

## **2<sup>nd</sup> Global SSF SUMMIT 2024**

**FAO Headquarters, Rome, Italy**

**5-7 July 2024**

### **The Diverse Experiences of Small-Scale Fisheries**

This report summarizes the experiences of Small-Scale Fisheries highlighting the successes, challenges, and ongoing efforts of SSF communities and support organizations from different regions.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> SSF Summit provided a space for SSF community representatives to share their stories, challenges, and visions. The SSF as a sector is characterized by a diversity of experience while sharing similar struggles.

#### **Marginalization and Exclusion**

The summit highlighted the development of the "blue economy" and its detrimental impact on small-scale fisheries, often prioritizing larger commercial interests. Additionally, small-scale fishers frequently lack representation and influence in policy decisions that directly affect their fishing grounds and livelihoods. The call for greater inclusion in the Committee on Fisheries agenda underscores this ongoing struggle.

#### **Insecurity and Threats to Livelihoods**

A lack of secure tenure rights makes small-scale fishers vulnerable to displacement, often due to competing interests like tourism or large-scale aquaculture. Among critical issues within SSF is the "resource grabbing" that serves as a threat to many communities, indicating that small-scale fishers often face competition for resources from more powerful actors. Furthermore, the vulnerability of small-scale fishers to climate change is emphasized, with changing fish stocks and environmental degradation directly impacting their ability to fish.

#### **Social and Economic Vulnerability**

The summit also highlighted the lack of basic infrastructure and services in many small-scale fishing communities, further exacerbating poverty. Additionally, the experiences of women in small-scale fisheries are specifically mentioned, highlighting their often-invisible contributions and limited access to resources and decision-making power.

#### **Need for Recognition and Empowerment**

This summit underscored the vital role small-scale fisheries play in global food security; a contribution often overlooked in favor of larger-scale fisheries. There is a clear call for supporting and empowering small-scale fishers to engage in sustainable fishing practices, recognizing their deep understanding of local ecosystems. The need for capacity building, particularly for women, is

also highlighted to ensure small-scale fishers can advocate for their rights and participate effectively in decision-making processes.

Overall, the SSF Summit painted a picture of small-scale fisheries facing significant challenges related to marginalization, resource insecurity, and social vulnerability. However, it also emphasizes their importance to food security and the need for greater recognition, support, and empowerment to ensure their sustainability and well-being.

## **DAY 1 – 2<sup>nd</sup> SSF Summit 2024**

### **Opening**

Nadine Nembhard welcomed the participants to the 2<sup>nd</sup> SSF Summit, highlighting the event as a venue for collaboration among small-scale fishers and introducing the ground rules for the SSF Summit.

Gaoussou Gueye discussed the 10th anniversary of the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries, sharing the stories of women and men fishers. The Summit and the Committee on Fisheries provide fishers with the opportunity to advocate for their welfare in the face of worsening climate change that deprives their communities of resources. The Confederation of African Artisanal Fisheries Organizations and its members call on governments and organizations to take action to support SSFs in their struggle. The SSF Guidelines emphasizes the critical commitments on protected areas, tenure, and the use and trade of fisheries resources, and their significance for women and indigenous communities. The development of the "blue economy" has been exclusionary of the most important stakeholders in the fishery sector. The group is calling for governments to adopt a more sustainable use of water resources, commission impact studies that include the affected communities, and implement mechanisms to promote transparency. The SSF Guidelines calls for strengthening alliances between men and women from artisanal fishing communities to advance the voluntary guidelines. As stakeholders who know more about their situation, the participation of SSFs must maintain an inclusive venue that allows everyone to participate in promoting the guidelines.

### **Plenary Session**

The first panel featured Herman Kumara, Josana Serrao Pinto, and Carmen Mannarino, who aimed to contextualize small-scale fisheries in today's global context through sharing experiences from Asia, Latin America, and Africa.

Maira Netto, from MPP Brazil, presented a report on the Ocean, Water and Fisher People's Tribunal. The report highlighted the need to protect SSF communities' way of life from the capitalist "blue economy" development, which favors unsustainable industrialization and aquaculture. The report serves as an important expression of solidarity, recognizing the role and needs of women, and adopting a human rights-based approach to amplify the voices of marginalized communities. The report examined 93 cases from 5 countries in Asia and Brazil, and recognized artisanal fisherwomen as key actors in advancing the agenda of the People's Tribunal.

The panelists explained their motivations for organizing the People's Tribunal. Herman cited the need to address the degradation of fisheries resources caused by unsustainable practices and the extractive industry, rooted in exploitative actions facilitated by neoliberal policies. Josana highlighted the recognition of the need for an instrument that reflects the reality of fishers, including men, women, and youth. Carmen emphasized the recognition of the climate crisis and the inclusion of experiences from Asia, Brazil, and South Africa to strengthen the analysis.

The panelists discussed how the Tribunal contributes to building solidarity. Herman noted that each community is affected differently, and the Tribunal serves as a venue for sharing. Josana emphasized the Tribunal's relevance as a space for people to be heard and empowered, providing an open opportunity for everyone to participate. Carmen recognized the common challenges faced by the communities, even if their struggles may appear different, and how the Tribunal allows them to see themselves in others and collectively address these challenges.

The panelists also explained how the Tribunal and its evidence contribute to the struggles of fishers at the local and global levels. Herman stated that the Tribunal provides empirical evidence to support the fishers' claims, enabling more concrete discussions and negotiations with governments and other relevant actors. Josana highlighted the Tribunal's role in providing a collective space for challenging current realities. Carmen emphasized how the Tribunal's findings can inform and strengthen the implementation of the SSF Guidelines and other relevant instruments.

### **Recommendations from the panel:**

Herman suggested that recognizing existing power structures and analyzing the situation through open dialogue would be productive. He also advocated for unity among fishers to overcome their shared challenges.

Josana emphasized the need to address distrust among people. She argued that adopting the tribunal would provide a platform for fishers to share their struggles and revive a sense of collective hope, which could motivate greater participation and action.

Carmen proposed that replicating the tribunal model could enable fishing communities to develop collective power. However, she acknowledged this would involve a lengthy process of dialogue and evidence gathering to reclaim their rights. She argued the summit should serve as a space for sharing experiences and building solidarity.

### **Short Discussion**

One participant inquired about the next steps to ensure respect for fishers' rights after documenting cases, and how to access or communicate with the People's Tribunal. Another participant asked about the impacts of the Tribunal's successes on small-scale fisheries and governments, while a third participant offered to share a success story. The participant also asked if the Tribunal is similar to the organization in Mauritania that represents different actors, and whether issues related to fish feed could be included. In response, Carmen stated that the People's Tribunal plans to publish a guide on how to establish the Tribunal.

## DAY 2

The day began with a ritual from the El Molo community, led by Christina Louwa, to guide the small-scale fisheries community.

Lorena Ortiz presented the primary findings of a global consultation on customary tenure rights and social development in small-scale fisheries. The presentation emphasized the critical role of tenure rights and social development in governing small-scale fisheries.

Azrilnizam Bin Omar shared the Tagal System, a customary sustainable management system for inland fisheries among the indigenous communities of Sabah and Sarawak, Malaysia. This system involves community agreements on closed fishing seasons, addressing the impact of agricultural activities on the local ecosystem, and addressing pollution. The Tagal System offers protection for river and freshwater resources, as well as income and livelihood opportunities for the local community members.

