards their implementation at the local and national levels.

11. The International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) is an important partner for FAO and for the IPC Fisheries Working Group with a focus on facilitating the engagement and strengthening of small-scale fisheries actors, including through grant funding to the IPC Fisheries Working Group. The Fifth and Sixth Global Farmers' Forum convened by IFAD in 2014 and 2016, respectively, included sessions dedicated to small-scale fisheries issues. IFAD has also initiated mainstreaming the SSF Guidelines in its relevant projects.

12. Mainstreaming of the SSF Guidelines into the strategies, policies and work programmes of regional organizations is moving ahead. These organizations include the African Union Commission (AUC), the Central America Fisheries and Aquaculture Organization (OSPESCA), the Fishery Committee for the Eastern Central Atlantic (CECAF), the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM), the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC), the Southeast Asian Fisheries Development Center (SEAFDEC) and the Western Central Atlantic Fishery Commission (WECAFC).

13. Also at the regional level, FAO has supported member countries in awareness raising, experience sharing and identification of regional priorities. Together with partner countries, regional organizations and projects, a number of regional workshops were organized in 2015 to facilitate implementation planning. The regions included Southeast Asia⁴, South Asia, Eastern Africa, North

¹ Partner organisations have also prepared non-official versions of the SSF Guidelines. All language versions are available at www.fao.org/documents/card/en/c/21360061-9b18-42ac-8d78-8a1a7311aef7/.

² Report available at www.fao.org/3/a-i4880e.pdf

³ The IPC Fisheries Working Group represents CSOs that have been engaged in the SSF Guidelines process since the Global Conference on Small-scale Fisheries held in Bangkok, Thailand, in 2008.

⁴ Report available at www.fao.org/3/a-i5253e.pdf. Reports of the other workshops will be posted on the FAO website as they become available.

Africa and the Near East, and Latin America and the Caribbean. All participants to the regional workshops agreed on the need for concerted efforts by governments, their development partners and other stakeholders for ensuring the implementation of the SSF Guidelines, stressing in particular the need for effective participation of small-scale actors themselves. The need for adequate funding was also brought up as a priority and governments were called upon to both make the necessary internal budgetary allocations and to seek additional funding from resource partners. Interest to support similar workshops in other regions has been expressed by partners and relevant regional organizations.

14. At the national level, a number of countries have taken steps to implement the SSF Guidelines. In Algeria and Mauritania, FAO has supported the formulation of national fisheries strategies that include attention to small-scale fisheries and the SSF Guidelines. In Cambodia, FAO and partners are assisting the fisheries administration in areas such as addressing child labour and promoting gender equality in small-scale fisheries. Costa Rica has enacted an executive decree on the official application of the SSF Guidelines and has requested further FAO support to operationalize its provisions. Indonesia is developing a national plan of action for small-scale fisheries. In Sierra Leone, FAO has provided support with regard to governance of tenure within the context of the Voluntary Guidelines for the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security (VGGT), including for small-scale fisheries as called for under Chapter 5 of the SSF Guidelines. South Africa has requested FAO collaboration on, *inter alia*, the implementation of the national small-scale fisheries policy with a view to ensure its consistency with the SSF Guidelines principles and provisions.

CONTINUING SUPPORT TO IMPLEMENTATION

15. The FAO Workshop on the Development of a Global Assistance Programme in Support of the Implementation of the SSF Guidelines in December 2014 provided direction for the continued development of the GAP. As a result, an FAO Umbrella Programme for the Promotion and Application of the SSF Guidelines – Enhancing the Contribution of Small-scale Fisheries to Food Security and Sustainable Livelihoods (the FAO SSF Umbrella Programme) was established.

16. The FAO SSF Umbrella Programme, established in September 2015, is a programme implemented by FAO in collaboration with partners and intending to host several projects by multiple donors supporting the same overall goal and outcomes. It supports FAO in fulfilling its mandate to achieve food security for all and in using its comparative advantages to create and share critical information about small-scale fisheries in the form of global public goods and to connect different partners.

17. It is expected that strong ownership of the SSF Guidelines and their implementation by stakeholders, in particular governments and small-scale fisheries actors, would be generated and maintained through their involvement under the FAO SSF Umbrella Programme. Capacity of players to assume their roles and responsibilities in relation to the application of the principles of the SSF Guidelines will be strengthened through the programme.

18. The FAO SSF Umbrella Programme is structured around four interrelated components corresponding to the components of the GAP proposal agreed by the Committee in 2014:

- (1) Raising awareness: knowledge products and outreach
- (2) Strengthening the science-policy interface: sharing of knowledge and supporting policy reform
- (3) Empowering stakeholders: capacity development and institutional strengthening
- (4) Supporting implementation: collaboration and monitoring

19. The first project under the FAO SSF Umbrella Programme is supported by Norway aiming to support the social, economic and environmental transformation of the small-scale fisheries sector towards better contribution to food security and poverty eradication as a result of improved policies, strategies and initiatives.

20. More information on the FAO SSF Umbrella Programme is included in the document COFI/2016/Inf./13.

21. Based on the initial GAP proposal, the 2014 FAO Workshop on the Development of a Global Assistance Programme in Support of the Implementation of the SSF Guidelines also recommended the need for monitoring and governance mechanisms for the implementation of the SSF Guidelines. Exploring this need further, including with the IPC Fisheries Working Group as part of their support from IFAD, the need for a mechanism that complements the FAO SSF Umbrella Programme and covers the more strategic elements of the former GAP proposal has been confirmed. It is hence proposed that a SSF Guidelines Global Strategic Framework (SSF-GSF) be developed. An overview of the proposed functions of the SSF-GSF is set out in the following paragraphs.

22. As recommended by the Thirty-first session of the Committee, the SSF-GSF would support the implementation of the SSF Guidelines according to the four components of the GAP and the FAO SSF Umbrella Programme (see above) with, however, limited direct implementation functions. Its purpose would be to facilitate interaction between governments and interested actors to support the implementation of the SSF Guidelines, within the framework of the FAO and in alignment with its rules and policies.

23. In this context, a possible function of the SSF-GSF in relation to progress monitoring of the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), in particular SDG 14, target 14b, 'Provide access for small-scale artisanal fishers to marine resources and markets' could also be explored.

