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# COMMITTEE ON FISHERIES

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### SMALL-SCALE AND ARTISANAL FISHERIES: PROGRESS ON IMPLEMENTING THE SSF GUIDELINES SINCE THE THIRTY- THIRD SESSION OF COFI IN 2018

#### Executive Summary

This Information Paper provides additional information in relation to the document COFI/2020/6 on Supporting Small-scale and Artisanal Fisheries. The paper provides additional details on activities and achievements by FAO, governments, small-scale fisheries actors and partners in the context of implementing the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication (SSF Guidelines) since the Committee's Thirty-third Session in 2018. It should be recognised that, as the SSF Guidelines are gaining acceptance by a larger number of partners, it is becoming increasingly difficult to capture all developments.

This paper also draws attention to the need for more countries to begin participatory processes to adopt the SSF Guidelines principles and recommendations, and to recognise the value of the SSF Guidelines as a tool for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). FAO Members are encouraged to engage in preparations for the celebration of the International Year of Artisanal Fisheries and Aquaculture in 2022 (IYAFa 2022).

The progress on improving the availability of information and data on small-scale fisheries through the study “Illuminating Hidden Harvests: The contribution of small-scale fisheries to sustainable development” is further described in the document COFI/2020/Inf.12.1.

## I. INTRODUCTION

1. The SSF Guidelines were endorsed by the Thirty-first Session of the Committee in 2014 and FAO has since provided support to their implementation mainly through its Umbrella Programme for the Promotion and Application of the SSF Guidelines (FAO SSF Umbrella Programme). The increasing number of Members, organizations and partners referring to the SSF Guidelines in their policies, strategies and actions shows a degree of mainstreaming of the agreed framework for addressing small-scale fisheries governance and development that the SSF Guidelines represent, also well beyond FAO supported initiatives.
2. The activities and achievements highlighted in this document are organized according to the four interrelated components of the FAO SSF Umbrella Programme: (i) Awareness raising: knowledge products and outreach; (ii) Strengthening the science-policy interface: sharing of knowledge and supporting policy reform; (iii) Empowering stakeholders: capacity development and institutional strengthening, and (iv) Supporting implementation: programme management, collaboration and monitoring. These initiatives include those supported directly and indirectly by the FAO SSF Umbrella Programme as well as examples of activities led by partners, illustrating the uptake of the SSF Guidelines. The document does not claim to contain an exhaustive list of achievements but provides key examples and should be seen as a continuation of the document COFI/2018/Inf.17 on Progress by FAO and partners concerning the implementation of the SSF Guidelines since the Thirty-second Session of COFI in 2016. Appendix 1 contains a bibliography with relevant publications and material published since 2018.

## II. COMPONENT 1: AWARENESS RAISING

3. Component 1 of the FAO SSF Umbrella Programme covers efforts involved in raising awareness about the importance of small-scale fisheries and the SSF Guidelines and their implementation. Such efforts include the organization of and participation in events that present and discuss the SSF Guidelines as well as the development of guidance and other communication products. The expected result of these activities include both informing different types of partners in fisheries and other sectors about the SSF Guidelines' and facilitating their uptake in strategies, initiatives and policies.
4. Examples of achievements in relation to creating awareness and promoting uptake of the SSF Guidelines in key thematic processes and events, within and beyond fisheries, at the global level include:

- Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development and the SDGs: FAO, as custodian agency for SDG indicator 14.b.1 (Progress by countries in adopting and implementing a legal/regulatory/policy/institutional framework which recognizes and protects access rights for small-scale fisheries) supports countries in working towards achieving SDG 14.b and reporting on its progress. The indicator is a composite indicator and its reporting is based on three questions of the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries questionnaire. FAO encourages and supports countries in ensuring participatory and meaningful reporting processes in this context. A regional workshop on SDG 14.b for the Pacific region was held in 2019.
- Biodiversity: During the Sustainable Ocean Day held at the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) 14th Conference of the Parties (COP 14) in November 2018 in Egypt, the SSF Guidelines were presented by small-scale fisheries actors in the session on voices of ocean people. In addition, the CBD published the guide Addressing Gender Issues and Actions in Biodiversity Objectives which specifically refers to the SSF Guidelines. Moreover, FAO, the Secretariat of the CBD, the European Bureau of Conservation and Development (EBCD), and the Fisheries Expert Group of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN-CEM-FEG) organized a meeting to explore approaches to identify, manage, monitor, evaluate and report on Other Effective Area-based Conservation Measures (OECMs) in support of Aichi Target 11. The meeting also

explored approaches to a decision adopted by the CBD in 2018 general guidance on OECMs (Decision 14/8).

- Climate change and disaster risk: The 4th International Symposium on the Effects of Climate Change on the World's Oceans, held on 4-8 June 2018 in Washington, DC, USA, included a session showcasing current adaptation measures and opportunities (good practices, tools and approaches) in responding to climate change and disaster risks in the fisheries and aquaculture sector. It focussed on small-scale fisheries and made reference to Chapter 9 on Disaster risks and climate change of the SSF Guidelines. There were also a couple of working groups to which the SSF Guidelines were highly relevant including with regard to small-scale fishing communities and the poverty-climate change nexus , and enabling conditions and challenges of for climate change adaptation in fisheries.
- Food security and nutrition: At the 45th Session of the Committee on World Food Security (CFS), a side event on Realizing the right to food from oceans and inland waters highlighted the role of fisheries in food security and why it needs increased recognition. For instance, small-scale fisheries are estimated to account for over 50 percent of animal protein intake in many of the least developed countries of Africa and Asia but more data is needed to help shape policies that ensure and increase people's access to eating nutritious fish and seafood. It should be noted that there are strong links between the SSF Guidelines and other products of CFS and FAO. Information briefs have been developed to show how the SSF Guidelines and the Voluntary guidelines to support the realization of the right to adequate food in the context of national food security (2005), the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forest in the Context of National Food Security (VGGT –2012), CFS Principles for Responsible Investment in Agriculture and Food Systems (RAI principles) and the CFS Framework for Protracted Crisis reinforce each other.
- Value chains, post-harvest and trade: The SSF Guidelines were presented as a key tool during the 2018 WTO Public Forum in Geneva in October 2018 where FAO organized a working session called FAO Instruments supporting the Sustainability of Traded Fish and Fisheries Products. The session focused on how international instruments and initiatives can contribute to sustainable trade in fish and fishery products. In addition, the SSF Guidelines also received attention at the 17th session of the FAO Committee on Fisheries Sub-Committee on Fish Trade where small-scale fisheries value chains, post-harvest and trade was a stand-alone agenda item for the first time. During the meeting, FAO requested guidance from the sub-committee on priority activities to be undertaken in line with the implementation of the SSF Guidelines.
- Social protection and decent work: The need to put social protection and occupational safety and health in fisheries and aquaculture, as called for in the SSF Guidelines, on the political agenda was discussed by parliamentarians from 17 countries who met in Panama in September 2018 for the V Forum of Parliamentarians on Fisheries and Aquaculture for Latin America and the Caribbean (FOPPAALC). The forum was organized by FAO in coordination with the Latin American Parliament (PARLATINO), the Parliamentary Front Against Hunger (PFH) and the Panama National Assembly Also, at the VI FOPPAALC, held in Colombia in November, 2019, an agreement was made to foster social protection and occupational safety in labour and fisheries national legal frameworks of member countries (see also paragraph 17 below for more on social protection).
- Indigenous Peoples: To ensure full integration of indigenous peoples' perspectives in the implementation of the SSF Guidelines, FAO strives to support more initiatives in this respect (see also paragraph 30 below). The 2019 Expert Seminar on Traditional Knowledge and Indigenous Peoples' Fisheries in the Arctic Region (hosted by FAO in cooperation with Finland and Canada), recommended FAO and member states to elaborate on recommendations to strengthen indigenous peoples' governance over traditional fishing, including in the Arctic region. Such efforts will include advancing training on the SSF Guidelines for indigenous peoples, along with training on the VGGT. In addition, FAO will undertake work to disaggregate statistics and research on small-scale artisanal indigenous peoples' fisheries, for countries with presence of indigenous peoples.

