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STRATEGIES FOR INCREASING THE CONTRIBUTION OF SMALL-SCALE CAPTURE FISHERIES TO FOOD SECURITY AND POVERTY ALLEVIATION IN THE WECAFC REGION¹

SUMMARY

This paper outlines characteristics of small-scale capture fisheries, and considers the constraints and opportunities that may affect their contribution to food security and poverty reduction. It is suggested that there are now good reasons to re-consider the role of small-scale fisheries in contributing to food security and poverty alleviation, and the Commission is invited to review a number of strategies aimed at increasing this contribution. Governance issues are considered fundamental to the success of these strategies. In addition, special attention is recommended in the collection of adequate information and assessing the trade-offs between policy options. The costs and benefits of different policies must be carefully articulated in terms of their absolute and distributional impacts on food security and poverty alleviation. Finally, the importance of cross-sectoral and inter-agency approaches and solutions for addressing poverty and food security issues is recognized.

INTRODUCTION

1. The purpose of this paper is to highlight the contribution of small-scale capture fisheries (SSF) to food security and poverty alleviation, outline strategies, the adoption and implementation of which could significantly increase this contribution. The paper also aims at encouraging governments, other stakeholders and the international community to increase their support/assistance to the small-scale capture fisheries sub-sector in the WECAFC region.

EXPLANATION OF KEY TERMS AND CONCEPTS

2. Small-scale fisheries can be broadly characterized as employing labour intensive harvesting, processing and distribution technologies to exploit marine and inland water fishery resources. The activities of this sub-sector, conducted full-time or part-time, or just seasonally, are often targeted on supplying fish and fishery products to local and domestic markets, and for subsistence consumption. Export-oriented production, however, has increased in many small-scale fisheries during the last one to two decades because of greater market integration and globalization. While typically men are engaged in fishing and women in fish processing and marketing, women are also known to engage in near shore harvesting activities and men are known to engage in fish marketing and distribution. Other ancillary activities such as net-making, boat-building, engine repair and maintenance, etc. can provide additional fishery-related employment and income opportunities in marine and inland fishing communities.
3. Small-scale fisheries operate at widely differing organizational levels ranging from self-employed single operators through informal micro-enterprises to formal sector businesses. This sub-sector, therefore, is not

¹ Adapted from Document COFI/2003/009 – Strategies for Increasing the Sustainable Contribution of Small-scale Fisheries to Food Security and Poverty Alleviation

homogenous within and across countries and regions and attention to this fact is warranted when formulating strategies and policies for enhancing its contribution to food security and poverty alleviation.

4. During the 1996 World Food Summit, food security was defined as:

*Food security exists when all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life*¹.

An important indicator for monitoring inter-country comparability of food security is per capita consumption based on the average daily dietary energy supply in calories per year. Per capita consumption is calculated on the basis of national food balance sheets and population data. This indicator is a national average and needs further information and refinement, often provided by food consumption surveys, to assess the spatial, temporal, age and gender differences in food security within countries.

5. Poverty in fishing communities and elsewhere, for long was considered to be simply a matter of an income too low to meet basic subsistence needs and an international poverty line of US\$1/caput/day is still used as a simple index to define the poor. Currently it is increasingly recognized that poverty is a complex, multi-dimensional concept and process characterized by low income, poor health, low literacy levels, under-nutrition, inadequate housing and living conditions and that people move in and out of poverty. Poverty is also seen as a symptom of structural imbalances in society, and is highly correlated with social exclusion, marginalization, vulnerability and lack of power. Because of this complex nature it is difficult to define but even more difficult to measure.
6. A significant high proportion of small-scale fishers are poor and unable to influence their operating constraints. However, some small-scale fishers can exert considerable control over such constraints and generate significant levels of income. Although the level of poverty in many small-scale fishing communities remains high, there are few empirical studies² that focus on assessing and identifying the specific causes and manifestations of poverty in fisheries.
7. The FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries is concerned with food security and poverty alleviation, as demonstrated by article 6.2. This article links fisheries management with food security, poverty alleviation and sustainable development, stating:

Fisheries management should promote the maintenance of the quality, diversity and availability of fishery resources in sufficient quantities for present and future generations in the context of food security, poverty alleviation and sustainable development. Management measures should not only ensure the conservation of target species but also of species belonging to the same ecosystem or associated or dependent upon the target species.

