

LASU-ICSF-FAO-WORLDFISH

**NATIONAL WORKSHOP ON MEDIA AND ADVOCACY CAPACITY BUILDING
FOR THE**

**IMPLEMENTATION OF THE VOLUNTARY GUIDELINES FOR SECURING
SUSTAINABLE SMALL-SCALE FISHERIES (SSF GUIDELINES) IN NIGERIA**

Report



9 - 11 May 2022

Aderemi Makanjuola Hall, Lagos State University, Ojo,

Lagos State, Nigeria.

Report prepared by Shehu Akintola and Kafayat Fakoya, (LASU)

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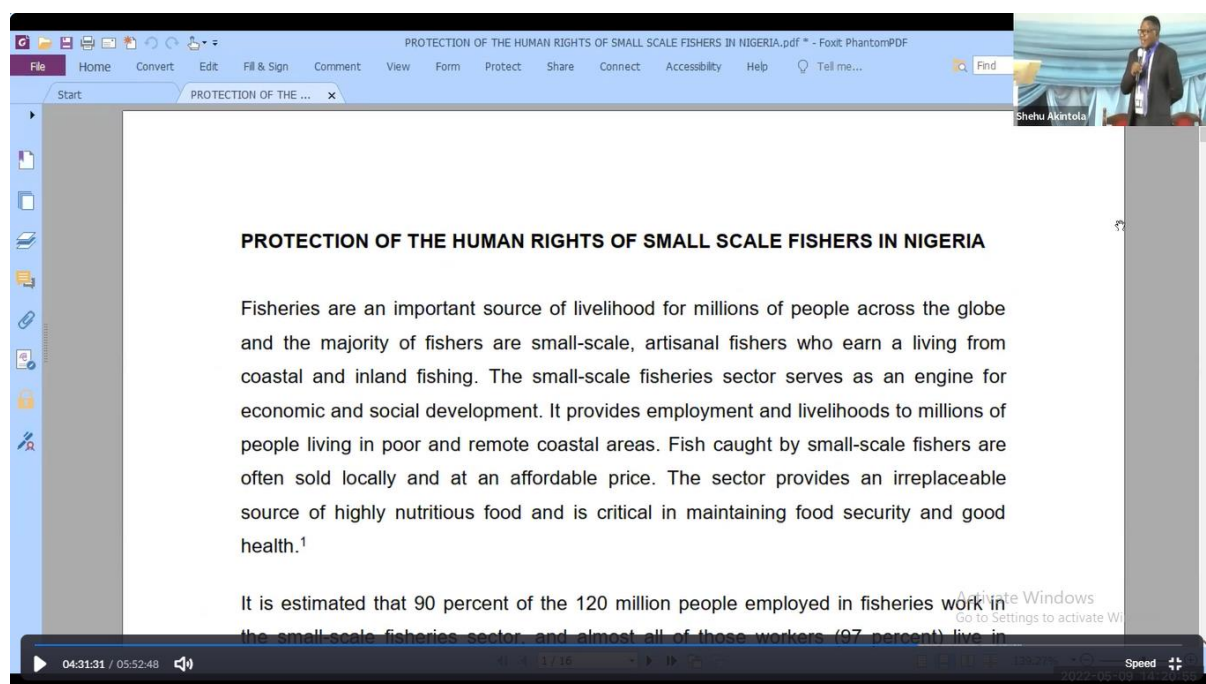
Lagos State, Nigeria.

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Background

The capacity development and advocacy workshop was held from May 10 to May 11, 2022. Prior to this session, two panel presentations on human rights were delivered on May 9, 2022 intersecting with the need for capacity building in advocacy by fishers, fish workers and their representatives, fishing communities, and also by other stake holders inclusive of NGOs and CSOs.

The first presentation on human rights was delivered by **Mr. Lucas Koyejo, Coordinator, National Human Rights Commission, Lagos Office, Nigeria** titled, **“Protection of the Human Rights of fishers in Nigeria”**. In the presentation, Mr. Koyejo highlighted the importance of small-scale fisheries sector to nutrition and food security, employment and livelihoods to millions of people living in poor and remote coastal areas of developing countries. In the Nigerian context, he emphasized the contribution of the fishery sector to the Nigerian economy which is about 5.40% of the nation’s Gross Domestic Product (GDP). The importance was underscored based on fish believed to be the most common and cheapest animal protein source especially among the poor in Nigeria. He noted that with the huge appetite for fish in excess of annual demand of 1.50 million metric tons, increasing fish demands by Nigerians is from domestic production of fish, of which the small-scale fisheries is the most important component of domestic fish production, contributing up to 90% while importation played a major role by providing more than half (56.0%) of fish supply. This, he noted made Nigeria to be considered as the largest importer of fish in developing world. Regulating the fisheries sector are a number of policies, decrees, and acts put in place by successive Nigerian governments. These regulations include the Sea Fisheries Act of 1971, the Sea Fisheries (Licensing) Regulations of 1971, the Sea Fisheries (Fishing) Regulations of 1972, the Exclusive Economic Zone Decree of 1978, the Sea Fisheries Decree of 1992, and the 1995 Sea Fisheries Regulations.