- Blue economy: In partnership with a number of other organizations, and led by the International Collective in Support of Fishworkers (ICSF) and SwedBio, FAO had planned a workshop on 'Small-scale fisheries and everything Blue' to provide an opportunity to review the different blue agendas and discuss their implications, challenges and opportunities for small-scale fisheries, coastal and inland communities, and human rights-based approaches. The COVID19 outbreak made a physical meeting impossible, but a first virtual discussion with participants from civil society organizations (CSOs), social movements, research and academia took place to further prepare the workshop.

5. The fact that development partners and other important stakeholders are increasingly expressing interest in the SSF Guidelines and in including them in their investment strategies and activities, is a clear result that raising awareness pays off. As more partners refer to the SSF Guidelines, it is expected that development investments and activities will increase synergies allowing for greater impact. Related key developments include:

- The annual European Fisheries Development Advisors Network (EFDAN) meeting held in June 2018 in Sweden discussed the importance of participation of small-scale fisheries actors in global and regional processes and highlighted examples of FAO's support to strengthening organizations.
- The German Ministry for Development Cooperation (BMZ) co-convened an innovation dialogue with the NGO Bread for the World in Berlin in 2019 where the SSF Guidelines were introduced as part of the existing tools to address current shortcomings in sustainable fisheries, including in Africa. The dialogue was attended by about 100 participants from ministries, NGOs, academia and the public.
- In September 2019, FAO was also invited to hold a briefing for the German Development Agency (GIZ) about the SSF Guidelines and what it means to work with the chapters in them when GIZ hosted a regional conference for their staff members, consultants and implementing partners of small-scale fisheries and aquaculture projects in Uganda, Mauritania, Malawi, Madagascar and Zambia.
- The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and USAID has released a guide on Advancing gender in the environment: gender in fisheries – a sea of opportunities which also refers to the SSF Guidelines.
- Oak Foundation has developed a funding stream for small-scale fisheries which supports the implementation of the SSF Guidelines.
- For the 41st annual forum of the NGO Parliamentarians for Global Action (PGA), SDG 14 and 16 were put in focus. Over 100 parliamentarians gathered in Praia, Cabo Verde, and the forum ended with the adoption of a Plan for Action that, among other things, set out to build sustainability in small-scale fisheries by "Promoting the adoption of legislation that recognizes, protects, sustains and empowers small-scale fisheries and the communities that rely on them a's well as the implementation of the FAO Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries".<sup>1</sup>

6. FAO and partners have continued to produce materials that facilitate the understanding and uptake of the SSF Guidelines. These include:

- Additional animated videos on chapters 5, 6, 7 and 9 of the SSF Guidelines, produced for FAO by ICSF.

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<sup>1</sup> [www.pgaction.org/pdf/annual-forum/Praia\\_Plan\\_of\\_Action\\_en.pdf?v=2](http://www.pgaction.org/pdf/annual-forum/Praia_Plan_of_Action_en.pdf?v=2)

- A roadmap and associated toolbox to support countries in the implementation of the SSF Guidelines is being drafted and discussed with partners. One of the tools for assessing institutional, policy and legal frameworks in relation to the SSF Guidelines takes inspiration from an analytical tool developed and tested in Indonesia and the Philippines by USAID.
- Other tools already available include:
  - Fisheries Learning Exchanges: A short guide to best practice is a handbook providing guidance on developing, implementing, evaluating and sustaining fisheries learning exchanges, produced through collaboration between FAO, the NGO Blue Ventures and the research initiative FLECELL;
  - An illustrated SSF Guidelines card game, developed in collaboration with Wageningen Centre for Development Innovation (Wageningen University and Research – WUR, the Netherlands), which has been piloted in the Resilient Fisheries Governance training course in Wageningen as well as in a regional workshop with participants from five African countries (see also paragraph 37 below).

### **III. COMPONENT 2: STRENGTHENING THE SCIENCE-POLICY INTERFACE**

7. Under component 2 of the FAO SSF Umbrella Programme, FAO continues to work with partners on generating and facilitating specific knowledge on small-scale fisheries issues to better inform related policies, in fisheries, but also beyond. Partners from research and academia play an important role in work under this component. Key developments and achievements are summarized below.

8. A session of the FAO International Symposium on Fisheries Sustainability: Strengthening the science-policy nexus, November 2019, examined possible pathways to secure sustainable fisheries livelihoods, including with respect to their social, cultural and equity dimensions. One of the keynote presentations was given by a small-scale fisher and the discussions emphasized approaches leading to equitable and sustainable fisheries livelihoods, particularly regarding inclusive fisheries governance and engagement with fishers and fish workers, both women and men. The recommendations of the session confirmed the need to implement the SSF Guidelines and promote a human rights-based approach (HRBA). The SSF Guidelines were also referred to in several other sessions of the symposium and in a survey carried out with participants, 67 percent said they had used the SSF Guidelines in their work, and 53 percent expressed interest in using the Guidelines in their future work.

