Impact of Covid-19 on Fisheries and Aquaculture
Effects, Good Practices and Recommendations:
Small-Scale Artisanal Fisheries Perspective

Sebastian Mathew
Executive Director, International Collective in Support of Fishworkers
(ICSF)

Virtual Dialogues on the Road to the 34th Committee on Fisheries
13-17 July 2020
Fisheries and Covid-19

• Fish are declared as essential food, and fishing and fish processing are declared as essential services soon after 11 March 2020
• Work on the marine fishing vessel is considered at low risk of exposure
• Subsistence fishing, gleaning activities and subsistence fish consumption seem less affected in remote areas
• Fear of contagion and poor access to health care facilities of small-scale, artisanal fishing communities
Diminished livelihood opportunities:
Small-scale artisanal fishers and fishworkers

- Supply-side disruptions
  - Covid-19 and its prevention and control measures
  - Fishing operations, input supply affected
  - Labour supply reduced
  - Fisheries management problems
Diminished livelihood opportunities: Small-scale artisanal fishers and fishworkers

- **Demand-side disruptions**
  - Covid-19 and its prevention and control measures
  - Global, regional, national and local trade slump (high-value fish and fish products)
  - Lack of capacity for long-term storage of fish
  - Higher price of smaller pelagics at landing centres to the disadvantage of women fishmongers (low-value fish and fish products)
  - Higher cost of transportation
Impacts

• Supply of high-value fish negatively impacted
• Supply of low-value fish less affected, but demand remains volatile
• Decline in the number of small-scale artisanal fishing vessels in operation
• Work force reduced to meet operating costs
• Some fishers forced to sell high-value fish at lower prices
• Burden of household duties under lockdown reducing women’s participation in the work force
• Unemployment, reduced income and food insecurity threaten the livelihoods of fishers and fishworkers
• Some inland fishers threatened with starvation
• Forced dependence on social protection measures
Good practices

• Declaring fish as essential food and fishers and fish processors as essential workers (many countries)
• Exemptions granted to artisanal fishers from curfew (Chile)
• Social protection and economic support programmes for fishers and fishworkers (UK, EU, Canada)
• Hardship funding for marine fishing vessels 12-m or below (Scotland)
• Permitting small-scale fishing fleet compatible with pandemic prevention measures to undertake commercial fishing operations; prior fixing of prices of catch and facilitating fish sales through cooperatives with preferential access to women fish vendors (Kerala, India)
• Support for temporary cessation of fishing activities and storage of fish of producer organizations (EU)
Good practices CSOs, Industry, etc.

• Collecting and disseminating epidemiological information and providing emotional support to fishing communities (Brazil)
• Providing emergency assistance to procure food and medicine, especially to migrant fishers and fishworkers (India)
• Control Guide to avoid spread of Covid-19 on artisanal fishing boats (Peru)
• Guidance for Covid-19 risk assessment on fishing vessels (NFFO, UK)
Recommendations 1

- Strengthen social protection measures during the entire duration of the Covid-19 pandemic
- Ensure Covid-19 related social protection measures are inclusive of the self-employed, informal, and migrant fishers and fishworkers, consistent with the SSF Guidelines
- Improve access of fishers, fishworkers and their families to health infrastructure and health care
- Promote alternative employment opportunities
- FAO to recommend national governments to create a Covid-19 social protection fund, equivalent to 1% of the landed/farm-gate value of fish production
- FAO in collaboration with the World Bank/IFAD to create a special social protection fund to support small-scale artisanal fishers and fishworkers in low income, food deficit countries
Recommendations 2

• Segregate different types of robust fishing craft/gear combinations towards local nutrition and food security, consistent with pandemic control protocols and standards

• Strengthen institutions of fishers and fishworkers (trade unions, coops, associations, etc.) towards improving the effectiveness of economic and social protection measures during the pandemic

• Promote joint mechanisms of fisheries and health departments to adopt pandemic control measures maintaining a judicious balance between Covid-19 control measures and human rights

• FAO/OIE/WHO tripartite collaboration to jointly develop protocols and standards for emerging and reemerging zoonotic diseases and persistent pandemics in the context of fisheries and agriculture
Acknowledgements

• Kafayat Fakoya and Shehu Akintola (Nigeria)
• Gustavo Silveira and Beatriz Mesquita (Brazil)
• Ahmad Marthin Hadiwinata (Indonesia)
• Julian Teelar (India)
• Brian O’Riordan (Belgium)
• Alain Le Sann (France)
• Cornelie Quist (Netherlands)
• Juan Carlos Sueiro (Peru)
• Vivienne Solis (Costa Rica)

For more information, visit: https://covid.icsf.net/
Thank you