

SAMUDRA

REPORT

THE TRIANNUAL JOURNAL OF THE INTERNATIONAL COLLECTIVE IN SUPPORT OF FISHWORKERS



UN Ocean Conference

SSF Summit

Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities

Fisheries Legislation

Self-governance of Co-operatives

Energy Transition in Fishing Fleets



ICSF is an international NGO working on issues that concern fishworkers the world over. It is in status with the Economic and Social Council of the UN and is on ILO's Special List of Non-governmental International Organizations. It also has Liaison Status with FAO.

As a global network of community organizers, teachers, technicians, researchers and scientists, ICSF's activities encompass monitoring and research, exchange and training, campaigns

and action, as well as communications. *SAMUDRA Report* invites contributions and responses. Correspondence should be addressed to Chennai, India.

The opinions and positions expressed in the articles are those of the authors concerned and do not necessarily represent the official views of ICSF.

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Transforming Aquaculture & Fisheries for Gender Justice

BANGKOK
THAILAND

GAF 9

1-3 October
2025



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THE TRIANNUAL JOURNAL OF THE INTERNATIONAL COLLECTIVE IN SUPPORT OF FISHWORKERS

NO.92 | DECEMBER 2024

FRONT COVER



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PUBLISHED BY

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BACK COVER



Women fish processors
at Gambia
Photo by Dawda Foday Saine

AGENDA

A Call to Action 4
The third UN Ocean Conference will be held in Nice, France in June 2025

HISTORY

Long Voyage, Short Story 6
Behind the creation of the SSF Guidelines

REPORT

Embracing Diversity, Building Solidarity..10
The SSF Summit in Rome in July 2024 called for stronger alliances

SSF SUMMIT

A (Better) Space for Dialogue 15
The SSF Summit in Rome was a forum for constructive dialogue

SSF SUMMIT

Fishworkers, Unite! 17
Resounding calls for the implementation of the SSF Guidelines marked the Rome SSF Summit

SSF SUMMIT

Out of the Trenches 19
Future SSF summits should help small-scale fishing communities defend their spaces

SSF SUMMIT

A Space in Progress 20
The 2024 SSF Summit was a platform for building community and connections

SSF SUMMIT

Dig in Together 22
Only collective work can advance the agendas of SSF and fisher communities

SSF SUMMIT

Looking Back, Moving Forwards 25
The SSF Summit can become a permanent space for global collective action

REPORT

Better Recognition Now 29
SSF issues would have been better discussed as a stand-alone agenda item at COFI 36

REPORT

Keep on Engaging..... 32
The SSF subsector must remain continuously engaged within the CBD process

FISHWORKER'S ORGANIZATIONS

Here to Stay! 34
A press conference at the CBD meet discussed fisherfolk in action

CBD

Looking Ahead and Beyond..... 41
At COP16 fishers lobbied for a human-rights approach to marine biodiversity conservation

CBD

Women on Par 43
Target 23 of the KMGBF aims for a gender-responsive approach

CBD

A Monumental Moment..... 45
A particular focus at COP16 was on the rights of indigenous peoples and local communities

CBD

Towards Inclusive Solutions 48
Discussions and decisions on complex marine ecosystems featured at COP16

TANZANIA

A Crisis of Drowning 51
The Lake Victoria Drowning Prevention Project tackles the daily risks of fishers in Tanzania

INDONESIA

Beyond the Blue Economy 53
Approach must encourage economic incentives for fishing communities

THE PHILIPPINES

Warding the Sea 56
In the Philippines fishers' rights, responsibilities and remedies are mediated by the State

MEXICO

The Power of Self-reliance 60
A programme in Mexico offers novel pathways for better self-governance of co-operatives

CHILE

The Mother of All Battles..... 64
A new fisheries law in Chile addresses corruption, overfishing and exclusion

INDIA

Exiled at Home..... 67
Threats undermine the livelihood opportunities of fishing communities in the Sundarbans

REVIEW

A Sterling Job..... 72
An UNCTAD publication compiles knowledge of energy transition in fishing fleets

REVIEW

An Indispensable Guide 74
Anthony Charles' Sustainable Fishery Systems is an absolute must for every fisheries library

OBITUARY

An Apostle of Peace 76
This scholar will long be remembered for critiquing the industrial model of fisheries

Comment..... 3

Roundup..... 78



Brian O'Riordan
M'Bour fish landing centre, Senegal

Beyond a Silo Mindset

Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) should use an ecosystem- and human rights-based approach that combines conservation with sustainability

In the context of fisheries, soon after the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) was signed at the 1992 Earth Summit, the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries drew attention to how effective fisheries-management measures can successfully contribute to the conservation of aquatic biodiversity, as well as to the protection of the interests of subsistence, small-scale and artisanal fisheries.

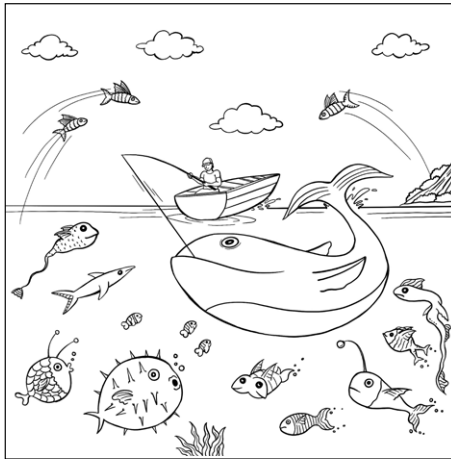
The 2014 fisheries instrument—the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication (the SSF Guidelines)—went a step further and observed how the health of aquatic ecosystems and associated biodiversity was a fundamental basis for the livelihoods of small-scale fishers and fishworkers. The SSF Guidelines upheld responsible and sustainable use of marine, coastal and inland biodiversity within a human-rights framework, and of ensuring the benefits of resource management reaching small-scale fishing communities. The SSF Guidelines saw community-based, collaborative, concurrent or co-operative fisheries management with the participation of small-scale, artisanal fishing communities, and their traditional knowledge and secure tenure rights, as effective mechanisms to bolster livelihoods while conserving biodiversity.