Margaret Nakato discussed the current challenges with the customary tenure rights system in Uganda, particularly for women, indigenous peoples, and ethnic minorities. Based on national consultations, it was revealed that indigenous peoples have lost their tenure rights due to the introduction of formal regulations and military enforcement in Uganda. This serves as a criticism of the one-size-fits-all approach to governance of tenure, which can be detrimental to small-scale fishing communities.

Laitia Tamata, from the Pacific Community in Fiji, called on decision-makers, countries, and donors to support and develop financial mechanisms that directly assist small-scale fisheries in managing their fishery resources. He also encouraged everyone to reflect on the question: What would you leave behind?

Sebastian Mathew presented country-level case studies on social development as a process of institutional transformation towards overall well-being. These case studies highlighted the need to address the challenges faced by marginalized groups, including small-scale fishing communities. The transformation can be community-led or state-led, and it encompasses a broader notion of social security and social protection beyond just government-provided benefits. The case studies also emphasized the importance of promoting occupational health and eradicating forced labor as central to social development. The positive impact of investing in social development in the small-scale fisheries context was highlighted, including the need to consider migrant fishers who may be excluded from geographically-specific interventions. The case studies from Antigua and Barbuda, and Costa Rica, revealed the challenges faced by small-scale fishing communities, such as tenure rights issues and the exclusion of informal workers from social services.

Aracelly Jimenez Mora shared her experience as a mollusk cultivator and member of the CoopeMoluscosChomes in Costa Rica. She explained that their way of life and work is not currently acknowledged and is considered informal, leaving them without access to the same.

The session concluded with the audience members reflecting on the need to recognize the diversity of small-scale fisheries contexts, the importance of customary tenure systems, and the centrality of social development to improving the livelihoods and well-being.

Parallel sessions were then held for participants to delve deeper into the two key themes of the summit: social development and tenure.

The discussion covered experiences and challenges related to social development and customary tenure rights in small-scale fisheries. Participants shared their stories and insights.

*Social Development:*

- Concerns about lack of access to basic services, infrastructure, and social protection for fishing communities, especially for vulnerable groups like women, children, and migrants.
- Examples of self-sustaining initiatives by fisherwomen's groups providing credit and savings support.
- Need for governments to recognize and integrate traditional practices and knowledge into policies and development plans.

*Customary Tenure Rights:*

- Threats to customary tenure systems due to industrialization, conservation efforts, and policies favoring large-scale operations.
- Lack of recognition and protection of customary rights, particularly for marginalized groups like indigenous peoples.
- Strategies suggested include clearly articulating and strengthening customary systems, as well as ensuring meaningful consultation in policy decisions.

The group agreed on the importance of addressing common challenges around social development and customary tenure to improve the wellbeing and livelihoods of small-scale fishers.

**Regional Group Parallel Sessions:**

**Africa Group**

Facilitators: Margaret Nakato (Uganda) and Editrudith Lukanga (Tanzania)

Notetaker: Elyse Mills (ICSF)

Group representative for report back: Suzanne Njeri (AWFISHNET, Kenya)

*Sharing cases and experiences on tenure rights and social development:*

- Gambia: Tenure rights is no longer what it was. Biodiversity is being impacted by both climate change and human activities. Weak policies denounce our rights as fishers. Issue is

fishmeal production is having a huge impact on fishers' access to resources and fishing areas.

- We need to make a concerted effort in protecting our natural resources.
  - We need to articulate our tenure systems clearly. How do we strongly preserve our existing tenure systems?
  - Big campaigns for aquaculture development, and big expenses made to expand aquaculture.
  - I challenge this group to come up with solutions and guidelines for protecting self-sustaining tenure systems.
- Congo: Tenure rights for women that process fish. Our claims were not taken into account. Fish processing is a complicated task, with many smells and flies around. It's an activity that can be annoying for neighboring communities. We have been campaigning to get designated areas to do our processing. In my site, I have no access to water, and a company has purchased the land to exploit the sand to build houses. I feel powerless to protect my land. We need specific sites for landing and processing fish to be able to do our work without issues.
  - Togo: Member of AWFISHNET. In Togo, the chair of our cooperative did a lot of work to find a suitable relocation area for us to do our processing work.
    - In terms of social development, we need adequate and relevant tools and conditions to carry out our work. When governments design fishing ports, they need to be mindful of having proper processing sites there. Women are often carrying their child on their backs while processing - this is not acceptable. They need to also benefit from the welfare system to access childcare.
  - Mauritania: We don't have a great fishing culture, but we do have fishing communities on the shore. They have developed a special technique with dolphins to be able to fish. We don't have a tenure problem, because by law there is no private ownership on the coast. We have an area that is planned to become an MPA, but it is a place that many fishers fish in. There are plans to install some infrastructure.
    - For social development, small-scale fishing has played a part in social development. It brings in money and employs several thousand people.
    - A big problem is competition from the blue economy, specially making fishmeal to feed other fish.
  - Nigeria: Concern of social development of fisherfolks. The only time governments remember fishers is during election times when politicians want their support.
    - No potable water - drinking water is also used for bathing, cleaning, etc.
    - No good schools in fishing communities.
    - Impacts from the blue economy, oil companies.

- Would be good to know more about the modalities of the tribunals so we can also see how to do this process in our countries.
- Uganda: Militarization of the fisheries sector, particularly in small-scale fishing communities. This has a direct impact on decent work. There is no decent work when fishers are always on the run. Fishers are arrested for no reason, just for fishing.
- Benin: People in fishing tend to be marginalized. Fishers have no insurance, but they are part of the workforce of the country.
- Nigeria: A group of women who are self-sustaining which was founded by women. They were trained by FAO on credit and savings. The women have been able to sustain this system for more than 8 years, despite a weak national economy. The NGO that they started off with, gave out some capital to get started, and now the women give out small loans to other local women with low interest rates.
- Gambia: Most of our fishing grounds have been given to industry and development projects. No microfinance services have been given to fishers, and no hospitals are available.
- Kenya: The government does not recognize that fishers are doing this work as part of their culture for sustaining themselves and their communities. When we have discussions at the national level, they are just copying language at the international level without taking customary tenure into account.
  - Local people have their own way of managing their resources, lakes and rivers, and it has worked for them for many years. Traditional knowledge is very key here to ensuring their survival. Governments need to reflect this knowledge in their policies.
- France: Consultation with fisherfolks and people living on the shore is limited when developing plans for MPAs. In meetings, they make them sign a participation sheet and then say they have consulted the communities, which is hardly true.
  - In the Seychelles, 30% of the area became a protected area without any consultation.
- South Africa: Social development of inland fisheries. There is only a policy for marine fisheries, not inland. AWFISHNET is sitting on the inland fisheries task force, but there are no resources and bad coordination meaning we don't have opportunities to meet.
- Namibia: We do not have a specific customary tenure system, but with the support of FAO, we came up with a national plan of action toward developing a legal framework under which SSF would be recognized.
- South Africa: Issue of how conservation impacts tenure rights. There is a tendency for the government to think that customary tenure rights mean anyone can go to fish. Thousands of licenses are given out to industrial boats, but the fisheries management practices are based on Western models which don't fit the African context.
- Tanzania: Issue of safety at sea, there are significant numbers of fishers drowning. We talk a lot about food security in fisheries, but we don't spend enough time talking about the risks of fisheries. How can we come up with strategies to increase safety in SSF?