24. The SSF-GSF is intended to promote full and effective participation of small-scale fisheries actors in the SSF Guidelines implementation and also encourage participation in the implementation of the SSF Guidelines by other actors, e.g. academia, research institutes, regional organizations, and NGOs. The mechanisms for engagement of such actors in this work of FAO and a future SSF-GSF would be designed in accordance with the policies, rules and procedures of FAO.

25. If the proposal for its establishment is endorsed by the Committee, steps would be taken following the Thirty-second Session to establish the SSF-GSF in accordance with the relevant FAO procedures. In this context, careful consideration will be given as to the specific role of the SSF-GSF and its responsibilities vis-à-vis the Committee, as well as any other pertinent FAO body.

26. FAO continues to receive requests from member countries and organizations for support to the implementation of the SSF Guidelines and additional extra-budgetary funding will be required to respond to such requests. Resource partners are hence encouraged to support both the FAO SSF Umbrella Programme and to consider the development of bilateral projects that would also contribute to the proposed SSF-GSF.



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COMMITTEE ON FISHERIES

Thirty-third Session

Rome, 9-13 July 2018

SMALL-SCALE AND ARTISANAL FISHERIES GOVERNANCE

Executive Summary

This document reports on work by the Fisheries and Aquaculture Department on small-scale and artisanal fisheries governance and development, including both marine and inland fisheries, with a focus on progress towards implementation of the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication (SSF Guidelines) under the FAO Umbrella Programme for the Promotion and Application of the SSF Guidelines. It also addresses the Committee's recommendation to further develop a mechanism for experience sharing, collaboration and monitoring in the context of SSF Guidelines implementation (SSF Global Strategic Framework - GSF), the proclamation of the International Year of Artisanal Fisheries and Aquaculture as well as work on assessing the status of inland and marine small-scale fisheries, and progress regarding the Global Work Programme to Advance Knowledge on Rights-based Approaches for Fisheries (GWP). Complementary and additional information is provided in COFI/2018/Inf.17, 18 and 19.

Suggested action by the Committee

The Committee is invited to:

Underline the contribution of small-scale and artisanal fisheries to global, regional and national efforts to **the achievement of the SDGs, in particular SDG 14** ;

Note **the progress** concerning the implementation of the Guidelines **for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication (SSF Guidelines)**, since the Thirty-second Session of COFI in 2016;

- Support the SSF Guidelines implementation, including the provision of extra-budgetary resources through the FAO Umbrella Programme for the Promotion and Application of the SSF Guidelines;

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- Note the United Nations General Assembly resolution proclaiming 2022 the “International Year of Artisanal Fisheries and Aquaculture” and provide advice with regard to preparations for its celebration;
- Note progress in improving the information baseline and assessment of the contribution of small-scale fisheries in inland and marine waters, facilitate the sharing of data and advice on potential case study countries/sites;
- Note progress regarding the Global Work Programme to Advance Knowledge on Rights-based Approaches for Fisheries (GWP) and advise on future support and potential extra-budgetary funding for the GWP.

I. INTRODUCTION

1. Since the Committee's Thirty-second Session in 2016, the Fisheries and Aquaculture Department has continued to provide support to and encourage the implementation of the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication (SSF Guidelines), which were endorsed by the Thirty-first Session of the Committee in 2014. This support has mainly been provided through the FAO Umbrella Programme for the Promotion and Application of the SSF Guidelines (FAO SSF Umbrella Programme), established in 2015, but also by other FAO initiatives and projects incorporating SSF Guidelines principles and provisions in relevant activities.

2. The importance of the small-scale fisheries sector as a key contributor to the three pillars of sustainability - environmental, economic and social - is recognized by FAO Members and partners. An important number of independent initiatives by governments, development organizations, research institutes etc. to support the implementation of the SSF Guidelines, including uptake in policies and strategies, are noted and applauded. Small-scale fisheries actors themselves and their Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) continue their high level engagement, including with regard to capacity development, awareness raising and strengthening representation of small-scale fisheries actors at different scales.

3. Implementing the SSF Guidelines at the national and local levels, with support from global and regional policy and strategic processes, will enhance the contribution of small-scale fisheries to food security, poverty eradication and sustainable livelihoods. This will also directly contribute to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), in particular SDG target 14b, which calls to Provide access of small-scale artisanal fishers to marine resources and markets - but also other SDGs: 1 No poverty, 2 Zero hunger, 5 Gender equality, 12 Responsible consumption and production, 13 Climate action, and 16 Peace, justice and strong institutions.

4. Activities and achievements in the context of SSF Guidelines implementation are described below. The document also reports on the proclamation of an International Year of Artisanal Fisheries and Aquaculture as well as work on assessing the status of inland and marine small-scale fisheries, and progress regarding the Global Work Programme to Advance Knowledge on Rights-based Approaches for Fisheries (GWP). More information is also provided in documents COFI/2018/Inf.17, 18 and 19.

II. PROGRESS TOWARDS SSF GUIDELINES IMPLEMENTATION

5. The FAO SSF Umbrella Programme, which includes support from Norway and Sweden, is structured around four interrelated components (i) Awareness raising, (ii) Strengthening the science-policy interface, (iii) Empowering stakeholders, and (iv) Supporting implementation.

6. **AWARENESS RAISING** - It is crucial that governments and relevant stakeholders are aware and understand the principles and provisions of the SSF Guidelines if they are to apply them in their work. FAO has invested in increasing awareness at global, regional and national levels on the contribution of small-scale fisheries to food security and poverty eradication and in why and how the SSF Guidelines should be applied in small-scale fisheries governance and development. This awareness raising has included the organization of specific meetings and workshops (e.g., a workshop on exploring the human rights-based approach - HRBA - in the context of implementation and monitoring of the SSF Guidelines held in Rome on 24-26 October 2016) as well as engaging in global policy processes through the participation – by FAO and small-scale fisheries actors – in conferences and events organized by partners. There have also been considerable efforts invested in the development and dissemination of guidance and communication products, including a handbook on gender-equitable small-scale fisheries development and governance.