Mr. Koyejo demonstrated linkage between the small-scale fisheries to the sustainable development goals and human rights by focusing on the importance of the small scale fisheries more importantly, to the economy of the fishing communities than the national economy and acknowledged social and cultural rights as being of equal importance as the economic rights.

He noted the pivotal role of the small-scale fisheries to achieving SDG 14 on sustainable oceans, specifically target 14.b on access for small-scale artisanal fishers to marine resources and markets, and the importance of sustainable small-scale fisheries to achieving a range of other SDGs, most directly SDG 1 (no poverty), SDG 2 (no hunger), SDG 3 (good health and well-being), SDG 5 (gender equality), SDG 8 (decent work and economic growth) and SDG 10 (reduced inequalities), and generally support the achievement of the entire 2030 SDG Agenda which affirms that the SDGs 'seek to realize the human rights of all'. He stated that human rights and the SDGs are tied together in a mutually reinforcing way with the vast majority of the SDG targets reflecting provisions of international human rights instruments that entail legal obligations for the States that have ratified these instruments.' Likewise, the cross-cutting principle of 'leaving no one behind' reflects the fundamental human rights principles of equality and non-discrimination. This, he opined therefore means that an effective and adequate implementation of SDG target 14.b requires the realisation of a series of human rights – and holds the potential to contribute to the realisation of human rights, as well.

He stated dire need to protect the human rights of fishermen in Nigeria has been an age long driving force for a lot of protests that have taken place nationwide. Experts across the world have stressed the need to protect the rights of fishermen who are among the most poorest and most vulnerable set of people, and who have been subjected to various degrees of exploitation while at work. He stressed that small-scale fishing communities, be they indigenous or non-indigenous, are being marginalized and disadvantaged, to the extent that, in many instances, they are becoming extinct. He drew on the adoption of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) by the UN General Assembly as a statement of historic significance that should inspire small-scale fishing people, regardless of their ethnic background. The Declaration does contain important principles regarding indigenous peoples' rights to livelihoods, culture, natural resources and self-determination and emphasizes that indigenous peoples have the right to own, use, develop, and control the lands, territories and resources that they possess by reason of traditional ownership or other traditional occupation or use, as well as those which they have otherwise acquired."

Mr. Koyejo pointed out that all the core human rights treaties apply to small-scale fishers and fish workers, either as individuals or as groups of people. Although, the large number of conventions of the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the International Maritime Organization (IMO) lay down human rights relating to work and employment, he was quick to observe that these and many other treaties assume formal employment relationships that may not be common in small scale fisheries, but at least the fundamental principles and rights at work relating to freedom of association, forced labour and child labour, and discrimination apply to all workers. Therefore, he remarked that while the aforementioned are legally binding treaties, there are also non-legally binding international human rights instruments that have significant importance to small-scale fishers, fish-workers and communities and in this group belongs the UDHR though, many of its provisions form part of the binding customary international law, and it constitutes the international bill of rights

together with the ICCPR and the ICESCR. Other soft-law instruments include the 1986 UN Declaration on the Right to Development and the 2007 UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP). Among the aforementioned instruments, the SSF Guidelines specifically refer to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), the CEDAW, the CRC, the ILO and IMO instruments on work in fishing and sea safety, the UNDRIP, and the Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities in the different issue areas that they cover. Furthermore, he provided the hindsight of some of the most prominent human rights underpinning SDG target 14.b entrenched in the international human rights instruments and contained specifically in Chapter 4 and 2 of the 1999 Nigerian constitution and laws.

He gave a narrative on human rights violation of the rights of fishing communities in Nigeria and focused on plights of coastal fishing communities which face deteriorating qualities of life and sometimes eviction as a result of the activities of ports, harbours, oil drilling vessels, etc., thus resulting in oil spills, gas flaring and overall destruction of the environment, directly affecting the lives and livelihood of the people. The losses being suffered by the fishing communities are both social and economic and sections 16 and 17 of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (as amended) provides for the social and economic rights of Nigerians, thus making the actions of these companies punishable.

He noted that oil spill incidents have occurred at different times along the Niger Delta area and from the records of the Department of Petroleum Resources (DPR) within the period 1976–2015, a total no of 16,476 spills occurred at different occasions and a total quantity of approximately 3 million barrels were spilled into the environment. Unfortunately, more than 70% was not recovered, 69% of these spills occurred off-shore, a quarter was in swamps and 6% spilled on land. The record from the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) indicates that the amount of crude oil spilled into the Niger Delta is estimated at 2,300 cubic metres, on average over 300 spills occurred every year from 1975 to 1995. In contrast, the World Bank provides figures which estimates oil spill to the environment at almost ten times the NNPC figures arguing that the official figures ignore the so called “minor” spills. Other oil driven environmental factors affecting fishing activities include gas flaring, oil well blowouts, and improper disposal of drilling mud, and pipeline leakages.

