

Implementing Voluntary Guidelines for securing sustainable small scale fisheries in the context of food security and poverty eradication

-SRI LANKA-

THE CONTEXT:

Small-scale fisheries (SSF) in Sri Lanka, and elsewhere, deserve attention not only because the sector is confronted with issues such as poverty, food insecurity, resource over-exploitation, etc., but also for the opportunities it provides in addressing important economic, social and environmental concerns that exist beyond the sector, such as providing safe and nutritious food, employment, strengthening the economy while maintaining the health of the ecosystem. It is now well known that SSF is not just about catching and selling fish, but represent a cultural heritage, a way of life, with its own values, customs, traditions, giving meaning and identity to the lives of those who are engaged in it. However, the sector has come under an array of threats in the recent past; increased fishing pressure, use of environmentally unfriendly gear, resource degradation, multi-stakeholder issues in the coastal zone, poor enforcement of laws, ineffective governance and management, and more recently, the adverse impacts of climate change. All these have had varying impacts on both the ecosystem and human system, finally threatening the sustainability of the resources and the wellbeing of the people who are dependent on SSF.

The recently developed SSF Voluntary Guidelines (herein after referred to as ‘the Guidelines’; SSFG) capture the inherent features of small scale fisheries by addressing the most compelling issues in SSF, especially, the need to recognize the rights of fishing people and to make the process of fisheries management participatory, inclusive, integrated and holistic with special concern on women and marginalized populations. Yet, efforts made towards sustainable small scale fisheries, especially by adopting the relevant SSFG, would be futile unless they are incorporated into a country’s policy making and planning process. The policy making process has made some headway in Sri Lanka, where, with assistance provided by the Norwegian Government, the Ministry of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources Development (MFARD) recently (2018) prepared a White Paper on National Fisheries Policy, which was approved by the Cabinet and is expected to be presented to the parliament. The 2018 policy has incorporated some SSFG, although the policy still appears to be quite deficient in addressing a number of compelling needs of the small scale fisheries sector.

THE PROCESS

In the above context, Sri Lanka Forum for Small Scale Fisheries (SLFSSF) embarked on a process to implement the FAO Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Fisheries (herein after referred to as the ‘Guidelines’) during July 2018 to May 2019, with assistance from International Collective in Support of Fishworkers (ICSF), as part of FAO efforts

towards Global Implementation of the Guidelines. Following the FAO Project Results Matrix, the SLFSSF was engaged in a number of activities as enumerated below.

Plan of Activities:

1. A Sensitizing workshop for State Actors. Key officials of the Ministry of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources, Department of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources, Ceylon Fisheries Corporation, Ceylon Fisheries Harbour Corporation, National Aquatic Resources Research and Development Agency (NARA), National Aquaculture Development Authority, Coast Conservation Department, Coast Guard, Department of Forest Conservation, Department of Wildlife, Department of Agriculture, Central Environmental Authority, Tourism Development Authority, participated in this workshop, where the SSF guidelines were presented, discussed and major areas of concern were identified.
2. Development of communication tools for community stakeholders. A number of documents were prepared in local languages (Sinhalese and Tamil) to be distributed among fishing communities, which included the following.
 - a. FAO Voluntary Guidelines for securing sustainable small scale fisheries in the context of food security and poverty eradication (the original document translated to Sinhalese and Tamil)
 - b. A simplified version of the SSF guidelines in the two local languages.
 - c. 12 Fact sheets, giving the key messages of SSF Guidelines
 - d. Posters to be displayed in community halls, etc. Giving key messages.
3. Stakeholder meetings held in various parts of the country, with the participation of fisheries community members and state actors, from 12 coastal districts of the country; Galle, Matara, Hambantota, Batticaloa, Trincomalee, Mullativu, Jaffna, Kilinochchi, Mannar, Puttlam, Chilaw, and Negombo. Discussions were carried out on the relevance of the Guidelines, priority areas of concern and issues associated in implementing them.
4. Assessment of current policy to identify changes required in the context of implementing the Guidelines, which was done with a group of policy experts. The policy implications emerging from discussions under 3 above were discussed and the current fisheries policy was revised by incorporating the relevant SSF Guidelines.
5. Final policy workshop to finalize policy statements and to propose changes to National Policy.

