

Towards Synthesis

A synthesis document summarizes the approach of civil society organizations towards the proposed SSF Guidelines

Civil society organizations (CSOs) have engaged closely with the process led by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) in developing the International Guidelines on Securing Sustainable Small-scale Fisheries (SSF Guidelines). The Guidelines, they feel, are an opportunity to ensure much-needed recognition and support for small-scale fisheries (SSF), and especially for marginalized and vulnerable groups within SSF.

to the Guidelines. The proposals that emerged were compiled into a synthesis document, which, after integrating another round of comments, was also uploaded on the CSO website in January 2013.

The synthesis document compiles several detailed proposals in relation to the SSF Guidelines, including their scope and the basic principles that should underpin them. It also makes detailed proposals on key thematic areas of relevance to SSF, which reflect the aspirations of many.

The Guidelines, it is stressed, should not attempt to arrive at a definition of SSF, but rather what characterizes the diversity of SSF. The use of the term 'small-scale fisheries actors' should be applied in such a way that it covers men and women working in the full range of activities along the value chain, including the pre- and post-harvesting and trading sector, and in all fishing and harvesting activities, whether at sea or on land.

The SSF Guidelines should be binding (not voluntary), given that many of the principles and much of the content of the Guidelines are already accepted language in obligatory Conventions and Treaties signed by the Parties. They should be underpinned by the recognition of the human rights of all and should stress the need for a human-rights-based approach. The term 'human rights' should be understood to include collective rights as well.

Synthesis document

For CSOs, the synthesis document will form the basis for their engagement with the SSF Guidelines process. It also formed the basis of

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CSOs, comprising the World Forum of Fish Harvesters and Fishworkers (WFF), the World Forum of Fisher Peoples (WFFP), the International Collective in Support of Fishworkers (ICSF) and the International Planning Committee on Food Sovereignty (IPC) set up a co-ordinating group with the purpose of engaging with the Guidelines process.

Between September 2011 and December 2012, the CSO platform organized 20 national-level workshops spanning Asia, Africa and Latin America, and two regional workshops in Africa. Consultations were also organized among small-scale fishers and fishworkers in the European Union and Canada. More than 2,300 people participated in these consultations, sharing their aspirations and proposals in relation

*This article has been written by **Chandrika Sharma** (icsf@icsf.net), Executive Secretary, ICSF*

COOPESOLIDAR R.L.



The civil society platform on the proposed SSF Guidelines organized national-level workshops in Asia, Africa and Latin America

their comments on FAO's Zero Draft of the Guidelines.

With the Technical Consultation to negotiate the SSF Guidelines coming up soon, from 20 to 24 May 2013, in Rome, Italy, CSOs are hopeful that States will recognize the participatory and bottom-up nature of the CSO process, and that the key proposals that have emerged from this process are reflected in the Guidelines that are finally adopted.

CSOs also hope that the participatory nature of the process will be continued, both during the negotiations, and in the implementation of the Guidelines, once adopted, as this will only serve to strengthen implementation and the achievement of common objectives. 3

For more



[sites.google.com/site/
smallscalefisheries/](https://sites.google.com/site/smallscalefisheries/)

Civil Society Website on Small-scale Fisheries

www.fao.org/fishery/ssf/guidelines/en

FAO Website on Small-scale Fisheries Guidelines