He presented two case studies of human rights violation in the Niger Delta. The first on the Movement for the Survival of Ogoni People (MOSOP) which spent years fighting against Shell over damages caused by oil spills dating back to 1970. Among their complaints was the deprivations of their rights to self-sustenance, education and good life. In July 2021, the Akwa Ibom Cooperatives Fishing Association Ltd. stormed the head office of the National Human Rights Commission, demanding justice against Exxon Mobil over damages caused by spillage from their facilities in the community. Among the things complained about by the fishermen was the destruction of their fishing nets, ropes and other tools and accessories as a result of the oil spillage since 1998.

Another form of human rights violations are the on-going forceful evictions in Lagos, Nigeria’s most populated city. As far back as 2013 waterfront communities — populated mostly by those in the small-scale fishing industry have been demolished as Lagos continues to pursue the megacity dream. In 2017 and 2018, many residents of the Otodo Gbame and Ilubirin waterfront fishing communities in Lagos Island were forcefully evicted by the order

of Lagos state government. So far, over 24 fishing communities have been demolished, rendering over 50,000 residents homeless. On Tuesday, January 21, 2020, residents of Tarkwa Bay and Okun Ayo waterfront communities in Lagos, Nigeria, were given two hours to leave their homes. The Nigerian Navy entered both communities and began shooting guns in the air, the aggressive evacuation plan left about 4,500 people homeless. The Nigerian Navy stated that the order to forcefully evict the residents came from higher authorities but they did not mention which arm of government had issued the orders or plans to resettle or compensate the evictees.

Citing this as instance of flagrant disrespect to the Rule of Law, the Federal High Court ordered an immediate halt on all evacuations and demolitions in Tarkwa Bay and Okun Ayo. In June 2017, after two months of rigorous advocacy and protests driven by the residents and human rights activists and organizations including National Human Rights Commission, the Lagos High Court decreed that the eviction of the over 5,000 people from Otodo Gbame was a violation of their rights. The court ordered the government to pay compensation. Till date the evicted residents have not received any compensation from the authorities. Concerned citizens and victims have also physically protested at the Lagos State Governor's office, but so far, the government has eluded the issue, and any attempt to bring up evictions and demand accountability has been shunned. He stressed that the communities were not given adequate notice or alternative accommodation, as required by international law and the demolition exercises took place only days after the Lagos State High Court had issued an injunction restraining demolitions in the waterfront communities. These evictions, he noted are particularly of concern as they were being carried out in blatant disregard of court orders and have completely ignored international human rights guidelines on forced evictions. International law is clear on eviction for development purpose. There must be consultation with the affected community, all alternative options to eviction must be explored, and a resettlement plan must be in place should the evictions be carried out. Under no circumstances should force be used. The people affected are mainly from the Egun fishing communities and other ethnic minority populations, with no other options, lived in poor-quality homes along creeks and other waterfronts.

He asked a series of questions including what the solution should be to these violations faced by the people in the communities? What can the government do to ensure the rights of the fishing communities are protected? He emphasized a human rights approach to emphasize protection and promotion of human rights on strengthening the capacities of the holders of these rights i.e., the fishermen and members of the community, to be aware of and to claim and exercise their rights effectively by creating policies that recognize and secure their rights. He pointed out that effective implementation of human rights is strongly dependent on the capacity of the communities' rights to claim their rights. In furtherance of this, he suggested that steps should be taken to actualize these recommendations and the fishing communities encouraged to actively participate in the protection and promotion of their rights. In addition, he remarked that fishermen should recognize their collective rights and move towards the goal of securing their rights noting that fishing communities and cultures are not as resilient as we tend to believe, particularly under the new threats that they are now facing. Rather, they are vulnerable, and are not as easily restored once they are broken. A culture lost is forever lost, as with biodiversity. A declaration may be an

instrument of committing governments to secure the 'rights to life' of small-scale fishing people.

In his closing remarks, he recommended academics and National Human Rights Institutions as important allies noting that the knowledge academic research creates is vital in describing situations, defining problems, highlighting issues and bringing them to the table. Finally, he opined that small-scale fishing people need all the friends they can muster to work collectively on all fronts in the long march to securing their rights and to protect and provide access for small-scale fishers to marine resources and markets there is need for human rights-based approach to fishers' issues.

The second panel presentation on, **“Human Rights versus Neo-liberalism: Law as tool for balancing Land Tenure Right interests in small - scale fisheries’ was delivered by Professor Olatoye Kareem of the Faculty of Law, Lagos State University, Lagos, Nigeria.** He drew attention on advocacy for Human Rights Approach (HRA) as the basis for fisheries development and governance. The approach to secure fishers' basic rights (e.g., rights to food, rights to decent work and livelihoods, and rights to a healthy environment) that condition their well-being emerged with the global contributions and impacts of the small-scale fisheries to provide food for billions of people and provide sustainable livelihoods for millions of people and its immense contributions to global catches. He observed that human rights thinking and implementations are canvassed through (some already existing) national and international legal frameworks as the most effective means to address vulnerability constraints in fisheries governance. While it encourages humans to engage in competition that would unleash the massive creative and wealth creation potential, he remarked that the weakness is the continued penetration of neoliberalism into fisheries and a major concern is that the approach is predicated on human private entitlements or private property rights, which encourages free selection and pursuit of economic activities, inculcation of habits of self-regulation, and use of “the market” as a key indicator of appropriate levels of governance in that the rule of the market is used to as a basic instrument of development policy and management of natural resource extraction to establish and legally secure property rules and rights. He demonstrated that private property rights are tied in a way to capitalist property relations, disregard and are clearly incompatible with collective rights, which confer indivisible privileges to social groups and reaffirms the value and tradition of the community over the individual. In other words, this a neo-liberal approach lays that emphasis on private individuals and their personal claims to the basic material conditions of life.