- Uganda: Climate change is already impacting infrastructure in fisheries. In Uganda, there is a big processing factory that is already underwater and unusable. Climate policies must take fishing communities and activities into account.

### **Asia and the Pacific Group**

Facilitators: Velia Lucidi (IPC), Cornelia Quist (ICSF) and Azril Jaring (Malaysia)

Notetaker: Ronald Rodriguez (ICSF)

Objective: Identify common themes and action points/calls to action to be presented

Process: The group agreed to tackle the questions as a plenary

Countries: India, Philippines, Bangladesh, Indonesia, Fiji, Samoa, Sri Lanka, Thailand

#### *Sharing cases and experiences on tenure rights and social development:*

Customary tenure rights and Social Development - Practices on community-led resource governance exist:

The SSF Guidelines recognize the link between Tenure and Social Development. Tenure, both formal and customary, serves as a prerequisite to access to social services.

- Sri Lanka's Padul System allows SSF members to share resources by assigning specific access conditions through a quota system, ensuring equitable access to prawn resources. However, the system restricts access to the male heads of households, and the government's new fisheries law may remove this community-based management approach.
- Fiji's customary tenure on sea cucumber harvesting adopts a co-management system among tribal clans, who have traditional ownership over the land, adjacent waters, and marine resources. While current legislation encourages local communities to manage resources as a requirement to retain their tenure rights, the decision-making process remains within the community and is led by the chief. Despite the recognition of customary tenure and traditional resource management practices, government support and funding are limited. Nonetheless, women in the community are becoming more active in decision-making and contributing their local knowledge.
- There are signs of overfishing in the small fishing grounds, which is expected to have a significant impact on the community. Traditional fishing methods are being replaced by other methods that contribute to overfishing.
- The Philippines provides preferential rights for small-scale fishers, prohibiting commercial fishing operations within designated fishing grounds. Small-scale fishers are represented in policy and decision-making through the Fisheries and Aquatic Resources Management Councils, allowing them to directly participate in resource management and enforcement. Women are well-represented in these councils and are formally recognized through the



country's fisherfolk registration. The fishers are also directly involved in monitoring their associations and cooperatives, and the MFARMCs actively encourage women's participation in fisheries.

- Indonesia's Sasi is an example of strong marine management by the indigenous community. While there is a clear division of labor between men and women fishers, the men remain more powerful in decision-making.
- In the past, social insurance for fishers was mandatory and subsidized by the government. However, this has now been privatized, requiring fishers to pay premiums to access coverage. Fisherfolks are considered informal workers, but new legislation will introduce a new social insurance system that requires local governments to allocate funds.
- India's customary tenure rights are limited to access rights, with no direct ownership of resources. In Kolkata, fisherfolk villages declare protected areas, but this also limits access for other community members. Only accident insurance. Therefore, Fisheries Departments must also prioritize social development initiatives.

### **Proposals:**

- Governments should provide broader social insurance coverage for small-scale fishers.
- Fisheries departments should develop social protection programs specific to the SSF sector.
- Allocate funds for social protection of small-scale fishers.
- Ensure that renewable energy projects in or near coastal communities' benefit SSF communities. Develop guidelines to protect the rights of fishers.
- Protect SSF communities from displacement due to tourism development. Establish a system of cooperation between the community and resorts, supported by the government.
- Recognize the contributions of the SSF community by allocating or returning funds collected from the sector, including license fees and fines.
- Academic, non-government, and other institutions should support customary tenure rights.
- Implement registration systems for SSF that include women and inland fishers.
- Build alliances to ensure protection of community-managed resources.
- Increase the visibility of the SSF sector.
- Legislation must protect customary tenure rights, traditional community practices on resource management, and traditional livelihoods.
- Promote protected zones and community-controlled, government-legitimized fishing areas managed inclusively by small-scale fishers.
- Enhance women's access to markets and resources through price and non-market interventions.

- Adopt 'Local SSF Communities' as an inclusive category recognizing indigenous peoples dependent on inland and marine resources.
- Valorize local and traditional knowledge on management of marine and coastal areas.
- Align community-based fisheries management with the SSF Guidelines.

*Key Message:* Government legislation should protect traditional tenure to ensure equitable access to inland, marine, and coastal resources.

## **Latin America and the Caribbean Group**

Facilitators: Vivienne Solis Rivera and Beatriz Mesquita (ICSF) and Aracelly Jimenez Mora (Costa Rica)

Notetaker: Marvin Fonseca

*Sharing cases and experiences on tenure rights and social development:*

- Vivienne Solís welcomes everyone and highlights the great opportunity to participate in this parallel event, which allows the region to present its position. She recalls that the morning sessions discussed customary tenure and social protection, and invites all participants to discuss two central themes: 1) customary tenure and 2) social protection. A plenary discussion is decided, with Diego Mora and Martha Machazek summarizing the results. The objective is to open a space to discuss and share stories, progress, and experiences, and then define a strategy and propose possible solutions. Finally, Solís invites all participants to introduce themselves and their places of origin.
- Juliana Medina, Colombia, shares that on the issue of customary tenure, fishers have lost tenure over their territories. She notes that in Colombia, there is no governance system, the government does not consult, and small-scale fishers cannot influence decision-making. This has led to a series of impacts on artisanal fishing, originating from the government itself. Native fishers should have governance over the land.
- Jesús Chaves, Costa Rica, agrees with the previous points. In Costa Rica, there is no land tenure; the land belongs to the State. Now, artisanal fishers are being displaced by conservation measures and protected areas. He explains that the only guaranteed space to maintain small-scale fishing activities is the Responsible Fishing Marine Area, which is a co-management of the fishery between the fishers' organization and the Ministry of Fisheries. Chaves reiterates that artisanal fishers in their own communities do not have land tenure. Among many impacts, small-scale fishers cannot access credit. Powerful actors, such as tourism and agricultural companies, are affecting the small-scale artisanal fishing sector.
- Diego Mora, Ecuador, explained that in his region, there are 44 communities. The lands where the fishers have settled are the result of land displacement. He explained that the State owns the mangroves and land in Ecuador.
- Mora commented that in the 1960s, the majority of the mangroves were destroyed for shrimp farming companies. Now, a concession right has been established, which is the product of the historical struggle of the mangrove users. They are granted use of the mangrove for 10 years, but the State does not provide support and only presses for

conservation measures. He explained that they currently live in conflict with other users. Another conflict is related to binational issues, a result of migrations in the southern region.

