

Small-scale Focus

One of the agenda items of a recent FAO meet focused on the importance of small-scale fisheries from a sociocultural, economic, sustainability and food-security perspective

Why has it taken us so long to focus on small-scale fisheries? Thus began the statement by the United States (US) during the discussion on Agenda item 10 (a), “Update on the Development of International Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-scale Fisheries”, at the 30th Session of the Committee on Fisheries (COFI) of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), held in Rome, Italy, from 9 to 13 July 2012. The US view was shared by several other States.

The general consensus about the importance of small-scale fisheries from a sociocultural, economic, sustainability and food-security perspective, and for urgent measures to support the sub-sector, was evident throughout the COFI meeting, including during discussions on other agenda items. The report of the Sub-committee on Trade that was adopted by COFI encourages FAO to make the focus on the small-scale sector more explicit in its work programme, and to include the sector as a separate item on the agenda of the Sub-committee on Fish Trade at its next session.

While the overall response of States to the questionnaire on national-level implementation of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries (CCRF) was poor, those States that did respond reported that the most commonly applied management measures in marine fisheries are related to addressing the interests and rights of small-scale fishers as well as of fishing capacity. Addressing the interests of small-scale fishers in fisheries management has moved

progressively from fifth position in 2005 to first position in 2011.

A side event titled “Small-scale Fisheries Guidelines: Getting it Right” organized by the civil society co-ordination group, comprising the World Forum of Fish Harvesters and Fish Workers (WFF), the World Forum of Fisher Peoples (WFFP), the International Collective in Support of Fishworkers (ICSF) and the International Planning Committee for Food Sovereignty (IPC), attracted excellent participation.

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Representatives of more than 20 States, as well as intergovernmental, fishworker and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) participated in this side event (see Box 1).

Technical consultation

The agenda paper for item 10 (a) invited COFI to note the steps taken so far in the Guidelines development process, and provide guidance on further consultations and the conduct and funding of the formal negotiation process; to advise on the modalities of engagement by civil society organizations (CSOs) in the scheduled intergovernmental technical consultation (TC), taking note of the practices of the reformed Committee on World Food Security (CFS) as applied in the recent negotiations of the Voluntary

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Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure to Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security (VG-Tenure); recommend how to facilitate the future implementation of the Guidelines, including through the development of specific implementation strategies at various levels and the mobilization of extra-budgetary resources; and propose other activities to be undertaken by FAO and its development partners in relation to securing sustainable small-scale fisheries.

A total of 41 States spoke on this agenda item, followed by interventions from several observers. Overall, there was widespread endorsement of the Guidelines and of the participatory process adopted to develop them. The FAO secretariat was commended for the inclusive and participatory process undertaken, and was encouraged to continue along the same lines.

At the same time, the need for other interventions was also highlighted. Several States, including Brazil, Peru, Thailand and Norway, called for putting in place, on an urgent basis, a global assistance programme for small-scale fisheries. Several other States, including India, Afghanistan, Iran, Malawi, Angola, Senegal, Ghana, Guinea-Conakry and Cameroon,

reiterated their call for the setting up of a sub-committee on small-scale fisheries that could provide a solid basis for the development of the sub-sector.

Advice was also provided on the issue of modalities of engagement of CSOs in the scheduled intergovernmental TC in 2013. Norway and Afghanistan were in favour of adopting modalities for CSO participation in the TC similar to those that were applied during the CFS-led negotiations on the VG-Tenure.

Sierra Leone, speaking on behalf of the African Union, supported the ongoing participation of CSOs in the Guidelines process, and called for ensuring that the voices of those involved in this sub-sector are accommodated and co-ordinated within the process of developing the guidelines. Peru, on behalf of the Latin American and Caribbean Group (GRULAC) similarly called for a consultative process for CSO engagement in the negotiations.

South Africa drew attention to the new small-scale fisheries policy that has been developed in the country, which was gazetted on 20 June 2012. The policy, which emphasizes sustainable use, has been drafted with the full participation of all stakeholders, and has benefited greatly from the inclusive process. South Africa called for a similarly inclusive process to develop the international Guidelines.

The European Union (EU) said that the negotiation process should respect established practice for observer participation in FAO. India said that while greater participation of CSOs should be encouraged, it should be as per established procedures. Canada was of the view that the issue of modalities for CSO participation concerns the broader governance of the organization and that it was outside COFI's mandate and authority to determine how civil society should participate in the TC beyond what current rules allow. If there is an intention to change how the public engages then, Canada suggested, the modalities for such engagement of all stakeholders—CSOs, NGOs,

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At the 30th Session of COFI a total of 41 States spoke on agenda item "Update on the Development of International Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-scale Fisheries"

BOX 1

CSO Statement

Agenda Item 10 (a): Update on the development of International Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-scale Fisheries

Chairperson,

Governmental delegations and Members of COFI,

Fraternal Greetings from the millions of men and women artisanal fishworkers, who we are proud to represent.