Prof. Olatoye provided similarities between HRA and the SSF Guidelines as 'inclusive of human rights and dignity, respect of cultures, non-discrimination, gender equality and equity, equity and equality, consultation and participation, rule of law, transparency, accountability, economic social and environmental sustainability, holistic and integrated approaches, social responsibility, feasibility and social and economic viability'. He argued that a key objective and guiding principle of the SSF Guidelines is the need to afford secure tenure right for stakeholders, and therein lie conflicting interests. From a logical perspective, he indicated that promotion of HRA applies to neoliberalism tendency in a way and reflects the capitalist property acquisition tendency; principally it could disfranchise fishing communities by overturning their socio-cultural foundations and allowing further permeation of individualized and commoditized fishing rights. Re – echoing, the views of Ruddle and Davis, Prof. Olatoye opined that promotion of a human rights approach (in tenure right acquisition) could disfranchise fishing communities by overturning their socio-cultural foundations and allowing further permeation of individualized and commoditized fishing rights. Consequently, there is emphasis on group rights, rights of indigenous peoples as the locus of rights-based advocacy in fisheries. He noted that the SSF Guidelines relies on the existing National and International instruments for implementation and a law is good if it is capable of balancing the various competing interests in society- Public interest (of the State), Individual interests (of protection of private property) – HRA and Social interest- joint or mutual exploitation and conservation of social/communal resources. Prof Olatoye noted the existence of not less than 8 legislations indirectly or directly regulating the small scale fisheries in Nigeria among which is the Land Use Act, 1978.

According to him, Land Tenure Rights for small-scale fisheries are challenged with conflicting interests while it is widely recognized that small-scale fishing communities need to have

secure tenure rights to the resources that form the basis of their social and cultural well-being, their livelihoods and sustainable development. The Land Tenure law in Nigeria recognizes both the statutory land tenure system and the customary land tenure system and under the customary land tenure system, communal land is recognized. The question, he posed is whether land tenure right should be defined in terms of private property right as advocated by the protagonists of the human right approach (HRA) or in term of the communal property right embedded in African tradition and values. To balance this conflicting interests, he indicated the voluntary nature of the SSF Guidelines allows a State could adapt within the context of its national instruments.

He further suggested that for effective balancing of competing interests in fisheries tenure, the onus lies on duty-bearers to ensure appropriate reforms to enable appropriate and effective balancing of interest are carried out. The duty bearers typically include the state fisheries management agencies and possibly other authorities such as lawmakers and the maritime police as well as donor agencies and civil societies.

Prof. Lai Osho, seasoned communications expert from the School of Mass Communications, Lagos State University, Ojo, Nigeria was the first panel speaker on advocacy. His presentation, **“Advocacy: The How For Youth/Fishers Organizations”** addressed the topic from a media point of view. In his opening statements, Prof. Osho provided brief etymology of advocacy from its Latin root, the word advocate meaning “someone called to one’s aid”, and referring to it refers to someone who argues for a cause. He defined advocacy as a process of seeking support for an issue/programme, designed to involve political and other decisions makers by building support for it and legislation affecting it. The main objective, he emphasized is to influence decision makers and public opinion to bring about change to the benefit of a specific group of people or the poor generally. From a development communication perspective, he described advocacy as one of the components or strategies of development communication campaign which complement both social mobilization, and Programme communication in the Implementation of any development programme and for effective communication with relevant stakeholders is very important.



Prof. Osho gave broader explanations on communication strategies that can be used for implementing advocacy to consist of building relationships with the mass media and developing press releases on issues affecting small scale fisheries to help set the news agenda by making information more readily accessible to journalists. It could also be interpersonal communication such as lobbying with the right people to know and understand issues. Another strategy may be to use credible and influential people, and at times with little no publicity, but overall advocacy works best when the advocates are seen / perceived to be working in the public interest and not self -serving or promoting their selfish interests. He opined that advocates must have technical knowledge or expertise of the issues and must know the right people to meet and present the cases. This objective may be met through stakeholder analysis, employing SMART objectives supported with effective communication to drive home their viewpoints.

He pointed out that advocacy has its learning curve and its performance or efficiency determined by issues such as reputation and credibility of the organization and those carrying out the advocacy and campaign programme; legitimacy which is dependent on factors such as emotional feeling and attitude towards the groups; viability of the organization; stability, staff commitment, ability to exist for a long time, past records; resource availability and to reach out to different groups, communication skills and capacity to respond to issues and providing the right information through the right communication channels, accountability etc. He added that other salient matters include a clear and coherent strategy, ability to coordinate and cooperate with others, challenges of building alliances and competition among advocacy groups e.g for fund from donors, visibility in the media as well as access to decision-makers.