7. **STRENGTHENING THE SCIENCE-POLICY INTERFACE** - The inclusion of the principles and provisions of the SSF Guidelines in national and regional policies facilitates the actions needed to achieve the full contribution of small-scale fisheries to food security and poverty eradication. FAO is engaged in improving the knowledge available on small-scale fisheries and it also provides technical assistance to support governments and stakeholders in converting the improved knowledge into policies and action. This work includes an update of the 2012 "Hidden Harvest: the global contribution of capture fisheries" study (see paragraph 26).

8. **Mainstreaming of the SSF Guidelines into the strategies, policies and work programmes of regional intergovernmental organizations**, reported on at the Committee's Thirty-second Session in 2016¹, has continued to be a key focus. The Commission for Inland Fisheries and Aquaculture of Latin America and the Caribbean (COOPESCAALC), the Central Asian and Caucasus Regional Fisheries and Aquaculture Commission (CACFish), and the Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism (CRFM) can be added to the list of those with specific work and/or commitments in relation to SSF Guidelines implementation. At the national level, several countries have made important commitments to SSF Guidelines implementation including Cambodia, Costa Rica, Guinea, Sri Lanka and Tanzania.

9. **EMPOWERING STAKEHOLDERS** - Institutional mechanisms and informed capable stakeholders, especially small-scale fisheries actors and government staff but also other stakeholders, are necessary for participatory implementation of the SSF Guidelines. FAO collaborates in particular with the members of the Fisheries Working Group of the International Planning Committee for Food Sovereignty (IPC)² through regular consultations with their representatives. With funding from the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), the IPC Fisheries Working Group members have organized a series of national and regional events³ for their members and key partners to discuss the implementation of the SSF Guidelines and to empower their members to take action. There are several initiatives currently being designed by FAO and partners for strengthening small-scale fisheries organizations, including beyond the IPC Fisheries Working Group. This work includes mapping of small-scale fisheries organizations, identifying gaps and assessing capacity development needs.

10. **SUPPORTING IMPLEMENTATION** - SSF Guidelines implementation benefits from coordination, dissemination of lessons learnt and progress monitoring that also promotes experience sharing. Following the recommendation of the Committee's Thirty-second Session, the SSF Guidelines Global Strategic Framework (SSF-GSF) has been further developed in consultation with small-scale fisheries actors and was presented to the COFI bureau in 2017. The SSF-GSF is a multi-stakeholder framework and, while not having any formal constitutional or legal standing, it will promote participation of small-scale fisheries actors - in collaboration with government representatives - in the SSF Guidelines implementation. It will have an advisory and facilitative role and its activities will be reported to the Committee. The proposed structure of the SSF-GSF includes an Advisory Group consisting primarily of small-scale fisheries representatives, a Friends of the SSF Guidelines group with COFI Members participating on a voluntary basis, a Knowledge Sharing Platform of other actors and an FAO Secretariat.

11. **SSF Guidelines implementation progress monitoring and experience sharing** will be important components of the SSF-GSF, including in relation to monitoring of the achievement of the SDGs, in particular SDG 14, target 14b (see COFI/2018/9). A monitoring system should also provide information that helps guide future implementation efforts and it should create learning, promote

¹ See the document COFI/2016/Inf.13

² The IPC Fisheries Working Group represents CSOs that have been engaged in the SSF Guidelines process since the Global Conference on Small-scale Fisheries held in Bangkok, Thailand, in 2008, and now works closely with FAO on the implementation of the SSF Guidelines.

³ India, 21-22 March 2016; Thailand (regional) 30 April - 1 May, 2016; Nicaragua (regional) 30-31 May 2016; Brazil 13-17 June 2016; Pakistan, 24-25 August 2016; Tanzania, 30 August - 2 September 2016; Myanmar, 19-19 March 2017. see also <https://sites.google.com/site/ssfguidelines/>

exchanges of experiences and support identification of good practices. A multi-stakeholder workshop to discuss such a monitoring system was held in September 2017, and follow-up activities include the testing of indicators in the Caribbean region and the gathering of additional inputs from small-scale fisheries organizations.

12. FAO continues to receive requests from Members and organizations for support to the implementation of the SSF Guidelines and additional extra-budgetary funding will be required to respond to such requests. Resource partners are hence encouraged to support the FAO SSF Umbrella Programme.

13. A more detailed description of SSF Guidelines implementation activities is provided in COFI/2018/Inf.17.

III. UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION PROCLAIMING 2022 THE "INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF ARTISANAL FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE"

14. Based on a proposal by the Committee's Thirty-second Session in 2016 and the adoption by the Fortieth Session of FAO Conference in 2017, the United Nations General Assembly in the Seventy-second session in December 2017 proclaimed 2022 the "International Year of Artisanal Fisheries and Aquaculture" and invited FAO to serve as the lead agency for the Year, in collaboration with other relevant organizations and bodies of the United Nations system. A road map will be developed and countries and partners are encouraged to actively engage in and support the observance of this most auspicious of international years.

IV. PROGRESS IN IMPROVING THE INFORMATION BASELINE AND ASSESSMENT OF THE CONTRIBUTION OF SMALL-SCALE FISHERIES IN MARINE AND INLAND WATERS

15. To inform policy processes, knowledge and information are needed. Addressing the fact that the contribution and value of small-scale fisheries, in particular of inland fisheries, is often underestimated - as noted by the Committee's Thirty-second Session in 2016 - work has been undertaken to assess and monitor the status of inland fisheries with a view to give them appropriate recognition and to support their management. A significant effort has been made to update the FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Circular (C942 Revision 3) "Review of the state of the world fishery resources: inland fisheries". The updated circular seeks to go beyond the analysis of trends in production and provide a deeper analysis of the state of inland fishery resources and their importance/relevance to the achievement of a number of SDGs. It also responds to the request of the Thirty-second Session of the Committee to cover broader aspects of the contributions of inland fisheries.

16. In order to improve fisheries monitoring, assessment and management of data-limited, capacity limited fisheries, with particular emphasis on small-scale fisheries, FAO under the GEF-funded Coastal Fisheries Initiative (CFI) project is currently developing a Fisheries Performance Assessment tool that covers the three dimensions of sustainability (environmental, economic and social) as well as the governance component. This tool includes a data-limited assessment module to inform management and will be piloted in at least 25 fisheries in six countries covered by the CFI project (Cap Verde, Cote d'Ivoire, Ecuador, Indonesia, Peru and Senegal) through a series of capacity building workshops. This tool, including methodologies, application templates, preliminary results and guidance materials will be made available for users outside the CFI project.