8. Furthermore, article 6.18 of the Code is directed towards the welfare and social and economic security in fishing communities:

Recognizing the important contributions of artisanal and small-scale fisheries to employment, income and food security, States should appropriately protect the rights of fishers and fishworkers, particularly those engaged in subsistence, small-scale and artisanal fisheries, to a secure and just livelihood, as well as preferential access, where appropriate, to traditional fishing grounds and resources in the waters of their national jurisdiction.

1984 FAO WORLD CONFERENCE ON FISHERIES MANAGEMENT

9. The 1984 FAO World Conference on Fisheries Management produced a Strategy for Fisheries Management and Development, which included a section on *The special role and needs of small-scale fisheries and rural fishing and fish-farming communities*. The Strategy recommended that the sector be given priority in fisheries development policies, and emphasized the importance of increasing the incomes of those in small-scale fisheries. It also stressed that small-scale fisheries have "*an important role in providing income and employment to large numbers of fishermen and their families, who form part of the poorest and most disadvantaged communities in society*". The Conference and the resulting Plan of Action emphasized an

integrated approach, and this concept influenced many donors and member nations in their efforts to support small-scale fisheries.

POVERTY AND VULNERABILITY IN SMALL-SCALE FISHING COMMUNITIES

10. The general description of paragraph 5 stresses the need to raise living standards in small-scale fishing communities, and to overcome the lack of influence and ownership over production and other aspects, which may constrain ability to contribute to food security and poverty alleviation. Many small-scale fishing communities, particularly marine fisheries, are isolated from land-based society, not only geographically but also socio-economically, culturally and politically, demonstrated by the often disproportionately low investment in management, research and support for the sector relative to the many people involved.
11. Small-scale fishing communities are vulnerable, leading to poverty and reduced food security. Examples include climatic and other natural events, such as yearly and seasonal fluctuations in stock abundance; poor catches; bad weather and natural disasters such as hurricanes; economic factors, such as market price fluctuations and variable access to markets; policy factors affecting the rights of small-scale fishers; and occupational factors such as the dangers of working at sea. Environmental degradation from natural or human-induced causes further increases vulnerability. Those in small-scale fishing communities may also be vulnerable to poor health and other wider determinants of poverty.
12. Globalization processes may have adverse effects, especially among poorer groups:

...improvements in communications and transportation as well as the liberalization of trade have now brought most producers and consumers into a global market. ...while textbook accounts suggest that trade liberalization will lead to greater overall welfare, some actors have the wherewithal to take advantage of global markets to a far greater extent than others, owing to their access to capital, expertise, technologies and policy-makers. Conversely, others benefit much less and even suffer losses, often through no fault of their own. Furthermore, only in a few situations are people who are unfairly denied access to these means compensated or provided with alternative opportunities to help themselves.⁴

CONTRIBUTION OF SMALL-SCALE FISHERIES TO POVERTY ALLEVIATION AND FOOD SECURITY

13. However, while currently many small-scale fishing communities are poor and vulnerable, small-scale fisheries can generate significant profits, prove resilient to shocks and crises, and make meaningful contributions to food security and poverty alleviation, in particular for:
 - those involved directly with fishing (fishers, traders, processors, etc.);
 - the dependents of those involved directly with fishing (fishing-related households and communities);
 - those who buy fish for human consumption (consumers);
 - those who benefit from related income and employment through multiplier effects; and
 - society in general and those who benefit indirectly as a result of national export revenues from fisheries, re-distributive taxation and other macro-level mechanisms.
14. Small-scale fisheries exploit a renewable and potentially sustainable source of food that provides animal protein, fish oils and essential micronutrients such as calcium, iodine and certain vitamins. Although the perishable nature of products, often produced in remote locations, can present obvious problems, production from many small-scale fisheries is consumed locally, and can be processed into forms that do not perish easily. Fish has historically played an important role in food security in many countries and continues to do so globally, providing 15-16 percent of animal protein intake. The importance of fishery products in many coastal, lake and floodplain areas is very much greater than this global average. Given that small-scale fisheries supply about one half of the fish used for direct human consumption, supporting sustainable earnings can ensure sustainable supplies to consumers, many of who are themselves poor.
15. Small-scale marine and inland fisheries play a vital role in food security through the preservation and processing of fish for trade to inland markets. Inland fisheries may contribute more to national and local food

security because of the subsistence nature of much of the fishing activity. Marine small-scale fisheries, in contrast, often play an important role in local and national poverty alleviation through profits being made from the sale of fish, the generation of export revenues, formal economic benefits, income and employment multipliers in upstream and downstream activities, and perhaps to a lesser extent from taxation that can be used for re-distributive purposes. Small-scale fisheries are providing increasing amounts of foreign exchange earnings in many countries, and the last decade has seen a significant increase in the amount of products exported from small-scale fisheries. For example, in Guyana, the small-scale fisheries account for about 90 percent of the fish landed and exported.