Dr. Kafayat Fakoya, the co-convenor and Associate Professor in the Department of Fisheries, Lagos State University, Lagos State, Nigeria presented a paper on “**Advocacy as a challenge to small scale fisheries governance in Nigeria**”. She gave a concise definition for advocacy as the act of helping people find their voice or interests or for the cause of someone or group of people. She elaborated the different ways through which advocacy can be expressed or achieved to include but not limiting to promoting, defending, speaking in favour of, recommending, arguing for, and supporting. She identified the attributes of an advocate, what makes advocacy effective and typical examples of advocacy activities in the fisheries sector.

Based on the above, she stated that advocacy must be task-oriented, driven by people with a common interest, bringing peoples’ concerns to Governments, monitor policies, and encourage to empower political participation at the community level. Therefore, the ability to function at highest capacity means that the intent must be to put people first, strengthen social ties and speak a common language, uphold principles of equality, diversity and confidentiality, guided by clarity of vision, willing and open to share resources, operate on a common, accessible communication network and be open or receptive to feedback. An advocate, she noted could be a person, Civil Society Organizations (CSO) or Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) but it is more common to find a number of advocates functioning as an entity with the goal or purpose of *working* and *collaborating* for change on a local, state, national or international level. Therefore, the advocate must be a non –state actor, voluntary and non- profit, autonomous or independent of influence from the State/Government and, non-violent in its action- the basis of differentiation from an activism.

Dr. Fakoya provided examples of activities which are deemed as advocacy. These examples were tailored specific to the theme which was small-scale fisheries and were given as building capacity of fishing communities, associations or groups to train to be their own advocates, create or strengthen collective action for dialog, skills in using advocacy tools available (including the media), rule crafting, selection of effective strategies, tactics and enforcement, educate fishing communities on legislative process and on the other hand educate legislators on small scale fisheries issues.

TYPES OF ADVOCACY ACTIVITIES

- Communication of stories on successful fisher networks, learning from experience of other sector social movements.

Technical and Legal Expertise

- Assist fishing communities or fish value chain actors to win in court for a cause or the fishing community

Lobbying

- Advocate for or against specific legislation, regulatory efforts, meeting politicians, questions in parliament, participating in various consultative processes, running public forums etc.



Another option, she identified could be to provide research and Information with the purpose of identifying needs of small-scale fisheries issues, understanding the opposition, as well as the climate of opinion about the issues in the community. Still on research and information, she mentioned promotion of increased scientific information and use of traditional knowledge as very important in advocacy particularly the grassroots levels. Also, a very significant role is to provide communication channels either formally or informally to link and bridge gaps for all stakeholders, particularly between communities and the state. In addition, she highlighted the importance of communication of stories on successful fisher networks as well as learning from experience of other sector social movements. She stated that advocates can also provide technical and legal expertise to assist fishing communities or fish value chain actors to win in court for a cause or the fishing community. On lobbying, she explained that advocates can lobby against specific legislation, initiate regulatory efforts, meet politicians, ask questions in parliament and participate in various consultative processes or run public forums to encourage discussions on important viewpoints.

Largely taken from Ratner et al (2014), Dr. Fakoya provided excerpts to illustrate how the theoretical framework of Human Rights Approach (HRA) is intertwined with natural resource management and, also demonstrated the role of advocacy. Referring to fisheries and other natural resource managements, the institutions and power structures determine resource allocation (i.e. who is given access and how the right is exercised) and power structure (governance structure/ public sector), particularly shapes policies, legislations, implementation, interactions between the State and civil society, and development outcomes. She underscored the importance of human rights based framework which draws attention to the impacts of institutions and power structures on livelihoods and

wellbeing, and determines development outcomes as either positive when living standards are improved or negative assuming negative when these decline. She emphasized that in development economics human rights is perceived as a supplement and substitute to approaches focused on rural livelihoods and national economic growth. And, advocacy is often framed or built around human rights while legal instruments either domestic or international are used to defend *access rights for the poor* as part of a right to livelihood.

She pointed to how long years of authoritarian leaderships in Nigeria had weakened governance and synergy from collaboration between governmental institutions and non-governmental organizations. The extent of civic action allowed by the State, she emphasized can be defined along a continuum from collaboration to repression and generally, she identified low public awareness and less involvement of citizenry in governance process and advocacy. Delving into Nigeria small scale fisheries Governance, she unfolded some elements of self-rule based on traditional norms in traditional fisheries and mixed management systems while centralized (State) governance by the State influences or contributes to *social ties that could promote resources management weakening but still visibly stronger* in inland fisheries than marine fisheries (Fakoya and Akintola, 2018).