17. Work has been initiated to revisit and update the 2012 World Bank, FAO and WorldFish "Hidden Harvest: the global contribution of capture fisheries" to deepen the information on small-scale fisheries and to provide a comprehensive, authoritative and quantified baseline on their role and contribution. This work – a Hidden Harvest 2 (HH2) – is being carried out in collaboration with WorldFish and Duke University and it is expected to be completed in 2020 based on the compilation and analysis of existing data at the global level, as well as case studies and the national and regional levels.

18. A full description of the above mentioned work streams is provided in COFI/2018/Inf.18.

V. PROGRESS REGARDING THE GLOBAL WORK PROGRAMME TO ADVANCE KNOWLEDGE ON RIGHTS-BASED APPROACHES FOR FISHERIES

19. The Global Work Programme to Advance Knowledge on Rights-based Approaches for Fisheries (GWP) was welcomed by the Committee in 2016. There is a strong link between the SSF Guidelines and FAO's work on tenure and rights-based approaches for capture fisheries through Chapter 5: Governance of tenure in SSF and resource management.

20. Noting the Committee underlined that FAO should serve as the neutral platform for advancing knowledge on rights-based approaches, FAO is co-organizing the global conference "Tenure and User Rights in Fisheries 2018: Achieving Sustainable Development Goals by 2030" (UserRights 2018), in Yeosu, Republic of Korea, 10-14 September 2018 (www.fao.org/about/meetings/user-rights). FAO is calling for an extensive set of case studies on a diverse range of rights-based approaches and welcomes in-kind and financial support for this work.

21. Regarding other elements of the GWP, FAO is intending to launch the repository on existing rights-based management systems in late 2018; through the EAF-Nansen Programme, collaborating with partner countries in Africa on transboundary resources; and is developing proposals for regional and national workshops to support countries in the development of appropriate rights-based fisheries management systems.

22. A more detailed description of the progress regarding the GWP is provided in COFI/2018/Inf.19.



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Organización de las
Naciones Unidas para la
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منظمة
الغذية والزراعة
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COMMITTEE ON FISHERIES

Thirty-fourth Session

1–5 February 2021

SUPPORTING SMALL-SCALE AND ARTISANAL FISHERIES

Executive Summary

This document summarizes achievements of FAO to support sustainable marine and inland small-scale and artisanal fisheries governance and development. It reports on progress under the FAO Umbrella Programme for the Promotion and Application of the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication (SSF Guidelines) and related developments. It highlights the contribution of small-scale and artisanal fisheries to food system transformation in the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, as well as innovative efforts to improve technical capacities for data collection and analysis in small-scale fisheries. Finally, it presents preparations for the International Year of Artisanal Fisheries and Aquaculture (IYAFA) in 2022. Complementary and additional information is provided in COFI/2020/Inf.12 (Small-scale and artisanal fisheries: Progress on implementing the SSF Guidelines since the Thirty-third Session of COFI in 2018), COFI/2020/Inf.12.1 (Status update on the global study 'Illuminating Hidden Harvests. The contribution of small-scale fisheries to sustainable development'), COFI/2020/Inf.12.2 (Draft planning roadmap for the International Year of Artisanal Fisheries and Aquaculture 2022).

Suggested actions by the Committee

The Committee is invited to:

Reiterate the importance of enhancing the **contribution** of small-scale and artisanal fisheries to global, regional and national efforts to eradicate hunger and eliminate poverty and note progress by FAO and partners concerning the implementation of the SSF Guidelines since the Thirty-second Session of COFI in 2016. More specifically, the Committee is invited to:

- Note progress to implement the SSF Guidelines under the auspices of the SSF Umbrella Programme; and consider supporting the FAO SSF Umbrella Programme to initiate additional national participatory processes for the sustainable development of small-scale fisheries and to improve their contribution to food security and nutrition;

- Reiterate the value of the SSF Guidelines as a tool to support achieving the SDGs, in particular SDG 14, but also other goals related to food security, poverty eradication, gender equality, sustainable livelihoods, and responsible consumption and production; and provide guidance on how FAO should focus additional capacity development to Members in support of achieving SDG target 14.b.;
- Note the progress in improving information on small-scale fisheries, in particular through the study, “Illuminating Hidden Harvests: The contribution of small-scale fisheries to sustainable development”; and provide guidance on how FAO can further support improved data collection and analysis methodologies for small-scale fisheries, and related capacity development at country and regional level;
- Provide inputs and suggestions on the Draft planning roadmap for the International Year of Artisanal Fisheries and Aquaculture 2022 (IYAFA 2022); and share national plans to celebrate sustainable development of small-scale fisheries and aquaculture during IYAFA.

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. Since the Committee's Thirty-third Session in 2018, the Fisheries Division has continued to provide support to and encourage the implementation of the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication (SSF Guidelines), which were endorsed by the Thirty-first Session of the Committee in 2014. This support has mainly been provided through the FAO Umbrella Programme for the Promotion and Application of the SSF Guidelines (FAO SSF Umbrella Programme), established in 2015, but also through other FAO initiatives and projects incorporating SSF Guidelines principles and provisions in relevant activities.
2. Further, a significant number of independent initiatives by governments, development organizations, research institutes, etc. to support the implementation of the SSF Guidelines, including uptake in policies and strategies, are noted and applauded. Small-scale fisheries actors themselves and their organizations continue to actively engage in capacity development and awareness raising, and increasingly participate in local, national, regional and global fora.
3. Key activities and achievements in the context of the SSF Guidelines implementation are described below. The document also reports on preparations for International Year of Artisanal Fisheries and Aquaculture in 2022.