- Mora concluded his presentation by stating that fishers do not want to be seen by the Ecuadorian State only as ecosystem conservationists, but as co-managers.
- Francisco Villegas, Mexico, shared that the issue of customary tenure in his experience as a Yaqui nation in Sonora, Mexico, is completely different. In Mexico, they have been recognized a right to the territory since 1940. They manage 450,000 hectares, a well-delimited territory with legal backing from the government. However, they face problems of pollution from the nearby large cities. Additionally, wheat farmers contaminate the area with various agricultural chemicals.
- In summary, while they have tenure rights, they are impacted by agrochemical pollution. At times, they observe large quantities of dead fish due to the agricultural toxins.
- Libia Esther Arciniegas, from Colombia, explains that the issue must be analyzed from a broader perspective, as there is a problem of land and sea tenure. The issue should be addressed from a water-centric approach. She spoke about the sea, where conservation reserve areas are being proposed and are displacing maritime fishers. But on the continental side, landowners promoting monocultures, palm oil, and livestock, among other activities, are displacing fishers. Another issue is the introduction of exotic species by commercial companies. She also explains that around wetlands, fishers are fighting to have those areas restored to the wetlands. The solution is that fishers are restoring the marsh areas.
- Marta Machazack, from Panama, explains the fishing zones of the communities, not only in Panama but also in the Mesoamerican region. She explains that fishers are losing their lands due to activities such as tourism and the expansion of conservation efforts. She explains that protected areas have been established without consultation with the fishers. She emphasizes that fishers are part of the ecosystem and fishing areas. We have been threatened by social problems and the climate crisis. Each day there is less biomass. The solution is the empathy of Governments towards fishers and strengthening the capacities of fishers in legal matters.
- Sandra Mesa, from Spain, in addressing the issue of solutions, states that a diagnosis of the situation carried out by academia is needed. Another topic is the participation of women in decision-making bodies in the fishery. Women are fishing professionals. Women are cheap and/or unpaid labor; this must end.
- Cairo Laguna, Nicaragua, invites everyone to consider the issue from a different perspective: who is responsible for the loss of territory?
- Analyzing the issue of land tenure in greater detail, Laguna notes that it is not necessarily linked to the land itself, but rather to the rights of artisanal fishers, who have been displaced by the arrival of industry.
- Another important issue, Laguna points out, is the loss of species, for example due to recreational fishing. These activities have caused us to lose species for artisanal fishing. Fishing areas have also been lost, as well as to tourism, both on land and at sea. Another significant loss is that fishing communities began to develop local aquaculture, which is now being controlled by large companies.
- Laguna also explains that tenure has been lost due to the laws themselves. A legal and judicial revolution is needed to recover areas and species, Laguna concludes.

- Sara Garrido, Chile, laments that in Chile, there is a law that has divided indigenous people and artisanal fishers.
- Antonia Adama, Guinea-Bissau, CAOPA, explains that from her experience, unity is an important strategy to fight for the preservation of land tenure. She explains that in her country, cooperatives have joined together and confronted the government. The organization must be strengthened, and organizations must be united. Strength is required.
- German Hernández, Honduras, explains that he believes it is not enough to discuss these issues at the national level. A commission needs to be formed among fishers, with representatives from around the world, to address the major challenges facing the sector.

### **Proposal:**

It is necessary to make visible the work of women fishers and fishing territories in Brazil.

Alexis Castillo, Nicaragua, points out that according to the discussion, the following 5 points could be considered:

1. Unity
2. Strengthening existing networks.
3. Involvement of other organizations linked to the issue, for example, the Ramsar Convention
4. The Voluntary Guidelines as an instrument for defending fishing rights, particularly tenure.
5. Use of national and international standards that allow review processes and, if necessary, take the issues to the courts

Mitchell Lay, Antigua and Barbuda, notes that the discussion on the issue of tenure should be expanded to the topic of social development and consider analyzing in a comprehensive way other factors that impact the lives of small-scale artisanal fishers. For example, the issue of access to financial sources. Being this a key issue. In addition, it must be clear that there has been a loss of livelihoods; and, if livelihoods are lost, capacities are also lost.

Alejandro Bravo, from Peru, proposes that in the face of violated ancestral rights, artisanal fishers should be guaranteed a presence in decision-making spaces.

Carola Barria, from Chile, explains how her family has been dedicated to fishing, as she is the granddaughter of artisanal fishers. She herself had educational opportunities as a result. She explains that one of the most serious problems is how laws can affect the issue of land tenure; she explains how in Chile, certain specific laws are affecting them and leading to conflict. Today, the fishing and indigenous communities are confronting this.

Juan Katin, from Chile, suggests that it would be important to highlight the presence of international observers who could help resolve conflicts, such as the case in Chile.

Summary of ideas from different participants:

- Social and tenure issues should be addressed in an integrated manner.
- The issue of customary tenure leads to addressing social issues.

- A set of various triggers of the impact on customary tenure issues are observed: conservation, protected areas, tourism, companies, legislation, among others.
- Government protection is necessary in the fishing areas where fishers settle and carry out their operations.
- Lack of government sensitivity to small-scale fisheries issues.
- It is necessary to promote the Voluntary Guidelines for Small-Scale Fisheries as a defense instrument.
- When land is lost, identity, culture, and livelihoods are lost.
- The issue of water governance should be discussed, allowing for a more comprehensive discussion.
- Social development is associated with land tenure issues. Both issues cannot be worked on in isolation.
- It is increasingly important to address the issue from the concept of territory, which can open the discussion to water resources issues, and also address continental spaces.
- Within the discussion of land tenure, the recognition of traditional knowledge should be included.
- The loss of customary rights is the loss of a set of rights. Not having governance, the lack of representativeness and legitimacy of the actors. All of the above is the result of a loss of rights.
- Territorial management must be carried out and livelihoods must be guaranteed.
- It is explained that in Brazil, when talking about the concept of Territory, it has been expanded to the concept of "MARRITORRIO".

Notetaker: Arnau Quinquilà (TNI)

Summary of discussions:

### **Social Protection**

When discussing social development, we must consider all the factors that impact social development in fisher communities. For instance, when our territories are encroached upon, or when we lack access to financing, these have major repercussions on the social well-being of small-scale fisheries. Losing one's livelihood also means the loss of all associated social and cultural assets.

### **Customary Tenure**

- Julián Salgado: I feel that in our territories, we have lost control over the land and resources. The situation is such that we currently have no form of governance, with no active consultation processes. The government makes the decisions, leaving us voiceless as they impose their model of development. This has led to extremely complex situations in our territories. Fishers are directly suffering the effects of the government's imposition of its vision and development approach. Tenure and governance have been lost.
- Ostiago: In Costa Rica, fishers do not have rights over the territories. The state is imposing major development projects in our country. This is happening in Costa Rica, a nation with a high level of natural conservation. Regarding land tenure, fishers are suffering greatly. The government wants to help us in some ways, but is also facilitating the dispossession of fishers. Pineapple monoculture, among other activities, is leading to the encroachment on fishers' territories.
- Diego Mora: They are in northern Ecuador. Historically, the communities in their territory have been dispossessed. 60% of the mangroves were previously converted into shrimp farms. Thanks to the women, the mangroves are now very well conserved. Of the 53,000 hectares of protected mangroves, the state has transferred 5,000 hectares to the local communities. These communities are legally responsible for protecting the mangrove, but are not provided the technology or financing to do so. The local communities have suffered the effects of bilateral conflicts over resource use. The local communities recognize the participation mechanisms offered by the state, but they do not want to be solely responsible for mangrove conservation - they want to co-manage it with the state.
- Francisco: Mexican law recognizes the customary rights of the Yaqui people. This has been the result of the Yaqui people's historical
- Lidia Estelar: The land issue is key, but as fishermen, water is central. In the maritime zone, sea fishermen are displaced by the CIPA, which are marine conservation areas. In territorial areas, fishermen are losing their fishing areas due to the expansion of monoculture. The fishermen's marshes are being monopolized by the aquaculture of exotic species. Fishermen are now working on the systemic restoration of marshes.
- Marta: Fishermen are suffering greatly from the effects of tourism. This is exacerbated by conservation. The fishing grounds have been monopolized by conservation organizations without consulting the fishermen. Fishermen have the legitimate right to use their customary lands. To this, they add the effects of climate change. Moreover, the waters are being polluted by banana monoculture. If nothing is done, the fishermen will disappear.
- Solution: Open up participation and listening areas for the government so that fishermen can share their problems and influence policies. Another solution is to train the fishermen.
- In Galicia, female fishermen are suffering similar problems. What is needed is for scientists to evaluate what is happening at sea. The women who work in fishing are not a help to fishing, but are an integral part of the sector. We women continue to be the ones who take care of it as cheap labor. We demand more gender equality, as well as more institutional transparency. There is no transparency, for example, in European Union meetings, artisanal fishing has no space, only aquaculture and the large fishing industry.
- Cairo: When we talk about the loss of territory, we must talk about who is monopolizing the territories of the fishermen. Analyzing the loss of customary territories, we often see that it is not so important to talk about the loss of territories, but the loss of rights over territories and fishing. We have lost the customary right to fish. These rights have been captured by the