9. In relation to advancing the human rights-based approach, the Danish Institute for Human Rights (DIHR) organized two regional seminars in July-August and November 2019 for Africa and for Asia respectively, as part of their Sustainable Oceans Project to discuss the role that national human rights institutions can play in human rights challenges in the fisheries and aquaculture sector. The seminar convened about 30 people, representing national human rights institutions, UN agencies, academia, civil society organizations and NGOs. The seminars produced a series of proposed actions such as: addressing the knowledge gap regarding human rights impacts in the fisheries and aquaculture sectors; producing tools and guidance on how to implement a human rights-based approach to small-scale fisheries in projects and programs; the development of guidance on how national human rights institutions can use their mandate to promote and protect human rights of people working in, or affected by the fisheries sector; and capacity building and outreach to assist actors in the fisheries and aquaculture sectors understand the human rights impacts and implications, among others. FAO continues to work on this initiative with DIHR to further explore the application of human rights standards in SSF Guidelines implementation.

10. With regards to tenure-related issues, the FAO Global Conference on Tenure and User Rights in Fisheries 2018: Achieving Sustainable Development Goals by 2030 was held in Yeosu, Republic of Korea, on the 10–14 of September 2018. Among other things, it highlighted how implementing the SSF Guidelines is key in linking fishing tenure, access, user rights and human rights and fostering participation and empowerment. A series of regional workshops are now being held to provide additional recommendations for the development of practical guidance on how to effectively implement Chapter 5 – Governance of tenure and resource management – of the SSF Guidelines. In September and November 2019, such regional workshops were held in Thailand and Chile, respectively.

11. An International Conference on Communities, Conservation and Livelihoods was co-hosted by the Community Conservation Research Network (CCRN) and IUCN and took place at Saint Mary's University, Halifax, Canada, in May, 2018. It gathered around 500 people from all regions of the world and included sessions and presentations on small-scale fisheries referring to the SSF Guidelines. The meeting was a major opportunity to shine a spotlight on local communities around the world, how they are engaging in environmental conservation supporting sustainable livelihoods, and how they can be best supported in policy and in practical programs.

12. An important partner from the research community is the Too Big To Ignore (TBTI) research network, which has a broad research agenda on small-scale fisheries. The TBTI organized the 3rd World Small-scale Fisheries Congress in Thailand in October 2018 which had the specific objective to inform the SSF Guidelines implementation and included a number of dedicated sessions related to this. The FAO SSF Umbrella Programme facilitated participation of a number of policy makers, small-scale fisheries actors and early career researchers from developing countries.

13. Another important partner is WorldFish with whom FAO Fisheries Division signed an MoU in 2018 covering, among other things, continued collaboration on small-scale fisheries and implementation of the SSF Guidelines, including the global study Illuminating Hidden Harvests: the contribution of small-scale fisheries to sustainable development (IHH). This major collaborative undertaking of FAO, WorldFish and Duke University constitutes an important piece of work with regard to providing better information on and improving the knowledge of small-scale fisheries and their contribution to sustainable development. The release of the study is planned for end of 2020 and achievements to-date are reported on in the document COFI/2020/Inf.12.1.

14. FAO and WorldFish also collaborated on a forthcoming publication, Information and communications technologies to secure sustainable small-scale fisheries in Asia: Successes and failures, which aims to provide a reference framework for uses of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) in small-scale fisheries, specifically towards achieving the objectives of the SSF Guidelines and the SDGs. Moreover, an international workshop ICT4Fisheries in practice, held in Cape Town, South Africa in October 2019, was organized by ABALOBI and Blue Ventures, two NGOs using ICTs in their support to small-scale fisheries. A community of practice platform was created after a workshop where discussions and sharing of experiences will continue.

15. The scientific community is generally increasingly engaged in supporting the SSF Guidelines implementation as evidenced by a growing number of peer reviewed publications that either focus on or refer to the SSF Guidelines (see list in Appendix).

16. Two technical papers have been published with a view to provide guidance by sharing good practices:

- Securing sustainable small-scale fisheries: sharing good practices from around the world includes eight case studies from different parts of the world covering the thematic areas of the SSF Guidelines.

- 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, focusing on Chapter 7 – Value chains, post-harvest and trade.

17. In relation to other specific themes, the following knowledge products have been developed and are being disseminated and applied with partners:

- Guidelines for micro-finance and credit programmes in support of small-scale fisheries in Asia,<sup>2</sup> and Guidelines for increasing access of small-scale fishers to insurance services<sup>3</sup> have been developed by FAO in collaboration with Asia-Pacific Rural and Agricultural Credit Association (APRACA) and partners. These Guidelines were endorsed by APRACA membership in 2019 and are now being implemented, for example in the Philippines.
- Safety at sea for small-scale fishers – a manual aiming to contribute to a culture of safety awareness among fisherfolk (available in Bengali, Chinese, English, French, Malayalam, Singhalese, Spanish, Portuguese, Russian and Tamil) – has been developed in collaboration with the Bay of Bengal Programme –Intergovernmental Organization (BOBP-IGO).<sup>4</sup>
- Social protection and decent work: social protection is receiving more and more attention as a key instrument to address fishers' vulnerabilities and support them in developing alternative sources of income, but also as a way to promote sustainable use of resources, when coupled with fisheries policies and programmes. In the intersessional period, FAO supported governments and fishers organizations in a number of activities in relation to the promotion of decent working conditions in the sector. These include capacity development initiatives on aspects of safety, advocacy and policy work for coverage of fish workers by social protection system. FAO organized regional seminars on working conditions, safety and the fight against IUU fishing with the participations of many actors, including experts from governments and small-scale fishers organizations (see also paragraph 4 above and information on these activities can be found in the Inf. Document 14.1 on Safety and Decent Work in Fisheries and Aquaculture):
- A study was carried out by FAO and the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM) in selected countries in the Mediterranean region to better understand the need for social protection coverage.<sup>5</sup> Recommendations from the report are now being followed up with a view to improve the coverage and effectiveness of national social protection programmes for small-scale fisheries actors. The outcome study has been published along with a Policy Brief and will also be available in English and French.
- In Cambodia, FAO and WorldFish conducted a study on policy coherence between social protection and fisheries policies. The outcomes of the study, provided concrete entry points and were presented to different government authorities and developing partners in the Technical Working Group for Social Protection and Food Security and Nutrition and the Technical Working Group for Fisheries Administration. The outcomes were further disseminated through the policy brief Promoting greater

