

Looking Ahead

The regional conference on 'Building a Future for Sustainable Small-scale Fisheries in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea'

The regional conference on 'Building a Future for Sustainable Small-scale Fisheries in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea', held at Algiers, Algeria during 7–9 March 2016, was attended by over 200 participants, including policymakers, scientists, practitioners, fishers' representatives, fishworkers, civil society organizations (CSOs), non-governmental organizations (NGOs), research institutions, international organizations, among others.

The conference was organized by the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM) and the

GENERAL CONCLUSIONS

In the light of the UN Sustainable Development Goals which, among other issues, stress the importance of providing access for small-scale artisanal fisheries to marine resources and markets, the importance of the regional conference on 'Building a Future for Sustainable Small-scale Fisheries in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea' was acknowledged. Widespread support was expressed by conference participants for the conference objectives to raise awareness, share knowledge and devise future strategy to promote this crucial fishing sector.

In particular, the following general proposals were made:

- Tailor implementation of the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication (SSF Guidelines) to the Mediterranean and Black Sea context and provide support to GFCM contracting parties in the implementation of these guidelines.
- Launch a comprehensive and region-wide survey to develop accurate, timely and complete baseline data on the value and economic impact of small-scale fisheries, with a view to ultimately informing policy interventions.
- Launch wide-ranging consultations, including a mechanism for the sustainable development of the small-scale fishing sector and specific actions to develop a coordinated policy to support this sector. To this end, implement a joint regional strategy which builds on existing regional networks and platforms and promotes a level playing field

The conclusions are put forth to urge actions in support of sustainable small-scale fisheries in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea.

Fisheries and Aquaculture Department of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), including its Mediterranean regional projects, in collaboration with the Algerian Ministry for Agriculture, Rural Development and Fisheries and in partnership with CIHEAM-Bari, MedPAN and WWF.

The following conclusions have been developed based on the outcomes of the regional conference. The conclusions are put forth to urge actions in support of sustainable small-scale fisheries in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea. They are grouped, first, under a cluster of general and transversal proposals and, next, under five clusters relating to the specific thematic sessions of the conference.

This article is based on the Conclusions Document, of the Regional Conference on 'Building a future for sustainable small-scale fisheries in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea', brought out by the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM)

throughout the Mediterranean and the Black Sea.

- Develop a regional programme aimed at providing support and technical assistance, in particular to developing countries, in order to build capacity in the field of small-scale fisheries. Carry out, at the national level, where necessary, an analysis of legislation and institutional mechanisms which ensure the full participation of small-scale fishers in all activities regarding the sustainable development of the sector (development of alternative activities, co-management, financial support, labelling, traceability, right to decent work, social protection, etc.). Build the political will to invest in small-scale fisheries as a crucial tool to transform fisheries management, particularly within the context of the Blue Growth initiative and the implementation of the reformed EU Common Fisheries Policy. It was suggested that the GFCM member countries, the European Commission and FAO provide joint leadership in this regard (that is, through the organization of a high-level event). Disseminate the conclusions of the regional conference on 'Building a Future for Sustainable Small-scale Fisheries in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea' to relevant international meetings, such as GFCM regular sessions, the FAO Committee on Fisheries (COFI) and relevant European Union (EU) meetings.

SPECIFIC CONCLUSIONS OF THE PANELS PANEL I

Supporting the sustainable development of small-scale fisheries in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea under the Blue Growth perspective:

In the light of discussions held at the panel, it is proposed to: Develop indicators to measure the economic and social impact of small-scale fishing, both in quantitative and qualitative terms. In particular, efforts should be made to estimate not only the value of the output produced by such fishing and its economic impact on coastal