Methodology:

The focus group discussions (FGDs) at stakeholder workshops included detailed discussions on a selected topic. The major themes have been selected earlier (see below), but the discussants had a great degree of freedom in expressing their views. Since all Focus Group Discussions had the same themes, generalization of results could be done with a good degree of precision.

Fisher stakeholders (both men and women) were selected with the help of Assistant Directors of Fisheries in respective districts and with the help of the civil society organisation NAFSO, which is also a member of the SLFSSF. Each FGD was participated by about 28 men, 18 women and 10-12 state actors representing diverse institutions having interest in the coastal zone.

Several Key areas of the Guidelines were selected for discussions based on a number of past studies and, discussions and deliberations held with experts (SLFSSF), and the State Actor

workshop held on the 28th of September 2019. In fact, the key areas so identified included almost all the key Guidelines.

Guidelines relevant to Sri Lanka's SSF

From the initial state actors sensitizing workshop it was quite evident that all participants agreed on the relevance of the Guidelines for securing sustainable small scale fisheries in Sri Lanka. Discussions were carried out under the following themes, which were found to be the most relevant in the Sri Lankan context.

1. *Tenure Rights*
2. *Sustainable Resource Management*
3. *Fish Value Chain*
4. *Food Security Food Safety and Nutrition*
5. *Social Development*
6. *Occupational Health and Safety*
7. *Social Protection and Fisheries Insurance*
8. *Disaster Risk and Climate Change*
9. *Capacity Development*
10. *Gender in fisheries*
11. *Empowering Community Organisations*

The Outcome: MISSING LINKS & NEW SSF POLICY

The present process of stakeholder consultations around the country, revealed a number of important areas, which have evaded the attention during the earlier consultation process or which have not received sufficient attention of policy makers in preparing the 2018 policy. The following sections present a summary of such 'missing links' in the policy which are proposed to be incorporated into the national policy in making them more geared towards addressing the issues of the small scale fisheries sector of Sri Lanka.

Tenure Rights:

Tenure rights of small scale fisheries has been addressed in Section 4.2.1 of the National Fisheries Policy (NFP) by stating "Respect the tenure rights of the traditional, migrant, subsistence and artisanal fishing communities to land, water and fish resources". While this is in line with section 5.3 of SSF guidelines, it was revealed in the discussions that there is a diversity of tenure 'rights' as perceived by fishers; rights that they possess and enjoy, rights that they think they have but do not enjoy and rights that they do not have and want to have and enjoy. Of the three, the former two were of importance because they were the rights the fishers thought that they had and were quite clear about them. While fishers were of the view that they enjoyed the rights to the beach, the waters (inland and marine) and, the fish resources, they complained that these rights are violated by other stakeholders, especially by the powerful tourism interests. The acquisition of beach areas by tourism stakeholders, have resulted in loss of anchorage sites, beach seining sites, space available for craft and gear repair and fish

processing, etc. It was also revealed that the rights of small scale fishers to coastal fish resources have also been violated by large scale mechanized crafts and gear which took away resources which were traditionally exploited by the small scale and artisanal fishers. There were also concerns about rights that fishers do not possess at present, but want to possess and enjoy. These included access to and use of mangrove forest, land adjoining beaches (forest and for craft anchorage), right to construct more permanent huts on the beach, to keep/store fishing gear, etc. These resources were under the control of non-fisheries institutions such as the Department of Forest Conservation, Department of Wildlife, etc. which hardly coordinated their activities with the Department of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources.

It was suggested during FGDs to respect the legitimate, especially “traditional and customary rights of small scale fishers” (section 5.4 of SSFG). Moreover, it was also revealed that rights cannot be defined unless boundaries are not known (beach, lagoon, fish resources, etc.). Thus, the need for zonation of the coastal zone was also noted (5.6 and 5.7 of SSFG).

