

# Implementing the VG SSF as a critical strategy in the economic empowerment of women

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**IORA Women's  
Economic  
Empowerment  
Event**



FAO, Africa



# Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication

## Gender analysis

- Recognises the importance of empowering men and women to participate in decision-making processes (Objectives)
- Voices of both men and women are heard in the application of the guidelines (Nature and Scope)



Dharmesh Shah

Recognise that women are significant actors in SSF (Foreword) and that half those employed in SSF are women (Preface)

# Cross cutting issues



- Focus on women
- Marginalised and vulnerable groups
- Indigenous communities
- Traditional knowledge
- Participation of the community



# All have a role to play

FAO looks at collaboration for implementation with

**governments, small-scale fishers, fish workers and their organizations, CSOs, research and academia, private sector, donor community**

“All non-state actors including business enterprises related to or affecting small-scale fisheries have a responsibility to respect human rights.”

# The guiding principles

Recognize the importance of adhering to **human rights standards** and gender equality as fundamental to development

Encourage **women leadership** and take into account Art. 5 of the CEDAW



Modesta Medard, Tanzania



# Gender Equality

- Recognize that achieving gender equality requires concerted efforts, different approaches and should challenge practices (8.1)
- Endeavour to secure women's equal participation in decision-making processes... ; adopt specific measures to address discrimination against women ... " (8.2)
- States should establish policies and legislation to realize gender equality and adapt those that don't. Ensure women's equal access to extension services and technical access. (8.3, 8.4)

# Responsible governance of tenure

Support equitable distribution of the benefits yielded from responsible management of fisheries (5.1)



Noor Aida, Indonesia





# Responsible governance of tenure

- Ensuring through legislation secure, equitable, and socially and culturally appropriate tenure rights to fishery resources, with a special attention paid to women (5.3, 5.4)
- Eliminate any form of discrimination against women in tenure practices in case of natural disasters and/or armed conflict (5.12)



# Sustainable resource management

Involve SSF with equitable representation of women in management of resources, including protected areas (5.15)

Encourage and support the role and involvement of both men and women, in pre-harvest, harvest or post-harvest operations, in the context of co-management and in the promotion of responsible fisheries... ensuring equitable participation of women (5.18)



Mwambo, Tanzania



# Social development, employment and decent work

- Recognise the economic and professional operations along the value chain and promote professional and organizational development opportunities for women (6.6)
- Ensure an environment free from crime, violence and abuse and ensure justice to victims (6.10); eliminate forced labour and prevent debt bondage (6.14)



# Social development, employment and decent work

Promote investment in HRD and ensure affordable access to essential services and to savings and credit; preferential treatment to women if necessary (6.2, 6.5, 6.15)





# Value chains, post-harvest and trade

Recognise the unequal power relationships between value chain actors; the vital role of women in the post harvest subsector (7.1, 7.2)



# Value chains, post-harvest and trade

- Ensure amenities and services are available... (7.2, 7.3)
- Recognise and support forms of associations and cooperatives of women, build capacities and have access to marketing mechanisms, trade information (7.4, 7.6, 7.10)



# Disaster risks and climate change

Consult with women and men in SSF when developing policies and strategies to ensure climate change adaptation and mitigation and building resilience.  
(9.2)



# Disaster risks and climate change

Special support be given to small-scale fishing communities living on small islands where climate change may have particular implications for food security, nutrition, housing and livelihoods. (9.2)



Jayanta Basu, India





# Ensuring an enabling environment and supporting implementation

- Policy coherence, institutional coordination and collaboration with special attention paid to ensuring gender equity and equality (10.1)
- Gender sensitive policies in spatial planning (10.2); Gender-disaggregated data in official statistics (11.1)
- Gender analysis in SSF research & programme planning to inform strategies for ensuring equitable benefits; in design of policies, programmes; gender sensitive indicators for monitoring (11.10, 13.4)



Recognise the specific knowledge of women fishers and fishworkers (11.6)



# Capacity development

- Ensure the equitable participation of women in representative structures in SSF subsector along the entire value chain; enable women to organize autonomously at various levels (12.1)
- Develop materials for effective dissemination of information on gender and women's role in SSF..." (13.3)



# Lacunae in the VGSSF

- Does not explain **what** gender issues in SSF are exactly nor the **impact** of unequal power relations for sustainable development or community wellbeing
- Focus is on gender mainstreaming rather than transformational change
- Inclusive approach is no guarantee to equal benefits or that policies and programmes will reflect these
- Unclear how gender issues will be dealt with since VGSSF “should be interpreted and applied in accordance with national legal systems and their institutions”



# Taking the VGSSF forward

- Provide an enabling policy environment through **national legislation**
  - Strengthen **women's organisations** through capacity building initiatives, leadership training & exchange visits
  - Promote women's **economic empowerment** through entrepreneurial training among women actively involved in post-harvest and related value chain activities
  - Ensure women are included in **decision-making** bodies at all levels
  - Take up issues of **rights and access** to fisheries resources, land and property
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- ICSF, Thailand
- Improve the **work conditions** of women - fish markets, transport, harbours
  - Include women in **social protection** programmes by insisting on the term fishworker



# Taking the VGSSF forward

- Link fisheries issues to the **larger debates** on agriculture, food security
- Involve **men** in gender empowerment initiatives
- Conduct national and regional workshops on the implementation of the **SSF guidelines**, with focus on gender dimensions
- Collect gender disaggregated **data** and conduct **research** to highlight women's contribution to SSF, and their needs
- Develop simplified and culturally appropriate **material** for women in fisheries



“It is vital to pay specific attention to securing the economic, social and cultural rights of women in fishing communities, including their rights to fishery resources, to coastal lands inhabited and used by them, to credit and transport, to appropriate infrastructure, facilities and services for fish processing and marketing, to basic amenities and services, and to decision-making processes affecting their lives and livelihoods.”

Chandrika Sharma *“Securing economic, social and cultural rights of small-scale and artisanal fisherworkers and fishing communities”*, MAST 2011, 10(2): 41-61



## KEEPING QUIET

by Pablo Neruda

Now we will count to twelve  
and we will all keep still.

For once on the face of the earth,  
let's not speak in any language;  
let's stop for one second,  
and not move our arms so much.

It would be an exotic moment  
without rush, without engines;  
we would all be together  
in a sudden strangeness.

Fisherman in the cold sea  
would not harm whales  
and the man gathering salt  
would look at his hurt hands.

Those who prepare green wars,  
wars with gas, wars with fire,  
victories with no survivors,  
would put on clean clothes  
and walk about with their brothers  
in the shade, doing nothing.

What I want should not be confused  
with total inactivity.  
Life is what it is about;  
I want no truck with death.

If we were not so single-minded  
about keeping our lives moving,  
and for once could do nothing,  
perhaps a huge silence  
might interrupt this sadness  
of never understanding ourselves  
and of threatening ourselves with death.  
Perhaps the earth can teach us  
as when everything seems dead  
and later proves to be alive.

Now I'll count up to twelve  
and you keep quiet and I will go.

FROM EXTRANGERA (TRANSLATED BY ALASTAIR REID, PP. 27-29, 1974)