16. Small-scale fishing, marketing and processing provide an important means of income generation for many of the poor and food insecure who are not officially categorized as small-scale fishers. Research into livelihood strategies has illustrated that household well-being is generally maintained in the face of shocks and crises, through a wide variety of strategies and coping mechanisms. The role of access to common property resources such as fish is especially important in this regard. The poor agro-ecological characteristics of much coastal land, and the vulnerability to degradation of land adjacent to inland water bodies, means that fishing can play an important role as a safety valve when agricultural production or livelihood strategies in non-fishing communities are under threat.

SCENARIOS/ISSUES LIMITING THE CONTRIBUTION OF SMALL-SCALE FISHERIES TO FOOD SECURITY AND POVERTY ALLEVIATION

17. Resource constraints in terms of stock availability can reduce the ability of small-scale fisheries to contribute to food security and poverty alleviation. Other constraints include lack of access to capital, limited alternative employment opportunities, and a lack of appropriate technology. However, probably most important are constraints in the form of governance and policy issues over access to and control over aquatic environments and resources, markets, and the distribution of benefits accruing from those resources. Marine and inland fishers tend to display different vulnerabilities to these types of constraints. In inland fishing communities, vulnerability related to access, control and distribution is often linked to conflict with other, equally poor, groups of water resource users, as well as with rich and politically powerful groups. In marine small-scale fisheries, access, control and distribution issues are more often linked with competition from industrial and foreign interests.
18. Conflict between small-scale and industrial fishing activity may stem from, or be reinforced by, governance and policy issues, such as inadequate enforcement capability or a lack of will for enforcement, or preferential treatment of industrial fisheries. Examples include long delays in processing complaints about incursions of industrial vessels into small-scale fishing areas, exclusion of small-scale fishers from fishing grounds, subsidies for industrial fisheries, and the payment by industrial fishing interests of arbitrary, informal incentives to obtain access to resources or markets.
19. Such conflict shows the importance of improving policies, institutions and processes and orienting them towards the reduction of the vulnerability of those in small-scale fisheries and defending their rights. It also demonstrates the need to make conscious and explicit choices between trade-offs through transparent decision-making mechanisms when trying to maximize food security and poverty alleviation, as well as need for a clear commitment to fulfilling these objectives. Trade-offs that might have to be considered when creating improved policies, institutions and processes include:
 - (i) ***An increase in equity for a decrease in efficiency.*** At the level of the individual vessel operator, changing the balance in the factors of production in favour of labour over capital inputs might result in greater employment but reduced profitability, although some studies suggest that because labour is relatively cheap in many small-scale fisheries, substituting labour for capital inputs (which tend to be expensive) can increase both profitability and equity. At the macro-level, some management regimes may directly trade efficiency against equity, e.g. open access or community-based management rather than systems of private property.
 - (ii) ***Supporting exports versus production for the national market.*** Increased exports to increase revenues in small-scale fisheries and enhanced foreign exchange earnings may lead to a decrease in availability of fish for sale in local markets. Such a trade-off may have important effects on the distribution of poverty and food security.

