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COMMITTEE ON FISHERIES

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OUTCOMES OF AND FOLLOW-UP TO TENURE AND FISHING RIGHTS 2015: ADVANCING KNOWLEDGE ON RIGHTS-BASED APPROACHES FOR FISHERIES FOR ENHANCING FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION, POVERTY ERADICATION AND ACHIEVING THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

Executive Summary

This document reports on work on rights-based approaches in fisheries, in particular on the outcomes of Tenure and Fishing Rights 2015: A global forum on rights-based approaches for fisheries (UserRights 2015) co-organized by FAO and the Government of the Kingdom of Cambodia.

Additionally, it describes the results of subsequent consultative meetings and introduces the thematic areas proposed for a global work programme on rights-based approaches in capture fisheries within the framework of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The outline and main features of the proposed global work programme are provided in COFI/2016/Inf.15.

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Suggested action by the Committee

The Committee is invited to:

- Provide information and feedback on recent activities relating to rights-based approaches in fisheries;
- Advise on future support and potential extra-budgetary funding for the proposed global work programme and comment on its content, in particular on the principles and thematic areas identified by the consultative processes to date as well as priority activities within the proposed work programme; and
- Provide recommendations on additional thematic areas and activities.

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Department (FIA) has a long history of work on rights-based approaches, with early mention made in 1969 in FAO Fisheries Technical Paper 92 “Fisheries management and the limitation of fishing” (J.A. Gulland) and followed by several decades of work on territorial use rights, area fisheries management schemes, and traditional and community-based coastal fisheries management systems.

2. In addition to the series of Fisheries Technical Papers, FAO supported two global conferences FishRights '99: Use of Property Rights in Fisheries Management and Sharing the Fish '06: Allocation issues in fisheries management held in Fremantle, Australia in 1999 and 2006, respectively. Both conferences had a strong emphasis on marine commercial fisheries of developed countries.

3. During the same period, FAO was enhancing its research on (i) the importance of the governance setting for the origin and persistence of poverty; (ii) mechanisms that had permitted fishing communities to escape poverty and mechanisms that had caused fishing communities to become poor; (iii) community organizations and customary management regimes, their importance for adequate use of community resources and consequent effects on poverty; and (iv) the scope of occupational opportunities outside the harvesting sector within and outside the community.¹

4. When endorsing the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security (VGGT) in 2012, the Committee on World Food Security noted the critical role of this instrument to serve as a reference and provide guidance to improve the governance of tenure of land, fisheries and forests with the overarching goal of achieving food security for all and to support the progressive realization of the right to adequate food in the context of national food security.

5. Concurrently, FAO supported the development of the Voluntary Guidelines on Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication (SSF Guidelines). In particular Chapter 5 provides the direct link to the VGGT and the need for secure tenure rights and responsible governance of tenure.

6. FAO's work on rights-based approaches, including the proposed global work programme, is anchored within FAO's strategic framework and its five strategic programmes (SPs) with particular emphasis on: eradicating hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition (SP-1); sustainable management

¹ FAO. Report of the third session of the Advisory Committee on Fisheries Research. Rome, 5-8 December 2000. FAO Fisheries Report. No.639. Rome, FAO. 2001. Paragraph 17.

and utilization of natural resources (SP-2); and eliminating rural poverty through socio-economic development (SP-3). The work supports FAO's Corporate Blue Growth Initiative and is aligned with the VGGT, the SSF Guidelines and the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries.

II. RECENT ACTIVITIES ON RIGHTS-BASED APPROACHES FOR FISHERIES

7. In March 2015 the FAO and the Government of the Kingdom of Cambodia co-organized UserRights 2015 in Siem Reap, Cambodia². This forum was attended by 140 participants from various fisheries-related disciplines and 39 countries, provided a venue for all stakeholders to share lessons learned about rights-based approaches in marine and inland fisheries, and was supported by several donors and partners.

8. Forum participants discussed experiences, opportunities and challenges relating to rights-based approaches in fisheries. It was emphasised that no 'one-size fits all' solution exists and that context-specific rights-based approaches have to be designed to contribute effectively to environmental, economic and social sustainability. There is a wide range of rights-based approaches, and the full suite of options needs to be considered with clear identification of the impacts of each option on different stakeholders.

9. Discussions stressed the importance of effective stakeholder involvement in the planning and implementation of rights-based approaches with timeframes that are long enough to allow for inclusive stakeholder consultations. It was noted that the sources and mechanisms of financing rights-based approaches should be clearly identified and be context specific. Additionally, rights-based approaches need to ensure gender equality and empowerment.

10. Good governance, transparency and accountability were identified as essential components of rights-based approaches, and devolved management and co-management were noted as possible mechanisms for achieving this.

11. Participants noted that limiting the number of people fishing is usually an essential ingredient of sustainable fisheries, making the enhancement/diversification of livelihood strategies crucial, in particular in a context of poverty and food insecurity.

12. The forum recommended that regional meetings should be held every two to three years and global meetings every five years to share knowledge, compare challenges and solutions, and develop capacity. The need for capacity development for fishers, managers, communities and various government sectors was emphasized to facilitate the development and implementation of sustainable rights-based approaches.

13. In a survey sent out by FAO to UserRights 2015 participants after the forum, 56 respondents identified six thematic key areas for consideration in a global work programme on rights-based approaches in fisheries:

- political economy and governance,
- delineation of rights and processes for doing so,
- capacity development,
- enhancement/diversification of livelihoods,
- transboundary rights, and
- financing

² The report of the forum is available at <http://www.fao.org/about/meetings/user-rights-2015/resources/conference-documents/en/>.

14. In October 2015, FAO hosted an informal think tank Friends of UserRights 2015 (FoUR15) in Fiumicino, Italy. Using the thematic areas prioritized by the survey, FoUR15 participants developed further the content of a global work programme. The discussions underlined the importance of clarifying terminology and concepts used in the context of rights-based approaches in different regions and re-emphasized the need to acknowledge that ‘no one size fits all’ solution exists. In this context, both analyses of existing rights-based approaches and pilot projects were considered essential components of a work programme. Practical considerations for the programme included the creation of modules within each thematic area to make it responsive to demand-driven requests regarding specific interests, needs and support. Additionally, it was recognized that there is need for extra-budgetary funds from donors and partners to support specific module(s).

15. In March 2016, FAO supported the Lake Victoria Fisheries Organization in holding the workshop Entebbe 2016 in Uganda. Participants reviewed the elements of the proposed programme drafted during FoUR15 and elaborated on types of activities at global, regional and national/local levels. Participants noted the necessity of attention to poverty eradication, food security and nutrition, and the needs of small-scale fisheries communities and vulnerable and marginalized groups within a broader framework for rights-based approaches in all types of fisheries.

III. PROPOSED WORK PROGRAMME

16. As noted above, the proposed global work programme on rights-based approaches in fisheries underscores six thematic areas. It provides a coherent framework for facilitating FAO’s work on rights-based approaches in both the large- and small-scale fisheries sectors to secure the social, economic and environmental pillars of sustainable development and achieve the SDGs. The programme is designed to be flexible with modules within each of the thematic areas to accommodate global, regional and national/local contexts. The suggested time frame is eight years.

17. The proposed global work programme is comprehensive in scope and supports increased intra- and cross-sectorial dialogue, cooperation and knowledge sharing. The topics of gender, climate change, and illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing are recognized as essential and cross-cutting, and the principles of the VGGT and SSF Guidelines are underlined throughout.

18. The outline and main features of the proposed global work programme are found in COFI/2016/Inf.15.