II. PROGRESS TO IMPLEMENT THE SSF GUIDELINES UNDER THE AUSPICES OF THE SSF UMBRELLA PROGRAMME

4. The FAO SSF Umbrella Programme supports the implementation of the SSF Guidelines by creating partnerships and synergies with other actors in the fisheries and development arena. The FAO SSF Umbrella Programme is also a mechanism for collaborating across FAO. It takes guidance from an SSF Technical Network with membership from FAO technical divisions and regional and sub-regional offices. This inter-disciplinary collaboration is essential for successful results.
5. To ensure the sustainability of the FAO SSF Umbrella Programme, it is imperative that activities are firmly anchored within existing structures and processes and that work is carried out in a participatory manner, involving all major stakeholders, especially those whose livelihoods are directly impacted. FAO's comparative advantage lies in its ability to provide an enabling environment, provide guidance and promote partnerships and the sharing of good practices at global, regional and national levels. By promoting conditions such as supportive policy and legal frameworks and appropriate institutional structures, in particular empowered organizations representing small-scale fisheries actors, progress towards sustainable small-scale fisheries can continue beyond FAO's support.
6. At global level, FAO has further elaborated the different functions of the SSF Guidelines Global Strategic Framework (SSF-GSF); with particular attention given to the Advisory Group of the SSF-GSF, in collaboration with the IPC Working Group on Fisheries¹. The Advisory Group brings together representatives from global small-scale fisheries organizations, including representatives of indigenous peoples and rural workers, as well as the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD). The group provides advice on how to best implement the SSF Guidelines around the world and engages in global policy processes to represent the perspective of small-scale fisheries. Regional Advisory Groups are also being set up to facilitate engagement in different

¹ World Forum of Fishers People (WFFP), World Forum of Fish Harvesters & Fish Workers (WFF) are members of the International Planning Committee for Food Sovereignty (IPC) Fisheries Working Group with which FAO has a partnership agreement.

geographies. The SSF-GSF also includes a Knowledge Sharing Platform for other SSF Guidelines partners. WorldFish and the NGO community have advanced this group by providing a forum for discussions on collaboration modalities and promoting the sharing of existing tools and resources.

7. Work is also ongoing to build a mechanism for monitoring of improvements in small-scale fisheries and of the implementation of the SSF Guidelines. Such a mechanism will provide information that helps guide future implementation efforts by creating learning and supporting identification of good practices. It will be participatory, relate to SSF-GSF and recognize the links with the SDGs, in particular SDG 14.b. An e-consultation was held in February-March 2020 to help elaborate this monitoring mechanism. Based on the outcomes of the e-consultation and other consultations and inputs, it will be finalized and then piloted in selected countries before being rolled out more broadly. This monitoring mechanism will also support national efforts to monitor improvements in small-scale fisheries.

8. So far, some ten regional and sub-regional networks and organizations, representing many thousands of small-scale fisheries actors, have been supported. The FAO SSF Umbrella Programme will continue this stream of work together with its other commitments at the global, regional and national levels with a view to create tangible impacts on the ground at the same time as creating the mechanisms and structures for securing sustainable small-scale fisheries at a larger scale.

9. While the global and regional policy processes and institutional structures are important as part of an enabling environment and to provide guidance, change and positive impact is only achieved if the SSF Guidelines are implemented at the local and national levels. The FAO SSF Umbrella Programme engages in a number of countries where participatory processes are used to agree on and implement priority actions for SSF Guidelines implementation. Based on experiences in countries where SSF Guidelines implementation planning is fairly advanced², a toolkit with practical advice on how to develop a national plan of action for the implementation of the SSF Guidelines (NPOA-SSF) has been developed and is currently being deployed. Examples of countries where SSF Guidelines implementation processes are being initiated since COFI 33 include Madagascar, Myanmar, Namibia, Oman, the Philippines and Senegal. SSF Guidelines implementation continues in Costa Rica and Tanzania and additional countries are supported by the FAO SSF Umbrella. Moreover, specific SSF Guidelines implementation support is provided from the FAO SSF Umbrella Programme to the FAO-GEF Coastal Fisheries Initiative West Africa project in Cabo Verde and Cote d'Ivoire in addition to Senegal. SSF Guidelines implementation is also underway in Ghana, Malawi, Sierra Leone and Uganda with a strong focus on the postharvest sector and women's organizations and entrepreneurship, putting into practice recommendations from the "Handbook on gender-equitable small-scale fisheries development and governance" (FAO, 2017).

10. FAO continues to receive requests from Members and organizations to support implementation of the SSF Guidelines and additional extra-budgetary funding will be required to respond to such requests. Resource partners are strongly encouraged to support the FAO SSF Umbrella Programme.

11. A full description of the work and achievements under the FAO SSF Umbrella Programme and related initiatives is provided in COFI/2020/Inf.12 (Small-scale and artisanal fisheries: Progress on implementing the SSF Guidelines since the Thirty-third Session of COFI in 2018).

² See the document COFI/2016/Inf.13, prepared for the 32nd Session of the Committee, for an account on where activities were started already during the previous biennium.

III. SSF GUIDELINES AS A TOOL TO SUPPORT ACHIEVING THE SDGS

12. Small-scale fisheries play an important role in food security and nutrition and offer development pathways for poverty eradication and equitable development. The SSF Guidelines provide a framework to enhance the contribution of small-scale fisheries to food security, poverty eradication and sustainable livelihoods, and directly contribute to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), in particular SDG 14 and target 14.b, but also other SDGs. As noted in previous paragraphs, and elaborated upon in COFI/2020/Inf.12, efforts of the SSF Umbrella programme support achievement of many SDGs, including 1 No poverty, 2 Zero hunger, 5 Gender equality, 12 Responsible consumption and production, 13 Climate action, 14 Life below water and 16 Peace, justice and strong institutions.

13. These efforts include working with partners to promote a human rights-based approach, social protection, gender equality, and value chain enhancement, in particular in the postharvest subsector, as well as efforts to address climate change and extreme poverty in small-scale fisheries. FAO is promoting sustainable food systems to increase the quantity and quality of fish products for human consumption by empowering women, and working to strengthen the mitigative and adaptive capacity to climate change of traditional fishers and fish workers, and supporting the integration of Indigenous Peoples' perspectives in the implementation of the SSF Guidelines.

14. Target 14.b of the 2030 Agenda calls on States to “provide access for small-scale artisanal fishers to marine resources and markets”. Governments have an essential role to play in ensuring equitable access to resources and markets for small-scale fishers and fishworkers, and the SSF Guidelines contain valuable recommendations to support achieving SDG Target 14.b.

