

CONCEPT NOTE FOR NATIONAL MULTI-STAKEHOLDER AND ADVOCACY CAPACITY BUILDING WORKSHOPS ON THE SSF GUIDELINES.

The Lagos State University will convene a national multi-stakeholder workshop for awareness raising and capacity building in collaboration with WorldFish, International Collective in Support of Fishworkers (ICSF) and Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). The workshop will support a process of social, economic and environmental transformation of the small-scale fisheries sector in Nigeria towards its better contribution to food security and poverty eradication as a result of improved policies, strategies and initiatives.

BACKGROUND

The [Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication](#) (SSF Guidelines) were developed as a complement to the 1995 FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries to address small-scale fisheries. They encompass all activities along the whole value chain undertaken by both men and women particularly in developing countries. The SSF Guidelines were formally endorsed as an international instrument at the 31st Session of the FAO Committee on Fisheries (COFI) in June 2014.

The SSF Guidelines provide guidance for policies, strategies and actions in small-scale fisheries on a wide range of issues including governance of tenure and sustainable resource management; social development, employment and decent work; value chains, post-harvest activities and trade; gender equality; and disaster risks and climate change. The SSF Guidelines recognize the diversity and rights of actors in small-scale fisheries and promote the human rights based approach including processes for fisheries management that are participatory, inclusive, integrated and holistic. Implementing the SSF Guidelines will ensure that previous patterns of marginalizing pre- and post-harvest sector workers, especially women and vulnerable populations, would become a thing of the past.

The SSF Guidelines are aimed at States for adoption and implementation but require effective participation of small-scale fisheries actors themselves as well as support from a diverse range of sectors and other stakeholders. Unlocking the huge potentials of small-scale fisheries lies in enhancing livelihoods of small-fishers and increasing employment opportunities for the marginalized and vulnerable in a way that is technically, economically, socially and environmentally sustainable. It is important that the SSF Guidelines are contextualized and efforts to implement them are futile unless there is sufficient awareness of their principles and contents by state and non-state actors alike.

Since 2014, ICSF has been actively involved in SSF Guidelines implementation by organizing workshops, publishing booklets, producing videos and delivering presentations. The FAO supports ICSF projects in the Global South to promote awareness about the SSF Guidelines and to mobilize support for their implementation. The national multi-stakeholder and capacity building workshop proposed here is part of a current FAO-ICSF project, which includes supporting SSF Guidelines implementation in Nigeria.

RATIONALE

In Africa, small-scale fisheries are simply too big to ignore but their contribution to the economies at various levels (local, state or sub-regional and national) is undermined by lack of recognition of their importance and benefits to food and nutrition security, livelihood security and preservation of cultural heritage. The contributions of small-scale fisheries are obscured due to poor or lack of good quality environmental, social, and economic data of the subsector. As a result of the seemingly lack of

evidence of their true worth, small-scale fisheries are poorly understood by policy makers and fishing communities suffer social, economic, and political marginalization, often in silence.

Concurrent with the adoption of the SSF Guidelines in 2014, the African Union (AU) Policy Framework and Reform Strategy for Fisheries and Aquaculture (PFRS) recognized and adopted the development of small-scale fisheries. This action led to [A 10-Year Action Plan for Small-Scale Fisheries Development in Africa](#) for the continent published in 2017. At the sub-regional level, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) lists the application of the Guidelines across ECOWAS Member States as one of its expected outcomes of their strategic framework for sustainable fisheries and aquaculture development and has identified key actions to achieving the objective. Also, the Fisheries Committee for the West Central Gulf of Guinea (FCWC) indicates its intention to promote an action plan within the AU policy framework developed through a regional consultation in 2018 for stakeholders in West and Central Africa and intends to advance an FCWC regional integration plan for the SSF Guidelines.

The year 2022 has been designated as the International Year of Artisanal Fisheries and Aquaculture (IYAFA) but Nigeria is yet to feature among the expanding cohort of Member States that have made public commitments to implement the SSF Guidelines. South Africa, Ghana, Senegal and United Republic of Tanzania among others are already in the race and ahead of Nigeria to implement the SSF Guidelines in spite of it being the country with the largest catch and employment in Africa.

Why would Nigeria need the SSF Guidelines? Traditional fisheries authorities are recognized as *de facto* managers with some reciprocity but in the real sense little jurisdictional or institutional integration exists between the traditional fisheries institutions and the State. Absence of formal policies for decentralization of power to traditional fisheries governance systems subjects primary stakeholders - fishers, fish workers, other fisheries-based livelihoods groups and fishing communities - to inequity in governance decision-making processes. They are deprived of statutory control over rights, use and benefits of fishery resources and lack the possibility to implement regulations that are suited to their own livelihood needs.