large industry or recreational fishing. In spatial terms, tourism has taken away a lot of territory from fishermen. In addition, the loss of rights has also been the result of the capture of spaces and rights by industrial aquaculture. Through the creation of laws, the rights of fishermen must be protected. It is important that the species that have been lost due to the expansion of the fishing industry

- Sara Garrido (Chile): In Chile, we are going through a complex situation given the approval of a law that protects the areas where indigenous peoples live. The fishing communities and the indigenous peoples are divided by the law, and this generates division between these two communities.
- Antonia (Guinea-Bissau): In Africa, we have corporative and we got together to lobby communities. We got together, cohesive, and to collaborate with each other to achieve our objective. Due to pollution-related issues, communities suffer.
- Herman: It is true that we can attend all the meetings, but it is more important that we constitute ourselves into a commission where all the fishermen can come together to jointly denounce the problems they suffer.
- Josana: I am thinking about the model of territorial governance. In Brazil, fishermen not only think about the land, but also where the fishermen live. In this sense, we speak of traditional fishing territories. We women shellfish gatherers need visibility so that we are not criminalized. The Brazilian parliament is working on a new law to recognize traditional fishing territories.
- Alex Castillo: Four proposals:
  - Unity: Generate commissions where we can share our problems and organize to find solutions.
  - Involve other agencies related to this topic. I was listening to the issue of wetlands.
  - Ensure compliance with the tenure guidelines.
  - Review international standards that may be linked to the work. We need to review the specific labor realities in each country to ensure the labor rights of fishermen.
- Alejandro Bravo: Given the situation where ancestral rights are being violated, it must be ensured that fishermen have representation and a voice in the different political spaces.
- Carola Barría: I am the granddaughter of artisanal fishermen. Today I live more comfortably than my ancestors. Law 20249 is affecting us a lot, especially in the southern area. A law can affect different territories differently. This law has put the indigenous communities and the fishing communities in conflict. I manage the second largest port in the Chiloé region, the problem is that this law is pitting the fishing and indigenous communities against each other.
- Juan Catín: It would be necessary to have observers in the territories to have a neutral perspective on what is happening in the territories.

### **Group 1 (English) Report:**

We call upon governments to:

- Ensure the operationalization of the global strategic framework for the implementation of the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries. We need to drive the development of national plans of action in relation to the VGSSF across all African countries, aiming to increase the number from 5 out of 54. The countries that have already developed their national plans of action should serve as change agents. At the next level, to achieve effective implementation, we need to mobilize political support and goodwill to foster commitment and facilitate the execution of these plans.
- Enhance the social development of small-scale fishers. We must address the critical infrastructure deficits in marine and inland small-scale fishing communities. For example, these communities lack access to potable water and quality education, leading to issues such as drug abuse and limited alternative livelihoods. Without targeted development in this sector, the prospects for these communities remain bleak. Therefore, our strategy focuses on the comprehensive improvement of infrastructure to create sustainable and thriving communities.
- Implement proactive measures to address the critical safety concerns raised by small-scale fishers regarding the rising number of drownings. Despite the increasing incidents, there has been no adequate response from local or national government levels. Our strategy includes providing small-scale fishers with timely weather forecast information to enhance their safety and prevent further tragedies. Additionally, we must ensure the effectiveness of disaster responsiveness by the relevant agencies through the provision of adequate resources.
- Address cross-cutting issues like climate change.

### **Group 2 (English) Report:**

The rights of small-scale fisheries have been violated, especially through policy decisions. There are concerning cases of depleting fish stocks, such as the use of Gambia's fish resources by a Japanese fish feed mill. It is crucial to conserve and preserve Africa's natural resources.

Tribunals should be encouraged in Africa to address these issues. The promotion of aquaculture often comes at the expense of natural resources. For instance, a fisheries reform law in Congo exempted fish processors, and their concerns need to be amplified.

In Mauritania, the introduction of the blue economy has led to the establishment of protected marine areas, where fishing has been prohibited, causing significant competition in the sector. Nigeria faces challenges in the social development of SSF, with a lack of basic infrastructure like schools, clean water, and healthcare in many fishing communities. Alternatives for fisherfolk impacted by closed and open seasons need to be explored.

However, there are also success stories, such as a Nigerian fishing cooperative empowering women in processing through a savings scheme, which could be replicated in other African fishing settlements. In Uganda, the militarization of SSF has led to corruption, while in Benin, the SSF community has been marginalized and requires greater recognition.



In the Gambia, a lack of social development and the sale of land to industries have negatively impacted the SSF. Governments must respect the customary land tenure rights of these communities. There are also challenges in inland fisheries, where a lack of funding and market access, as well as the absence of recognition for customary laws, need to be addressed.

Climate change and its impact on landing sites and the ability of processors to adapt are also pressing concerns.

Strategies to address these challenges include:

- Enhancing state ownership of land
- Recognizing and incorporating customary and indigenous knowledge and practices in fishery management

The common challenges faced include the disregard of traditional communities and their ancestral land ownership, the exclusion of SSF from decision-making and development, and the limitations or bureaucracy around land acquisition.

### **Group 3 (French) Report:**

- Leverage available tools to defend your interests, such as land directives, Convention 188, and development objectives. The strategy is to band together and enforce these measures.
- For social improvement and development, we must identify fishermen, their communities, and the entire value chain, and understand their contextual needs. We must bring them into the movement for common advocacy, as we must do at this summit, and push countries to implement the directives.
- Rely on directives and other international instruments, and put pressure on signatory governments to ensure that all countries recognize the status of fishermen, their communities, and the entire value chain, and therefore their social and human rights.
- Create a platform where all countries can share their needs, progress, and delays. We must all make a strong commitment to contribute to this platform.
- To validate the importance of these social advances, they must be linked to the crucial role of artisanal fishing in food security, employment, the fight against poverty, and resource management.
- For land, historical fishing rights, and the valorization of prior rights, we must rely on existing instruments.
- This summit must be united and serve as the trigger for a common initiative to effectively implement the Voluntary Directives.
- Clearly identify the responsibilities and roles of each person, as well as the means that will be made available. We ask states to have a clear implementation strategy with roles and clear, dedicated means to ensure the effective involvement of stakeholders.
- Integrate articles of the directives into laws to guarantee social protection, development, and land for artisanal fishing and its value chain.

