

Small-scale Hopes

A national consultation workshop on sustainable development of small-scale fisheries in Vietnam was held recently in Hanoi

A national consultation workshop on sustainable development of small-scale fisheries in Vietnam, and the international guidelines on sustainable small-scale fisheries proposed by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) was held during 1-2 November 2012 in Hanoi.

The workshop was organized by the Department of Capture Fisheries and Resources Protection

participation in sustainable fisheries management.

Vietnam's fisheries sector plays an important role in the country's economic development, in labour and income generation, and in food security and poverty alleviation, both in urban and suburban areas. There are around 4.7 mn Vietnamese workers in the fisheries sector, involved in capture, aquaculture, fish processing and allied services. In 2011, the country's total fisheries production was 5.2 mn tonnes, and exports of fish products were valued at US\$6 bn, accounting for 24.44 per cent of agricultural exports and 6.34 per cent of total exports.

The Hanoi workshop focused on four primary areas:

- sharing of information on small-scale fisheries in Vietnam, including the roles, issues and challenges relevant to specific human-development needs, fishery-based livelihoods in inland and marine regions, food security, poverty alleviation and sustainable use of fishery resources
- contributing to the proposed guidelines of FAO on small-scale fisheries through the opinions of stakeholders in the context of Vietnam
- strengthening the knowledge and capacity, and improving the roles, of civil society organizations in the development of sustainable fisheries
- enhancing co-operative networks among government agencies and fisheries associations, and creating opportunities to enable them to participate in decision-making processes

The topics covered at the workshop dealt with the challenges that small-scale fisheries and fishers in Vietnam face...

(DECAFIREP) of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD), in co-operation with the Centre for Marinelife Conservation and Community Development (MCD) and the Vietnam Fisheries Society (VINAFISH), with support from the International Collective in Support of Fishworkers (ICSF).

Sixty participants from national and local authorities, fisheries organizations and associations, non governmental organizations (NGOs) and fishermen representatives attended the workshop.

The topics covered at the workshop dealt with the challenges that small-scale fisheries and fishers in Vietnam face, namely, the lack of financial resources; unstable production; environmental impacts (including from natural disasters and climate change); market-led approaches; and limited

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At the Hanoi workshop, participants discussed key issues related to registration and safety, value chain, gender and climate change, and how to improve benefits for small-scale fishers. They also proposed solutions and recommendations for sustainable fisheries management.

Throughout the workshop, participants stressed the importance of small-scale fisheries in terms of policy development. Although Vietnam has in place policies on small-scale fisheries, such as the Fisheries Law and other important legislation, gaps still exist in the implementation of these policies at the local level, which are needed to sustain the communities' livelihoods and protect natural resources.

Emphasizing the significance of the Hanoi workshop for the sustainable development of Vietnam's small-scale fisheries, the MCD presentation on the key policy recommendations led to interesting panel discussions. Tran Cao Muu, General Secretary of VINAFIS, said: 'Small-scale fisheries play a large role in creating jobs and exploiting coastal resources locally and globally. FAO and Vietnam, therefore, share common concerns about the direction and organization of activities of the sector. In our framework, effective solutions have been raised to ensure civil rights and prevent destructive fishing. Innovation is suggested to rehabilitate coastal resources, help the transition of economic systems, and create a model for the production value chain and co-management that will ensure a more sustainable development of Vietnamese small-scale fisheries'.

According to statistics presented at the workshop, as of 2011, there were around 128,000 fishing vessels in the country, with a total capacity of 6.4 mn vessel capacity units (VCUs), which employed millions of people. Production from the small-scale fisheries sector accounted for about 69 per cent of the total annual fisheries production. Small-scale fishers have targeted species like shrimp, crab, octopus and squid for export.

Chu TienVinh, the former Deputy Director of the General Department of Vietnam Fisheries, said that it was necessary to develop the fisheries sector into one that could produce competitive branded goods of high quality and repute so that the traditional fisheries sector could be transformed into a modern one. Research on environmental resources, and gathering time-series data on coastal fishing activities were the basic inputs needed for production planning in each region. It is also important to re-organize production at sea and develop co-operative models of fisheries management and production, while simultaneously enhancing the role of women in fisheries, it was stressed.

Nguyen Quang Vinh Binh, Vice President of the Fishery Association in Thua Thien Hue province in central Vietnam, where lagoons are located, said: "Fishery associations should have access to fishing rights, so that they are able to manage fishing activities. Fishery associations should re-organize fishing grounds in a way that can sustain the traditional fishing areas of people and families who are members of the association. At the same time, they can facilitate and provide support for fishermen who legally practise fishing in a creative, well-organized and effective

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Nguyen Thu Hue, Director, MCD, Nguyen Quang Vinh Binh, Vice President, Fishery Association, Thua Thien Hue province, Tran Cao Muu, General Secretary, VINAFIS, and Chu Tien Vinh, Former Deputy Director, General Directorate of Fisheries, MARD

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Inaugural session of the national workshop on FAO IGSSF, held at Hanoi, Vietnam, during 1-2 November 2012

way. Fishery associations also have the right to eliminate members who repeatedly make serious mistakes in disregarding the rules of the organization or who engage in activities that adversely affect the natural environment and aquatic resources. In the Thua Thien Hue province, there are about 6,000 members organized into 65 official fishery associations. Of those, 22 have been given fishing rights by the district authorities, and about 10,000 ha and seven fishery associations are involved in the management of fishery conservation areas”.

The outcome of the Hanoi workshop is expected to be shared widely in the run-up to the international FAO workshop in Rome in 2013. 3

For more



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