



COMMITTEE ON FISHERIES

Thirty-fifth Session

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SUPPORTING SMALL-SCALE AND ARTISANAL FISHERIES

Executive Summary

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

Suggested action by the Committee

The Committee is invited to:

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

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

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I. INTRODUCTION

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

II. PROGRESS IN POLICY UPTAKE OF THE SSF GUIDELINES

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

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

² See COFI/2022/Inf.9 for details

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

III. STRENGTHENING SSF ORGANIZATIONS AND PARTICIPATORY PROCESSES

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

V. CONCLUSIONS

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

⁷ See COFI/2022/SBD/10.

⁸ See COFI/2022/4.1.