- Involve fishermen and value chain actors in fishing governance tools.
- The state must dedicate land for fishing activities and the value chain. Fishing zones must be guaranteed, and historic fishing zones protected.
- Recognize the importance of artisanal fishing in the Blue Economy, at least on par with the oil industry, tourism, industrial fishing, or any other maritime activity.
- Integrate the impacts of climate change on artisanal fishing.
- Protect resources, water quality, and the marine environment in general to ensure the sustainability of our activity.

### **Plenary Session:**

Aliou Sowe, Gambia, WFF, highlighted the main objective of the 2nd SSF Summit: to advance the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries. The Summit will collect proposals and commitments based on the shared experiences and diverse perspectives within the subsector. This summit is expected to build on the solidarity among SSF communities and their supporters.

In the welcome remarks, Manuel Barange, Assistant Director-General and Director of the FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Division, shared the history of recognizing SSF as important contributors to food security and livelihoods, and their inclusion in the FAO's work.

John Kurien, a Reflective Practitioner from India, led the summit participants in reflecting on the journey of creating and owning the SSF Guidelines. He shared the "Short story of a long voyage" - the history of the SSF Guidelines, from the struggle of artisanal fishers to gain recognition and support from governments and civil society, to the eventual adoption of the Guidelines in 2014.

Nicole Franz, from the FAO, shared what has happened in the decade since the adoption of the SSF Guidelines. The Guidelines have been integrated into global and regional processes beyond fisheries, and the FAO has developed tools for data collection, management, and capacity development. Key publications, such as "Illuminating Hidden Harvest," have helped increase recognition of the contributions of the SSF. The FAO has also focused on capacity development for its members, partners, and SSF organizations, and on implementation support and monitoring. Lessons learned include the importance of political will, strong organizations, and partnerships in driving change.

Diana Vasquez, Rare-Central America, and Gavina Tumbaga, MFARMC Philippines, presented on strengthening communities through innovative application of social science principles to drive more sustainable fisheries management behaviors. They highlighted the successful collaborative development of the Philippines' National Plan of Action for small-scale fisheries, which involved multiple stakeholders. The NPOA provides social protection programs for SSF communities.

The Philippine NPOA emphasizes capacity development of the SSF sector for sustainable self-management. It responds to the high poverty rate, production system fragmentation, and limited representation in decision-making among SSF communities.

Developing an effective SSF Plan of Action requires an inclusive, collaborative approach, which is key to successful implementation of the SSF Guidelines.

Tavita Faletose, Samoa Reefs of Hope, shared their community-led efforts to implement the SSF Guidelines. Research shows working with youth can effectively raise local awareness. Securing tenure rights, livelihoods, and control over fisheries resources are central concerns for Samoa's SSF. Traditional knowledge guides their sustainable fishing practices, maintaining a strong community-environment connection. Faletose called for stakeholder support and promotion of SSF tenure rights to enable effective local resource management, while emphasizing the need for adequate funding.

Hugh Govan, Adjunct Senior Fellow, presented on the state of Pacific Islands' SSF and the context of SSF Guideline implementation in the region. The adoption of the Pacific Framework for Action on scaling up community-based fisheries management was instrumental in developing sustainable fisheries, transitioning from centralized to community-based management approaches. The inclusive, collaborative development of this regional policy framework also incorporated gender and social inclusion. Govan highlighted the importance of tailoring guideline implementation to each country's context, and suggested piloting key policy components as a soft introduction to seek national buy-in. Engagement with SSF and coastal communities must be prioritized in establishing marine reserves or protected areas.

Anna Carlson, Fishery Officer, GFCM: The Regional Plan of Action of SSF in Mediterranean and the Black Sea showcased the work of the GFCM to adopt and implementing SSF Guidelines at the regional level. The RPOA defines 9 pillars corresponding to the SSF Guidelines: Scientific research, SSF data collection, SSF management measures, value chain enhancement, participatory approach, capacity building, decent work and social protection, strengthening of role of women, and climate and environment. The adoption of the RPOA was facilitated by a series of consultations-workshops and conferences with participation from more than 1000 fishers. Although the process promoted inclusivity, there was limited direct participation from SSF during the drafting of the documents. The RPOA development and implementation contributed to the development of tangible indicators to measure progress in terms of stakeholder management, social protection, improving data collection and promoting the role of women. Strong political backing and ownership by the ministers was crucial in the development of the RPOA. To further support the work, building synergies and having a space for SSF exchange are crucial To pave the way forward, dedicated fora and consolidation of the visions for implementation until 2028 will facilitate the participation of SSF and technical work address the issues identified and securing resources for continued implementation.

Djalikatou Cherif Haidara, CAOPA: Summary of day 1 and key messages from the SSF body. Artisanal and indigenous peoples shared their stories and common struggle as a way to build the solidarity within the sector. These also became the basis for the proposals for the implementation of the social development and tenure chapters under the SSF guidelines. The SSF and their supporters calls for the protection of the processing zones that are integral to the livelihoods of fishers, protection from displacement, promoting community-based resource management and equitable sharing of

resources. Self-organization among fishers and indigenous peoples facilitates the process of securing tenure rights and access to social development services. Policies on conservations must not exclude SSF communities. Capacity building for fishers and particularly for women to promote greater participation. The positive experiences in countries in Asia showcases mechanism that can be replicated. Calls for the re-inclusion of the SSF under the COFI agenda.

Jesu Rethinam from SNEHA, India, reframed the perspective on livelihood. The small-scale fisheries agenda has been overshadowed by the blue transformation agenda, which focuses on increasing production through aquaculture, further excluding SSF communities. Women have historically been excluded from the discourse on tenure rights, contributing to their increasing invisibility and the allocation of rights primarily to men. Fisher people belong to the sea, but they also need access to land as part of their livelihood and way of life. There is a need for recognition and representation of women at all levels, as they have earned the right to representation through their immense contributions to fisheries and food sovereignty.

Vivienne Solis Rivera from CoopeSolidar, Costa Rica, highlighted the distinction between customary rights and the SSF guidelines. The claims of SSF communities in Honduras to land and water resources are based on a long history of stewardship in these areas. The SSF Guidelines provide an opportunity for these communities to preserve their way of life and their direct link to local resources.

Anaru Fraser from IITC, Aotearoa, New Zealand, shared that traditional knowledge is integral to the way of life and fishing in Māori SSF communities. The SSF agenda needs to be included in the COFI agenda, and more stories of SSF Indigenous Peoples should be shared. The communities are able to enjoy the fruits of customary tenure rights. Relationships allow for the development of "weapons of mass collaborations," and political will and partnerships are critical to this process. Connecting, maintaining, and growing relationships facilitate securing customary tenure rights.

Juan Echanove from Right to Food, FAO, stated that states have an obligation to respect and protect the rights of SSF Indigenous communities and promote their right to food. Dignity is at the core of human rights.