Sustainable Resource Management:

A number of quite important policy strategies in respect of resource management are laid down in the NFP, with major emphasis on the adoption of precautionary and ecosystem approaches(10.4) to fisheries management (guiding principle 10), prevention of overcapacity and IUU fishing (section 5.14 & 5.20), promotion of co-governance (5.15 & 5.18), compliance with international treaties (section 6.13), etc.

What received concern at the FGDs were some of the missing links on management and control. It was revealed that although an array of laws and regulations govern the process of coastal zone management including fisheries, a proper Monitoring, Control and Surveillance mechanism to monitor this process (section 5.16) was absent. Moreover, the need to decentralize management decisions to district level with the involvement of local government actors was also highlighted (in line with sections 5.17 & 10.7). Another quite interesting fact that emerged from the discussions was the need to treat the coastal zone as one ecosystem used by multiple stakeholders and to ensure that all relevant stakeholders are involved in the process of management decision making at all levels, including youth, women, differently abled and marginalized groups (5.15 of SSFG). The need for cross sectoral collaboration and institutional coordination in managing the coastal zone resource use was also an important concern in this regard (section 10.5 of SSFG). It was agreed that management approaches will have to be holistic, integrated, inclusive, and participatory (6.1 and 10.5 of SSFG). However, for such efforts to succeed it was agreed that discrepancies among mandates of different institutions need to be minimized. Therefore, it was proposed that the state should intervene to minimize overlapping policies and mandates among institutions responsible for coastal resources development conservation and management (section 10.5 of SSFG). Discussions also revealed the need to promote demarcation of boundaries of ecosystems in the Coastal zone (10.2) when boundaries of diverse subsystems are not clear; lagoons, mangroves, reserves, forests, etc. and, difficulties encountered in managing coastal resources.

Value Chains, Post-Harvest and Trade:

The National Fisheries Policy has taken into consideration the relevant aspects of the pre-harvest, harvest and post-harvest sectors of the fish value chain to a significant extent.

One of the important missing link in the pre-harvest sector or in the ‘preparatory phase’ was the absence of provisions for spatial planning to allow for allocation of space for different fisheries related activities on the coast; craft anchorage, equipment storage, fish drying, etc. (10.2 of SSFG) and shore facilities to engage in such activities.

The issue of post-harvest losses was discussed at length and the need for Provision of facilities for scientific fish handling and storage at landing sites (7.5) towards reducing post-harvest losses at the landing site level was highlighted. Moreover, Promotion of the development of technology for post-harvest value addition and minimizing post-harvest losses (section 7.5 of SSFG) were also proposed to be incorporated into the present policy.

Economic and political power wielded by fish merchants and their oligopsonistic fish buying practices where producer prices are pushed down through collusion among merchants was highlighted as a deterrent to achieve fair producer prices. Thus, intervention in fish marketing and increasing the competition among fish merchants towards ensuring a fair price to fish producers (7.1 of SSFG) was proposed. As a further means of increased competition in the market, promotion of entry of community organisations into fish marketing was also suggested. To profit from emerging opportunities in the export market, it was also proposed to provide fishing communities with access to information on fish export market (7.10) and also to establish export market links (7.4).

It was pointed out that unregulated trade has resulted in the export of even small fish varieties which were important for the nutrition of poorer groups in the rural and estate sector. Therefore, it was suggested to incorporate a policy statement, that the government would regulate foreign trade to ensure that food and nutritional security of the people is not threatened by international trade in fish and fish products (7.7).

Occupational Health and Safety:

The focus of the NFP on occupational safety and health has mainly been on, ensuring safe, healthy and fair working conditions at sea and on land, in accordance with international standards and promotion of the establishment of insurance schemes concerning safety at sea and occupational safety.

The recent discussions revealed fishers’ lack of concern for safety at sea. It was agreed that there is a need to build awareness among fishers on the importance of adopting sea safety measures (6.17). Concerns were also expressed about the lack of economic access to safety equipment due to their high prices. It was therefore decided to incorporate a policy statement saying that the government would assist fishers in acquiring safety equipment (in line with 6.17).