15. The governance and management of fisheries that recognize the participation of fishers, local stewardship, and shared decision-making, or co-management, empower fishworkers and balance rights and responsibilities between users and government authorities. Appropriate access to resources and secure tenure or user rights, together with co-management, are fundamental elements of sustainable fisheries. FAO is working to complement recommendations in the SSF Guidelines with specific practical guidance on options and opportunities for fisheries stakeholders to consider how to implement co-management and facilitate the formalization of appropriate tenure, access and user rights in fisheries, noting that these are key elements for realizing sustainable access to resources, as well as the food security and the economic contributions of the small-scale fisheries sector. To date, regional workshops have provided recommendations for national marine fisheries in the respective areas of South East Asia and the Bay of Bengal, and Latin America and the Caribbean. The next workshop, Great Lakes and Inland Water Bodies of the World, will provide further recommendations for inland fisheries guidance. Additional workshops are planned to cover other regions of the world.

16. The COFI Sub-Committee on Fish Trade³ emphasized the importance of market access, value chains, post-harvest operations and trade to enhance the contribution of small-scale fisheries towards the achievement of SDG14.b. A new FAO Technical Paper, "Securing sustainable small-scale fisheries: Showcasing applied practices in value chains, post-harvest operations and trade", examines good practices and successful initiatives consistent with the recommendations of the SSF Guidelines (included as COFI/2020/SBD.20) and can be used to inform future work by FAO.

³ COFI/2020/4. Decisions and recommendations of the Seventeenth Session of the COFI Sub-Committee on Fish Trade, Vigo, Spain, 25-29 November 2019.

IV. ILLUMINATING HIDDEN HARVESTS: THE CONTRIBUTION OF SMALL-SCALE FISHERIES TO SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

17. In June 2017, FAO, in collaboration with WorldFish and Duke University, initiated a global study entitled ‘Illuminating Hidden Harvests: the contribution of small-scale fisheries to sustainable development’ (IHH), which was introduced during COFI33 (see COFI/2018/Inf.18). A launch event for the report is due in 2021 and will provide an opportunity to discuss how the findings and the methodologies developed and used can be further applied, both to inform policy and to improve regular data collection on small-scale fisheries.

18. IHH will provide updated and more thorough information on variables such as catch and employment, but it will also present information on the nutritional contribution of inland and marine small-scale fisheries. The data and knowledge generated by the study is expected to contribute to more effective decision-making by policy-makers and empower small-scale fishing communities and stakeholders to call for greater government support and investment. It is also expected that the experiences of IHH will contribute to developing better inter-disciplinary and harmonized data collection and analysis capacity at the national and regional level, with support from FAO and partners. To support this a regional roll-out in partnership with relevant regional organizations, is envisaged to make full use of the data and methodologies developed by IHH.

19. More information on IHH can be found in the document COFI/2020/Inf12.1 (Update on the study “Illuminating Hidden Harvests: the contribution of small-scale fisheries to sustainable development”).

V. INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF ARTISANAL FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE

20. The United Nations General Assembly in its Seventy-second session in December 2017 proclaimed 2022 the “International Year of Artisanal Fisheries and Aquaculture”. In its 33rd session, the Committee welcomed the International Year of Artisanal Fisheries and Aquaculture in 2022 (IYAFA 2022). FAO is serving as the lead agency for IYAFA 2022 in close collaboration with relevant partners and bodies of the United Nations system. Since 2018, FAO has begun planning in earnest for IYAFA 2022. To guide and focus its efforts, FAO has developed a draft planning roadmap and welcomes inputs and suggestions from the Committee.

21. Countries and partners are encouraged to actively engage in and support the observance of this auspicious international year. IYAFA presents an opportunity to promote the sustainable development of small-scale fisheries and aquaculture food systems; enhance global awareness about, understanding of, and action to support the contribution of small-scale fisheries and aquaculture to the global fisheries sector; and promote dialogue and collaboration between and among small-scale fishers, fish farmers, fish workers, governments and other key partners. These efforts will further contribute to sustainable development of small-scale fisheries and aquaculture and achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

22. A summary of preparations to date for IYAFA 2022 and the draft planning roadmap are included in session information document COFI/2020/Inf12.2 (Draft planning roadmap for the International Year of Artisanal Fisheries and Aquaculture 2022).



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COMMITTEE ON FISHERIES

Thirty-fifth Session

5-9 September 2022

SUPPORTING SMALL-SCALE AND ARTISANAL FISHERIES

Executive Summary

This document summarizes achievements of the Fisheries and Aquaculture Division to support sustainable marine and inland small-scale and artisanal fisheries governance and development. It reports on progress in implementing the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication (SSF Guidelines) and highlights the contribution of small-scale and artisanal fisheries to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development within the context of the FAO Strategic Framework 2022-2031. Information on the International Year of Artisanal Fisheries and Aquaculture (IYAFA) 2022 is reported in COFI/2022/4.1; complementary information is included in COFI/2022/Inf. 9: Supporting small-scale and artisanal fisheries and in COFI/2022/SBD/10 and COFI/2022/SBD/13.

Suggested action by the Committee

The Committee is invited to:

- Acknowledge the importance of inland and marine small-scale and artisanal fisheries to sustainable development, food security and nutrition, and resilience of coastal and rural communities through their contribution to agrifood systems, employment, livelihoods and economies, and resource stewardship and note the continued progress of FAO and partners with regard to the implementation of the SSF Guidelines as a contribution to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. More specifically, the Committee is invited to:
 - Appreciate the increased policy uptake of the SSF Guidelines, in particular at global and regional levels, and call for continued support to FAO and development partners in their catalytic and facilitative role in advancing national participatory processes and the creation of enabling environments, including policy, strategy and legal frameworks, for enhancing the sustainability of small-scale and artisanal fisheries and their contribution to food and nutrition security and livelihoods at all levels;
 - Provide guidance on how FAO should continue strengthening small-scale fisheries organizations as well as how to further develop the SSF Guidelines Global Strategic Framework (SSF-GSF) as a functional and effective mechanism to support the implementation of the SSF Guidelines.
 - Encourage improved national level multi-disciplinary data collection and analysis of small-scale and artisanal fisheries, building on the results and methods of the Illuminating Hidden

Harvests study, and advice on how FAO can support relevant, innovative, cost-effective, participatory and gender-sensitive approaches, including using small and large-scale disaggregated data in reporting to inform governance and management of the subsector.