Limited capacity of the primary stakeholders to challenge the *status quo* (centralized governance system) and to demand equity in power distribution and responsibility is linked to the highly informal structure of small-scale fisheries. This structure is characterized by low organizational capacities, systemic disempowerment and exclusion from discourse on democratic subsidiarity, and an apparent vacuum in leadership to lobby and influence policy-making in the interests of the subsector. There is also a lack of awareness of the principles of human rights enshrined in the Nigerian constitution and related legal entitlements to seek judicial redress against the State. For instance, the non-fulfillment of the right to adequate and equal educational opportunities deprives the primary stakeholders to improve living standards.

Raising awareness of SSF Guidelines and catalyzing its implementation by the State requires contextualization and evaluation of local needs. The voluntary nature of the Guidelines posits an advantage as there is flexibility to prioritize actions suited to local, state and national contexts. This achieving clarity on what to implement and by whom, how to implement, where to implement, and when to implement at various levels (local, sub-regional, national, regional) but maintenance of a bottom-up approach, inclusiveness and equity in participation and representation are integral in all phases from planning to implementation.

Policy-makers and the State must be prepared to willingly engage with non-state actors in no-holds-barred discussions to agree without coercion to 'walk the talk'. Improved awareness and capacity development in advocacy of human rights are crucial for local, state, regional and national organizations and networks to influence policy-makers. These are key to enhance the understanding

of the interdependence between the environment in which production activities take place and fish productivity as well as to aid recognition of the real economic and social contributions of small-scale fisheries at national and local scales. For these to be achieved however fishers, fish workers, fisheries-based livelihood groups and community-based organizations have to build capacity to become credible, legitimate, and democratically accountable so as to negotiate with the State as equals.

Therefore, equitable participation, representation and accountability in fisheries decision-making processes would expectedly improve sense of stewardship and ownership by the primary stakeholders closest to, and highly- dependent on the fishery resources for food and livelihood security. Certainly, these would expedite self-administration of a participatory, all-inclusive and transparent fisheries governance system and in doctrine sustain 'continuity' and justice of the system.

It is against this backdrop that the national multi-stakeholders and capacity building workshop is being organized to raise awareness, sensitize and build capacity in advocacy on the SSF Guidelines among state and non-state actors. The workshop also intends to provide space for reviewing existing capacities of key stakeholders in implementing the SSF Guidelines, to understand better the potential challenges that could emerge during their implementation in Nigeria and to identify key areas of actions required.

OBJECTIVES

Following are the objectives of the workshops:

1. To raise awareness and sensitize state and non-state actors (fisher and fish worker organizations, the academia and research communities, non-governmental organizations [NGOs] and other civil society organizations [CSOs]) about the SSF Guidelines as a tool for sustainable fisheries development in Nigeria.
2. To highlight the pathways that will lead to the implementation of the SSF Guidelines and its mainstreaming in policies and legislations for improved governance of small-scale fisheries, food security and poverty reduction of local communities, state and national economy.
3. To enhance understanding of the roles, responsibilities and capacities of state and non-state actors in small-scale fisheries by building a network alliance for the SSF Guidelines.
4. To build capacity and strengthen advocacy of non-state actors including but not limited to fishers, fish workers, fisheries-based livelihoods groups, fishing communities, youth in small-scale fisheries, the media and communication sector, NGOs, CSOs etc to contributing in policy dialogues, participate in fisheries management planning, implementation and monitoring.
5. To produce a background paper which is inclusive of the stakeholders' recommendations and a working paper that set the template for the SSF Guidelines implementation and sustainable small-scale fisheries in Nigeria.

PROCESS

The three-days national multi-stakeholder workshop will begin with an overview of the SSF Guidelines, focusing on its various chapters. Existing policies and legislations will be discussed with a view to identifying gaps with respect to the SSF Guidelines. Participants should then be able to highlight the potential challenges envisaged in implementing the SSF Guidelines and also provide insight into how the livelihoods and food and nutrition security of people irrespective of gender and fisheries-dependent communities will be meaningfully addressed.

One day will be dedicated to capacity building with a focus on the roles and responsibilities of fisherfolks, fish workers, other fisheries-based livelihoods groups, fishing communities, the media and communication sector, NGOs and civic organizations and the expectations in the implementation of the Guidelines. Special attention would be given to identify additional needs to strengthen capacity in follow-up activities.

VENUE AND DATE

The national multi-stakeholder workshop will tentatively be held on 9-11 May 2022 (TBC).

PARTICIPANTS

The total number of participants is expected to be 30 and would follow gender equality principle. The participants would include: women and men leaders of inland and coastal fishing communities, fisheries cooperatives; representatives of Federal and State Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture, representatives of NGOs and CSOs, regional organizations (including regional fisheries bodies) and development partners.