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<sup>2</sup> Grace, L., van Anrooy, R. 2019. Guidelines for micro-finance and credit services in support of small-scale fisheries in Asia - A handbook for finance and fisheries stakeholders. In support of the implementation of the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication. Rome, FAO. [www.fao.org/3/ca5128en/CA5128EN.pdf](http://www.fao.org/3/ca5128en/CA5128EN.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> Tietze U., van Anrooy, R. 2019. Guidelines for increasing access of small-scale fisheries to insurance services in Asia. A handbook for insurance and fisheries stakeholders. In support of the implementation of the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication. Rome, FAO. [www.fao.org/3/ca5129en/CA5129EN.pdf](http://www.fao.org/3/ca5129en/CA5129EN.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> FAO. 2019. Safety at sea for small-scale fishers. Rome. <http://www.fao.org/3/ca5772en/CA5772EN.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> FAO. 2019. Social protection for small-scale fisheries in the Mediterranean region – A review. Rome. FAO. 92 pp. [www.fao.org/3/ca4711en/ca4711en.pdf](http://www.fao.org/3/ca4711en/ca4711en.pdf)

coherence between small-scale fisheries and social protection policies, mechanisms and programs in Cambodia<sup>6</sup> and a related infographic.<sup>7</sup>

- Also in Latin America and the Caribbean, a number of national level studies have been carried out and analyzed to provide recommendations for regional and national policy agendas to strengthen social protection for the small-scale fisheries and aquaculture sector with a view to achieving the sustainable development goals. The creation of a joint working group by FAO, the Central American Fisheries and Aquaculture Organization (OSPESCA) and the Central American Small-scale Fishers Confederation (CONFEPESCA) has been instrumental in fostering the incorporation of small-scale fisheries and aquaculture in national social protection programmes in Central American countries (see also paragraph 28 below).

18. At the regional level, in West Africa, two sessions of the Fishery Committee for the Eastern Central Atlantic (CECAF) artisanal fisheries working group have been held in Dakar, Senegal (in July 2018 and in October 2019).<sup>8</sup> These sessions were the first ones held after the working group revised its terms of reference in 2016 to include the implementation of the SSF Guidelines, and its workplan includes improved data collection on small-scale fisheries based on a selected number of key indicators, studies on key challenges facing the small-scale fisheries sector and refining the characterization of small-scale fisheries in the region.

19. Moreover, a regional SSF Guidelines consultation workshop for the CECAF countries was organized in July 2019 in Dakar, Senegal, to discuss and agree on actions needed for securing sustainable small-scale fisheries within the context of existing regional and international policy frameworks. This 3-day consultation was the seventh of regional awareness raising and SSF Guidelines implementation planning events convened by FAO, in collaboration with regional partners, in different parts of the world in earlier years. For this workshop, FAO partnered with the African Union Inter-African Bureau for Animal Resources (AU-IBAR) and collaborated with the ECOWAS Commission and the FIRST project. The workshop brought together 70 participants, including government representatives from 19 CECAF member countries.

20. The Committee for Inland Fisheries and Aquaculture of Africa (CIFAA) is the regional fishery body (RFB) for inland fisheries and aquaculture in Africa. In its 18th session, held in Bamako in November 2019, an agenda item on the SSF Guidelines was included for the first time. The SSF Guidelines are referred to in the African Union Policy Framework and Reform Strategy for Fisheries and Aquaculture in Africa and are hence linked to the continental policy framework. By strengthening African RFBs and regional economic communities (RECs) in their knowledge on small-scale fisheries and the SSF Guidelines, capacity is created to support their member countries.

21. FAO continues to support the implementation of the SSF Guidelines and the achievement of SDG Target 14.b in North Africa. In Tunisia and Algeria, a technical cooperation project entitled “Blue Hope Initiative in the Mediterranean Sea” is assisting stakeholders in the development of investment plans, aiming at facilitating the inclusion of local small-scale fisheries communities in the Blue Growth process. In order to support the management of marine small-scale fisheries in the sub-region, FAO is working with its partners on improved data collection. A sub-regional initiative for an SSF inventory has been initiated to complement previous and ongoing activities like the MedSudMed qualitative mapping of small-scale fisheries in Libya and Tunisia. The overall scope of the inventory is to obtain a clear picture of the status of the small-scale fisheries sector and to identify fishing grounds and the most sustainable and economic viable fishing methods.

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<sup>6</sup> FAO 2020. Promoting great coherence between small-scale fisheries and social protection policies, mechanisms and programs in Cambodia. By Kosal Mam, Peter Jackson and Sopanha Chap

<sup>7</sup> Illustration: Greater inclusion in social protection can benefit both fisher-farmers' livelihoods and Cambodia's fisheries. [www.fao.org/3/ca7398en/CA7398EN.pdf](http://www.fao.org/3/ca7398en/CA7398EN.pdf)

<sup>8</sup> Report of the FAO/CECAF Working Group for Artisanal Fisheries. [www.fao.org/3/ca5942b/CA5942B.pdf](http://www.fao.org/3/ca5942b/CA5942B.pdf)

22. The members of the GFCM agreed to a ten-year Regional Plan of Action for small-scale fisheries in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea (RPOA-SSF) at a high-level conference held in Malta in September 2018. This declaration took shape at the end of a long process involving all stakeholders. It is a historic step for the region and a concrete commitment to ensure the long-term environmental, economic and social sustainability for small-scale fisheries within the next decade. The implementation of the RPOA-SSF is now being supported through a multi-partner workplan.

23. FAO Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia (REU) funded a project on Systems and methodologies of data collection in inland fisheries of Europe 2018-2020. This project focuses on assisting West Balkans countries with data systems for monitoring their inland fisheries, which are primarily small-scale fishers and anglers in rivers and lakes. The project is developing good practices guidelines that highlight regional success stories such as co-management arrangements between government and fishers / angler associations, as well as the potential for citizen science in data collection. National workshops will provide training to stakeholders in small-scale freshwater fisheries of West Balkans, namely in the participating countries of Albania, Montenegro and North Macedonia. Moreover, a technical publication documenting data collection systems relevant for small-scale inland and recreational fisheries in European countries was produced jointly with the European Inland Fisheries and Aquaculture Advisory Commission (EIFAAC).

24. In the Caribbean, FAO continues to provide support to the uptake of the SSF Guidelines in the Caribbean Community Common Fisheries (CRFM) policy. As the main output of a participatory policy influencing process, the CRFM Ministerial Council approved the Protocol on securing sustainable small-scale fisheries for Caribbean Community fisherfolk and societies (SSF protocol) in May 2018, bringing it into force immediately. FAO continues its support through the Centre for Resource Management and Environmental Studies (CERMES) and its Gender In Fisheries Team (GIFT) to fill in critical gaps, especially in gender analysis and reporting, that can inform more targeted interventions with regard to protocol implementation. Among other things, more in-depth knowledge of gender in fisheries is required, especially in priority areas, some of which were identified during the participatory process to develop the SSF protocol and in various projects.