The area-based approach of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KMGBF)—developed as a strategic plan for implementing CBD and its protocols over the period 2022-30—recognizes sustainable fisheries management, and one of its targets seeks to ensure that 30 per cent of terrestrial, inland water and coastal and marine areas, especially of particular importance for biodiversity, are effectively conserved and managed through protected areas (PAs), and other effective area-based conservation measures (OECMs). The PAs and OECMs are to ensure that any sustainable use in these areas recognize and respect the rights of indigenous peoples and local communities (IPLCs) and is consistent with conservation outcomes. Further, full, equitable, inclusive, effective and gender-responsive representation and participation in decisionmaking, and access to justice are to be ensured, especially of IPLCs. The KMGBF targets are thus couched in a human-rights language and CBD Parties may therefore report how their conservation initiatives uphold a human-rights-based approach. Conversely, National Plans of Action-SSF Guidelines may be urged to pay

attention to meeting key KMGBF targets for protecting the health of aquatic ecosystems and associated biodiversity towards safeguarding sustainable livelihoods of small-scale fishers and fishworkers. In other words, in the context of aquatic biodiversity, duties for sustainable use of conservation regimes are to be interlocked into duties toward conservation of sustainable use regimes.

Considering that many biodiversity administrations at the national and subnational levels are top-down structures, mostly invested in conservation and wary of sustainable use, they need to be brought to speed about the National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs) of Parties like Australia, Canada and Japan that recognize IPLC participation in decisionmaking for the conservation and sustainable use of aquatic biodiversity.

The categorization of coastal and marine protected areas



in Japan, which is inclusive of common fishery right areas and coastal fisheries resource development areas, offers an excellent example to other Parties to move away from a conventional, zero-sum approach to the conservation and sustainable use of marine, coastal and inland biodiversity, to focus on conservation outcomes of sustainable-use regimes in a consultative, collaborative, participatory and integrated manner.

Similarly, recognizing voluntary efforts at resource management, introducing government schemes

to improve the fisheries-management skills of people, and moving away from price-oriented consumption to sustainability-oriented consumption are innovative ideas that need further attention. The example of satoumi, where Japanese fishers have been conserving biodiversity through voluntary joint management, as well as examples of collaborative initiatives to restore seagrass beds, to remove marine litter, and to conserve rich fishing grounds through the maintenance of upstream forest areas with support from fishers and other interested parties are noteworthy.

The CBD secretariat, in collaboration with relevant UN agencies and civil society organizations, is encouraged to collect and disseminate such examples to lure Parties out of a silo mindset and to confidently apply a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach to simultaneously engage with conservation and sustainable use of aquatic biodiversity in an integrated and collaborative manner. Good practices culled out of NBSAPs as well as civil society reportage may be translated into all UN languages. 3

A Call to Action

The third UN Ocean Conference (UNOC3) will be held in Nice, France, on June 9-13, 2025. In the run up to it, the UN Secretary-General's Special Envoy for the Ocean, Ambassador Peter Thomson, reiterates that small-scale fisheries is at the heart of ocean conservation

Considering the future of humanity's relationship with the ocean, it is with a sense of apprehension that I write these words today. The ocean covers over 70 per cent of our planet; it is the source of life and livelihood for billions of people; and it plays a pivotal role in sustaining biodiversity and regulating

and nutrition for millions of people around the globe, particularly in the coastal regions of low-income countries. Their contribution to local economies, food systems and cultural heritage is immeasurable.

I come from Fiji and have spent a good part of my life working with the coastal communities of our rural districts and islands. As a result, I've experienced from a young age how closely ocean health is tied to human well-being, especially for small-scale fishers. Given the challenging times in which we live, their deep knowledge of marine ecosystems, migratory patterns of fish and sustainable fishing practices—passed down through generations—is invaluable. Yet, for reasons beyond their control, they are among the people most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, habitat degradation, overfishing, pollution and the increasing pressures of industrial activities.

Despite their great significance as food providers and the disproportionate vulnerability to which they are being subjected, small-scale fishers are often sidelined in decision-making processes, particularly at the level of international ocean governance. The insights of small-scale fishers are too often overlooked in favour of industrialized interests, a process that marginalizes them and weakens our efforts to address ocean challenges in the comprehensive and inclusive manner. If we are to navigate our way to sustainable solutions for what ails the ocean, I believe we are going to have to elevate the voices and knowledge of small-scale fishers in global ocean governance.

The Sustainable Development Goal 14 (SDG14), universally agreed to

the Earth's climate. The ocean has been a constant in human history, shaping civilizations, cultures and economies. But we are putting its well-being under immense pressure with overfishing, pollution and the accelerating impacts of the anthropogenic-induced climate crisis.

In my capacity as the UN Secretary-General's Special Envoy for the Ocean, I engage with diverse ocean stakeholders around the world: policymakers, scientists, environmentalists, businesses and communities directly dependant on the ocean for their livelihoods, namely, small-scale fishers. We are preparing for the third UN Ocean Conference (UNOC3) to be held in Nice, France, on June 9-13, 2025. We must ensure that the voices of small-scale fishers are heard and that they are actively involved in shaping the outcomes of the conference.

