

## **Saving Lives, Protecting Livelihoods**

### **National Workshop on Small-scale Fisheries, Cyclone Ockhi and Disaster Risk Management**

**Thiruvananthapuram, India  
29<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> May 2018**

#### **STATEMENT**

We, participants at the National Workshop on Small-scale Fisheries, Cyclone Ockhi and Disaster Risk Management, held in Thiruvananthapuram, India, on 29<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> May 2018;

Concerned that Cyclone Ockhi brought unprecedented fatalities to fishers, including migrant fishers, all along the entire range of their fishing operations, both in inshore and offshore waters;

Further concerned about the impact of Cyclone Ockhi on the women and children of the affected families of fishers;

Mindful that natural disasters have differential impacts and therefore need a differentiated approach at all levels;

Recognizing the need for a national perspective, legal and policy framework that integrate on-land and at-sea disaster management and disaster risk management;

Fearing that climate change impacts can enhance the intensity of cyclones in future in the Arabian Sea, in addition to the Bay of Bengal, and would have disastrous consequences for coastal communities and fishing communities;

Being aware that better disaster management and disaster risk management can contribute to mitigating new disaster risk and associated economic, environmental and social consequences;

Recognizing that the quality and success of disaster management and disaster risk management can be greatly enhanced through consultation and participation, applying a human rights-based approach within the Sendai Framework for Disaster Reduction 2015-2030, and the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication (the SSF Guidelines);

Further recognizing that coastal fishing communities often have their own mechanisms, processes and institutions relevant for disaster preparedness that can effectively complement governance mechanisms under the jurisdiction of the State; and

Taking note of the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) target 1.5 “[B]y 2030 build the resilience of the poor and those in vulnerable situations and reduce their exposure and vulnerability to climate-related extreme events and other economic, social and environmental shocks and disasters”

Recommend the following measures to the appropriate authorities at various levels and other relevant stakeholders:

### **I. Disaster management authorities**

1. Reduce the number of deaths and number of people affected, including migrant fishers, and reduce the direct economic losses caused by disasters;
2. Integrate fishers' knowledge into search and rescue operations at sea at all levels;
3. Ensure that emergency relief and rehabilitation measures are expeditiously delivered without further aggravating economic, social and psychological distress of affected families;
4. Take care that relief and rehabilitation measures in a post-disaster scenario are proportional to the needs of affected men and women in fishing and post-harvest activities, including of those directly and indirectly affected;
5. Safeguard maternal health and education for children of affected families;
6. Develop, in consultation with fishing communities, appropriate mechanisms for disaster relief and rehabilitation in the fisheries sector and apply standardized protocols to promote coordination and cooperation at all levels;
7. Build and strengthen resilience and adaptive capacity of small-scale fishing communities and reduce their vulnerability to natural disasters;
8. Make adequate budget provisions to support disaster risk management at all levels;
9. Ensure that disaster management and disaster risk management measures applicable to the fishing sector are informed by reliable information regarding fishing fleets, fishing gear and fishing operations in cooperation with the relevant fisheries departments and the Coast Guard;
10. Develop baseline information on marine and coastal habitats (natural reefs, coral reefs, sandy beaches, etc.) to assess damages to these habitats and dependent species from natural and manmade disasters consistent with Article 7 (adaptation) and Article 8 (addressing loss and damage) of the 2015 Paris Agreement of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC);
11. Promote public awareness about natural disasters like cyclones, among other means, through school curricula reforms, school clubs and through ocean literacy programmes;
12. Strengthen the capacity of local self-governments to enhance community participation in disaster risk reduction;

### **II. Early warning and prediction authorities**

13. Improve accuracy of cyclone prediction and efficiency of its dissemination among coastal fishing communities, and among nearshore and offshore fishers;
14. Develop innovative new approaches (e.g. earmarking 'dynamic cones of uncertainty' as potential cyclone zones) for cyclone prediction, along with multichannel communication, to rapidly disseminate cyclone alerts to local communities (community radio, VHF, HF, satellite phones, etc.);
15. Integrate safety of fishing vessels, vessel navigation and operations as well as occupational safety of fishers into disaster risk reduction protocols to reduce the number of fishers losing their life during cyclones, including through the provision of financial incentives;

### **III. Fisheries authorities**

16. Recognize the role and responsibilities of the fisheries authorities in monitoring fishing activity and safeguarding sea safety and ensure them an active role, along with other agencies, in search and rescue operations as well as in relief, rehabilitation, reconstruction and recovery efforts; in this context, coastal state/union territory fisheries authorities and the fisheries department at the centre should collaborate;

17. Provide effective and appropriate communication equipment to all fishers and registered fishing vessels at sea;

18. Develop awareness of small-scale fishing communities and provide training about adoption of effective sea safety procedures including use and maintenance of communication equipment;

19. Enforce sea safety norms and integrate sea safety into fisheries management and governance for short-haul and long-haul fishers, consistent with the recommendations of the SSF Guidelines, employing the “relief-development continuum” and “build back better” principles and a human rights-based approach;

20. Build capacity, including through pre-sea training, to deal with fishing in rough sea conditions and working for excessive periods of time, after an assessment of the risks concerned;

### **IV. Fishing communities**

21. Improve the efficiency of cyclone alerts dissemination among coastal fishing communities, and among nearshore and offshore fishers, using the most cost-effective means of communication (e.g. community radio);

22. Encourage traditional and local knowledge and use of traditional protocols to predict disasters and to reduce disaster risks, and to promote community-based disaster risk management planning;

23. Strengthen the capacity of community-based organizations, including women’s organizations, to deal with disaster risk management, particularly at the local level;

24. Propose ‘green zones’ under coastal disaster preparedness programmes to reduce the vulnerability of small-scale fishing communities to sudden-onset cyclones; and

25. Integrate sea safety into community-based initiatives for fisheries development and management.

In conclusion, building resilience to natural disasters and climate change of coastal communities requires coordination at all levels and open consultation with, and participation of, all stakeholders. This includes an awareness of the responsibilities of the community in ensuring an overall culture of safety at sea and on land.