communities in the Mediterranean and Black Sea, but also the impact of small-scale fishing on related sectors such as fish processing and tourism. Furthermore, an analysis of the interaction of small-scale fishing with other sectors, particularly those also engaged in Blue Growth strategies (in marine transportation, oil and gas, tourism, etc.) is needed for a better understanding of both the wider economic and social impacts of small-scale fishing, as well as the risks these other sectors may pose to small-scale fishing communities. Examine the economic impact of small-scale fishing under different exploitation arrangements with a view to identifying circumstances under which this activity might generate an investable surplus and undertake studies to estimate the potential size of this surplus. Similarly, efforts should be made to identify points of entry for technological, management, marketing and policy interventions that would facilitate the above mentioned favourable circumstances. Identify relevant parameters—having acknowledged the need to develop a common definition of small-scale fisheries—for the classification of 'small-scale fishing' in the Mediterranean and Black Sea, based on relevant regional characteristics (dimension of the vessel, gear used, activities of non-vessel based fisheries, etc.) and in relation to the harvested resources. Disseminate information on the effectiveness of the GFCM Data Collection Reference Framework (DCRF) and promote its use as a data collection tool for small-scale fishing. Provide technical assistance in the practical application of the DCRF in the collection of standardized data on small-scale fishing in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea. Produce a desk study on the social protection systems and national legislations in place and available to small-scale fishers in the Mediterranean and Black Sea riparian States, with a view to identifying and promoting the most successful options. Identify policy interventions which facilitate income and livelihood diversification for

small-scale fishers. In particular, efforts should be made to identify opportunities for crossover between the small-scale fishing and small-scale aquaculture sectors.

Develop, in collaboration with GFCM members, a pilot programme that would test ways to better integrate small-scale fisheries into a Blue Growth approach, as well as better integrate small-scale fisheries in the decision-making processes of other sectors whose Blue Growth activity may have an impact on small-scale fisheries.

PANEL II

Strengthening the role of stakeholders in the context of management and co-management schemes:

In the light of discussions held at the panel, the following actions are proposed: Conduct an analysis to assess national and international legal frameworks with a view to identifying institutional contexts that allow for the establishment of small-scale fisheries co-management schemes and with a view to defining general rules for the engagement and compliance of small-scale fishers with these schemes. Prepare best practice guidelines for the enforcement of small-scale fisheries co-management schemes in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea. Such guidelines should be linked directly to the SSF Guidelines and, in addition to providing advice on the institutional and legislative context, should provide direction for the elaboration and implementation of participatory processes, co-management settings and tools, approaches for monitoring, control and surveillance schemes and indicators to monitor the effectiveness of management measures. Provide support to currently ongoing co-management processes in the Mediterranean and build commitment for their multiplication across the region. A regional programme, based on a solid institutional framework and building on existing experiences and partnerships, should be established to offer a longer-term vision on how co-management can

benefit small-scale fisheries at the regional scale. Map fishing activities in order to provide relevant information to be integrated into marine spatial planning processes. Such processes are crucial to securing tenure rights and access to the resources for small-scale fishers, and thus ensuring livelihoods and the sustainable development of communities reliant on small-scale fisheries. The GFCM, on behalf of its member countries, should advocate for this issue at a high level with the European Commission, prior to the commencement of the marine spatial planning processes. Establish a capacity-building programme devoted to supporting stakeholder roles in small-scale fisheries co-management and tailored to different targets (institutional, marine protected areas administration, local administrations, natural and social scientists, civil society, small-scale fishers and other resource users).

PANEL III

Improving the efficiency of marine protected areas (MPAs) as fisheries management tools and benefits from involving the small-scale fisheries sector:

In the light of discussions held at the panel, it is proposed to:

- Adapt and draw lessons from the experience of MPAs with no-take zones and regulated buffer zones that have been successful in involving fishers in management decisions and in processes that safeguard wild resources, while also preserving the livelihoods upon which small-scale fishers depend. Given the socioeconomic benefits obtained by small-scale fishers in these exemplary MPAs, learning from such cases would provide guidance on how to sustain economic, social and cultural aspects of the profession. To support replication of these successful MPAs, adequate legal frameworks, political will and financial and human capital would be required.
- Replicate examples of collaboration at the inter- and intra-ministerial

level that demonstrate the successful management of small-scale fisheries in and around MPAs when working 'hand in hand'. Such integrative models could encourage top-down and bottom-up processes in many riparian countries for securing the future sustainability of the profession, while also providing international technical guidance.