The conference needs to recognize that small-scale fisheries (SSF) play a crucial role in ensuring food security

Small-scale fishers are often sidelined in decision-making processes, particularly at the level of international ocean governance

4

This article is by Ambassador Peter Thomson (thomson.ocean@un.org), the United Nations Secretary-General's Special Envoy for the Ocean, UN

by all nations back in 2015, sets out to conserve and sustainably use the ocean's resources. One of SDG14's targets specifically calls for small-scale fishers to be provided with access to marine resources and markets. This fact alone gives the justification for small-scale fisheries to have a strategic place at the main table of UNOC3.

In April this year, I attended the FAO Committee on Fisheries (COFI) meeting in Rome, where I heard a clear call for equity from small-scale fishers including youth, women and indigenous fishworkers. Their message was an urgent one: they require fair access to ocean resources and opportunities in the changing conditions being experienced around the planet. And so, looking ahead to UNOC3, national delegations should arrive in Nice with mandates to address the demands of SSF. Ideally they should be able to demonstrate national policies that:

1. Create meaningful platforms:

Ensure that small-scale fishers can engage with policymakers and stakeholders on equal terms, with the allocation of resources, support and platforms necessary to make this meaningfully so. Demonstrate that financial and institutional constraints have been addressed so that small-scale fishers can actively participate in international dialogues.

2. Recognize and value traditional knowledge:

Besides scientific and technological solutions, traditional knowledge of small-scale fishers must be fully integrated into national marine considerations, with their lived experience integrated rationally with scientific data to develop more effective, holistic strategies for ocean governance.


3. Secure tenure rights: As industrial fleets and large-scale aquaculture encroach on traditional fishing grounds, necessary measures are in place to secure the legal and customary rights of small-scale fishers through provision of preferential access areas in the territorial waters. The SSF Guidelines offer a clear framework


for securing tenure rights for small-scale fishers; these must be fully implemented at national levels to safeguard these communities.

It is gratifying that a large section of civil society is in support of such policies. By way of example, the RISE UP's Blue Call to Action, signed by over 650 organizations worldwide, calls for a human rights-based approach to be at the heart of all sustainable ocean initiatives. It calls for upholding the rights of small-scale fishing communities to tenure, resources and meaningful participation in decision-making processes, and for the global community to actively support the resilience of small-scale fishers in the face of climate change and industrial threats, such as overfishing and marine pollution.

It is painfully apparent that without urgent reforms and a political commitment to protect these communities, we risk losing not just their livelihoods but also a crucial pillar of ocean conservation. The voyage to sustainable ocean governance requires collaboration, solidarity and a deep commitment to inclusivity, for the ocean is a shared resource and its well-being is a responsibility we hold in common. Small-scale fishers may not have the economic power or political influence of industrial fleets, but they hold the key to many of the solutions to the problems the ocean faces.

Inclusive, equitable

Building on the principles of the SSF Guidelines, UNOC3 must ensure that ocean governance is inclusive, equitable and grounded in the realities of those who depend on the ocean the most. It must take an ecosystem-based approach to ocean health, one that prioritizes the long-term health of marine environments and ensures that small-scale fishers can continue to thrive. I encourage all readers, whether they be policymakers or come from civil society or the business sector, to support the inclusion of small-scale fishers in all efforts to protect and sustain the ocean's well-being. 

For more 

Third UN Ocean Conference (UNOC3), Nice, 9-13 June 2025

<https://sdgs.un.org/conferences/ocean2025>

2025 United Nations Conference to Support the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development (A/RES/78/128)

<https://sdgs.un.org/documents/ares78128-2025-united-nations-conference-support-implementation-sustainable-development>

2025 United Nations Conference to Support the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development (A/RES/77/242)

<https://sdgs.un.org/documents/ares77242-2025-united-nations-conference-support-implementation-sustainable-development>

Long Voyage, Short Story

A long and eventful journey lies behind the creation of the SSF Guidelines

This is the story of the long and eventful journey towards the creation of the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication (the SSF Guidelines). I have been a participant of this journey for five decades and this recollection represents my own perspective. Others may narrate it differently, but the essence remains the same: a story of small-scale fishers, deeply rooted in their socio-cultural heritage, reclaiming their rights to the sea and its resources. I divide this journey, spanning over a century, into eight distinct periods.

independence. Governments and civil society began to intervene, enacting laws and fostering co-operative frameworks to protect fishers, and enacted measures like bans on trawlers. Many individual fishers—both men and women—were the heroes in these early struggles, although their names are lost to history.

Two (1951-1970): Realization

After World War II, newly independent nations embarked on paths of economic development, with support from wealthier countries. This period, often termed the 'Development Decades', saw a focus on increasing production across various sectors, including fisheries. Developing nations, eager to adopt temperate-zone technologies, embraced innovations like bottom trawling, largely unaware of the repercussions for their own fishing communities.

The ban on shrimp exports from China in 1950 intensified the quest for alternative marine shrimp sources. Consequently, the rapid expansion of trawler fleets, predominantly owned by a new class of capitalists, engendered fierce competition with small-scale artisanal fishers for both sea space and resources.

One of the notable critics of this development paradigm was Professor Johan Galtung, a pioneer of peace studies and a staunch supporter of small-scale fishers. His opposition to the 'blue revolution' highlighted the adverse impacts of top-down development strategies on traditional fishing communities.

