



JOINT COMMUNIQUE

Conclusions of the East Africa Consultation Workshop on improving small-scale fisheries in the context of food security and poverty eradication

FAO Sub-Regional Office for Eastern Africa, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
15-18 September 2015

INTRODUCTION AND INITIAL FINDINGS

The *East Africa Consultation Workshop on improving small-scale fisheries in the context of food security and poverty eradication* was held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, on 15-18 September 2015. It was hosted by the FAO Sub-Regional Office for Eastern Africa. The workshop was attended by a total of 38 participants from Burundi, Djibouti, Ethiopia Kenya, Rwanda, Somalia, South Sudan, Tanzania and Uganda, including representatives of governments, regional organisations/Regional Fishery Bodies (RFBs), Civil Society Organization (CSOs)/non-state actors, NGOs, research institutions, academia, other relevant actors as well as FAO staff and resource persons.

The overall objective of the workshop was to facilitate the understanding of the principles of the *Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication* (SSF Guidelines) and their application in order to support sustainable small-scale fisheries and Blue Growth. During the three and a half days, participants examined the current status of Small-Scale Fisheries (SSF) in the region and shared experiences through country and topical presentations, and discussed priorities and actions for implementing the SSF Guidelines at regional and national levels.

The workshop noted that small-scale fisheries employ the bulk of fishers and fish workers in the region and contribute substantially to food security and livelihoods through their role in providing nutritious food and generating local and national incomes. Inland fisheries are particularly important in many countries of the region. There are many aquatic resources, including freshwater and marine resources, that are shared by two or several countries and the regional aspects of small-scale fisheries are hence important.

The workshop noted the many already on-going initiatives, good practices and opportunities for supporting small-scale fisheries in the region. Some important activities have already taken place, e.g. consultation meetings in Tanzania and Somalia, and a regional meeting for non-state actor organisations convened by the AU-IBAR/NPCA¹. Still, there are many challenges and constraints to address before secure and sustainable small-scale fisheries are a reality. Accordingly, the workshop called upon all stakeholders to promote the application of the principles of the SSF Guidelines at all levels. The role of CSOs was particularly emphasised and the need to collaborate with governments stressed.

¹ African Union Interafrican Bureau for Animal Resources (AU-IBAR) and the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) Planning and Coordinating Agency (NPCA).

The workshop acknowledged the comprehensiveness of the SSF Guidelines as well as the need to take a holistic and human rights based approach to small-scale fisheries governance and development. The links between the SSF Guidelines and the *Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security* were also acknowledged and their relevance to fisheries noted.

The workshop recognised that the implementation of the SSF Guidelines should be anchored at the local and national levels but that regional attention and support would also be required to address transboundary fisheries related issues. The role of the African Union (AU) and the work done by the AU-IBAR/NPCA on developing an African Policy Framework and Reform Strategy for fisheries and aquaculture was appreciated. This strategy includes a thematic area on sustainable small-scale fisheries development with specific reference to the SSF Guidelines. The importance of the Lake Tanganyika Authority (LTA) and the Lake Victoria Fisheries Organisation (LVFO) was acknowledged and the need for strengthened collaboration among concerned countries also with regard to other shared resources noted.

OUTCOMES OF WORKING GROUP DISCUSSIONS

Key priority areas of actions to be considered further in national and regional implementation planning processes proposed by the workshop included:

Governance of tenure in SSF and resources management (chapter 5 of the SSF Guidelines)

- Secure tenure for small-scale fishing communities with regard to fishery resources and land needs to be ensured. Land use legislation needs to contain provisions for consultations with all stakeholders, specifically including small-scale fisheries actors, and land use plans should be developed with the involvement of small-scale fishes and fish workers.
- Existing zones and preferential access arrangements for small-scale fisheries need to be protected. Participatory enforcement mechanisms should be developed, building on existing good practices in the region.
- The capacity and organisations of small-scale fisheries actors need to be strengthened so that they can effectively participate in decision-making processes relating to small-scale fisheries governance. Also, structures for co-management and shared decision-making need to be established/strengthened at all levels.
- There is a need for harmonisation of policy frameworks and fishery regulations on shared water bodies and for shared fishery resources. Management plans should be developed accordingly and experiences from other parts of Africa shared.
- Inter-ministerial collaboration – as well as coordination with other actors – on small-scale fisheries governance and development is needed. A first practical step towards establishing a structure for such collaboration and coordination at the national level could be for the fisheries authority to request an inter-ministerial technical consultative meeting.
- The application of the ecosystem approach to fisheries (EAF) as a model for developing small-scale fisheries management should be promoted.

Social development, employment and decent work and gender equality (chapter 6+8 of the SSF Guidelines)

- Access to amenities, facilities and services for small-scale fishing communities should be improved as part of fulfilling basic human and social needs. Existing regional information should be analysed to inform this. Linkages with relevant government agencies, mobilisation of community action and lobbying by CSOs in this respect will be required.