- (iii) ***Supporting foreign or local fisheries for enhanced national income.*** A government may obtain licence revenue or royalty payments from foreign industrial fishing companies, or encourage export earnings from its own semi-industrial or industrial fleet. Both policies may result in small-scale fisheries catching less fish, thereby decreasing their contribution to food security and poverty alleviation. However, this may be viewed as acceptable if it increases revenue for food imports and national poverty reduction programmes. Again, important distributional effects in food security and income may result from such trade-offs.
 - (iv) ***Short-term and long-term interests.*** Short-term initiatives to reduce poverty and improve food security may have a negative impact on long-term sustainability. Small-scale fisheries might be supported through credit provision or subsidies in an attempt to increase food security and earnings, but could result in overexploitation, falling catches and declining profitability.
20. In addition to the trade-offs between policy choices, there is the risk of unintended effects from certain policies or changing management regimes. Disbanding commercial or powerful fishing monopolies to improve access of small-scale fishers to fishing grounds may actually remove a form of "management" of a water body, leading to conflicts between small-scale fishers and possibly even overfishing. Habitat restoration, rehabilitation and conservation should have positive benefits on living aquatic resources, but such efforts may affect small-scale fishers by temporarily denying them access to resources, or by encouraging large-scale fishing interests to exploit the improved habitat. Therefore, even after policy choices and trade-offs have been considered and decided upon, there is a need to continuously monitor their impact on poverty and food security, and modify them as necessary.

THE IMPORTANCE OF RE-CONSIDERING SMALL-SCALE FISHERIES AND THEIR CONTRIBUTION TO FOOD SECURITY AND POVERTY REDUCTION

21. The last decade has seen a significant reduction in the extent of support for the small-scale fisheries sector by development banks, bilateral and multinational donor agencies. This decline has in a large part been due to (i) the need to move away from production-oriented projects towards projects that aim at more sustainable development activities and fisheries management, and (ii) the difficulties that most development banks and donors encounter in funding such projects, *inter alia* because they require significant institutional support, much flexibility and a long-term commitment.

Trends in food security as related to fisheries

22. At an international conference on the Sustainable Contribution of Fisheries to Food Security (Kyoto, Japan, 1995), the 95 participating states approved a Declaration and a Plan of Action to enhance the contribution of fisheries to human food supply, noting the shortfall in the supply of fish relative to demand, but recognizing that this shortfall could be addressed if appropriate steps were taken to conserve and better manage fish resources. The need to ensure food security was further emphasized at the World Food Summit (Rome, 1996) and re-iterated at the recent World Food Summit - five years later (Rome 2002), which stressed the need for sustainable management of natural resources.
23. The predicted rises in global population, and corresponding increases in demand for food, including fish, mean that many of the food security problems of today are likely to persist. The effects of the imbalance between supply and demand are not likely to be evenly felt across the world. Indeed, while many countries and regions have made considerable progress in reducing food energy deficiencies, many others (notably in sub-Saharan Africa) have either experienced a worsening of food security, or have only managed to display improvements through a greater reliance on food imports from developed countries.
24. In reconsidering the role of small-scale fisheries in food security, it is also important to recognize and support the contribution that they already make in many countries. This contribution is widely underestimated due to scarcity of appropriate data. This scarcity of data is particularly marked in inland fisheries, where there are large numbers of fishers, who are often widely dispersed and fishing on a part-time and seasonal basis to supplement other activities. This often means that, for the purpose of employment statistics, they are not counted as working in the fisheries sector.

Trends in fisheries-related poverty

25. In the past, while many development interventions in small-scale fisheries were implicitly aimed at reducing poverty, most were not explicitly focused on improving the living conditions of the poor, but aimed rather at accelerating economic growth through technology and infrastructure development, and through market-led economic policies. The lack of an explicit focus on poverty and the distributional impacts of development programmes may explain the limited results of many interventions. Certainly, the continued levels of poverty in small-scale fishing communities require all those concerned to take a fresh look at the problem. This re-examination is also motivated by the broadening of the poverty concept, a better understanding of the causes of poverty, and the recognition of the significance of vulnerability, which mean that new strategies for poverty reduction are required.
26. While economic growth has helped to reduce the number of poor people in the world, the positive impacts of growth on poverty have been less than expected, in part because of inequitable distribution of the benefits, population increases, and the effects of the HIV/AIDS epidemic. As a result there has been a re-focusing on poverty by many governments and donor agencies. The United Nations World Summit on Sustainable Development (Johannesburg, 2002), the World Bank's 2000 World Development Report, the 1995 UN World Summit for Social Development, and the UN Millennium Declaration, adopted in 2000⁵ - all these considered poverty eradication to be a primary priority.

WHAT CAN BE DONE?