Three (1971-1980): Flashes of resistance

As developing countries imported foreign fishing technologies, they

Modest boats, simple gear and a primary focus on self-consumption characterized this sector

One (until 1950): Inklings

Since the earliest days, marine fisheries worldwide operated on a small-scale, artisanal basis. Modest boats, simple gear and a primary focus on self-consumption characterized this sector. Family involvement was vital in all aspects of production, yet the reins of control rested firmly in the hands of the merchant class that dictated terms for surplus sales and financial support.

Historical records show that as early as the 18th and 19th centuries, fishers faced the dual pressures of new industrial technologies and the dominance of merchants. Through newspapers, books and photographs, we learn of their early attempts at collective action to protect their livelihoods and economic

This article is by John Kurien (kurien.john@gmail.com), Former Professor, Centre for Development Studies, Thiruvananthapuram, India and Honorary Member, ICSF

also imported the conflicts that came with them. Tensions flared between small-scale fishers and industrial fleets, leading to militant responses. Disillusionment spread as the promised benefits of fisheries development failed to materialize, with some governments responding in surprising ways—such as the military regime in Indonesia enacting the first ban on bottom trawling. Moreover, this period also witnessed the nascent re-emergence of conscientious reflection and reconsideration from academics, civil society activists and international organizations regarding the potential of small-scale fisheries (SSF).

In this period emerged key individuals and movements advocating for SSF. Figures who played pivotal roles, such as Matanhy Saldanha, who called for a national forum for Indian fishers, and Junko Yamaka, who organized the First Asian Fisher Conference. David Thompson's "Thompson Table" also left a lasting impact on discussions about the advantages of SSF.

Four (1981-1986): Knowledge and advocacy

The disillusionment of the previous decade led to two key developments: efforts to build stronger data systems to demonstrate the merits of SSF, and collective action to advocate for fishworker rights at the national and international levels. The adoption of the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) in 1982 was a game-changer. It replaced the notion of 'freedom of the seas' with extended national jurisdictions. This shift empowered fishing communities to assert their rights to marine resources.

Two milestones of this period stand out: the 1984 Rome conference of fishworkers and the establishment, in 1986, of the International Collective in Support of Fishworkers (ICSF). Key figures of this period include Juan Crespin Torres, the trade union leader representing processing workers in the fishmeal industry of Peru, whose proposal for an international support group for fishworkers at the Rome

conference left an indelible mark; Pierre Gillet and Jeremy Herklots, the innovative boat designers, whose participatory approach with small-scale fishers in creating designs for beach-landing boats, sparked a technological revolution in SSF in south India; and Francis Christy Jr, an FAO officer and author of the Territorial Use Rights in Fisheries (TURF) paper, whose extensive travels and insights into the dynamics of SSF in the tropics, validated the rationale of customary tenure and underscored the inadequacy and impracticality of Individual Transferable Quotas (ITQs) for these communities.

Five (1987-1994): International co-operation of movements

ICSF began serving as an anchor for the national and regional consolidation of fishworker movements that had begun to assert their presence in fisheries discourses. A fresh leadership emerged, bringing forth novel perspectives, including the imperative to mainstream the role of women from a feminist standpoint, and the recognition of fishers as the 'beacons of the sea', thereby underlining their pivotal role in fishery resource management, particularly at the local level.

On the global level, the ratification of UNCLOS and discussions surrounding the UN Fish Stocks



<https://www.icsf.net/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/930.ICSF082.pdf>

The adoption of the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) in 1982 was a game-changer

Agreement marked a notable shift in international negotiations, with structured participation from small-scale fishworkers and fisheries support groups. This trend was welcomed as a new avenue for inclusive deliberations.

We fondly remember the visionaries of this period for their audacious spirit and unwavering commitment as champions of fishers'



Securing Sustainable Small-scale Fisheries: Bringing together responsible fisheries and social development (4SSF) at Bangkok, Thailand, 13 -17 October, 2008. The conference, was a landmark event that brought together diverse stakeholders from around the world to support SSF

rights. Among them are Humberto Chamorro, president of CONAPACH in Chile; Saffronio Balagtas, president of Bikis Lakas in the Philippines; Joyachen Antony, president of the Kerala Swatantra Matsya Thozhilali

(NFF) in India. We keenly feel their absence today.

Six (1995-2000): A global movement

This short but significant period marked the global consolidation of fishworker efforts, culminating in the formation of two global networks: the World Forum of Fish Harvesters & Fish Workers (WFF) and the World Forum of Fisher Peoples (WFFP). The adoption of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries (CCRF) in 1995 was a pivotal event, reinforcing the need for responsible practices in fisheries management. CCRF also underscored the integration of fisheries into coastal area management, recognizing the coast as the customary heritage of fishing communities. This implicit acknowledgement hinted importantly at the reciprocal nature of their tenure rights to both coastal land and sea.

The adoption of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries (CCRF) in 1995 was a pivotal event...

Federation (KSMTF) in India; Victoria Mora, a fisher leader from Puntarenas in Costa Rica; Dao Gaye, President of the Collectif National des Pêcheurs Artisanaux du Sénégal (CNPS) in Senegal; Michael Bellevue, secretary of the Maritime Fishermen's Union (MFU) in Canada; and Harekrishna Debnath of the National Fishworkers' Forum

Small-scale fishers continued to assert their rights in international negotiations, notably in the discussions on the UN Fish Stocks Agreement. FAO's Advisory Council on Fisheries Research (ACFR) also shifted focus during this time, expanding its mandate to address the social and economic aspects of fisheries. The deliberations of the ACFR played a pivotal role in positioning the Committee on Fisheries (COFI) at the forefront of global advocacy efforts to highlight the manifold contributions of SSF.