Apart from on-board safety equipment, concerns were expressed on the need to make landing site and equipment safe for navigation. A large number of landing sites in coastal areas with

rocky bottoms provide only narrow passage to crafts in and out to the sea, which are quite tricky and unsafe, especially during monsoonal periods. It was also revealed that some landing sites did not have electricity. Thus, a policy statement was incorporated stating “Provision of land-based equipment and facilities for easy navigation of fishing crafts”.

Although various laws and codes of conduct in relation to work in the fishing sector were more relevant to the deep sea sector, it was decided to incorporate a statement that the government will ensure “Ratification of ILO Conventions on Safety and Work in the fishing sector and, incorporation of the relevant provisions to ensure safety and fair working conditions in the fisheries sector” (sections 6.6, 6.16, 6.17 of SSFG) ,although this was also indicated in the NFP, but with less force and clarity.

Social Protection and Fisheries Insurance:

The NFP makes only a general statement that the government will improve the social safety net and social security protection for the fishers including women. However, the participants at the FGDs expressed their displeasure on the functioning of the Fishermen’s Pension Scheme, which was considered in the past as the best instrument of social protection for fishers. The scheme has failed to provide sufficient protection and interest in the pension scheme has been on the decline. Fisheries Insurance too has always been a failure due to informational asymmetries (between insurers and insurees) and payment of indemnities has been time consuming, laborious and often ended up without claims being paid. This issue was discussed in detail and the participants agreed that one of the efficient means of operating a fisheries insurance scheme was through fisher community organisations because the latter had near perfect knowledge of accidents and other hazards at sea).

FGD discussions also revealed that Fisheries Insurance does not cover partial damages to fishing equipment, but only total losses (boats and gear lost at sea). It was also brought into notice that climate-change induced hazards, such as storms, could destroy fishing craft, gear and other assets on the coast. Another related problem was ill-health and injuries caused by bad weather and climate related hazards. Thus, it was decided to insert a statement into NFP that the government would ‘ Promote fisheries insurance schemes that cover fishing and climate related risks causing full and partial damages to fishing crafts and gear, coastal assets, ill-health and loss of life (6.3 of SSFG).

Disaster Risk and Climate Change:

It has been recently noticed that coastal populations have come under certain serious threats due to climate change such as changes in monsoonal patterns, coastal erosion, high frequency and intensity of storms, changes in wind movements and water currents, etc. causing loss of income and livelihood disruption. The NFP has also made provisions that the government will adopt “strategies to deal with climate change impacts including the promotion of research, building the resilience capacity of the fishing populations and helping them to resettle and recommence livelihoods”. During FGDs, changes in fish breeding and migratory patterns due to climate change impacts were highlighted. Thus it was proposed to include a policy statement, saying

that the government would ensure “Promotion of research towards predicting the shifting of breeding, migration of fish stocks due to climatic change effects”.

While accepting the fact that Sri Lanka’s weather information system works quite well with the deep sea sector by effectively communicating such information through High Frequency Radio, the participants thought that an ‘early-warning’ mechanism is still lacking. In treating this deficiency, it was decided that a policy strategy should be adopted to ‘establish an early warning systems for small scale fishers based on coastal district’ (related to 9.2 of SSFG). The possibility of using mobile phones, the use of which is quite common among fishers, to communicate weather data to fishers was also discussed. Thus, the incorporation of a policy statement ensuring the “Provision of fishers with access to weather data through mobile phone based weather information system” was also proposed (9.2 of SSFG).

In ex-ante management of disasters it was noticed that the absence of an updated list of craft and fishing equipment was a deterrent and, therefore, the ‘Registration of fishers, crafts and fishing equipment with regular update of information on annual basis’ (9.2 of SSFG) was incorporated as a policy statement. Moreover, the fact that community organisations form the best source of information concerning damages to crafts, gear and lives caused by disasters, it was proposed the NFP includes a statement that the government would ensure “Involvement of community organizations on disaster management” (9.8 of SSFG). Since all user groups of the coastal zone resources are affected by climate-induced changes, it was proposed to include in the NFP a statement to indicate that there will be “Cross sectoral collaboration and institutional coordination to deal with disasters and climate change impacts in the coastal zone” (section 9.3 of SSFG).