Her analysis of the major challenges of the fisheries sector pointed to lack of autonomy and sub sectoral –specific policies. Within the fisheries sector, she pointed out that, sharing limited resources with aquaculture and industrial fisheries emasculates the small-scale fisheries *which* according to her is also contending with lack of enabling conditions and over the years, received the least priority in terms of consideration in policy processes. These perhaps, she reported account for neglect of the sector which is apparent in plethora of environmental and livelihood issues in the oil –rich Niger Delta, a rich fishing ground due to undervaluation of contributions to national GDP, a fallout of wide information and *data gaps*. *She reminded that with the exception of the statutory 5 nautical miles Exclusive Fishing Zone for small scale fisheries that guarantees access rights to fishers*, existing fisheries regulations and policies are not aligned with the realities of present challenges and for some time, the emergence of a new fisheries bill has remained in domain of the National Legislature.

Small scale fishing communities, she pointed out appear ‘*voiceless*’, lacking capacity to defend their rights. The ‘*voicelessness*’ she observed is embedded in poor organizational capacities and lingering *vacuum in leadership* among fishers’ cooperatives /associations to lobbying powers to influence policies. Dr Fakoya informed the participants that registered fishers’ cooperatives were purposefully introduced in the ‘80s to facilitate distribution of all state-sponsored credit and technical assistance to fishers. The immediate impacts were growth and development during the 3rd and 4th National Development Plans. However, she echoed the emotions of many fishers and fish workers who were not always happy with the State because they perceived as being found relevant for purpose of politics. Base on this x-ray of the small scale fisheries status and challenges, she queried if perhaps this reason is partly the reason why small scale fisheries actors have positioned themselves as ‘‘expecting entitlements’’ from the State? She reminded participants especially the fishers and fish workers that the mandates of fishers’ cooperatives must not be confused with rights of *inclusivity, equity, and participation* in decision-making. In furtherance of this, she provided classic examples of how the Nigerian Union of Fishermen and Seafood Dealers, the apex

body for small scale fisheries established in 1995 was *subsumed* under the Fisheries Cooperative Federation of Nigeria Limited - a platform for organizations of fishers, fish farmers and other stakeholders and that this singular act, she said has led to *marginalization* of the sector.

She remarked that the small scale fisheries is identified with lack of self –advocacy unlike aquaculture and industrial fisheries where private –led initiatives give voice to issues relating to their subsectors. She identified the nature of advocacy in Nigeria as *systemic with the Intent of* changing policies, laws or rules and aim to make *positive, long-lasting change, more effective* but noted that advocacy on small scale fisheries appears to be conducted in infrequent, and non-systematic or contextualized manner, citing Akintola et al., (2017), she remarked that distrust between fishers and the State, is carried over to Academia because researchers do not often come up with research problems which address the interests of fishers.

With the intent of revealing the status of advocacy in Nigeria small scale fisheries she brought out similarities with Ghana small scale fisheries where according to Yamoah and Johnson (2017), strong advocacy is lacking. The CSOs and media voices are low in the fisheries sector and in congruence, Consultation and involvement of key actors in the planning and decision - making is low.

Though she was emphatic on solutions to improve small scale fisheries status which included developing partnership prerogative of CSOs with the State and local NGOs such as Fisheries Society of Nigeria (FISON) is to develop sustainable small scale fisheries; readiness of fishing communities to take up the challenges of self-advocacy and drive the SSF Guidelines implementation; capacity building of Fishers cooperatives require to gain legal recognition as representative bodies and be democratically accountable (Akintola et al., 2017). However she highlighted possible limitations such as commitment and readiness of the State to “walk the talk” and to demonstrate true democracy by allowing advocacy networks freedom to operate in the space it truly deserves. Another source of concern, she noted is the Voluntary nature of the SSF Guidelines which does not compel the State to adopt, legalize and drive implementation and enforcement. On the parts of the advocates(CSOs, NGOs), she raised pertinent questions on the preparedness to collaborate, build trust and share resources for synergy in advocacy networks, and noting that advocacy should not be left to NGOs and CSOs alone. Finally, she closed her presentation with highlights on the danger of each advocacy organization pursuing its own interests as counterproductive to developing a strong, interactive win-win system of participation and decision- making.

Mr. Alieu Sowe, a member of The Africa Advisory Group and World Forum of Fisher People (WFFP) Chapter, Gambia Fisher Folk Association presentation was focused on the “ **African Advisory Group Advocacy on the implementations of the SSF Guidelines: *The Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication (SSF Guidelines)*”**: an important tool for sustainable development of small-scale fisheries”. In his opening statements, He introduced *the* African Advisory Group I as a regional body of the Global Strategic Framework composed of representatives of global and regional civil society networks having within themselves small-scale fisheries organizations in the African continent. He described the group as performing and advisory role to the Advisory Group of the Global Strategic Framework in Support of the

Implementation of the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication (AG SSF-GSF). And, this is achieved by working with all the regional processes relevant to the implementation and monitoring of the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication (SSF Guidelines). He stated that the objective of Information sharing sessions was to bring awareness to the challenges, needs and opportunities to sustainably develop small-scale fisheries on globally and at the African continent.