Notable figures from this period include Thomas Kocherry, the passionate leader of NFF and WFFP, who advocated for a World Fisheries Day; Mohammed Ali Shah, leader of the Pakistan Fisherfolk Forum; Satya N. Nandan, the generous chair of the UN Fish Stocks Agreement negotiations, who enabled the participation of small-scale fishers; and Margarita Lizárraga, the influential FAO officer behind CCRF and FAO/ACFR revival, whose quiet but impactful support for fishworkers left a legacy.

Seven (2001-2007): A tragedy, transformation

The expansion of global fishworker networks continued during this period, with the International Planning Committee for Food Sovereignty (IPC) providing a platform for small-scale food producers. However, the devastating 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami brought the focus back to the human aspect of fisheries, highlighting the importance of traditional knowledge, youth involvement and local institutions.

The recognition of a human rights-based approach to SSF emerged during this time. Maizan Hassan Maniku, director of fisheries in the Maldives, played a pivotal role in fostering collaboration among fishworkers, civil society bodies and governments.

Eight (2008-2014): SSF Guidelines

The journey towards the SSF Guidelines culminated during this period. The 2008 Bangkok conference, supported

by the government of Norway, was a landmark event that brought together diverse stakeholders from around the world to support SSF. In 2009, fishworker representatives from WFF, WFFP, IPC and ICSF called for a special policy instrument grounded in a human rights-based approach. In 2011, two national consultations were held in Cambodia and Malawi to outline an SSF framework tailored to respective national contexts.

WFF and WFFP, facilitated by ICSF with support from IPC and several local fisher groups and NGOs, conducted numerous meetings and workshops at national and regional levels during 2011-2012, engaging over 3,000 individuals from fishworker organizations and NGOs. These gatherings focused on articulating concerns and aspirations that had to be integrated into a global instrument with the consensus of all stakeholders. A co-ordinating committee of civil society organization synthesized these inputs into a structured draft.

These efforts culminated in the FAO zero draft of the SSF Guidelines and extensive negotiations, at times contentious, at technical consultations in 2013-2014. The Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication—we fondly call them the SSF Guidelines—were endorsed at the COFI Session 31 in July 2014.

In an unprecedented move for a UN document, the SSF Guidelines was dedicated to the efforts of one exceptional individual, deeply committed to small-scale fisheries: Chandrika Sharma, my former student and executive secretary of ICSF. She was aboard the ill-fated Malaysian Airlines flight MH 370, en route to an FAO regional meeting in Mongolia, to highlight the SSF Guidelines negotiation process.

And this brings me to the end of my short story of this long voyage. 📖

**REPORT OF THE
TRIVANDRUM
WORKSHOP
NOV. 20-25, 1986**

TOWARDS AN INTERNATIONAL COLLECTIVE IN SUPPORT OF FISHWORKERS

<https://www.icsf.net/wp-content/uploads/1986/11/930.ICSF083.pdf>

For more



Rallying to Rome: Special People. Collective Processes. A Unique Event

https://www.icsf.net/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/930.ICSF251_ICSF-Rallying-to-Rome.pdf

Short story of a long voyage: Towards making of the FAO/UN small-scale fisheries guidelines

<https://icsf.net/resources/kurien-john-2024-short-story-of-a-long-voyage-towards-making-of-the-FAO-un-small-scale-fisheries-guidelines/>

Embracing Diversity, Building Solidarity

Participants at the SSF Summit in Rome in July 2024 called for stronger alliances among the diverse actors in the arena

The second international Small-scale Fisheries (SSF) Summit took place at the headquarters of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) in Rome, Italy, from July 5-7, 2024, prior to the 36th Session of its Committee on Fisheries (COFI). This Summit built upon discussions that emerged during the first Summit in 2022, focusing particularly on tenure rights and social development as key themes of concern for small-scale fishworkers globally.

The organizing team included the Working Group on Fisheries of the International Planning Committee for Food Sovereignty (IPC); the General Fisheries Commission for the

discussions, in which participants gathered by region and language to discuss the experiences of small-scale fishworkers in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, Europe and North America. Translation services were provided in the plenary sessions in Arabic, English, French, Italian, Portuguese, Spanish and Turkish.

The first day was reserved for representatives from small-scale fishworkers' organizations, and invited support organizations, including ICSF. The day focused on engagement, dialogue and building solidarity among representatives from various SSF contexts around the world.

The second and third day were open to all other participants, and emphasized the commemoration of the tenth anniversary of the endorsement of the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication (SSF Guidelines). The discussions focused on how to advance co-ordinated concrete action to implement the SSF Guidelines, and how the SSF Summit can inform and motivate governments in this process.

The Summit also delved into the successes, challenges and ongoing efforts of SSF communities, organizations and supporters from around the world, providing a crucial space for SSF representatives to share their stories, struggles and visions for the future. It emphasized that while the SSF subsector is characterized by a diversity of experiences between countries and regions, the predominant obstacles small-scale fishworkers are facing

This Summit built upon discussions that emerged during the first Summit in 2022, focusing particularly on tenure rights and social development as key themes of concern for small-scale fishworkers globally

Mediterranean (GFCM); SwedBio; the Small-scale Fisheries Resource and Collaboration Hub (SSF Hub); and FAO.

Around 300 people registered to participate, more than doubling the 145 participants in the first Summit. Half of the participants this time around were representatives of SSF organizations, including a strong IPC delegation, while the other half represented inter-governmental organizations, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), academia and governments.