Gender Equality:

Due to the participation of a large number of women at FGDs, gender issues received special attention. While fishing has always remained a male dominant activity, gender issues, especially the role of women in fisheries varied with ethnicity and religion across the country.

In line with the guiding principle of gender equality, the NFP clearly indicates that the government will ensure that men and women are given equal opportunities in participating in the activities of the sector. NFP also states that gender mainstreaming would be an integral part of the process of fisheries development (section 8.1). However, FGDs revealed that in certain communities, especially in predominantly Buddhist coastal communities, women employment was still considered a reflection of man’s inability to feed the family. It was proposed that awareness should be build up in these communities to show the importance of women employment in improving family wellbeing. Moreover, employment in fishing related or other sectors was considered a right of women. The discussions finally led to the agreement that the NFP should include policy strategy of, “Building awareness among fishing communities on the right of women to take up employment either directly or indirectly in small scale fisheries” (8.2 of SSFG).

The important role played by women in fisheries cooperative societies was also brought to the notice at FGDs. These discussions led to the proposition that a policy statement be incorporated into the NFP “Ensuring a minimum of 25 percent representation of women in the ‘committee

of office bearers' of fisheries community organisations (8.2 of SSFG). Yet, women fisherfolk complained that women were paid less than men for the same work performed, which was considered by all participants as unjust. Thus it was proposed that the government should take steps to remove such discrepancies in wage rates based on gender. A statement is thus proposed to be incorporated into the NFP ensuring the "Removal of discrepancies in wages paid to men and women in the fisheries sector" (8.3 of SSFG).

Social Development:

It was agreed at the FGDs that no measures taken towards sustainable resource management would succeed if measures towards social development were not adopted at the same time. The national fisheries policy has several general policy statements in respect of social development, with major focus on improvement in education, health, poverty alleviation, improved standards of living, etc. which meet provisions made in an array of SSF Guidelines. However, FGDs revealed several other policy implications which were more specific on people's access to basic social services, proposing to include a policy statement ensuring that "small scale fishers have affordable access to basic education, health, housing and household amenities" (6.2 of SSFG).

It was also discussed in detail the problem of the continuity of children's education during the 'off season', which could last several months. It was also shown that many children in fishing communities hardly find opportunities of studying in good national schools either due to the remoteness of their dwellings or due to their inability to afford high cost of education. Thus it was proposed to include policy statements that state, "according priority to children of fisher communities to enter higher education in fisheries, and giving priority with their excellence, during recruitment for employment in the fishery related institutions" (6.14, 6.15 of SSFG) and "provide financial assistance to needy children from fisher families to continue education during off season" (6.14 of SSFG).

Credit has always been an issue in fishing communities because fishing assets are not accepted as valued collateral by formal lending institutions. The participants emphasized the need for the government to intervene and assist the fishing populations with the provision of credit. These discussions led to the proposition that a policy statement be included stating "Promotion of the development of credit and micro-credit schemes to encourage investment in fisheries and to enable the poor and vulnerable to access credit" (6.4 of SSFG).

One of the serious issues with regard to the vocation of fishers is the low status accorded to it. The term fisher (*maalu karaya*) generally conveys the connotation of 'low-ranked person'. The participants proposed that the government should make steps to "Build awareness among people of Sri Lanka of the importance of the SSF sector and recognition of fishing as respectable vocation". This issue is not explicitly addressed in SSFG.

Capacity Development:

The NPC has provisions for training of fishing communities to take up fishing as a business, engagement in aquaculture, to be trained as skippers, and also to take part in management decision making, many of which have been outlined in SSF Guidelines.

It was brought to the notice at FGDs the need for fishing communities to be made aware and trained in new fishing techniques, especially in deep sea fishing technology, post-harvest processing, alternative income generation activities, etc. While there is so much of interest today in sustainable use of resources; conservation and management, it was disclosed that fishing communities are hardly made aware of the diverse measures to be adopted to achieve the goals of sustainability. Thus, it was proposed to include a policy statement to this effect; “Building capacities of members of fishing communities in new fishing techniques, deep sea fishing technology, post-harvest processing, alternative livelihoods and, resource conservation and management” (12.2 of SSFG).

