



***International Collective in Support of Fishworkers (ICSF) &
Technical Services for Community Development (TESCOD)***

CONCEPT NOTE

**IYAFA: Celebrating Sustainable and Equitable Small-Scale Fisheries
African Workshop – Accra, Ghana
15-18 February 2023**

Context

The UN General Assembly proclaimed 2022 as the International Year of Artisanal Fisheries and Aquaculture (IYAFA), with FAO as the lead agency. This provides an opportunity to further reiterate the objectives and promote the implementation of the Small-scale Fisheries Guidelines. Although IYAFA was technically designated to 2022, this workshop highlights the importance of not confining attention to small-scale fisheries issues to a single year, but continuing this attention well into the future.

Approximately 90% of the 140 million people engaged in fisheries globally work in the small-scale fisheries sector, predominantly, but not only, in the Global South. These small-scale fisher people (men and women) catch half of the world's seafood and provide over 60% of the fish destined for direct human consumption. For each fisher person in the small-scale sector, at least four other people are engaged in related land-based activities, such as the preparation of equipment, fish processing, and marketing. In total, more than 500 million people are estimated to depend on fisheries for their livelihoods. As a family-based activity, fishing makes a direct contribution to household food security, where women play a particularly important role both as the link with the market and as the provider of food in the household, in addition to their reproductive role. This significant contribution to food security, livelihoods and to local and national economies is expected to improve through the implementation of the SSF Guidelines.

Small-scale fisheries provide the first and most important link in a long chain of social, cultural and economic activities that contribute to the health and well-being of local communities and wider society. Fishing constitutes far more than merely an economic activity, but rather forms part of the culture, identity and way of life of fishing communities, marine and inland, with customs, food habits, rhythms of life, rituals, spiritual beliefs, value systems, traditions and social organisation closely linked to fisheries, and to the aquatic milieu on which their livelihoods depend. The provision of fish and fishery products by small-scale producers also plays an important role in food sovereignty, enabling low-income consumers for whom other comparable sources of food are not readily accessible, to enjoy their right to food and other human rights. Often, small-scale fisheries have been the only form of social protection available and accessible to many marine and inland fishing communities.

Women play a vital but largely unrecognised and undervalued role in realising the right to food by supplying fish and fishery products. The FAO estimates that in 2018, 59.5 million people, at least 14% of whom were women, were directly engaged either full time, or more

frequently part time, in capture fisheries or aquaculture. This is likely to be a gross underestimate given that women's work in the fisheries sector is often unpaid and unrecorded. The most significant role played by women in fisheries is at the processing and marketing stages. Active in all regions of the world, women have become significant entrepreneurs in fish processing. In fact, most fish processing is performed by women, either in their own household or as wage labourers in the large-scale processing industry. However, despite their entrepreneurial success, women often have to deal with considerable hardships and adverse working conditions. They may also face unequal competition for accessing raw materials for their processing and trading activities.

Objectives of the Workshops

In this context, the International Collective in Support of Fishworkers (ICSF), its members and partners, are organising four regional workshops and women's exchanges in 2022 and 2023 in Asia¹, Latin America and the Caribbean², Africa and Europe, in partnership with fishworker organizations globally.

The African workshop will be held in Accra, Ghana from 15 to 18 February 2023. The overall goal of the workshop is to strengthen the recognition of small-scale fisheries' crucial contributions to global food security and nutrition, the importance of access rights in the sector, social development and gender equality. The objectives of the workshop are:

- To increase international engagement of fishworker organizations regarding food security, access rights, gender equality, and social development issues.
- To deepen cooperation between fishworkers and like-minded organizations.
- To amplify the voices of women in the inclusive development of small-scale fisheries.
- To provide a platform for networking and sharing of best practices to build resilience among small-scale fishing communities.

The workshop is also an opportunity to take stock of how the SSF Guidelines are being implemented in Africa to eradicate poverty, ensure food security and nutrition, and promote the tenure rights of small-scale fishing communities.

Participants

The workshop will include 40 participants from community-based organizations, national and international fishworker organizations, networks of women in fisheries, and civil society organizations from across Africa. The target groups will primarily be drawn from organizations involved with the preparation, negotiation and implementation of the SSF Guidelines in Africa since 2011, such as the IPC's Africa Regional Group, as well as fishing communities and organizations that ICSF members work with in their local and national contexts.

¹ The Asian workshop took place from 5-8 May in Bangkok, Thailand. More information on the workshop can be found here: <https://www.icsf.net/resources/asia-workshop-iyafa-2022-celebrating-sustainable-and-equitable-small-scale-fisheries/>

² The Latin American and Caribbean workshop took place from 2-5 November on Cardoso Island, Brazil. More information can be found here: <https://www.icsf.net/resources/latin-america-workshop-iyafa-2022/>

Methodology

The workshop will be four days, and will focus broadly on discussing the obstacles small-scale fishworkers face in accessing resources and fishing areas, how communities and organizations mobilise to address these challenges, and a range of social development issues. Fishworkers' inputs to the preparatory process will be important for determining the questions and specific topics that will be discussed in the workshop. ICSF will share a questionnaire to collect inputs from participants beforehand.

Some of the sub-themes that may also be addressed in the workshop, and which are central to the work of ICSF and its fishworker partners, include: human rights of fishers, fishworkers and fishing communities; social protection; impacts of 'blue economy' agendas on small-scale fisheries; impacts of climate change and mitigation and adaptation initiatives on small-scale fisheries; roles of fisheries organizations, associations and cooperatives; decentralisation of fisheries governance structures; mainstreaming gender equality/equity in fisheries; and promoting decent work and social development of fishing communities.

The workshop involves:

- Collaborative discussions and activities in which fishworkers are able to share their experiences and perspectives, learn from each other, and develop collective strategies and plans of action for addressing these issues in their local and national contexts.
- Open, inclusive spaces for fishworkers and like-minded organizations to meet face-to-face and deepen their cooperation on advocacy work related to food security and tenure rights.
- Exchanges between women in fisheries, which highlight their experiences, the challenges they are facing, and the creative approaches they use to address these challenges.

The general structure of the workshop includes:

- **Day 1 //** Session 1: Access rights for marine and inland fishworkers to resources, fishing grounds and markets.
- **Day 2 //** Field trip to Tsokomey to engage with women from the Densu Oyster Pickers Association (DOPA) and Session 2: Women and gender in small-scale fisheries.
- **Day 3 //** Session 2 continued: Solutions and Ways Forward for Improving Women's Access to Resources and Participation; and Session 3: Social development, employment and decent work.
- **Day 4 //** Session 4: Workshop Statement and Gender Action Plan

Workshop outputs:

- Collective statement by workshop participants
- Communications (website, newsletter, social media)
- Regional Action Plan on women and gender
- Photos and videos
- Workshop report