Elisa Morgera, the UN Special Rapporteur on Climate Change, acknowledged that SSF communities, particularly women and children in fisheries, are at the intersection of climate change, conservation, and human rights violations. She recognized that climate change is a form of marine pollution and emphasized the need to enhance access to information. Building relationships and alliances will be instrumental in advancing the respect and protection of human rights and honoring the knowledge of SSF, women, and Indigenous

The session explored how a human rights-based approach is integrated into small-scale fisheries issues on social development and customary tenure rights, as well as the status of investment to protect the rights of fishers and resource management. Improved social development is expected to contribute to better conservation of resources.

Azriknizam Jaring invited participants to share stories about social development and customary tenure rights.

*Sharing of case studies or stories that resonate with the participants:*

Lydia Sasu described the case of shell fishing by the Densu oyster pickers association in Ghana. With USAID support, the community revived a degraded river system. They participated in data collection and assessment, and through inclusive consultation, agreed to a 5-month closed season to allow the river to recover. After this, they observed improvements in oyster harvests. The community also established a mangrove restoration nursery, with women as active resource managers. They shared data with the government and FAO to aid conservation efforts and monitoring. Co-management was also promoted, and from 2017-2024, the community restored 43 hectares of mangrove.

This showcases how community collaboration contributed to the successful restoration of the Densu oyster fishery. Key elements included:

- Increased awareness of the impact of mangrove cutting on river health
- Sharing the success story with neighboring communities
- Community support for those affected by the closed season
- Dialogue between traditional leaders and the ministry to develop co-management
- Capacity building on scientific methods to inform decision-making

Dani Setiawan described the Sasi customary tenure practice in eastern Indonesia. Indonesia's Village Law recognizes the customary rights of Indigenous Peoples, but does not cover marine areas. However, communities and NGO partners use the law as a basis to implement customary tenure over marine resources, despite conflicts with national planning legislation.

- Indonesia's constitution facilitates SSF-Indigenous Peoples' claims by including customary rights
- But the younger generation is less engaged with customary laws, which needs to be addressed.

Chief Gary emphasized that education for Indigenous Peoples is critical to securing their rights. Although IPs in Alaska are not receiving support from the Federal Government, they recognize the need to continue education and capacity building. Having "a weapon of mass collaboration" is needed as the work expands from the community to the broader governance environment. Climate change is also affecting the fishing practices of IPs, and customary laws may be more helpful in protecting local resources than regulations that often do not work.

John Kurien noted that it is important to recognize the diversity of experiences. The integration of customary and formal laws is critical in advancing and protecting the rights of communities.

Phililie Mbatha discussed the conflict between customary law, which gives access to fishers, and national legislation that considers them as trespassers. Education on customary law to deepen understanding becomes crucial in resolving this conflict, empowering fishers to more effectively use customary law in exercising their rights.

The most important changes that need to occur include:

- Education and support for fishers on how to exercise their rights within both the customary and formal framework.

- Integrating tenure and resource management with social development.
- Recognizing that the unwritten nature of customary laws allows them to change according to how communities evolve. The integration of customary and formal laws should consider the youth, capacity development, and gender equality. Improving access to social development services for youth and women can better engage them in the protection of tenure rights. The youth should be recognized as agents of change and capacitated accordingly, while also acknowledging that the modern youth may face challenges in securing the resources needed to survive while fighting for their rights. Maintaining an open dialogue with the youth to understand their struggles and interests is crucial.

Social development is often delegated to other agencies outside of the fisheries. However, this must be treated as an integral component of the SSF-IP communities. 2 key points/messages:

- Education—through workshops and informal sessions with the fishing communities—is an integral component under tenure rights and social development advocacy to create the links among the fishing community members and with the government. Within education, language is key.
- Social development is often implemented using a more universal approach but we also need to have more sector specific social development services for the SSF-IP communities.

### **Informal sharing session**

Imani Fairweather Morrison and Tanya Mahadwar, CEA Consulting: Strategic review of the Oak Foundation SSF Strategy Evaluation Framework. Oak Foundation's evaluation in 2017 revealed that the organization could be doing more work at the global level on safeguarding marine ecosystems and protection of livelihoods. This required a shift in how the foundation is investing, connecting with funders and with partners. A strategy was adopted based on people and systems and bringing in the human rights-based approach.

Pip Cohen, Turning the Tide towards more equitable flow of funding. Highlighted the current disproportionality in the ocean philanthropic funding that goes to the SSF and coastal community projects. Estimates on funding that goes to the IPs less than 1%. There is a need for more direct funding to local communities and IPs. This will require transfer of assets and decision-making to local control. Money must flow to non-extractive processes self-determined by partners to meet their needs. This also need to be supported by shifting the power to local control. The Turning Tides, as a facility contributing to coastal tenure security and tenure rights through fair funding.

Marina Gomei, WWF, SSF Hub Network to create an interactive map of the work of NGOs on SSF.

### **DAY 3 - Collective reflections on how the SSF Summit can support the implementation of the SSF Guidelines.**

Adam Woldenden, PANG, Fiji, discussed the WTO negotiations on fisheries subsidies. He highlighted the failure to hold large subsidizers accountable, while developing countries' small-scale fisheries face an arbitrary threshold system without a clear definition of "small-scale". Woldenden emphasized the need to elevate SSF voices, engage with national governments, and address the issue promptly.

Vivienne Solis Rivera, CoopeSolidDar, Costa Rica, called for a shift in global perspective to local, and local perspective to global. She stressed the importance of integrating sustainable use and food security, referencing the CBD and FAO frameworks. Rivera emphasized the need for the SSF sector to actively participate in key global conferences on sustainable resource use, which requires knowledge sharing and respect for rightsholders' decision-making.

Herman Kumara, IPC Regional Advisory Group, Asia, highlighted the IPC as a platform for bottom-up working groups. He criticized "fake solutions" like the 30x30 target, which could dispossess SSF of their resources and negatively impact livelihoods. Kumara emphasized the need for National Plans of Action to arise from strong country ownership, not international demands, and require government funding for implementation. He called on the FAO to include SSF in the COFI agenda.

Subsequent speakers from across Africa, Latin America, and Asia shared similar perspectives, underscoring the need to elevate SSF voices, integrate SSF into policy frameworks, and ensure their meaningful participation in decision-making processes.

The Asia and Pacific Regional Working Groups held a parallel session to collectively reflect on how the SSF Summit can support the implementation of the SSF Guidelines.

Participants included representatives from Bangladesh, Thailand, Philippines, Fiji, Samoa, India, New Zealand, international organizations/foundations, Indonesia, the IPC, and the FAO involved in developing the SSF Guidelines.

Key points on what is needed for the adoption and implementation of the SSF Guidelines in the region:

- Coordinate among countries to share strategies and progress made, and establish an international/regional databank on SSF Guidelines implementation.
- Recognize that CSOs and SSF communities need not follow FAO's political/geographic subdivisions.
- View the SSF Guidelines as a framework for countries and their SSF sectors, not just as FAO guidelines.
- Strategically prioritize components of the SSF Guidelines that fall under the mandate of fisheries ministries represented in COFI.
- Engage with CSOs involved in negotiating the SSF Guidelines and understand how to collaborate at different levels and with diverse actors.
- Consider the varying levels of government support and attention to the SSF Guidelines across different countries.
- Start at the local level, democratize the SSF Guidelines to make them more adaptable to the realities of SSF and support organizations.
- Interface with relevant government agencies to promote the SSF Guidelines and raise awareness from the government to the community level.
- Draw lessons from examples like the Philippines, where NGO-SSF network collaboration encouraged the development of a National Plan of Action.