25. In the Caribbean FAO has improved Safety at Sea through a regional training which includes modules such as emergency preparation, outboard engine repair and maintenance, safety risk management, boat handling and basic marine traffic as well as First Aid and communication. In addition, nearly 600 fishers have received specific ICT trainings focusing on the three ICT devices most important to safety at sea for small-scale fishers: the VHF radio, Global Positioning System (GPS) and cell phone. FAO has taught instrumental, technical and procedural skills while also performing drills on the radio, GPS and cell phone in a classroom environment as well as at sea.

26. The Western Central Atlantic Fishery Commission (WECAFC) has endorsed a resolution that encourages the implementation of the SSF Guidelines in all member States (WECAFC/15/2014/8). In its 17th session in July 2019, progress was reviewed and the meeting also discussed the roadmap towards IYAFA in 2022. Also the Commission for Small-Scale and Artisanal Fisheries and Aquaculture of Latin America and the Caribbean (COPPESAALC) discussed the SSF Guidelines and reported on activities in member states, e.g., technical assistance was provided to national processes in Costa Rica, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua for the adoption of the provisions of the SSF Guidelines within national regulatory frameworks.

27. In Latin America, a workshop was held in the Yucatan Peninsula on small-scale fisheries governance and policy in Latin America and the Caribbean in December 2019. The workshop was hosted by the Mexican civil society organization Comunidad y Biodiversidad (COBI), in collaboration with others. Researchers and civil society organizations worked together to co-design a regional framework for mainstreaming the SSF Guidelines into governance and policy in the region, and also discussed how to assess implementation.

28. The Organization of the Fisheries and Aquaculture Sector of Central America (OSPESCA) integrated the SSF Guidelines already in its 2015-25 strategy and an artisanal fisheries working group among FAO, OSPESCA and the Central American Small-scale Fishers Confederation (CONFEPESCA) was created to foster the implementation of the SSF Guidelines in Central American countries, Cuba and Dominican Republic. The working group is an important platform where governments and fisher folk organizations are starting to work together to design and implement pilot experiences in fishing communities, on the implementation of the SSF Guidelines.

29. In October 2019, a Central American sub-regional meeting was held for OSPESCA member countries Belize, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and Panama to continue their regional approach to implement the SSF Guidelines. This meeting was enriched by the presence of fisher representatives from Colombia and Mexico, to broaden the sharing of experiences. This helped in the discussion on priority issues to address in the region through a regional project on small-scale fisheries. In addition, the Alliance of Indigenous Fishers of Central America participated and it was agreed that this Alliance will join the regional artisanal working group.

30. In San Jose, Costa Rica, in December 2018, Indigenous People representatives of Central American countries held a meeting to collectively construct mechanics for SSF Guidelines implementation and confirming the establishment of the Alliance of Central American Indigenous Fishers (Alianza de Pescadores Indígenas Centroamericanos) and the development of a regional action plan. The meeting was supported by FAO, OSPESCA, Fund for the Development of the Indigenous Peoples of Latin America and the Caribbean FILAC) and the Central American Indigenous Council (CICA). In 2019, the FAO national office in Panama reported on the course of the implementation of the SSF Guidelines in the context of poverty eradication for indigenous peoples in Central America. In September 2019, the Alliance of Central American Indigenous Fishers hosted a workshop on territorial governance in fishing in Panama City, with support from FAO and the FILAC. The outcomes of the workshop are planned to be compiled into a guide on responsible and participatory indigenous fishery governance.

31. In Southeast Asia, the Southeast Asia Fisheries Development Center (SEAFDEC) developed a Practical Guide for Gender Analysis in Small-scale Fisheries and Aquaculture in Southeast Asia based on the principle of the SSF Guidelines and is applying this guide in selected countries.

32. The FAO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific and the Network of Aquaculture of Centres in Asia-Pacific co-organized a regional consultation workshop on demographic change in fishing communities in Asia on 6-7 November 2019 in Bangkok, Thailand, to explore and understand the potential impacts of ageing, a young population, and migration in fishing communities on the fishing industry, sustainability of fishery resources, livelihoods diversification, climate change adaptation, and gender roles and relations.

33. In the Pacific, a workshop on the methodology for reporting on indicator SDG 14b1 was held. Representatives of 11 Pacific countries, regional organizations, academia and civil society gathered for the event. The purpose of the workshop was to raise awareness of the SDG 14.b, as well as of related regional and global policy instruments, in particular SPC's New Song for the Pacific and the SSF Guidelines, and to strengthen capacities to collect and compile relevant data and report on the indicator SDG 14.b.1.

34. To better understand how regional policies on coastal fisheries link to and complement the SSF guidelines, FAO in the Pacific and a regional partner, the Pacific Community (SPC), commissioned a review to assist with regional program and identify key areas of collaboration and programming in the region. Moreover, the fisheries community in the Pacific region saw the need to translate guidance emerging from the SSF Guidelines as well as regional policies such as "the New Song for Coastal Fisheries" on gender equity and chapter 5 into context specific guidance. FAO partners in the Pacific Islands region worked together to develop "the Pacific handbook for gender

equity and social inclusion in coastal fisheries and aquaculture”<sup>9</sup> which provides practical guidance on improving gender and social inclusion in coastal fisheries and aquaculture.

35. At the national level, several Members have taken the initiative to move towards SSF Guidelines implementation. FAO provides support as and when needed in reply to requests. Moreover, within the framework of a new Sida funded project under the FAO SSF Umbrella Programme, a call to all Members through the FAO national offices in developing countries was made enquiring about interest in SSF Guidelines implementation and requesting project proposals. Using predefined criteria, a selected number of proposals were accepted taking the number of countries with current or planned support to SSF Guidelines implementation to ten: Cabo Verde, Costa Rica, Côte d’Ivoire, Madagascar, Myanmar, Namibia, Oman, Philippines, Senegal and Tanzania. For some of these countries the aim is participatory development (and implementation) of National Plans of Action (NPOAs) (Senegal, Tanzania) or similar comprehensive approaches (Madagascar, Philippines) while others will have a more specific scope (Oman on gender) or build on earlier work (Costa Rica) or complement other ongoing projects (ecosystem approach to fisheries [EAF] – project in Myanmar, Coastal Fisheries Initiative [CFI] in Cabo Verde, Cote d’Ivoire and Senegal [in latter, also NPOA]).