My name is Cairo Roberto Laguna. I am an artisanal fisheries producer and vessel owner from Nicaragua, where I am currently the President of the Nicaraguan Artisanal Fishing Federation (FENICPESCA), Secretary of the Steering Committee of the Central American Confederation of Artisanal Fishermen (CONFEPESCA) and Latin American Representative of the World Forum of Fish Harvesters and Fishworkers (WFF).

Here I speak on behalf of the WFF, the World Forum of Fisher Peoples (WFFP), the International Collective in Support of Fishworkers (ICSF) and the Internal Planning Committee for Food Sovereignty (IPC).

The development of the guidelines on small-scale fisheries presents us with a unique opportunity: the opportunity to enhance the contribution of our sector to food security and poverty eradication, to socio-cultural diversity, to decent employment and livelihoods, to local and national economies, and to the conservation and sustainable use of fisheries resources, both inland and marine.

We, organizations that represent and support small-scale fisheries and fishing communities, have, therefore, welcomed the guidelines. We have also committed to engaging with the process of developing them. We have set up a co-ordination group comprising representatives from our organizations for the purpose of engaging with this process.

We urge the Committee on Fisheries to respect and recognize our commitment and facilitate our further meaningful participation with this process. We urge you to ensure that our voices are well represented at the inter-governmental technical negotiations on these guidelines to be held in 2013. In particular we request that:

- A specified number of civil society representatives, nominated by us, be enabled to make interventions during plenary discussions;
- Our representatives be allowed to participate in breakout sessions/ working groups of the technical consultation;
- Our representatives be allowed to submit and present written contributions and proposals.

Many such steps to enhance civil society participation have been taken within earlier FAO processes.

Facilitating our active participation will ensure that the Guidelines adopted represent a shared vision, and that they are owned widely, particularly by small-scale fishing communities themselves. This is essential if the guidelines are to be implemented effectively.

Mr Chair, COFI delegates, in our view this new international instrument should be global in scope so that it can be applied wherever appropriate.

Finally we would like to request COFI to commit financial resources to ensure the participation of our representatives in the negotiations process.

Thank you for your attention.



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environmental groups, industry and inter-government associations—be considered by the Conference. Canada also asked the secretariat to provide information on how all interested stakeholders can engage within the framework of the basic text available. New Zealand, supporting Canada, stressed that the modalities should apply consistently to all observers, a view also shared by Australia.

During the discussion, States highlighted several other issues. Norway expressed its full support to the Guidelines development process, offering financial support as well. Drawing attention to the fact that the Farmers Forum, organized by the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), would focus on small-scale fisheries in 2014, it

noted that the importance of small-scale fisheries, and its link with food security, is being increasingly recognized.

On behalf of the African Union, Sierra Leone stressed the need to work with fishing communities to safeguard the fisheries systems and wider ecosystems that support them, as well as to promote greater safety for those working in the sector. Sierra Leone also drew the attention of COFI to the strategic framework for access to resources being developed by the West African sub-regional fisheries commission (CSRP), which has a special protocol on small-scale fisheries. This will also draw on the zero draft of the Guidelines.

Venezuela, endorsing the need for a participatory approach for the development of the Guidelines, said that fishers need to be recognized as stakeholders in the process. Recommendations from fishers have regularly been taken on board nationally, it was noted. Cameroon stressed the importance of greater attention to small-scale fisheries, to improve livelihoods and working conditions as well as resource sustainability.

India, commenting on the Guidelines, said that these should not be confined to what to do, but should also focus on why certain steps are needed and who can take them. They should be addressed to all stakeholders and should aim at making concrete improvements in the lives of people. The language of the Guidelines must be simple and accessible, avoiding jargon. Peru said that the Guidelines should be voluntary in nature.

Indonesia said that small-scale fisheries are a national priority, and different standards must be considered for the sub-sector under the Special and Differential Treatment clause in the ongoing negotiations on fisheries subsidies at the World Trade Organization (WTO). Korea highlighted the need for a precise definition of small-scale fisheries.