The Summit programme involved a series of plenary and smaller group

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globally are strikingly similar. The key obstacles emerging from the plenaries and group discussions included:

Marginalization and exclusion: Increasingly central to the marginalization and exclusion of small-scale fishworkers is the development of initiatives embedded within the Blue Economy agenda. They include offshore oil and gas exploration, wind farms, port infrastructure, coastal tourism, land reclamation, exclusionary conservation areas, and large-scale industrial fishing. Small-scale fishworkers also typically lack representation or are excluded from policy processes that directly affect their fishing grounds and livelihoods.

Vulnerability and threats to livelihoods: A lack of secure tenure rights makes small-scale fishworkers vulnerable to displacement, often due to competing interests like tourism or large-scale aquaculture. This displacement usually goes hand-in-hand with land, water and fisheries resource grabbing that threatens many communities, meaning small-scale fishworkers often face resource competition from more powerful actors. Furthermore, small-scale fishworkers are particularly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, with changes in fish migration patterns, breeding grounds, the increasing severity of storms and environmental degradation directly impacting the health and availability of fish stocks.

Lack of social and economic security: Summit participants also highlighted the lack of basic infrastructure and social services in many small-scale fishing communities, including sanitation, clean water, education and healthcare, which further exacerbates poverty. The experiences of women in SSF were a particularly important point of discussion, highlighting their often overlooked social and economic contributions, and limited access to resources and decision-making power.

Recognition and empowerment: The vital role small-scale fisheries play in global food and livelihoods security was also underscored at the Summit—a contribution typically

ignored by those supporting large-scale industrial fisheries and aquaculture. Participants called for supporting and empowering small-scale fishers to engage in sustainable fishing practices, recognizing their deep understanding of local environments and biodiversity. The need for focused capacity building, particularly for women and youth, was also highlighted to ensure small-scale fishworkers can advocate for their rights and participate effectively in decision-making processes.

Proposals and demands: In the light of these obstacles and the complex struggles faced by fishworkers globally, representatives from SSF organizations called for a revived sense of unity and collective hope in order to develop more spaces in which fishworkers can share their struggles so as to motivate greater participation and action in political processes. The Peoples' Tribunal model that has been used by several IPC members in Brazil, South Africa and five Asian countries was highlighted as a powerful and inspirational example of a solidarity-building space that could also be organized in other countries and contexts.

The regional group discussions honed in on specific proposals and demands for national governments and civil society groups to work toward collectively. These include, region-wise:

Africa

- Governments must support and ensure the implementation of the Global Strategic Framework for the implementation of the SSF Guidelines (SSF-GSF).
- SSF actors must collectively push for the development of National Plans of Action (NPOAs) for the SSF Guidelines across all African countries; currently, there are only four.
- Countries that have already developed their NPOAs should serve as change agents. At the next level, to achieve effective implementation, political support and goodwill must be mobilized to foster commitment and facilitate the execution of these plans.
- Enhance the social development of small-scale fishers. We must address

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12

The SSF Summit 2024 was held in Rome from 5 to 7 July. The Summit also delved into the successes, challenges and ongoing efforts of SSF communities, organizations and supporters from around the world, providing a crucial space for SSF representatives to share their stories

the critical infrastructure deficits in marine and inland small-scale fishing communities. For example, the lack of access to potable water and quality education, leading to issues such as drug abuse and limited alternative livelihoods. Without targeted development in this subsector, the prospects for these communities remain bleak. Strategies must focus 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 increasing incidents, there has been no adequate response from local or national governments. Strategies must include providing small-scale fishers with timely weather forecast information to enhance their safety and prevent further tragedies. Additionally, the effectiveness of disaster responsiveness by the

relevant agencies must be ensured through the provision of adequate resources.

- Cross-cutting issues like climate change need to be addressed.

Asia and Pacific

- State legislation should protect traditional tenure to ensure equitable access to inland, marine and coastal resources.
- Broader social insurance coverage must be provided for small-scale fishers.
- Fisheries departments should develop social-protection programmes specific to the SSF subsector.
- Governments must allocate funds for the social protection of small-scale fishers.
- Renewable energy projects in or near coastal areas must benefit SSF communities.
- Guidelines need to be developed to protect the human rights of fishers.
- SSF communities need protection

from displacement due to tourism developments. A government-supported system of co-operation must be established between communities and tourist resorts.

- The contributions of SSF communities must be recognized by allocating or returning funds collected from the sector, including licence fees and fines.
- Academics, NGOs and other institutions should support customary tenure rights.
- Registration systems for SSF need to be implemented to include women and inland fishers.
- Alliances must be built to ensure protection of community-managed resources.
- The SSF subsector should be more visible.
- Legislation must protect customary tenure rights, traditional community practices of resource management, and traditional livelihoods.
- Protected zones and community-controlled, government-legitimized fishing areas, managed inclusively by small-scale fishers, must be promoted.
- Women's access to markets and resources must be enhanced through price and non-market interventions.
- Adoption of the term 'Local SSF Communities' instead of the vague category of 'Local Communities' in respect of the rights of indigenous peoples dependent on inland and marine resources.
- Local and traditional knowledge on management of marine and coastal areas must be valorized.
- Community-based fisheries management must be aligned with the SSF Guidelines.

Latin America and Caribbean

- Increase the visibility of the work of women in small-scale fisheries.
- Focus strengthening existing SSF networks and building unity between them.
- Build alliances between like-minded organizations working toward the same goals in protecting SSF.
- Prioritize the implementation of the SSF Guidelines as an instrument

for defending the human rights of fishers, particularly tenure rights.