36. The FAO-GEF CFI project in West Africa is currently reviewing fisheries legislation frameworks in Cabo Verde, Côte d’Ivoire and Senegal through a participatory process (including small-scale fisheries communities) and will come up with recommendations for modifications to reflect an ecosystem approach to fisheries (EAF) and principles of the SSF Guidelines. In particular, the project is developing a small-scale fisheries legislative practical guide (SSF Legal Guide) from an EAF perspective including addressing a human rights based approach, and gender equality. The project is also reviewing existing institutional structures to support amendments necessary for new co-management arrangements, including access rights systems for both men and women in coastal area.

37. New activities on Empowering women in fisheries for sustainable food systems have also started in Ghana, Malawi, Sierra Leone and Uganda, as well as in Tanzania where they complement the already existing initiative. Recognising that women predominate the postharvest sector and play a key role in ensuring that their families and consumers more broadly have access to food but that they face many obstacles and frequently do not have the same rights and opportunities as men, the initial focus of this project will be support to women actors in the small-scale fisheries particularly in the postharvest sector. By operationalising the SSF Guidelines with a focus on the work of women and the postharvest sector and capitalizing on related guidance, in particular the handbook Towards gender-equitable small-scale fisheries governance and development<sup>10</sup> (FAO, 2017), the project will contribute to more inclusive and efficient food systems with a focus on ‘small fish’ (small pelagic) value chains in order to increase the quantity and quality of small fish and fish products for human consumption and trade by empowering women in the postharvest sector. The donor, Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (Norad), has pledged funds for a five-year project and the geographic scope may be expanded to additional countries and regions in the coming years.

38. In addition to the above mentioned countries, there have also been activities in a number of other countries but at a more limited scale, for example:

- Under the project "Improve the Governance of the Fishing and Aquaculture Sector, for Food and Nutrition Security in El Salvador", and in close collaboration with stakeholders, the SSF Guidelines were disseminated widely and have been implemented at cooperatives level, strengthening infrastructure and hands-on processes to improve production practices.

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<sup>9</sup> <https://coastfish.spc.int/en/component/content/article/494>

<sup>10</sup> [www.fao.org/3/a-i7419e.pdf](http://www.fao.org/3/a-i7419e.pdf)

- ICSF undertook a study in 2019 to assess disaster response and preparedness in light of Cyclone Ockhi in India.<sup>11</sup> The study also reviewed cyclone warning systems and their efficacy, as well as central and state policies and plans (Tamil Nadu and Kerala) to cope with disasters and to minimise loss of human life and damage to fishery-based livelihoods, in line with the SSF Guidelines. In India, ICSF organised awareness raising workshops and contributed to informing the implementation of the Indian Marine Fisheries Policy which includes the SSF Guidelines. The workshops also highlighted mainstreaming gender in fisheries policy, both marine and inland, and the role of local self-governments in implementing the SSG Guidelines.
- ICSF also worked in a number of other countries:<sup>12</sup>
  - In Ghana translating the SSF Guidelines into four local languages for raising awareness among actors across the value chain with a view to strengthen community participation in policymaking, and to improve traditional fishing regulations and security of tenure of inland and coastal fishing communities.
  - In Brazil raising awareness of the SSF Guidelines among the Indigenous Peoples of the Amazonas state through a workshop in 2019 informing them about their rights as small-scale fishers, and helping to integrate them into coastal and riverine fishers and fishing communities.
  - In Viet Nam raising awareness about co-management and community-based monitoring, control and surveillance systems through two workshops in 2018 and 2019 respectively.
  - In Myanmar reviewing fisheries management in two townships in late 2018 and proposing integrating an ecosystem approach to fisheries management (EAFM) into the co-management mechanisms of local fishing communities, and undertaking a study, also in 2018, on improving working conditions for migrant fishers in a stow net fishery.
  - In the Philippines benchmarking legislation and policies against the SSF Guidelines during 2019, finding needs to improve tenure security and decent working conditions.
  - In Sri Lanka promoting the incorporation of key elements of the SSF Guidelines into fishery policy and planning processes during 2018-2019, especially processes dealing with securing tenure rights of fishers to land, water and fishery resources, social development and social protection.
- With support from Norad, FAO is working with the governments of South Africa, Saint Lucia and the Philippines to strengthen the adaptive capacity of traditional fishers and fish workers (in particular women) to climate change, including through skills trainings on the use of alternative marine resources, improved fish handling, adoption of modern methods for more efficient and targeted use of fishing gear and the slaughtering and handling of captured fish in ways that maximize their quality and value; basic safety at sea (e.g. survival at sea, safety risk management, emergency first aid, radio communication, international instruments, etc.) etc. Capacity development material is been developed from lessons learned in the project, aimed at broad distribution and re-use.

39. Through the Sustainable Management of Bycatch in Latin America and Caribbean Trawl Fisheries project (REBYC-II LAC), Costa Rica, Brazil and Colombia carried out bottom-up stakeholder led consultations to develop management plans that incorporate small-scale fishers. This was the first time that small-scale fishers effectively participated in the decision making process. This led to the creation of the Barra del Colorado Management Plan in Costa Rica, the creation of intra sectoral fishing and effort agreements in Colombia and the first EAF-based management plan for shrimp fisheries in Brazil.

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<sup>11</sup> Cyclone Ockhi – Disaster risk management and sea safety in the Indian marine fisheries sector.

[www.fao.org/3/ca2904en/CA2904EN.pdf](http://www.fao.org/3/ca2904en/CA2904EN.pdf)

<sup>12</sup> Information on ICSF's work to implement the SSF Guidelines is compiled on <https://igssf.icsf.net>

#### **IV. COMPONENT 3: EMPOWERING STAKEHOLDERS**

40. The 3rd component of the FAO SSF Umbrella Programme supports improved technical and organizational capacities of governments and stakeholders at the local, national and regional levels. It is closely related to activities conducted under the other components, in particular Component 2.

41. Within the framework of the GFCM RPOA-SSF (see paragraph 22 above), an ‘SSF University’ has been set up consisting of a variety of training courses directed to in particular small-scale fisheries actors in the Mediterranean and Black Sea region. As part of this programme, the GFCM is organizing two workshops for the Mediterranean and the Black Sea, respectively, to strengthen small-scale fisheries organizations in the two sub-regions, and to inform on the work of the GFCM and how small-scale fishers and fish workers can engage with the Commission. Other courses are organized by GFCM partners, including by the FAO, and other members of the ‘Friends of SSF’ network that has been set up for collaborating on the implementation of the RPOA-SSF.