The EU stressed the need for increased attention to the role of small-scale fisheries, both for food security and as a lever for economic growth in coastal areas. A focus on small-scale actors and vulnerable communities lies at the heart of the EU's development policy for food security as well as its fisheries policy. Policies that achieve sustainability contribute to strengthened performance of small-scale fleets, the EU noted. The EU also reiterated its view that the development of such an international instrument should, in particular, focus on the needs of developing countries and draw on relevant existing instruments. It underlined the need for the development of implementation strategies at various

levels—local, national, regional and global.

Canada said that small-scale fisheries existed across the country, especially in aboriginal and remote communities for subsistence, recreational, commercial, social and ceremonial purposes. Reserving comments on the zero draft of the Guidelines, Canada said it supported the technical consultations to negotiate the Guidelines. As human rights can be a sensitive issue, Canada was keen to know if the FAO secretariat had a plan and a budget available to support the TC, given that more than one round may be needed to reach agreement.

Mauritius underlined the need for a greater elaboration of the concept of sustainability, with a focus on an integrated approach. Issues related to safety at sea, women, gear selectivity and infrastructure need to be addressed. The role of CSOs and NGOs is very important, particularly in reaching out to, and convincing, fishing communities, Mauritius stressed.

Ecuador emphasized the need for a balance between conservation and sustainable use, and underlined the role of fishers and CSOs both for achieving sustainability and for developing the Guidelines.

Japan said that it recognized the socioeconomic importance of small-scale fisheries in both developing and developed countries, and that it gave high priority to the development of the Guidelines. There is need for a case-by-case approach for providing support—no uniform disciplines are possible.

Japan pointed out that even small-scale fisheries have impacts and that they too target internationally shared stocks, such as tuna. The issue of sustainability in the context of small-scale fisheries is thus important, and needs to be integrated into national and international management systems.

Fishing rights

Chile said that even as there is need to pay attention to economic, social and cultural rights of small-scale

BOX 2

Getting it Right

A civil society Side Event, titled “Small-Scale Fisheries Guidelines: Getting it Right”, was conducted by the World Forum of Fish Harvesters and Fish Workers (WFF), the World Forum of Fisher Peoples (WFFP), the International Collective in Support of Fishworkers (ICSF) and the International Planning Committee for Food Sovereignty (IPC) at the 30th Session of the Committee on Fisheries (COFI) of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), held in Rome, Italy, from 9 to 13 July 2012. The event was attended by over 70 persons, including 20 national delegations from Latin America, Africa, Asia, Europe and North America.

Chaired by Naseegh Jaffer of WFFP and Margaret Nakato of WFF, speakers included Rolf Willmann (Senior Fishery Planning Officer, FAO), Jackie Sunde (Member, ICSF), Fabio Hazin (Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture, Pernambuco, Brazil) and Tarun Shridhar (Joint Secretary, Department of Fisheries, India).

Rolf Willmann emphasized that “getting it right” must involve the stakeholders. He referred to the Outcome Document from the Rio+20 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development on “The Future We Want”, as well as the VG-Tenure Guidelines, both of which contain important commitments and language on rights and small-scale fisheries that have relevance for the Guidelines. Willmann also referred to the report on the contribution of fisheries to the realization of the right to food being drafted by the UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food. He detailed the process adopted so far for developing the Guidelines. The Zero Draft of the Guidelines is now online for comments. The revised draft, after incorporating the comments received, will provide the basis for the technical consultation to be held in May 2013, he said.

Jackie Sunde spoke about the consultations organized by civil society organizations (CSOs) on the Guidelines at national and regional levels, which included 14 national workshops and one regional workshop in Africa. She also provided information about the draft synthesis report that was prepared based on the reports and statements from these workshops.

Fabio Hazin of Brazil commended the inclusive process that has been followed in developing the Guidelines, noting that it was probably the most participatory process ever in FAO. Brazil is fully committed to the Guidelines, given the importance of small-scale fisheries. The Guidelines, he hoped, would serve as a lever to raise awareness of small-scale fisheries to the level it

deserves. It is also important to put in place the global assistance programme for small-scale fisheries proposed in the 29th session of COFI, he pointed out.

Hazin added that there are now two valuable documents and sources of information—the Zero Draft of FAO and the CSO synthesis report—which should be the basis for the consultation process that is to take place. The challenge, he said, is how to ensure that all the feedback from civil society and stakeholders is adequately and properly considered in drafting the Guidelines.

Tarun Shridhar of India wondered why small-scale fisheries have only been a footnote until now. Priority needs to be accorded to small-scale fisheries not only from the perspective of livelihood, food security and sustainability, but also from the perspective of commercial viability and international market access. He welcomed the development of the Guidelines as an instrument not so much to regulate small-scale fisheries, but to promote them. India continues to support the need for a sub-committee on small-scale fisheries, he noted.