- The current focus of fisheries management on the resource should be shifted to a more people-focused approach to small-scale fisheries governance. Small-scale fisheries actors should be part of relevant processes, fisheries management structures should allow for their effective participation and small-scale fisheries organisations strengthened to ensure true representation at all levels.
- The availability of financial services and insurance schemes for small-scale fisheries actors should be enhanced, based on assessed needs of small-scale fisheries, strengthening fisher groups, and facilitating communication regarding the use and need for financial instruments between fisheries actors and banks. Relevant good practices, including the development of small-medium enterprises, should be shared across the region.
- The often poor standard of living, lack of decent working conditions and discriminatory policies need to be addressed including through the professionalization of small-scale fisheries, compliance with existing labour instruments and guidance, such as on safety at sea and Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) regulations, and capacity development of fishers. At the regional level, harmonised operationalization of safety at sea/security instruments, including adoption of ILO and IMO² standard for training, should be promoted.
- Efforts should be made to build entrepreneurial capacity for alternative and complementary livelihood opportunities to help reduce the vulnerability of small-scale fisheries actors and mitigate their reliance on fisheries as the main source of income.
- Compliance with and implementation of existing gender instruments need to be strengthened, including through empowerment of and affirmative action for women.

Value chains, post-harvest and trade (chapter 7 of the SSF Guidelines)

- Improved landing, processing and marketing infrastructures (including access roads) and enhanced data collection and information systems need to be established for promoting equal market access for small-scale fisheries actors. Fishery related trade laws need to be reviewed and harmonised in the region.
- Fish value chain actors should be actively involved in decision making processes and representative fora, inclusive of all small-scale fisheries value chain actors, need to be established.
- Women, vulnerable and marginalized groups should be fully engaged in a dignified and respected manner and their contribution to small-scale fisheries recognized. Access to market information and amenities, capacity building – including on technical skills and social awareness – should be provided to these groups.
- Appropriate infrastructures for small-scale fisheries need to be developed, post-harvest losses reduced to a minimum and value addition enhanced. Bottlenecks and opportunities should be identified and capacity building with respect to fish handling, processing, value addition and marketing promoted.
- Enabling regulations, guidelines and harmonised fish product quality standards should be promoted to provide an enabling environment.

Disaster risks and climate change (chapter 9 of the SSF Guidelines)

- Small-scale fisheries actors need to leverage existing climate change strategies within their countries to have access to funds and insurance for climate change adaptation, and their needs should be integrated in disaster risk and climate change studies, policies and action plans.

² International Labour Organization (ILO) and International Maritime Organization (IMO).



NEXT STEPS

To realize the proposed actions, broad collaboration and support are needed from governments, and national and regional organizations, including RFBs, and other actors. This will require awareness raising and political will. The workshop identified the following next steps to promote collaboration and make progress on SSF Guidelines implementation at the national and regional levels:

Immediate follow-up in 2015:

- *Workshop participants* should share the workshop results with their colleagues and respective organizations upon their return. They should also report on the workshop outcomes, raise awareness and disseminate the SSF Guidelines at ministerial meetings, report to ministers, have targeted meetings with Members of Parliament (MPs) and identify other opportunities for putting small-scale fisheries on meeting and event agendas;
- The workshop results should be presented at the forthcoming *AU-IBAR/NPCA* “Think Tank meeting on governance and management of small-scale fisheries in the African context and its contribution to the African agricultural transformation agenda” to take place in October 2015;
- *RFBs* should submit the SSF Guidelines to their statutory bodies for consideration, adoption and monitoring of implementation.
- *Governments, with the support of research institutions, FAO and relevant stakeholders*, should translate the SSF Guidelines into national/local languages and develop popular, or simplified, versions and communication materials appropriate for small-scale fisheries actors and other stakeholders;
- *CSOs* should share the SSF Guidelines with their members;
- *CSOs, governments, RFBs and other stakeholders* should organize celebrations of World Fisheries Day on 21 November to promote the principles of the SSF Guidelines;

In 2016 (and onwards):

- *Workshop participants* should organize, in collaboration with partners and small-scale fisheries actors, national workshops to raise awareness on the SSF Guidelines and to initiate the establishment of national level multi-stakeholder platform;
- The *AU-IBAR/NPCA* should report on the workshop results and follow-up actions at national level to the next Conference of African Ministers of Fisheries and Aquaculture (CAMFA) meeting in 2016;
- The *AU-IBAR/NPCA in collaboration with FAO* should organise consultative workshops in other African regions along the lines of this Eastern African workshop. The AU-IBAR/NPCA should also continue to support SSF Guidelines implementation at the continental level including regional activities identified by the workshop, as appropriate and required, and continued engagement in the non-state actor platform.
- *RFBs* should support the celebrations of the World Fisheries Day at the regional level by organizing a follow-up event with a view to evaluate progress and further disseminate information on small-scale fisheries;
- *RFBs* should support experience sharing and communication among stakeholders and actors in the region;
- *Governments, RFBs and CSOs* should investigate possible partnerships and develop proposals for funding by development partners.
- *Governments and RFBs* should report on progress with regard to SSF Guidelines implementation to the FAO Committee on Fisheries (COFI) and the Sub-Committee on fish trade.



- *Governments* should initiate or continue the alignment of policies with the principles of the SSF Guidelines and develop national plans of action to ensure their implementation;
- *CSOs* should support the strengthening of small-scale fisheries actor organisations at local and national levels across the region;
- The *Too Big To Ignore (TBTI) research network* should engage with small-scale fisheries stakeholders in the region. *Governments and other stakeholders* are advised to communicate research needs to the TBTI.
- Ongoing and planned regional and national *projects* (e.g. SMARTFISH) should be encouraged to integrate or continue their efforts to promote the SSF Guidelines implementation in their work plans;
- *FAO* should continue to provide technical support, including with regard to awareness raising and implementation planning processes, and the development and dissemination of information and communication materials.

Participants thanked the FAO Sub-Regional Office for East Africa for hosting the workshop and expressed their appreciation of the hospitality of the people of Ethiopia.

Addis Ababa, 18 September 2015

