

**European Parliament Fisheries Committee Public Hearing, December 1 2009:
The Green Paper on the Reform of the Common Fisheries Policy**

**Afternoon Discussion Session Speaking Notes
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Small-Scale and Artisanal Fisheries in the Reform of the Common Fisheries Policy

Essential factors for successful CFP reform include: recognize potential of small scale fisheries (ssf) to contribute to securing ecological sustainability and sustainable social and economic development; respect the diversity of ssf; adopt a differentiated approach for their management; and support and otherwise facilitate the establishment of structures that enable the participation of small-scale and artisanal fisheries representatives in the decision making processes that affect them.

In the past, lack of recognition and respect for artisanal fisheries has been a major stumbling block to achieving responsible and sustainable fisheries in Europe. With the explicit mention of ssf and the adoption of a differentiated approach in the Green Paper, such a stumbling block could be turned into an opportunity in the CFP reform process. We welcome this opportunity.

However, currently, the majority sector, based on small-scale, artisanal, low input fisheries is poorly understood, and inadequately documented. In many cases sector catches are not properly recorded, and statistics are lacking on catch value, vessel numbers, number of operators, the amount of employment generated, the demographic profile, and the distribution of benefits. This means that the contribution of the sector to sustainable social and economic development and to environmental sustainability is not recognized let alone valued. In this respect Europe lags behind the rest of the world. EU and national level policy makers have been late and slow to grasp the significance of ssf. This must change in the reform process if the goal of achieving responsible and sustainable fisheries in Europe is to be met.

“Our sector can be viable, sustainable, and with a promising future, if given fair treatment and due recognition”, runs the preamble of the Statement drafted by over 60 participants from 8 countries who took part in the workshop “Common Fisheries Policy Reform in the European Union and Small-Scale Fisheries: Paving the way to sustainable livelihoods and thriving fishing communities” on September 28, 2009. Further details about the workshop, its documentation and Statement can be found on the website: <http://eussf.icsf.net/>.

In summary, small-scale fishing, the social and economic sustainability of fishing communities, and the ecological sustainability of aquatic resources requires:

Justice and Equity: In the first instance, fishers and fishing communities dependent on small-scale, artisanal, inshore, inland, and small-scale fish and shell fish farming activities should be provided with fair treatment in the allocation of access rights to resources and support services, with access to information and to the decision taking processes that affect their lives and livelihoods.

Organizations and other formal associations representing small-scale fishing interests should be afforded just and equitable access to fishing rights (including quotas) and decision-making processes, on an equitable basis with Producer Organizations and other organizations representing large-scale fishing enterprises.

Diversity and Localisation: Secondly, the nature, importance, potential and diversity of small-scale fisheries activities should be recognized and respected. Defining small-scale fisheries should be done and applied at the most appropriate level, be it regional, national or local. Such definitions should take account of regional particularities and geomorphology, technical aspects (fishing capacity), environmental aspects (selectivity, low discards, low seabed impact, low energy use etc), social aspects (decent work, high degree of benefit sharing, and links with local shore based activities and local employment, and the ownership and control of the operations).

Recognition of and Respect for Women: Thirdly, the role of women in fisheries should be recognized and respected, the contributions they make to the fisheries sector and to the wider community should be valorised, and they must be afforded their proper status as collaborating spouses, as economic actors; the importance of the social, cultural and economic activities they engage in must be recognized.

Definition and Defence of Small-Scale Fishing Rights: Fourthly, the rights of small-scale fishers and their communities should be defined and defended in accordance with article 6.18 of the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries¹ and in line with regional specificities and priorities. Once defined, these rights should be incorporated into law on a just basis with the rights of other resource users.

When adopting rights based policies and rights based approaches to the management of small-scale fisheries, account must be taken of the collective nature, and the livelihood, economic, social and cultural dimensions of their activities. In this regard, the use of rights based fishery management tools that promote individual interests at the expense of collective interests, especially those that incorporate market based allocation mechanisms should be avoided. The logic of tools such as individual transferable quotas (ITQs), and the logic of artisanal fishing are not compatible.

In this regard, it is important to learn from the lessons of the ITQ system in Iceland, as regards:

- **Concentration of ownership:** Following their introduction in 1984, after only 44 months the (trawler) industry had accumulated 70% of the total quota (ITQs), 1000 small vessels that had formed part of the ITQ system were scrapped, and their quotas merged with trawler quotas. It was only by staying outside the ITQ system, that small boat operators and their crew, as members of the National Association of Small Boat Owners (NASBO) have managed to survive.

¹ “States should appropriately protect the rights of fishers and fishworkers, particularly those engaged in... small-scale and artisanal fisheries... to preferential access... to traditional fishing grounds and resources in the waters under national jurisdiction.”

- Perverse effects on Human Rights, Working Conditions, Under Reporting/Overcapacity and Discards:
 - In February 2008, the European Committee on Human Rights ruled that the adoption of ITQs contravened fishers rights under the Icelandic Fisheries Management Act;
 - The ITQ system established a pattern of ownership and control akin to feudalism that degraded the employment conditions for many workers, especially through the leasing rights;
 - Overcapacity/ overfishing in the trawler fleet was facilitated through such measures as:
 - Allowing those who have quotas to land 5% of their annual catch as small fish, without deduction from their quotas.
 - Allowing those who have quotas to land 5% of their quotas as "Marine Research Institute" catch.
 - Allowing those who export their fish directly to Europe not to weigh their catch on a legal scale in Iceland, accounting for a difference around 10%, on annual exports of around 30 thousand tons.
 - Not addressing the problem of discards. For the period 2008/2009, the Marine Institute estimated discards to be around 1100 tons of cod and 1900 tons of haddock. Fishermen in Iceland consider this a gross underestimation.

A Differentiated Approach: Fifthly, apply a differentiated approach to sector specific management and regulatory problems. The need for capacity reductions in one sector should not result in the losses of fishing opportunities, employment or other benefits in other more sustainable sectors.

In this regard, the principle of subsidiarity should be applied to the management of small-scale fisheries, where management systems incorporate and are otherwise guided by local knowledge, experience and proven good practice.

The implementation of management plans, recovery plans and other regional and local management measures should be based on existing good practices, such as for marine protected areas, in participation with local small-scale fishers, shellfish gatherers and their communities, ensuring that their access rights are protected. Such measures should be responsive to the demands of small-scale fishers, shell fishers and their communities, and should incorporate the monitoring of biological and sociological indicators in their design so that their social and biological effectiveness can be measured over time.

Taking Account of Vulnerability and Resilience: Sixth, proper account must be taken of the inherent vulnerability and resilience of fishing communities in the reform process. Based on detailed impact assessment studies and baseline community profiles, genuine alternative activities and livelihood diversification schemes, based on local realities and capacities for change and adaptation to changing circumstances, should be provided and otherwise promoted.

In Conclusion

CFP reform and the new regulation require that an ethical framework is established for EU fisheries, based on considerations of:

- Justice and equity;
- Respect for human (including social, political and economic) rights;
- A Precautionary Approach geared towards sustainability of a functioning and healthy ecosystem and geared towards public health (nutrition, pollution etc);
- An Ecosystems Based Approach to management, with human interests and issues at the centre.

We need a moral compass to guide us through the reform process, to ensure that an appropriate balance is achieved between ecological, social, economic and ethical issues.