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. Small-scale fisheries hold enormous potential to promote transformative changes in how, by whom, and for whom fish and fishery products are produced, processed and distributed – with positive benefits throughout global aquatic food systems. Hence, they have a key role to play in FAO's Blue Transformation Programme Priority Area (PPA).
2. FAO has continued to support small-scale fisheries within the framework of the implementation of the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication (SSF Guidelines). Many related initiatives by governments, small-scale fisheries organizations and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), development organizations, research institutes, etc also take place. The sum of these efforts contributes to the uptake of the SSF Guidelines in policies and strategies and to their implementation, creating the enabling framework for sustained positive impact for small-scale fishing communities and those they support.
3. This document summarizes key FAO-led activities in the context of the SSF Guidelines implementation under the 'FAO Umbrella Programme for the Promotion and Application of the SSF Guidelines' (FAO SSF Umbrella Programme) through the project 'Creating an enabling environment for securing sustainable small-scale fisheries' (GCP/GLO/965/SWE), the FAO Flexible Multi-Partner Support Mechanism (FMM) sub-programme on 'Implementing the Small-Scale Fisheries Guidelines for gender-equitable and climate-resilient food systems and livelihoods' (FMM/GLO/155/MUL), as well as other FAO-led activities and initiatives by partners. Complementary information is provided in documents COFI/2022/4.1, COFI/2022/Inf. 9, COFI/2022/SBD/10 and COFI/2022/SBD/13.

II. PROGRESS IN POLICY UPTAKE OF THE SSF GUIDELINES

4. Since the endorsement of the SSF Guidelines in 2014, many steps have been taken to support their implementation¹. Implementation of the SSF Guidelines contributes directly to Sustainable Development Goal (SDG14) target 14b - to provide access of small-scale artisanal fishers to marine resources and markets - but also to the achievement of many others, including SDG 1. No poverty, SDG 2 Zero hunger, SDG 5. Gender equality, SDG 12. Responsible consumption and production, SDG 13. Climate action, SDG 14. Life below water, SDG 10. Reducing inequalities and SDG 16. Peace, justice and strong institutions.
5. In this context, the importance of the unique but often even more overlooked role of inland fisheries, in particular for rural populations in some landlocked countries, cannot be overemphasized.
6. Uptake of the SSF Guidelines in global and regional policy frameworks and processes continues to grow since the last COFI reporting period, for example, in the context of global food security and nutrition processes through the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) and the UN Food Systems Summit; in relation to biodiversity in side events at sessions of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD); and regarding Indigenous Peoples at the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Peoples.
7. At the regional level, organizations and Bodies such as the African Union, the Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism (CRFM), the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM) and the Southeast Asian Fisheries Development Center (SEAFDEC) include the SSF Guidelines in policy discussions and strategies².
8. Development partners, NGOs and research and academia also support the implementation of the SSF Guidelines. A literature review revealed that the number of publications referring to the SSF Guidelines has grown from 61 published in 2015 to 279 in 2020, reaching a total of 1 100 items.
9. This global and regional uptake of the SSF Guidelines contributes to the enabling environment described in Part 3 of the SSF Guidelines which is needed for their full implementation.

¹ See here for an overview <https://www.fao.org/voluntary-guidelines-small-scale-fisheries/en/>

² See COFI/2022/Inf.9 for details

10. At country level, developments have taken place with regard to policy and legal frameworks, e.g.,
- the government of Cabo Verde enacted a new decree in 2020 making explicit reference to the SSF Guidelines;
 - reviews of conformity of policy and regulatory frameworks with fisheries instruments, including the SSF Guidelines, took place in Cote d'Ivoire and Senegal under the FAO-Global Environment Facility (GEF) Coastal Fisheries Initiative West Africa project;
 - in Mauritania, FAO supported the formulation and adoption of a special law and master plan in favour of small-scale inland fisheries in 2021.
11. To support this, FAO released two guidance documents in English, French and Spanish: 'A policy and legal diagnostic tool for sustainable small-scale fisheries' for reviewing national policy and legal frameworks against the SSF Guidelines and 'Legislating for sustainable small-scale fisheries' providing considerations when legislating for the subsector. A related e-learning course is available and a new section of the legal database FAO-LEX dedicated to small-scale fisheries, SSF-LEX, will be released in the last quarter of 2022 to provide country-specific information on international legally binding instruments, constitutions, national law and policies relevant to the subsector.
12. A tool box to facilitate the development of National Plan of Action for the implementation of the SSF Guidelines (NPOAs-SSF) is available on the SSF Guidelines webpage, and e-learning courses and trainings on small-scale fisheries governance and transdisciplinary approaches have been made available with the International Oceans Institute - Southern Africa and the Too Big To Ignore (TBTI) research network. Moreover, a guidance document on how to apply a human rights based approach in the context of chapter 9 of the SSF Guidelines on disaster risks and climate change is available.
13. The United Republic of Tanzania launched its NPOA-SSF in March 2021 and a complementary plan for Zanzibar is under development. The governments of Madagascar, Malawi, Namibia and Senegal are working on developing NPOAs-SSF. In total, some 50 countries implement elements of the SSF Guidelines, with FAO support or through other projects, initiatives or organizations. National and local level implementation still needs to be accelerated to reap the full benefits of a sustainable small-scale fisheries subsector.
14. Committee Members are strongly encouraged to make use of the available tools and guidance to implement the SSF Guidelines and to express related demands for support. More information and resources are available at the SSF Guidelines webpage.³

III. STRENGTHENING SSF ORGANIZATIONS AND PARTICIPATORY PROCESSES

15. The SSF Guidelines promote a human rights based approach, including the participation of small-scale fishers and fishworkers, men and women, in decision-making processes concerning their livelihoods as key a principle. To effectively participate, small-scale fisheries' actors need strong representative organizations and participatory institutional structures. The need to further intensify support to the organization of small-scale fisheries at different scales and in different forms is clearly emerging.
16. At the global level, the SSF Guidelines Global Strategic Framework (SSF-GSF)⁴ partnership mechanism is not fully functional. Its original structure consists of (i) the Advisory Group representing primarily Civil Society Organizations; (ii) the Friends of the SSF Guidelines representing governments; and, (iii) a Knowledge Sharing Platform for all other stakeholders. The COVID-19 pandemic has added to existing challenges to its further development, as face-to face meetings would likely have accelerated engagement. At the same time, there may be a need to consider the benefits of

³ See <https://www.fao.org/voluntary-guidelines-small-scale-fisheries/en/>, in particular the "Resources" tab.