It was also proposed to emphasize the need to give special priority to women and children and thus a separate policy statement was proposed to be incorporated, stating that the government would ensure “Training of women & school drop outs in fishing communities in post-harvest processing and other ancillary activities related to fisheries” (.....SSFG).

A theme that generated substantial interest among the participants of FGDs was ‘co-management’. Discussions revealed that such management bodies needed to be more participatory, inclusive, integrated and holistic if they were to be called true ‘co-management’ platforms. It was thus proposed to train all participating stakeholders on the principles of co-management, which led to the inclusion of the policy statement that the government will ensure “training of government officials and community leaders on the principles of co-management (section 12.4 of SSFG).

Empowering Community Organisations:

An important policy strategy in the NFP in this regard is, “Recognition, empowerment and strengthening of fisheries cooperatives in addressing issues in fisheries and fisher wellbeing, and in representing fishing communities at decision making platforms”. It is also said that the government will liaise with fisheries cooperatives in integrated coastal zone management. However, it was felt that fishing communities will not be in a position to make a significant contribution towards management decision making, unless their capacities are built to perform management functions. Therefore, it was decided to incorporate a policy statement stating that the government will engage in the “Provision of training for officials of fisheries cooperatives in resource conservation and management, financial management and principles of cooperation” (5.15, 12.4 of SSFG). Another setback in this sphere has been the non-availability of important fisheries Acts, Laws, Regulations, Policy, etc. in a language easily understood by the community members. Thus the policy statement “Dissemination of Policy documents, laws, rules and regulations in a manner fisheries communities understand easily” was proposed to be incorporated to the NFP.

Participants at FGDs were quite critical of certain development projects which had been implemented without consulting the fishing communities. This was to be resolved by the inclusion of a policy statement stating that the government will “Consult Fisheries Cooperatives in the design, planning and implementation of fisheries and other development projects” (.....SSFG). Moreover, the need to channel public assistance through the fisheries cooperatives was strongly emphasized, proposing to include a policy statement ensuring

“Channeling of all public assistance to fishing communities through fisheries cooperatives ensuring the benefits to the end users”.

Revised National Fisheries Policy:

At the final policy meeting held in June 2019, with the participation of the Secretary to the Ministry of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources as the Chief Guest, and state actors representing all institutions operating in the coastal zone, along with experienced policy makers, academics and researchers, the proposed policy statements were discussed and finalized, as those to be incorporated into the current National Fisheries Policy. The proposed policy statements that include all relevant SSF Guidelines to secure sustainable SSF, are given in ANNEX 1.

Participation at MARE Conference (People and the Sea Conference) at the University of Amsterdam, in June 2019

The outcome of the SSF Guidelines Implementation process was presented at MARE conference in June 2019, in a panel organized by the FAO led by Mme. Nicole Franz (see Annex .MARE Presentation).

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The whole process of SSF Guideline implementation, went uninterrupted as planned. Starting with the state actor sensitizing workshop the process took place over a period of 10 months. A number of very important issues which have not received much attention earlier but that were found to be quite important in securing sustainable small scale fisheries emerged from discussions based on a diversity of themes that have been well addressed in the Guidelines.

The emphasis laid on the need to look at the coastal ecosystem as a whole in management decision making was an important outcome of the deliberations. This was associated with the need for cross sectoral collaboration and institutional coordination and the need to establish co-management platforms at the local level, rising up to the national level. Emphasis was laid on four important features to be incorporated into such co-management platforms, namely, *integrated, inclusive, participatory and holistic*. The need for capacity building of both state and community stakeholders for effective participation in such platforms was also underlined. A related proposition was the need to empower community organisations, consulting them in all stages of development activities and obtaining their active participation in management decision making.

Another very important outcome of the discussions was the incorporation of a number of policy statements to address issues of fishermen’s tenure rights. While the need to respect and protect legitimate tenure rights of fishers to land, water and fish resources was emphasized, it was also decided that it was necessary for demarcation of boundaries in the coastal zone.