Mr.Sowe narrated the history and background of the development of the SSF Guidelines with the Global conference on small-scale fisheries o-organized by FAO and the Royal Government of Thailand in collaboration with the Southeast Asian Fisheries Development Center (SEAFDEC) and The World Fish Center in Bangkok in October (13–17) 2008 reinforced the claim that small-scale fisheries have yet to fully realize their potential and reaffirmed that human rights are critical to achieving sustainable development and called for an international instrument on small-scale fisheries. Leading up to the conference, he reported that social movements, Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and fish workers representatives organized a preparatory workshop which was attended by more than 100 participants. From this conference, a statement with recommendations was produced as the outcome and emphasized the indivisibility of the human rights of small-scale fishers and indigenous people and also called for a guarantee of access rights of small-scale and indigenous fishing communities to territories, land, water, which is indispensable for their life and livelihood.He indicated that in 2009, the 28th Session of the global Committee On Fisheries (COFI) reaffirmed the need for such an instrument on small-scale fisheries and in support of this, the FAO facilitated three regional consultations on bringing together responsible fisheries and social development, including one for Asia and the Pacific in 2010.

He reported that from 2011 to 2013, a CSO platform organized more than 20 national and regional consultations, while FAO held three additional regional consultations to support the drafting of the first draft of the SSF Guidelines. This process brought together more than 4000 representatives of small-scale fishing communities, CSO, governments, and regional organizations from over 120 countries. The national-level consultations were organized primarily by CSOs, who play a major role in shaping the structure and content of the SSF Guidelines. From May 2013 to February 2014, the FAO held a technical consultation to negotiate the content of the SSF Guidelines. This process included States' delegations, regional organizations, CSOs and other observers. The result of the consultation was the SSF Guidelines which were endorsed by the 31st Session of the COFI on June 10, 2014 COFI. He described the Guidelines as a "breakthrough tool that will promote the implementation of national policies that will help small scale fishers thrive and play an even greater role in ensuring food security, promoting good nutrition, and eradicating poverty."

Furthermore, Mr. Sowe gave an overview of the contents of the Voluntary Guidelines as composed of three parts under which are thirteen chapters are grouped and discussed under six main themes : tenure, social development, employment and decent work, value chains, postharvest and trade, gender equality, disaster risk and climate change and ensuring an enabling environment and supporting implementation. He reported that the FAO developed the Global Strategic Framework with regional plans of action as a mandate in the Guidelines to promote and support the implementation of the Guidelines.

On the advocacy realities, he listed steps must be taken to include promotion of the effective participation of fishing communities, especially women and youth, in the community and local development processes. Next, he mentioned strengthening technical and political capacities of organizations of artisanal fisheries in the Continent; promoting the rational and sustainable exploitation of fisheries resources, especially at the level of artisanal fisheries resources; improving the living conditions of fishing communities, especially in access to essential social infrastructure and supporting concrete evidences of co-management and participatory governance of fisheries in the African countries and their disseminations.

He identified diverse actors ranging from fisheries associations at community, national, regional and global levels, government fisheries institutions; women and youth entities; private sectors; UN Agencies; NGOs; training and education institutions; media fraternity; network of fisher organizations to consumers among others and encouraged collective efforts to work earnestly towards the successful implementations and realities of the Small Scale Fisheries Guidelines at all levels to help advance the livelihood development of the Small Scale Fishers. He concluded that although much has been done over the years, collaboration and partnership in the African context has been indeed limited and little or no action taken towards the implementations of the SSF Guidelines in some African countries.

The last panel presentation was on **"Experience from advocating for sustainable small-scale fisheries"** by **Dr. Philippa Cohen, Consultant to WorldFish and Adjunct Research Fellow at James Cook University, Australia**. In her opening statement, Dr. Cohen made reference to sharing lessons from 5 years program in Asia, Africa and the Pacific. Sustainable small scale fisheries is that small scale fisheries continue to deliver the benefits

to food systems, food and nutrition security, local and national economy and culture and to ensure the best outcomes for food and nutrition security, human well-being and environment. She stressed that Nigeria is learning from others in the region and leading by example on how a nation can meet the commitment it made by core of SDGs policies and sustainable development of her fisheries.

Lessons from advocating for sustainable small-scale fisheries

Dr. Pip Cohen

She highlighted that there has never been a global attention on small-scale fisheries until recent with the important work of **Dr. Shakuntala Haraksingh Thilsted**, 2021 World Food Prize Laureate on the recognition of small-scale fisheries and the nutritional benefits of fish on food and nutrition security and well-being on the people and meeting the SDGs, particularly for the vulnerable most of which are women and children, a critical lever to meeting SDGs.