- Prioritize local-level actions, especially on the critical issue of tenure rights, through tenure mapping and securing other components.
- Promote grassroots movements to drive the adoption and implementation of the SSF Guidelines, as collective action can help convince governments.
- Focus discussions at the sub-regional level rather than regional, while sharing knowledge at the regional level.
- Leverage existing frameworks like the SDGs that overlap with the SSF Guidelines and identify synergies across government agencies.
- Adopt a more focused approach overall.

To prepare for the next summit, the delegates should:

- Compile local and country-level experiences, then bring this to the regional and global levels. Document the different experiences and existing legislation, particularly on tenure rights. Identify decision-making bodies and develop a comprehensive database of small-scale fishers in each country to better inform the decision-makers at COFI on the current state of the small-scale fisheries sector.
- Recognize that small-scale fishers are problem-solvers and key actors in advancing the Sustainable Development Goals, climate action, and biodiversity conservation.
- Advocate for the inclusion of the language from the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries within financing and resourcing organizations to encourage governments to adopt the Guidelines and support their implementation.
- Invite other UN agencies and international bodies to participate in the summit.
- Build alliances among small-scale fishing communities, Indigenous Peoples, civil society organizations, government allies, UN agencies, and financing organizations.

### **Plenary Session: How the Summit Can Inform Governments**

Recap by Mitchel Lay: Small-scale fisheries contribute to food security while exercising the right to their livelihood. SSF communities contribute not only to a country's production, but also promote a way of life aligned with food security needs and sustainable resource use. However, SSF remain marginalized even 10 years after the creation of the SSF Guidelines. Insecurity of tenure and threats from resource grabbing, climate change, and environmental degradation remain key challenges. There is a need for programs to address the housing, infrastructure, basic services, water, and health needs within SSF communities.

The Minister of the United Republic of Tanzania recognized that SSF, particularly women, play a crucial role in food security. Tanzania will bring its SSF agenda to the Committee on Fisheries.

Dani Setiawan of Indonesia asked Undersecretary Drusila Bayate of the Philippine Bureau of Fisheries about strategies and best practices to advance the National Plan of Action for SSF. The Philippine NPOA is a work in progress, with the government demonstrating commitment through a collaborative, multi-stakeholder approach to develop its legal framework and action plan. The



Philippines has established a recommendatory body, the Fisheries and Aquatic Resources Management Councils, at the local, provincial, and national levels, enabling SSF communities to participate in fisheries policy formulation. The country has also delineated municipal waters for small-scale fishers. While poverty incidence was reduced, it has risen again due to the sector's vulnerability to disasters. Advancing SSF rights requires a collaborative approach and partnerships to support implementation.

Sara Ester Garrido of Chile asked Undersecretary Rocio Parra Cortes about Chile's next steps in a new law to include and promote the rights of women and men in SSF. Chile recognizes the voluntary nature of the SSF Guidelines but has taken active steps to adopt them, supporting visibility, recognition, and gender as principles for effective implementation. With 36% of fishery production coming from SSF, Chile acknowledges the need to secure land and water access for SSF. Chile supports the inclusion of the SSF agenda in COFI and interim processes

Editrudith Lukanga of the United Republic of Tanzania to Principal Fisheries Officer Lilian Ibengwe of the United Republic of Tanzania's Ministry of Livestock and Fisheries: Please share the government's experience in developing and implementing its National Plan of Action for Small-Scale Fisheries, and how this is empowering small-scale fishers and securing the livelihoods of women, as well as addressing human rights issues.

The government has created an enabling environment through institutional mechanisms and policies to promote a collaborative and participatory approach with SSFs. Two NGOs in Tanzania worked with the government to conduct a workshop that secured the government's commitment to implementing the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries. Specifically, Section 13.5 on government support for implementing the SSF Guidelines served as a catalyst for the Tanzanian government. The country's NPOA-SSF will follow a multi-stakeholder approach, with a national taskforce leading its implementation. Key best practices that could be replicated by other countries include:

- Investing in building constituencies at the local, subnational, and national levels
- Conducting participatory mapping of hotspots
- Collecting data to support planning and monitoring
- Allocating resources to support implementation
- Engaging organizations that can provide resources to build a broader base of support

Tavita Faletoese of the Samoa Pacific Community-based Fisheries representative to Advisor Watisoni Lalavanua of the SPC Community-based Fisheries: Can you share a key regional process that elevates the voices of small-scale fishers for governments to act upon and support future Small-Scale Fisheries Summits?

The Regional Fisheries Governance/intergovernmental organizations promote the Community-based Fisheries Dialogue as a venue for small-scale fishers to communicate their concerns and agenda. The Cbfd summit encourages continued participation of partners. The SPC supports the inclusion of small-scale fisheries on the agenda of the Committee on Fisheries and subsequent meetings.

Ibtissem Gobbaa of Tunisia to Acting Head of Unit Emmanuel Berck of the DG MARE also shared message of support.

Based on the parallel session discussions, several key points emerged regarding implementation of the SSF Guidelines and planning for the next SSF Summit:

*Latin America Group:*

- Information about the SSF Guidelines is still lacking among SSF communities. To better enable SSF communities to use the Guidelines to advance their rights, the Guidelines should be made available in different languages. Local NGOs have been instrumental in assisting SSFs, but more resources from NGOs, FAO, and other organizations are needed to support their work.

*Africa Group:*

- Inclusion of the SSF agenda in the Committee on Fisheries and its subsequent meetings is crucial.
- Developing a monitoring framework to track implementation of the SSF Guidelines is important.
- Exploring venues at the regional level, in addition to developing National Plans of Action, can further the SSF agenda.
- Facilitating direct funding for SSF initiatives is needed.

*GFCM:*

- The Regional Plan of Action is the main instrument for implementing the SSF Guidelines in the region.
- Progress has been made through introducing tools and forums for SSF participation, but the lack of youth involvement threatens the sustainability of these efforts.
- Concerns were raised about the impacts of biodiversity loss, while recognition of women as important actors has begun.
- Social protection benefits could facilitate greater participation from the youth.

*NGOs and Academia:*

- NGOs will follow guidance on building and maintaining stronger partnerships to foster trust and collaboration.

Participants urged summit organizers to ensure the SSF agenda is included in COFI and its sub-committee discussions. Other key interventions called for:

- Not relegating Indigenous Peoples fishers to a subsector within SSF
- Increasing participation of SSF women in these fora
- More efforts to meaningfully empower fishers
- A differentiated approach to small-scale fisheries recognizing their unique position and contributions
- Critical inclusion of the SSF agenda in COFI to advance the sector

**Next Steps:**

- Present the Summit results at the COFI Meeting and the High-Level Event on the 10th Anniversary of the SSF Guidelines
- Report on the Summit
- Share the results of the survey on improvements to the SSF Summit
- Share experiences at local, regional, and global levels
- Work to ensure the SSF Summit happens again in the future

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