

Statement made by World Forum of Fish Harvesters and Fish Workers (WFF), World Forum of Fisher Peoples (WFFP), International Collective in Support of Fishworkers (ICSF) and International Planning Committee for Food Sovereignty on SSF Guidelines

Civil society statement on agenda item 9: Securing sustainable small-scale fisheries/GSF

Zero draft

1. Civil society recalls that the Committee endorsed the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication in its 31st session in 2014. At that occasion, “the committee noted the critical role of the adopted SSF in improving the social, economic and cultural status of small-scale fisheries, which were often particularly vulnerable to disasters and climate change. The Committee highlighted the need of the sector, which plays a crucial role in contributing to the promotion of livelihoods, as well as food security and nutrition in many countries. It also reiterated the importance of the guiding principles of the SSF Guidelines, in particular the human-rights based approach.” (COFI 2014 report, para. 20)

The Committee also welcomed the proposal for a Global Assistance Programme (GAP) for the implementation of the SSF Guidelines (as outlined in SSF Guidelines para. 13.6), agreeing on the inclusive and consensus-seeking overall strategic approach and the structure of the GAP around four components: raising awareness; strengthening the science-policy interface; empowering stakeholders and supporting implementation. (COFI 2014 report, para. 23 and 24).

2. Civil society further welcomes that efforts towards the implementation of the SSF Guidelines have started and scaled up at national and regional levels. We would like to highlight that small-scale fishing communities and organizations/CSOs have substantially contributed to these efforts, in many cases catalyzing implementation processes upholding the SSF’s guiding principles (which are outlined in chapter 3), in order to ensure that they are mainstreamed in policies and actions at all levels. (COFI 2014 report, para. 24). The key role of small-scale and artisanal fisheries to food security and nutrition, poverty eradication, equitable development and sustainable resource utilization is highlighted in the SSF Guidelines (Preface). The Guidelines also underline that, despite their importance, many small-scale fishing communities continue to be marginalized, and their contribution to food security and nutrition, poverty eradication, equitable development and sustainable resource utilization is not fully realized (preface). Therefore, the active, free, effective, meaningful and informed participation of small-scale fishing communities (according to the SSF Guidelines’ guiding principles, especially 3.1.6) is absolutely crucial for all efforts towards implementation the Guidelines and their objectives
3. Based on the Committee’s recommendation to further develop the GAP in a participatory manner and to define the roles of different partners in the implementation of the SSF Guidelines (COFI 2014 report, para. 23 and 24), we believe that the proposed Global Strategic Framework (GSF) constitutes an important contribution to the implementation of the SSF Guidelines. It complements and enhances the FAO SSF Umbrella Programme along the four components of GAP defined by this Committee. The GSF provides a framework that responds to the need for over-viewing efforts at national and regional levels, ensuring coordination and synchronized action, enhancing cooperation as well as ensuring coherence.
4. Civil society therefore fully supports the development of a SSF-GSF. We believe that the GSF constitutes an important element in order to ensure the implementation of the SSF Guidelines according to a human rights and holistic approach and in order to achieve the objectives set out in them, particularly the realization of the human right to adequate food, poverty eradication as well as the sustainable utilization, responsible management and conservation of fisheries resources.