Snapshots of findings of the Illuminating Hidden Harvest report showed that small scale fisheries contribute 40 % of global fisheries catch and provide essential nutrition to fishing households and larger population. The catch is dominated by pelagic species including a variety of freshwater and marine small pelagics, tuna, mackerels, jacks and scads, in addition to carps and tilapia. Small scale fisheries account for 90% of capture fisheries employment. Sixty million fishers are engaged full-time or part-time in addition to 492 million depending at least partially on engagement in small scale fisheries for their livelihoods. The study estimates 45 million engaged in all subsectors of small scale fisheries as women indicating a ratio of 4 out of 10 people and are most significant in postharvest sector and subsistence fishing. It also showed that governance was inclusive. Primarily fishers and fish workers have roles and share responsibilities in governance in a way that they are active contributors to the SSF Guidelines with co-management implemented for 20% of fish catch. Almost all producer organisations had harvesting and sustainable management goals while only 60% had human well-being goals. Overall, there is more

knowledge than before but there are also still some gaps. There are more eyes or focus on the implementation commitment because the SSF Guidelines are voluntary.

With 8 years to meeting the SDGs, many countries including Nigeria are seen to be leading the way with policies and programmes and these are explicitly mentioned in the SDG 14.b. She commended that Nigeria has risen to the occasion culminating with the IYFA by hosting this workshop and focusing attention on small scale fisheries at a time that the sector is receiving such global attention.

She linked the principles and thrust of the SSF Guidelines which are aligned and intertwined with the 17 SDGs in 2030. She stated that the SDGs are tools for accountability and nations use high level actors such as Dr. Shakuntala Thilsted to continually refer to them and use to bolster national and global work and hold governments accountable to the commitments they make. She illustrated these linkages between the SDGs and the SSF Guidelines in three ways: (i)SDGs are the everyday lived experience of millions of women and men involved in SSF is equal to success and failure to achieve the SDGs translates to lives of millions of women and men are harder they are suffering hardship if SDGs are being met or if they are not being met (ii) SSFs are the foundations of food security and many other SDGs and small scale fisheries are eroded, we would be retrogressing or making back-track on several of the SDGs and these would affect food production and supply among other inter-related SDGs; and (iii)working on advocacy and research with fishers and fish workers provides pathways to achieve progress towards SDGs and is what we need to focus on.

Dr. Cohen posed mind –provoking questions on possible losses and gains to or with SSF, from specific innovations or policy changes and balancing costs implications and gains from reforms, innovations and policy changes in small scale fisheries. She highlighted that we need to focus on providing evidence on the losses if small-scale fisheries are eroded if the pace in which small-scale fisheries are operating is taken away such the capacity of the ecosystem is undermined what is there to gain by investing in good governance of small scale fisheries. With more knowledge, information and evidence on small-scale fisheries contributions, what we need to know are the possible gains in quality of food, amount of food, national and local economic growth. As a community, she asked what specific innovations, policy reforms or programmes would lead to gains. Furthermore, she enquired what would be the cost of these innovations and the gains from these innovations and changes?. Therefore, she remarked that the next challenge would be to identify, quantify and test innovations and move away from the rhetoric of how many people employed and focus on the specifics of what we need to do because these are what donors, policy makers are looking for.

The broader lessons, Dr. Cohen highlighted are that all four elements: research, policy, advocacy and communications need to go hand in hand. Advocacy really needs to be connected to specific policy recommendations and policy changes to bolster the call to action. Advocacy has to be connected to policy reforms changes that will be evident in setting research direction or agenda, developing communication strategies and strengthening advocacy of local small-scale fisheries to advance towards SDGs and the need to connect to local, national and international media to draw attention to loss in small scale fisheries spaces and the losses and gains in terms of the implementation of the Blue Economy or other large-scale development that may happen in marine environment. This is where community would be asked to quantify losses and gains of costs of innovations and

the real benefits of supporting small scale fisheries including the implementation of the SSF Guidelines to local and national economies. Finally, she concluded that the four elements and their connectivity are needed to produce evidence for action-research of the costs and benefits for policies and investments.

Contributions/Comments from participants (In-Person and Online)

Ms Foluke Areola appreciated the presentations of the speakers on advocacy and corroborated Dr. Fakoya's perspectives on policies that it takes a very long time for policies to be made. She cited Dr Fakoya's example on a Fisheries Act 2014 which is yet to see the light of the day and recommended that the shortest route would be to seek short - term solutions by pronouncement of regulations which the Honourable Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development can put in place and be effective for the implementation of the SSF Guidelines.

Mr. Idowu S. Hunyibo called for self- advocacy and suggested beginning with use of simple tools such as the phones to pass on messages to larger audience.

Mr. Obinna Anozie made the reference to several regulations, policy documents which would be useful to develop policies and legislations to implement the SSF Guidelines in Nigeria. He noted that the Inland Fisheries Act (1992) and the Sea Fisheries Act (1992) had been updated in 2011 but not implemented till date. He commented that the HRA must be adequately represented in the current fisheries Act so that they reflect the small scale fisheries. At the continental level, he mentioned instruments such as the African Fisheries Reform Mechanism (AFRM) which has seven working groups of which small scale fisheries is one group, the Inland Fisheries Management System, the Policy Framework and Reform Strategy takes into cognisance the provision of SSF Guidelines which has seven pillars and the small-scale fisheries is one of them with objectives and outcomes, and a 10 Year Action Plan for Small Scale Fisheries Development in Africa. Finally, Mr. Obinna stated that he is ready to offer assistance at any point in time to participate in the SSF Guidelines implementation in Nigeria.