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Food and Agriculture
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Продовольственная и
сельскохозяйственная организация
Объединенных Наций

Organización de las
Naciones Unidas para la
Alimentación y la Agricultura

منظمة
الأغذية والزراعة
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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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an FAO initiative to minimize its environmental impact and promote greener communications.
Other documents can be consulted at <http://www.fao.org/cofi/en/>*



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- 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.

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.