- Social and tenure issues should be addressed in an integrated manner. Protect access to land, and preserve traditional knowledge, identity, culture and livelihoods.
- Improve state protection in fishing areas where SSF communities live and work.
- Expand discussions on water governance, allowing for a more comprehensive analysis on access to water and fishing grounds. The issue of territory and territorial management is becoming increasingly important, and can open up discussions on water-resource issues.
- The loss of customary rights is the loss of a set of rights. This, in turn, results in a lack of governance, representativeness and legitimacy of the actors.

Toward the third SSF Summit

The next SSF Summit is likely to take place in 2026, due to broad government support during the COFI session. In preparation for it, participants emphasized several action points that can build upon the process and prepare for a productive third Summit.

In relation to the ongoing SSF Guidelines implementation process, participants highlighted the importance of making the document available in more local languages in order to reach a larger number of small-scale fishing communities. In many places, information about the SSF Guidelines is still lacking. Making them a more accessible advocacy tool would be extremely beneficial in empowering them to demand their rights.

A few participants also emphasized the importance of having a monitoring framework to track the implementation of the SSF Guidelines. FAO has recently published a Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Framework (MEL4SSF) for this purpose.

Further proposals from the group included exploring diverse avenues for developing regional plans of action and NPOAs to ramp up and make the SSF

FAO



Group photo of SSF Summit 2024. Participants emphasized several action points that can build upon the process and prepare for a productive third Summit in 2026

For more

The Diverse Experiences of Small-scale Fisheries – Report from 2nd Global SSF Summit 2024, FAO Headquarters, Rome, Italy, 5-7 July 2024 (Draft) prepared by Ronald Rodriguez, 2024

<https://icsf.net/resources/the-diverse-experiences-of-small-scale-fisheries-2nd-global-ssf-summit-2024-fao-headquarters-rome-italy-5-7-july-2024-draft-by-ronald-rodriguez-2024/>

IYafa 2022: 1st Small-scale Fisheries Summit Report, 2-4 September 2022

<https://icsf.net/resources/iyafa-2022-small-scale-fisheries-summit-report-2-4-september-2022-citta-dell'altra-economia-rome-italy-by-fao-2022/>

2nd Small-scale Fisheries Summit (SSF Summit 2024), Rome, Italy

<https://icsf.net/resources/2nd-small-scale-fisheries-summit-ssf-summit-2024-rome-italy/>

2nd Small-scale Fisheries Summit

<https://ssfhub.org/ssf-summit-2024>

Guidelines implementation process more concrete and actionable.

Many participants also highlighted the crucial need for women and youth to be brought more directly into these processes in order to ensure they are taken up by the next generation and become sustainable in the long term.

All of this will only be possible and effective if funding is made directly available for SSF-led initiatives in which fishworkers guide the process from the grassroots level. Several participants noted that too many government-led processes remain only on paper, never reaching the ground, and have minimal positive impacts on the lives and livelihoods of SSF communities.

Beyond the SSF Guidelines process, the Summit participants broadly supported bringing back SSF back as a standalone agenda item in the next COFI session in 2026. Representatives from environmental NGOs also noted that they will prioritize efforts to listen to, and follow, the guidance of small-scale fishworkers in order to work toward building trust, stronger partnerships and collaborations with SSF organizations.

Furthermore, there was a call for governments and civil society groups to document and compile more examples of local- and national-level experiences

of small-scale fishworkers, and share this information at regional and international levels. This also involves documenting existing fisheries-related policies and legislation, particularly on tenure rights; developing a comprehensive database of small-scale fishworkers in each country; and identifying relevant decision-making spaces where SSF representatives should be invited to participate. These efforts would serve to better inform COFI members of the situation in their countries in preparation for the biennial sessions.

As the Summit drew to a close, there was a tangible feeling that participants want to work toward building stronger alliances among SSF communities, indigenous peoples, civil society organizations, government allies, UN agencies and funding organizations. In light of the tenth anniversary of the endorsement of the SSF Guidelines, such alliances are crucial in efforts toward their implementation on the ground. Small-scale fishworkers must always remain at the core of this process, being recognized and respected for their fundamental role as bearers of knowledge and problem solvers who possess powerful solutions for tackling many of the key obstacles they are facing, now and in the future. 🌱

A (Better) Space for Dialogue

The second Small-scale Fisheries Summit held in Rome on July 5-7, 2024, offered a forum for constructive dialogue and showed what needs to be done

It has been ten years since the adoption of the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication (the SSF Guidelines). That was the backdrop of the second Small-scale Fisheries Summit, held on July 5-7, 2024, at the headquarters of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) in Rome, Italy. Its main objective was to “promote priority actions” for the implementation of these guidelines, in particular through in-depth dialogue with governments. The Summit also aimed to provide a space, particularly for artisanal fisheries organizations from around the world, to get to know one another better and to explore collaboration between professional artisanal fisheries organizations and civil society organizations (CSOs).

On this last point, the Summit was clearly a success. It was rich in exchanges of experience and points of view among SSF organizations. It also laid the foundations for constructive dialogue with many environmental organizations, including those on the summit’s organizing committee. However, it will be much better if the organizing committee of future events is made up primarily of SSF trade organizations, particularly those from the Global South, whether or not they are members of the International Planning Committee for Food Sovereignty (IPC). The needs of inclusion and diversity must not undermine the primary objective of such a gathering: supporting the voiceless and marginalized SSF communities.

As part of the dialogue with NGOs, participants had the opportunity to share the rules of conduct adopted by the artisanal fishing organizations’

signatories to the Call to Action. These rules of conduct are essential to ensure a respectful dialogue among SSF actors and the organizations that support them. In particular, these rules require that small-scale fishers are enabled to speak for themselves, without NGO intermediaries.