Linking with other sectors

27. A number of strategies and areas of research could be pursued that would help to increase the contribution of small-scale fisheries to food security and poverty alleviation. Some strategies lie within the fisheries sector, and can therefore be tackled by fisheries-specific initiatives (covered in this paper), while others require action by planners, policy-makers and practitioners in other sectors. An example of the latter is the promotion of alternative employment and livelihoods when faced with widespread overexploitation problems. Those involved with fisheries-specific initiatives must balance the need to implement achievable strategies that lie within their own expertise against an acknowledgement that the determinants of food insecurity and poverty often lie in social, cultural and political variables in other sectors. Those working in fisheries and other sectors need to collaborate and coordinate their activities to ensure an inter-sectoral and inter-agency approach.

Data collection and research for strategy development

28. To develop effective fisheries-specific strategies, it may be appropriate to, first, better measure and understand the causal factors of poverty in small-scale fishing communities, and, second, clarify the real contribution of small-scale fisheries to food security and poverty reduction. Such activities could demonstrate the validity of assisting the small-scale fisheries sector, not only because of absolute and relative levels of poverty in the sector, but also, because of its current and potential contributions to food security and poverty alleviation at the local, regional and national levels. Certainly, the quality is inadequate of small-scale fisheries statistics collected in many countries, and especially for inland fisheries, characterized as they are by many unlicensed, part-time and seasonal operators. The motivation for collecting data on marine small-scale fisheries is often greater because of their significance for export revenues. Better data may be necessary simply to identify how many people are actually involved in small-scale fisheries, as, without such inputs, it is clearly impossible to measure their real contribution to food security and poverty alleviation. For example, a recent FAO study in Southeast Asia suggested that the figure reported to FAO for the number of inland capture fishers worldwide (4.5 million, full-time, part-time or occasional) is easily exceeded by those fishing in inland waters in the eight countries covered by the study⁶.
29. However, while baseline data may be required to assess the fulfilment of objectives, better data and information are not the only prerequisite for bringing about improvements in small-scale fisheries. Probably equally important in terms of international assistance is support for a better understanding of: (i) the process by which people move in and out of poverty; (ii) corresponding solutions in terms of *ex ante* risk management, and *ex post* support; (iii) the strategies required to increase the contribution of small-scale

fisheries to local, national and regional food security and to poverty alleviation; and (iv) how to put such strategies into action.

30. A better knowledge of the process by which people move in and out of poverty, and options for amelioration, requires specific focus on governance issues and power relations. Understanding of such issues is currently limited, but is required to assess, *inter alia*: which types of coping mechanisms are used in small-scale fisheries and to what effect; whether fishing is more risky than other sectors; how vulnerability has changed over time and why; how policies and trends affect fishers' livelihoods; through which mechanisms fishers do, or could, influence policy and power relationships; and how service provision and support to small-scale fishing communities can be improved.

Reducing vulnerability and increasing value

31. A number of actions can be, and are being, undertaken to address vulnerability. The destruction caused by natural disasters, such as hurricanes, can be reduced through disaster preparedness programmes and early warning systems. Occupational hazards can also be reduced: for example, accidents at sea can be addressed through sea safety programmes, while health problems such as those resulting from fish smoking can be lessened through the use of improved ovens. Another strategy to reduce vulnerability is to officially recognize and enforce the rights of fishers to the fishery resources and land that they live on or use, and the facilities they use (as stated in article 6.18 of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries), whether they are sedentary or migratory. Vulnerability can be further reduced when better information is available to decision-makers to guide development decisions. Finally, vulnerability can be reduced by developing fishers' organizational capacity and by introducing methods that facilitate their effective participation in decisions regarding the sector, their livelihoods and work conditions.
32. Value-added can be increased through improved infrastructure and management of landing sites, storage facilities and market buildings, as well as through better access to information about markets, enhanced processing and reduced post-harvest waste. Ensuring timely access to credit under realistic reimbursement conditions is a further means of improving the marketing of fish and other small-scale businesses. Reductions in post-harvest waste can also add value, and can be achieved through improved handling, processing and distribution of both by-catch and targeted species. Finally, more cost-benefit analysis of small-scale business operations could be used to identify strategies to increase returns.
33. Where stocks may be underexploited, food security could be increased and poverty decreased through (i) increased landings from more fishing effort, better fishing skills, etc., and (ii) marketing and value-added initiatives to generate higher revenues. This requires development planning, improved catching and processing technology, better access to markets, and strategies to achieve better prices. It may also require an assessment to show that stocks offer additional potential, and good resource management measures to ensure sustainability.