42. The African Union Inter-African Bureau for Animal Resources (AU-IBAR) and the African Union Development Agency (AUDA-NEPAD) have been supporting the establishment of sub-regional platforms for non-state actors (NSA) in fisheries and aquaculture. While the platforms have a broader membership than small-scale fisheries organizations, there is a focus on small-scale fisheries because of the sub-sector’s importance in Africa. In April 2018, the Southern African Regional Non-State Actors Platform in Fisheries and Aquaculture (SANSFA) was established and in March 2018 the West Africa Non-State Actors for Artisanal Fisheries and Aquaculture (WANSAFA) held his constitutive General Assembly. In July 2019, a workshop was co-organized by WorldFish, FAO, AU-IBAR and the Southern African Development Community (SADC) in Botswana to explore the possibility to create a pan-African NSA platform and how such a platform could link to global processes taking place within the SSF Global Strategic Framework (SSF-GSF).

43. Other examples of capacity developed in Africa supported by FAO includes strengthening the capacity of small-scale fisheries organizations in Morocco through a dedicated project that is delivering ad hoc fisheries management trainings to small-scale fishers, while access barriers to social protection are being addressed in Tunisia. Moreover, a learning exchange trip is being organized for Moroccan and Tunisian representatives to Italy within the framework of the SSF University coordinated by GFCM. The trip will aim at exchanging experiences in the management of professional organizations and in the diversification of incomes. In Mauritania, a new project titled “Improving management of water bodies for the production and marketing of inland fishery and aquaculture products in Mauritania” was recently approved to provide technical assistance for the management of inland fisheries along Senegal River.

44. A considerable amount of work is being carried out on gender. Some of the gender related work has been mentioned above (see, for example, paragraphs 31 and 37) but the FAO SSF Umbrella Programme has also supported participation of small-scale fisheries representatives or resource persons in various meetings and conferences that are considered as capacity development. Examples include:

- In October 2019, the Gender in Aquaculture and Fisheries Section and network of experts of the Asian Fisheries Society organized the seventh symposium on Gender in Aquaculture and Fisheries (GAF7), inviting around 150 participants. This year’s theme was Expanding the Horizons. During the symposium, a special workshop was held on the role women fish worker organizations play in implementing, and also monitoring the implementation of, the Small-Scale Fisheries Guidelines. It drew on experiences from the African Women Network of Fish Processors and Traders (AWFISHNET).
- FAO provided support to country participants to attend the International Conference of Women in Fisheries, November 2018, Spain. This conference agreed on a declaration: The ‘Santiago de Compostela Declaration for Equal Opportunities in the Fishing Sector and Aquaculture’

- In January 2020, the FAO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific supported the regional workshop on gender integration in fisheries, organized by the Oceans and Fisheries Partnership (USAID) and SEAFDEC in Thailand by providing resource persons on gender-sensitive reporting and communication, as well as on gender equality according to the SSF Guidelines.

45. A newly started project on co-management, funded by South Korea, aims to produce knowledge products and methodologies for evaluating performance of the existing fisheries co-management systems worldwide. The project is expected to contribute to enhancing the effectiveness of fisheries co-management systems around the world and improving knowledge about fisheries co-management that is widely applicable for sustainable fisheries and livelihoods. Beside, a test-bed project of the above co-management project will concurrently start to apply the developed methodology to a country level from the year 2020 onwards.

46. Work started in the previous biennium on mapping small-scale fisheries organizations and assessing their needs with a view to provide support has continued also since 2018. and the FAO SSF Umbrella Programme collaborates with partners in this respect. This includes work by the Duke University with support from the Oak Foundation on a small-scale fisheries organizations global inventory.

47. In the Pacific, two new initiatives have been started that include support to small-scale (coastal) fishers/fish worker organizations. A regional project is providing support to seven Pacific Island countries to develop and strengthen their small-scale tuna fisher associations and cooperatives to enable improved engagement in management and decision making processes related to the resources on which they depend. In addition, aligned to the latter regional project is a project that focuses on assessing, mapping and characterizing associations of fishers and fish workers from around the Pacific Islands. This project seeks to develop a baseline of information to assist national and regional agencies and organization better engage and support small-scale fisher and fish worker associations and cooperatives.

48. In Brazil, FAO supported national institutes and indigenous fishers' collectives in giving particular attention to the role of indigenous peoples in the SSF guidelines. The 'Seminar on Indigenous Fisheries in Amazonas and Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries' was held on 27 and 28 March 2019, in Manaus and generated several new community initiatives.

49. In the Caribbean, the FAO-GEF project REBYC-II LAC and StewardFish are collaborating with Duke University and the University of West Indies to diagnose the functionality of fishing organizations in Trinidad and Tobago and Suriname to understand and reinforce areas of action. This project created and strengthened five local fisher and fish worker organizations and one national organization in Suriname to enhance the capacity of small-scale fishers to participate in the decision-making process. Under StewardFish, capacity building is being carried out to empower fisherfolk throughout fisheries value chains to engage in resource management, decision-making processes and sustainable livelihoods, with strengthened institutional support at all levels. Implementation is being guided by the principles of EAF and is seeking to promote women's empowerment through leadership and promote the importance of social protection for sustainable livelihoods. Moreover, FAO is providing support to the Caribbean Network of Fisherfolk Organizations (CNFO) to allow small-scale fisheries actors in the region to better understand the SSF Guidelines and to engage in regional policy processes. In the region, FAO is also providing support to the CNFO and National Fisherfolk Organizations to increase resilience to climate change through the GEF Funded Climate Change of the Eastern Caribbean Fisheries Sector Project (CC4FISH).

50. Using the Learning guide "Putting the Voluntary Guidelines on Tenure into practice: A learning guide for civil society organizations", which was co-developed by FAO and the IPC Fisheries Working Group and tested in 2017 in Indonesia, training sessions were carried out for small-scale fisheries organizations and CSOs in Brazil, Sri Lanka and Tanzania. The overall goal of the training is to enable SSF organizations and their constituents to use the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible

Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security (VGGT) and the SSF Guidelines meaningfully and effectively to improve the governance of tenure and ensure sustainable small-scale fisheries.

51. With regard to global training programmes including modules on the SSF Guidelines and primarily directed to governments, initiatives with engagement by the FAO include:

- Wageningen Centre for Development Innovation (Wageningen University and Research – WUR, the Netherlands) on fisheries governance courses;
- TBTI interdisciplinary training course initiative;
- The Fisheries Training Programme under the auspices of UNESCO in Reykjavik, Iceland.
- A training course entirely dedicated to the SSF Guidelines is currently under development by the International Oceans Institute African Region (IOI-SA).