The policy development process also emphasized on incorporating a number of policy statements on social protection, work conditions and fisheries insurance. The need to revise and improve the fishermen’s pension scheme, adopting the relevant ILO conventions on work in the

fishing sector, reducing discrepancy in wages paid for men and women, and establishing a fisheries insurance scheme jointly with fisheries cooperatives to minimize informational asymmetries, can be considered as very important outcomes of the deliberation process.

Gender is another area where discussions reached agreements towards minimizing gender inequalities. Other than proposing that awareness should be built among community members about the right of women for fishing related or other employment, and the proposed actions to minimize wage discrepancies, it was also proposed that women representation in the committees of community organisations should be a minimum of 25 percent, which can be considered as a significant improvement over the gender concerns found in the former policy document.

Appreciably, the need for government intervention in marketing and trade was recognized at the deliberations and several policy statements were formulated to cope with unfair producer prices, unfair trade and nutrition issues. In this sphere, the promotion of community organisations to take up fish marketing, and regulation of international trade could be considered as very important policy measures indeed.

While the whole process of SSF Guideline implementation went on smoothly as expected, one of the setbacks was the insufficient time given to community stakeholders to the SSF guidelines. It was felt that more time was needed to make the community stakeholders aware of the Guidelines and their implications for sustainable use of the resources and for the wellbeing of fishing populations. During discussions with state actors it was disclosed that there is a mismatch between National Plan of Action and National Policy Guidelines. Often the National Plan of Action is prepared without giving much concern to the policy guidelines, it was noted. It was pointed out that, National Policy is a ‘show piece’ used by politicians and administrators to show the aid agencies and other donors that things move in a ‘socially optimal’ direction, while the actual running of the sector is based on the national plan of action that could deviate from policy prescriptions.

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ANNEX 1.

Proposed policy statements to be incorporated into the National Fisheries Policy

1. TENURE RIGHTS
<i>1.1 Identification, recording and protection of legitimate rights, including, where appropriate, traditional and customary rights of fishers, to the fish resources, the beach and adjoining lands</i>
<i>1.2 Promotion of zonal plans to ensure sustainability of major economic activities including fisheries</i>
<i>1.3 Identification and demarcation of the coastal zone for fisheries activities and for tourism development, ensuring that tourism interests do not contradict with fisheries interests</i>
2. SUSTAINABLE RESOURCE MANAGEMENT
2.1 General
<i>2.1.1 A strong MCS process in all waters for fisheries and aquaculture in collaboration with other appropriate agencies,</i>
<i>2.1.2 Promotion of area-specific or local level co-management platforms rising upto the national level, with cross sectoral collaboration, ensuring that they are participatory, integrated, inclusive and holistic.</i>
<i>2.1.3 Rules and guidelines for fisheries management through holistic and integrated approaches</i>
<i>2.1.4 Intervention to minimize overlapping policies and mandates among institutions responsible for coastal resources development conservation and management</i>
<i>2.1.5 Effective participation of the disadvantaged and the poorer sections of the community, particularly the youth, women and differently abled persons in the planning processes at all levels.</i>
2.2 Marine & Coastal
<i>2.2.1 Promotion of cross sectoral collaboration towards Integrated Coastal Zone Management</i>
<i>2.2.2 Promote demarcation of boundaries of ecosystems in the Coastal zone critical for fisheries and aquaculture.</i>
<i>2.2.3 Prevention of fisheries and aquaculture based environment pollution</i>