⁴ See <https://www.fao.org/voluntary-guidelines-small-scale-fisheries/resources/detail/en/c/1268316/>

and incentives for engagement in the SSF-GSF, and of the SSF-GSF as a whole to strengthen its internal linkages and collaboration function.

17. Fisheries governance and management approaches that recognize the participation of fishers, local stewardship and shared decision-making - or co-management - empower fishworkers and balance rights and responsibilities between users and government authorities.

18. These participatory approaches also support securing access rights for small-scale fishers to resources.

19. With support from the Republic of Korea,⁵⁶ FAO is developing knowledge products to evaluate fisheries co-management effectiveness through a guidebook, a toolbox, an e-learning and case studies.

20. Through collaboration with Saint Mary's University, Canada, and the Community Conservation Research Network (CCRN) a small-scale fisheries stewardship case study database exists, which will be complemented by a handbook on how to strengthen and support small-scale fisheries stewardship.

21. Indigenous Peoples engaging in small-scale fisheries are often among the most marginalized and a work plan to addressing this is under development with the FAO Indigenous Peoples team.

22. The role and contributions of women in small-scale fisheries still remain often overlooked and not recognized. The FMM subprogramme mentioned above focuses on women with a view to promoting sustainable food systems 10 countries in Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa. In the United Republic of Tanzania, institutional capacity development of the Tanzania Women Fishworkers Association (TAWFA) complemented by the establishment of a gender desk at the Ministry, is supported. In the Caribbean and in South East Asia, FAO is collaborating with Centre for Resource Management and Environmental Studies of the University of the West Indies (CERMES-UWI) and Southeast Asia Fisheries Development Center (SEAFDEC), respectively on gender analyses and scoping studies.

23. Other examples of regional level support to small-scale fisheries organizations include the launching of the Caribbean Network of Fisherfolk Organizations (CNFO) Leadership Institute in 2020, as a collaboration between CNFO and CERMES-UWI under the FAO-GEF Developing Organizational Capacity for Ecosystem Stewardship and Livelihoods in Caribbean Small-Scale Fisheries, which also provides needs-based training to fisherfolk and peer-to-peer capacity development. FAO also continues to support the African Union's non-state actor (NSA) platforms which are important components of the African institutional set-up and called upon for fisheries and aquaculture related policy consultations by the African Union and Regional Economic Communities. Through its subregional office in Tunisia, FAO provides specific support to the NSA platform for the Maghreb region. Direct support is provided also to the African Confederation of Artisanal Fisheries Organisations (CAOPA) and the Federation of Artisanal Fishers of the Indian Ocean (FPAOI).

24. At country level, among other, small-scale fisheries organizations in Togo and Ecuador are supported in collaboration with the FAO Partnership Unit by building synergies between the UN Decade of Family Farming (UNFFF), IYAFA 2022 and the SSF Guidelines. With FAO support, the International Collective in Support of Fishworkers (ICSF) works with small-scale fisheries organizations and processes in Brazil, Ghana, India and Nigeria to strengthen capacity to implement the SSF Guidelines.

25. Progress is being made, but more is needed to ensure a human rights based approach that promotes transparency, accountability and representation, is applied and that small-scale fishers and fishworkers participate effectively in decision-making. Collaboration takes place in this respect with partners including the Danish Institute for Human Rights and the One Ocean Hub.

26. Representation also relates to knowledge and communication. WorldFish, FAO and others, including small-scale fisheries organizations, have prepared a guide on 'Ethical and inclusive

⁵ Fisheries co-management capacity development Program Project (GCP/GLO/046/ROK).

⁶ Fisheries Co-management Capacity Development for Blue Communities: Sustainable Fisheries and Diverse Livelihoods Project (GCP/GLO/080/ROK).

communications involving small-scale fisheries', as responsible communications can improve the recognition and influence of fisherfolk in decision-making spheres.

27. Committee members and development partners are urged to support inclusive and fair processes in all aspects involving small-scale fishers, fishworkers and their communities as a means to achieve socially, economically and environmentally sustainable fisheries.

IV. ILLUMINATING HIDDEN HARVESTS: THE CONTRIBUTION OF SMALL-SCALE FISHERIES TO SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

28. The study 'Illuminating Hidden Harvests: the contribution of small-scale fisheries to sustainable development'⁷ (IHH) provides updated and comprehensive information on harvesting and production, livelihoods and economic values, gender, governance, nutrition and other important features of on inland and marine small-scale fisheries. Key findings include:

- Small-scale fisheries account for at least 40 percent of global fisheries catch (68 percent from marine fisheries; 32 percent from inland fisheries).
- 90 percent of the people employed along capture fisheries value chains operate in small-scale fisheries. This includes 14.6 million in harvesting in inland fisheries, and 12.9 million in marine fisheries harvesting.
- 45 million women participate in small-scale fisheries, including for subsistence.
- 492 million people depend at least partially on small-scale fisheries for their livelihoods.
- Small fish and midwater fish from inland and marine fisheries are especially nutritious and found abundantly in small-scale fisheries landings and
- Co-management is likely implemented about 20 percent of the catch from small-scale fisheries.

29. It is hoped that IHH will further facilitate the implementation of the SSF Guidelines and achievement of related SDGs through increased and renewed commitments and actions.

30. Committee Members are invited to support the expansion of the IHH initiative through further analysis, sharing the IHH country case studies data as a global public good, and multi-disciplinary, multi-source and participatory capacity development at country- and regional level; and to express related needs.

31. It is also suggested to include subsector disaggregated data in future FAO data collection, analysis and dissemination.

V. CONCLUSIONS

32. The International Year of Artisanal Fisheries and Aquaculture (IYAFA)⁸ 2022 is a unique opportunity to put small-scale fisheries in the global spotlight and to consolidate the needed actions and commitments to continue promoting sustainability and inclusiveness.

⁷ See COFI/2022/SBD/10.

⁸ See COFI/2022/4.1.