Resource allocation and management

34. In the more typical case - overexploited stocks - the contribution of small-scale fisheries to food security and poverty alleviation may be increased by:
 - improving the resource base through management;
 - marketing and value-adding initiatives, or changing the factors of production;
 - allocating a greater share of resources to small-scale fisheries; or
 - providing alternative livelihoods.
 - The issue that remains is that of addressing the trade-off between equity considerations and the production of a sustainable flow of benefits from a limited resource base.
35. The resource base can to some extent be improved through better resource management (e.g. through reductions in destructive fishing practices), and the rebuilding of stocks (e.g. through more aquatic protected areas, restoration, or through stock and habitat enhancements). It is also likely to require constraining commercial and industrial fisheries in competition with small-scale activities, and addressing conflicts

between different types of artisanal fishers. This will involve improving legal and policy frameworks, Monitoring, Control and Surveillance (MCS) activities, conflict management systems, and effective enforcement.

36. Changing the balance in the allocation of resources from industrial to small-scale fisheries can be achieved through (i) more explicit allocation through quotas, (ii) wider area allocation (wider reserved zones), and (iii) the use of fish aggregation devices (FADs) to increase stocks aggregation (and accessibility) in coastal areas. However, this is more difficult for many small-scale inland fisheries as their dispersed and informal nature make this type of intervention impractical. Ensuring access to, and control over, fish resources by small-scale fisheries is also likely to be achieved more through support for co-management and related systems, such as the creation of fishworkers' associations, improved MCS, conflict management and enforcement systems. However, to assess the impacts of different forms of access arrangements and property rights on poverty and food security, more research is required. To reduce poverty it is likely that the fisheries management regime must, first, generate economic rents, and, second, allow for some form of redistribution of these rents. Without this latter condition, wealth is likely to be concentrated and levels of poverty largely unaffected. However, to affect such redistribution, it will be necessary to tackle the existing micro- and macro-level institutions and elites that benefit from such concentration of wealth.
37. Providing alternative livelihoods under effective governance structures is also an important associated strategy required to reduce pressure on overfished resources and aquatic environments - both for those already active in the sector, and to prevent those from other sectors from moving into the fishery. Education is a crucial element in increasing the occupational mobility of fishers, thereby enabling them to make the most of employment and livelihood opportunities in other sectors, and improvements in occupation mobility are likely to be gradual rather than instantaneous. The provision of alternative livelihoods can reduce poverty in fishing communities, and allow stocks to recover. Stock recovery - supported by effective access control - can then generate possibilities for increased supplies of fish for human consumption, enhanced earnings in small-scale fisheries, generation of income and employment multipliers, and increased export revenues and taxation from small-scale fisheries.
38. Successful strategies for resource management and allocation are and will continue to be supported and underpinned by the implementation of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries. The Code can itself be used as an essential guide (as noted in paragraphs 6 and 7) and is being enhanced through publication of technical guidelines², including the development of guidelines on poverty alleviation in fisheries.

Explicitly addressing trade-offs and impacts of different policies and strategies

39. The trade-offs often implicit in policy decisions designed to combat food insecurity and poverty (such as those mentioned in paragraph 19), must be based on information from data collection and research (paragraphs 28, 29 and 30). Apart from the trade-offs, the costs and benefits of different strategies must be assessed. Currently, there is little hard data and information on which to base decisions. For example, what would be the cost of reducing industrial fishing activity with corresponding decreases in foreign exchange earnings, in favour of small-scale fisheries catches with increases in small-scale fishing profitability, multiplier effects and so on? What would be the comparative benefits of changing the balance of enforcement resources between land- sea- and air-based operations, or between government and community policing? What would be the cost of decommissioning hydroelectric plants to re-establish small-scale riverine fisheries, thus creating benefits through income and employment? How does the potentially high cost of small-scale fisheries management compare to the cost of resource depletion, loss of employment, income and food security resulting from no management? The estimates of such costs should be wider than economic costs alone, and include societal and cultural values.
40. Many strategies will need to be case-specific, depending on the strategy itself, the nature of the small-scale fisheries, the stakeholders involved and the geographical area (size and location) to which it might apply. Importantly, the distributional effects on food security and poverty of trade-offs are particularly poorly understood. With further investigation into these trade-offs and the need for different strategies, it may then be possible to develop guidelines for implementation of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries that specifically deal with food security and poverty alleviation.