Other speakers from the audience included delegates from Thailand, Mauritania, Bangladesh, Ivory Coast, Eritrea, Guinea and Mozambique. The Mauritanian representative said small-scale fisheries are already a priority area in his country and the Guidelines throw light on how to organize small-scale fisheries to make it more sustainable. The Guinea representative drew attention to the need for addressing illiteracy, improving access to credit, and building up fishers’ co-operatives. The Bangladesh representative highlighted the need for empowering small-scale fishers through leadership development. Mozambique said small-scale fisheries are important from a livelihood perspective and that it is already a priority area, as in Mauritania. The government is encouraging small-scale fishers to fish beyond the three-nautical-mile zone, he said.

The Ivory Coast representative said that the Guidelines should help address the problem of fishers’ migration and integrate fishers into management policy. The representative of Eritrea welcomed the focus on human rights. The Guidelines could provide the framework for enlarging financial assistance to poor fishing communities, he said. The representative of the sub-regional fisheries commission in West Africa said the Guidelines should be focused enough for countries to take ownership and to mainstream them into national and sub-national laws.

The active deliberation and large participation at the Side Event indicated that small-scale fisheries are of growing interest and priority.

fishing communities, there is also need to focus on issues of conservation. The US emphasized the need for ensuring that resources are well managed and pointed to the responsibility of the small-scale sector for this. The Guidelines, noted the US, should emphasize the importance of

innovative governance systems and adequate data.

New Zealand said that as the issue of poverty in small-scale fisheries was an issue primarily in developing countries, the Guidelines should focus on them. At the same time, there is need to think through whether the small-scale sector should remain

frozen—there is a need for progress. It is also important that the small-scale sector is subject to the same conservation and management regimes as the other sub-sectors, stressed New Zealand, given that in some contexts small-scale fisheries can cause more environmental damage.

Brazil said small-scale fisheries are multi-dimensional and include aspects such as social inclusion, cultural heritage, food security and employment. The proposed TC to develop guidelines should take into account the contribution of CSOs. It welcomed the participation of fishers' coalitions in the guidelines process.

While Brazil highlighted the importance of co-management, Bangladesh stressed the need to promote systems of community-based coastal resource management, to enhance the decision-making power of fishing communities, and to secure their rights to land and resources. Various types of support need to be provided, including insurance policies on a pilot basis.

Ivory Coast stressed the need for greater attention on migration and for protecting the interests of migrant fishers. It also pointed to the conflicts with trawlers, noting that as many as 15 per cent of small-scale fishers had their gear destroyed by trawlers.

Argentina noted that it has special rules for small-scale fisheries, and that there were quotas set for maximum capture by the sub-sector, as well as a register. The Guidelines, said Argentina, need to be used to boost trade among developing countries.

FAO, said Tanzania, should develop mechanisms to support CSOs at the national level to make it possible to address the national priorities of the sub-sector. Ways to disseminate the Guidelines to the grassroots will be needed. Angola sought the translation of the zero draft into Portuguese. Zambia and Malawi said they will need help in domesticating the good practices contained in the Guidelines and in implementing them. Panama said that special attention is needed for preparing a regional plan for the implementation of the Guidelines.

Organización Latinoamericana de Desarrollo Pesquero (OLDEPESCA), the Latin American Fisheries Development Organization, said that it is currently working on a protocol for the improvement of quality, sanitation and health in fisheries products from the artisanal sector. The organization is also creating a regional model for holistic development of small-scale fisheries. Organización del Sector Pesquero y Acuícola del Istmo Centroamericano (OSPESCA), the Central American Organization for Fisheries and Aquaculture, and the Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism (CRFM) drew attention to important challenges facing small-scale fisheries, like climate change and natural disasters, and the risks from illegal, unregulated and unreported (IUU) fishing. The Bay of Bengal Programme Inter-governmental Organization (BOBP-IGO) reported that it had initiated national-level consultations on small-scale fisheries in member countries.

The Statement from civil society (see Box 1) asked States to recognize the crucial role that CSOs had played in the Guidelines development process so far. It asked States to enhance CSO participation in the TC in specific ways, to ensure a continuation of the inclusive process.

Overall, COFI endorsed the Guidelines and the participatory approach that had been adopted by the FAO secretariat towards their development. Supporting the convening of an intergovernmental TC in May 2013, COFI called for continued collaboration with all stakeholders in the coming period. 3

For more



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