- Improve the management of MPAs, including multiple-use MPAs, by relying on the scientific and traditional knowledge of fishers, by involving concerned users/stakeholders and by using adaptive approaches. To this end:
 - tailor management in the light of the outcomes of long-term comparative monitoring of biological features, ecological effects of small-scale fisheries and socioeconomic benefits in and outside MPAs;
 - develop adaptive participatory approaches for management plans for small-scale fisheries in and around MPAs, based on biological and socioeconomic data, which could be jointly formulated, implemented and revised by MPA practitioners and fishers;
 - adopt regulations to overcome conflicting uses of MPAs which could have a negative impact on the livelihood of small-scale fisheries, having regard to relevant conservation objectives; and
 - consider participative management, in cases of use conflicts, specifically those between small-scale fisheries and recreational fisheries, to create a balance between the sustainable development of small-scale fisheries and, where applicable, the sustainable development of responsible tourism, so as to achieve conservation objectives.
- Consider conservation efforts, and MPAs in particular, as an investment in natural capital rather than as a public expenditure. Efforts should be

made to protect this investment from risks, such as conflicting marine-based activities and land-based pollution.

- Safeguard the small-scale fisheries sector in and around MPAs, including by setting up cooperatives, through strategies that are integrated in development plans devised by local authorities and that provide a market edge in favour of responsible and sustainable fisheries practices.

PANEL IV

Enhancing small-scale fisheries value chains:

In the light of discussions held at the panel, it is proposed to: Identify best practices for value creation, especially in the fields of labelling, direct sale, processing, diversification, inter-sectoral integration and vertical coordination. Additional case studies should be carried out to further examine such best-practice interventions and to promote their replication in various Mediterranean and Black Sea contexts. Model successful value chains, particularly in cases where clustering of various coastal economic activities occur, to identify entry points for innovation and to better understand the scope for fisher cooperation in resource management and in product marketing. Establish a capacity-building programme to support stakeholder roles in the creation of cooperatives, formulation of agreements with public and private institutions, development of partnerships and projects for coastal development. Better study and analysis of issues related both to credit and financial institution support. Public institutions should provide basic infrastructures and services to foster value chains and to prevent market failure. Access to formal finance is a crucial concern. This includes access to both formal credit for capital expenses and financing for fishing operations. Facilities and financial products can be developed in partnership with banks for medium- to long-term investment. Formal financing schemes (production

contracts, storage receipts) can be applied with the participation of fishers, traders and public authorities.

PANEL V

Putting the principles of the SSF Guidelines into practice: The case of the Mediterranean and the Black Sea

The SSF Guidelines constitute an important tool for supporting actions to securing sustainable small-scale fisheries in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea. These guidelines take a holistic perspective on the needs of small-scale fisheries and recognize that the implementation of these guidelines will necessarily be cross-sectoral. With a view to adapting these guidelines to the regional context, key elements to operationalize the principles of the SSF guidelines were explored: (i) policy and legal frameworks, (ii) main stakeholders, (iii) institutional structures, (iv) key entry points and (v) collaboration with other initiatives. The panel noted the importance of action at the local level and the need for effective participation of fishing communities. There are already positive developments taking place in the region in support of the SSF Guidelines implementation. For example, the existence of regional organizations and platforms such as the Maghreb Platform for sustainable small-scale fisheries, the Mediterranean Platform of Artisanal Fishers (MedArtNet), Low Impact Fishers of Europe (LIFE) and the Mediterranean Advisory Council (MEDAC), and the development of national policies and initiatives (for example, Aquapêche 2020 in Algeria, SSF national action plan proposals in EU countries).

In the light of discussions held at the panel, it is proposed to:

- Establish a GFCM working group on small-scale fisheries to facilitate the implementation of the SSF Guidelines in the GFCM region by developing national action plans and taking into account recommendations from relevant events and existing experience within the region and beyond.

- Strengthen the GFCM engagement with small-scale fishing communities by establishing a mechanism for supporting organizational development and agreeing on a modus operandi for meaningful collaboration. In particular, FAO's work on small-scale fisheries should be taken into account and special efforts should be made to collaborate with existing small-scale fisheries organizations and platforms, as well as to include women and marginalized groups in such collaborations.
- Promote, without compromising environmental sustainability, the improvement of socioeconomic conditions within small-scale fisheries, particularly through the promotion of livelihood diversification as appropriate, and the endorsement of the principle of decent work, as defined by the Work in Fishing Convention (C188) of the International Labour Organization (ILO). Furthermore, ratification of this Convention by GFCM member countries should be encouraged.
- Promote and facilitate the development of a forum for small-scale fisheries associations of northern and southern Mediterranean riparian countries, particularly through specific projects financed by member countries or by other international, governmental or non-governmental entities.

For more

www.fao.org/gfcm/meetings/ssfconference2016/en/#jfmulticontent_c382958-4

GFCM Event Website