## **V. COMPONENT 4: SUPPORTING IMPLEMENTATION**

52. Under component 4 of the FAO SSF Umbrella Programme, there are two main streams of work: the development of the SSF Global Strategic Framework (SSF-GSF) as a partnership mechanism to support SSF Guidelines implementation, and monitoring of progress toward securing sustainable small-scale fisheries, including the design of a monitoring system.

53. During the last two years, the SSF-GSF has been further developed in line with the initial 2016 COFI recommendations and as described in the document prepared for COFI 2018. The different components of this partnership mechanism in support of SSF Guidelines implementation have been better defined and several meetings have been held:

- Leading up to and in the margins of COFI 2018, the Advisory Group – consisting of representatives of global small-scale fisheries organizations, IFAD and UNOHCHR – met and developed terms of reference. They have continued meeting with the support of the IPC Fisheries Working Group and during 2020 work towards setting up regional Advisory Groups with a view to better connect with relevant regional organizations, processes and initiatives, including with Regional Fisheries Management Organizations (RFMOs) and the FAO regional conferences, has begun. The options for institutional links between an African Advisory Group and the planned continental NSA platform was discussed at the Pan-African workshop: Strengthening organizational structures of non-state actors for sustainable small-scale fisheries in Africa, held in Botswana in July 2019 (see also paragraph 42 above). An initial meeting of the Africa chapter was held in February 2020. Meetings in Asia and Latin America are foreseen later during the year.
- The Friends of the SSF Guidelines have five confirmed members: Canada, Indonesia, Norway, Peru, and Tanzania. A joint meeting was held with the Advisory Group in May 2018 to discuss terms of reference and collaboration and the FAO SSF-GSF Secretariat has been communicating with the Friends to discuss their engagement in relation to COFI 2020 and with regard to the planning of IYAFIA in 2022.
- In the margins of COFI 2018, discussions were also held with regard to the Knowledge Sharing Platform. This component of the SSF-GSF is composed of other actors, for example from academia, research institutes, regional organizations, or NGOs. As the name suggests, they contribute knowledge and support the Advisory Group and the Friends of the SSF Guidelines with research, capacity development, resource mobilization, communication, and other relevant activities. Two events took place in 2019 that contributed to the further development of the Knowledge Sharing Platform:

- In collaboration with the Oak Foundation, WorldFish organized a ‘Towards resilient and equitable small-scale fisheries’ workshop in September 2019 in Penang, Malaysia with a view to promote collaboration and coordination among small-scale fisheries stakeholders.
- The Environmental Defense Fund (EDF) convened a working session hosted by FAO with participants from environmental NGOs and other actors working with small-scale fisheries to advance how a resource and collaboration hub to support small-scale fishery leaders and help implement the SSF Guidelines. The hub will address SSF management and community development in mutually supportive ways and use tools and mechanisms that foster learning, information sharing, and capacity building. This ongoing effort will contribute to the SSF-GSF.

54. Work continues towards guidance on monitoring of improvements in small-scale fisheries and of the implementation of the SSF Guidelines. An online consultation to solicit views, recommendations, suggestions, and good practices from a diverse group of practitioners has been carried out in March 2020 and an in-depth engagement with a number of small-scale fisheries practitioners around the world was conducted. Follow-up activities include the development of a ‘monitoring dummy’ with indicators and guidance of process, to be reviewed by an expert meeting and piloted, including in the Caribbean region.

## VI. CONCLUDING REMARKS

55. The interest in small-scale fisheries and the understanding of their contribution to sustainable development continues to increase as reflected by initiatives and projects by old and new development partners and organizations. The consolidation and operationalization of the SSF-GSF will be important for supporting the continued implementation of the SSF Guidelines by a growing range of partners and ensuring that the fundamental principles contained in this international instrument are adhered to and that the key recommendations are implemented as intended.

56. FAO continues to play a facilitating and catalytic role at all levels with its comparative advantage as a convening power and its ability to identify, develop, analyze and share methods and good practices. Through the FAO SSF Umbrella Programme, FAO support is provided for awareness raising, policy reform and capacity development at the global and regional levels. The SSF Guidelines provide a wide-ranging set of recommendations beyond conventional fisheries matters as they reflect the reality and complexity of small-scale fisheries livelihoods. Within a framework of the human-right based approach, broad and sometimes new partnerships are hence needed together with cross-sectoral collaboration. Accordingly and as can be seen from the examples given above, FAO is entering into partnerships to promote the necessary holistic approach with regard to, among other things, human rights, social protection, tenure, gender equality, indigenous perspectives and a value chain perspective including in particular the postharvest subsector.

57. Moreover, since the last COFI in 2018, more efforts are also being invested at the national level. This has been made possible by the interest of countries to engage in the implementation of the SSF Guidelines combined with the resources made available through the FAO SSF Umbrella Programme. It should be recognized that to ensure participatory and holistic implementation processes, considerable investments are needed especially in human resources for consultations, empowerment, planning and coordination. Accordingly, FAO is deploying small-scale fisheries project staff in focal countries who will not only lead project implementation but also build national capacity for a long-term engagement in sustainable small-scale fisheries.

58. National level implementation will need to be continued and expanded to create real impact for local communities and society. FAO Members are hence encouraged to engage in participatory processes for SSF Guidelines implementation, using this instrument as a tool for achieving the 2030 sustainable development agenda and seeking collaboration with FAO and other development partners as appropriate. Resource partners are also encouraged to continue to support the FAO SSF Umbrella Programme so that FAO can continue its catalytic and facilitative role.

59. The results of “Illuminating Hidden Harvests: The contribution of small-scale fisheries to sustainable development” will be made available before the end of 2020. In addition to providing a snapshot of the current status of the contribution of small-scale fisheries to sustainable development, the work on the study has also generated improved methods and approaches for collecting data and analyzing the small-scale fisheries sector. It is hoped that FAO Members and development partners, working together with small-scale fishers and fish workers, will make use of both the new information and the methodologies to continue to improve knowledge and understanding of the small-scale fisheries sector.

60. The declaration of 2022 as the International Year of Artisanal Fisheries and Aquaculture (IYAFA) provides a great opportunity to increase visibility of the sector and momentum for promoting actions towards a sustainable small-scale fisheries sector. Using this opportunity to showcase how good practices and concerted efforts can improve the livelihoods of the people in coastal and inland areas that are dependent on small-scale fisheries and the income and nutrition they provide would be a strategically important step towards a brighter future. Engaging in planning and preparing for the IYAFA celebrations is hence an urgent matter which should begin now.

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