Improved governance: inclusiveness, lawfulness, transparency and accountability

41. It is clear from the foregoing that governance issues and power relations are critical to the success of the strategies suggested. Understanding the importance of governance issues is crucial in designing and implementing effective solutions.
42. Good governance in essence requires three elements: promotion of inclusiveness; promotion of lawfulness; and promotion of transparency and accountability⁸. If such conditions prevail, strategies aimed at increasing the contribution of small-scale fisheries to food security and poverty alleviation, and at reducing poverty in fishing communities, are likely to be effective.
43. Inclusiveness relates to issues of both empowerment and decentralization. Empowerment enables poor stakeholders to make meaningful contributions to research and strategy implementation, such as through the use of local and indigenous knowledge on stock status, incorporation of traditional technologies, extension and education, mobilization and political organization. Decentralization (e.g. co-management) is also thought to promote inclusiveness as it brings the decision-making process closer to local people. This may be the case, but evidence also suggests that the link between local governance and pro-poor outcomes require (i) the confluence of central and local commitment to pro-poor reform, (ii) adequate financing from central government, and (iii) long-term support to build up institutional capacity.
44. Lawfulness requires governing structures at both local and national levels to abide by, and enforce, the rule of law. This relates to enforcement of fisheries legislation and regulations, and also to appropriate legal reform to eliminate laws and practices that are identified as anti-poor. It may also require conflict mediation and resolution between resource users.
45. Finally, accountability requires that governing structures at all levels are answerable and open to sanction if they violate the principles of inclusiveness and lawfulness. It therefore relates closely to issues of corruption, transparency, access to information, and social and political capital. Poor small-scale fishers are often unable to enforce accountability, and therefore to effect pro-poor changes. For small-scale fisheries to contribute to food security and poverty alleviation, accountability needs to be increased, through better access to information and more participatory monitoring and evaluation of initiatives aimed at supporting small-scale fisheries, such as through the use of "social" audits.

SUGGESTED ACTION BY THE COMMISSION

46. The Commission is invited to review this paper and provide guidance to Member Nations, FAO and other agencies and international organizations, as to strategies that might be promoted to ensure significant improvement in small-scale fisheries development, with particular reference to the sector's contribution to food security and poverty alleviation. The Commission may wish to emphasize the importance of:
 - gaining a better understanding of the nature, extent, and causes of vulnerability and poverty in small-scale fisheries and improved information on and indicators for monitoring the contribution of small-scale fisheries to food security and poverty alleviation;
 - improved cross-sectoral and inter-agency collaboration and development of effective strategies and policies to address poverty and food security issues, and, where appropriate, inclusion of small-scale fisheries in national poverty reduction strategies and policies;
 - better management through the allocation of secure fishing rights backed by appropriate legislation to small-scale fishers in coastal and inland zones and their effective protection from industrial fishing activity or activities that degrade aquatic resources and habitats;
 - implementation of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries, and development of technical guidelines on increasing the contribution of small-scale fisheries to food security and poverty alleviation; and lastly,
 - the encouragement of the formation of fishermen's organizations at community level and the facilitation of their representation at local, regional and national levels thereby creating a sense of ownership and accountability by the small-scale stakeholders in the decision-making process.

¹ FAO World Food Summit, 1996. World Food Summit Plan of Action, §I.

² Literature review of studies on poverty in fishing communities and of lessons learned in using the SLA in poverty alleviation strategies and projects. G. Macfadyen and E. Corcoran, 2002. *FAO Fisheries Circular*. No. 979.

³ FAO/MRC/Thailand/Netherlands Ad Hoc Expert Consultation on New Approaches for the Improvement of Inland Capture Fishery Statistics in the Mekong Basin, 2-5 September, 2002 (see also footnote 11).

⁴ Ethical issues in food and agriculture. *FAO Ethics Series*, No. 1. 2001.

⁵ The Millennium Declaration contains the commitment to halve, by the year 2015, the proportion of the world's population whose income is less than one dollar a day

⁶ Inland capture fisheries statistics of Southeast Asia: current status and information needs. FAO Regional Office for Asia-Pacific, Thailand. February 2002 (Covers: Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Thailand , and Viet Nam).

⁷ For example, Inland Fisheries. *FAO Technical Guidelines for Responsible Fisheries*, No. 6. FAO, 1997.

⁸ New Thinking on Poverty: Implications for Poverty Reduction Strategies. P. Shaffer, 2001