3. FISH VALUE CHAIN
3.1 Pre-Harvest Sector
<i>3.1.1 Promoting the provision of suitable space and facilities for craft anchorage, fish drying and fishing equipment storage etc</i>
3.3 Post-Harvest Sector
<i>3.3.1 Provision of facilities for scientific fish handling and storage at landing sites</i>
<i>3.3.2 Intervention in fish marketing and increase competition in fish buying towards ensuring a fair price to fish producers</i>
<i>3.3.3 Provision of fishing communities with access to information on fish export market</i>
<i>3.3.4 Promotion of entry of community organisations into fish marketing and establish export market links</i>
<i>3.3.5 Promotion of the development of technology for post-harvest value addition and minimizing post-harvest losses.</i>
4. FOOD SECURITY, FOOD SAFETY AND NUTRITION
<i>4.1 Regulation of foreign trade to ensure that food and nutritional security of the people is not threatened by international trade in fish and fish products</i>
5. SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT
<i>5.1 Ensuring that small scale fishers have affordable access to basic education, health, housing and household amenities</i>
<i>5.2 According priority to children of fisher communities to enter higher education in fisheries, and giving priority with their excellence, during recruitment for employment in the fishery related institutions</i>
<i>5.3 Provision of financial assistance to needy children from fisher families to continue education during off season</i>
<i>5.4 Promotion of the development of credit and micro-credit schemes to encourage investment in fisheries and to enable the poor and vulnerable to access credit.</i>
<i>5.5 Building awareness among people of Sri Lanka of the importance of the SSF sector and recognition of fishing as respectable vocation.</i>
6. OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY
<i>6.1 Ensuring safe, healthy and fair working conditions at sea, inland waters and on land</i>
<i>6.2 Building awareness among fishers on the importance of adopting sea safety measures</i>
<i>6.3 Assisting fishers in acquiring safety equipment</i>
<i>6.4 Provision of land-based equipment and facilities for easy navigation of fishing crafts</i>
<i>6.5 Investment in the construction / development of proper anchorages and landing sites with basic infrastructure facilities for marine and inland fishing villages</i>
<i>6.6 Ratification of ILO Conventions on Safety and Work in the fishing sector and, incorporation of the relevant provisions to ensure safety and fair working conditions in the fisheries sector</i>
7. SOCIAL PROTECTION AND FISHERIES INSURANCE

- 7.1 Provision of social protection through effective fisheries pension schemes and fisheries insurance schemes
- 7.2 Establishment of Fisheries Insurance Schemes jointly with Fisheries Community Organisations to minimize informational asymmetries
- 7.3 Promotion of fisheries insurance schemes that cover fishing and climate related risks causing full and partial damages to fishing crafts and gear, coastal assets, illhealth and loss of life

8. DISASTER RISK AND CLIMATE CHANGE

- 8.1 Promotion of research towards predicting the shifting of breeding, migration of fish stocks due to climatic change effects
- 8.2 Establishment of early warning systems for small scale fishers based on coastal district
- 8.3 Provision of fishers with access to weather data through mobile phone based weather information system
- 8.4 Registration of fishers, crafts and fishing equipment with regular update of information on annual basis,
- 8.5 Involvement of community organizations on disaster management,
- 8.6 Cross sectoral collaboration and institutional coordination to deal with disasters and climate change impacts in the coastal zone

9. DISASTER RISK AND CLIMATE CHANGE

- 9.1 Designing and conducting training courses in fish farming
- 9.2 Building capacities of members of fishing communities in new fishing techniques, deep sea fishing technology, post-harvest processing, alternative livelihoods and, resource conservation and management,
- 9.3 Training of women & school drop outs in fishing communities in post-harvest processing and other ancillary activities related to fisheries
- 9.4 Training of government officials and community leaders on the principles of co-management

10. GENDER IN FISHERIES

- 10.1 Building awareness among fishing communities on the right of women to take up employment either directly or indirectly in small scale fisheries
- 10.2 Ensuring a minimum of 25 percent representation of women in the 'committee of office bearers' of fisheries community organisations.
- 10.3 Removal of discrepancies in wages paid to men and women in the fisheries sector

11. EMPOWERING COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS

- 11.1 Provision of training for officials of fisheries cooperatives in resource conservation and management, financial management and principles of cooperation
- 11.2 Channeling of all public assistance to fishing communities through fisheries cooperatives ensuring the benefits to the end users,
- 11.3 Consultation of Fisheries Cooperatives in the design, planning and implementation of fisheries and other development projects
- 11.4 Dissemination of Policy documents, laws, rules and regulations in a manner fisheries communities understand easily