Discussions with the Rise up NGO Platform present at the Summit a very positive development. A webinar

... it will be much better if the organizing committee of future summits is made up primarily of SSF trade organizations, particularly those from the Global South...

was organized to explain these rules to the members. Discussions with environmental NGOs also led to a better understanding of the role of SSF in biodiversity conservation. A number of participants signed a declaration on this topic at FAO’s Committee on Fisheries (COFI). It is worth repeating that the Summit was a great success from the point of view of dialogue and exchanges among the men and women from SSF subsector and civil society organizations, particularly environmental organizations.

However, when looking at the summit as a platform for dialogue between small-scale fishers and governments, the results were mixed. The practical implementation of the directives rests, to a large extent, with States; it is essential that future summits do much more to move in this direction. It would be a shame to reduce any future artisanal fisheries summit to a mere opportunity to share experiences, to engage in dialogue between fishers and civil society, and to make—for the

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CFFA



16

The Summit should have allowed fishers and support organizations to discuss the issues on the COFI agenda, to take common positions, and then to have the opportunity to defend them before the governmental delegations
 Source: <https://www.cffacape.org/>

hundredth time—a vague declaration on artisanal fisheries, unrelated to the issues on COFI’s agenda.

The Summit should have allowed fishers and support organizations to discuss the issues on the COFI agenda, to take common positions, and then to have the opportunity to defend them before the governmental delegations. On this occasion, however, this did not happen. To illustrate the disconnect between the Summit and COFI, most of the participants did not stay to attend COFI. Given the absence of most States at the Summit, this lacuna did nothing to facilitate dialogue between the artisanal fishing organizations and their State representatives.

In future summits, SSF organizations need to be better prepared, including by encouraging dialogue with States. A great deal of information and experiences can be shared in advance among the participants. In the case of Africa, the African Confederation of Artisanal Fisheries Professional Organizations (CAOPA) took part in a meeting of African fisheries and

aquaculture ministers in Tanzania, through AFRIFISH, the continental platform of non-State fisheries actors that it chairs. The aim was to prepare for the COFI meeting, with a particular focus on the challenges facing SSF. We are going to do everything we can to ensure that this type of preparatory meetings, which involve the participation of African small-scale fishers and civil society actors, becomes a regular occurrence and takes place before each COFI and SSF summit.

Future summits should become a unique opportunity to deepen the dialogue between SSF professionals and governments. They must create a platform to urge governments to implement the SSF Guidelines, by making concrete proposals linked to the current challenges facing fisheries, which need to be addressed by COFI.

On this last point, the publication of the Fishers Call to Action in 2022, which is rooted in the SSF Guidelines, provides clear ideas for concrete action by the signatory artisanal fisheries organizations. 3

For more

2nd Small-scale Fisheries Summit (SSF Summit 2024), Rome, Italy
<https://icsf.net/resources/2nd-small-scale-fisheries-summit-ssf-summit-2024-rome-italy/>

2nd Small-scale Fisheries Summit
<https://ssfhub.org/ssf-summit-2024>

African Confederation of Artisanal Fisheries (CAOPA)
<https://caopa.org/en/welcome/>

CFFA
<https://www.cffacape.org/>

Fishworkers, Unite!

The second Small-scale Fisheries Summit, held in Rome just like the first one 40 years ago, reverberated with resounding calls for the implementation of the SSF Guidelines

The second Small-scale Fisheries (SSF) Summit, held at the headquarters of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) in Rome, Italy, was a grand event that brought together 285 people, primarily representatives of SSF organizations and their supporters, but also inter-governmental organizations, academics, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and governments. A total of 78 countries were represented at the event organized on July 5-7, 2024. The Summit Hall at the FAO headquarters was a confluence of colours and cultures of five continents; It reverberated with a bewildering variety of issues presented by SSF representatives from across the world.

John Kurien's presentation on the history of the Summit commemorated the tenth anniversary of the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication (the SSF Guidelines). It was brilliant, informative and enlightening. Gender representation was more or less even, with 49 per cent female and 51 per cent male. But the situation was different when considered by geography and by nature of organizations represented. Asia, by far the largest fish-producing continent in the world, had only 12 per cent participation. SSF member-based organizations, which actually represent the small-scale fishworkers, had less than 40 per cent participation. Given the sorry state of global inland fisheries, especially inland capture fisheries, their voice should have been more prominently heard at the Summit.

Though customary tenure rights and social development in SSF were the

two priority topics, implementation of the SSF Guidelines was also discussed with much interest. The discussion on customary tenure rights was rich in content and covered large variations in the nature of tenure rights needed by small-scale fishers and fish farmers. But the need to include protection of water and fish resources in tenure rights was not mentioned with the importance it deserved.

The imperative to protect the livelihood rights of SSF communities in protected or conservation areas was reiterated by a number of participants

Another point relating to customary tenure rights in SSF came up in response to a plenary presentation on mapping of various conservation projects by the representative of Conservation International, an international environmental NGO. Voices from the floor were raised on the need to include mapping of conflict zones between conservation groups and SSF communities. The imperative to protect the livelihood rights of SSF communities in protected or conservation areas was reiterated by a number of participants.

The discussions on social development saw multiple references to the need for alternative livelihood sources. For small-scale fishworkers, this means working in sectors other than fisheries. This is not acceptable because it changes their identity as workers who live off fisheries. Fishing communities may need additional livelihood options to complement their earnings from fisheries, but they will

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ICSF



18

Fishers at work, Tamil Nadu, India. It was felt that the SSF organizations should have a permanent international hub at FAO to co-ordinate among themselves and make timely interventions on critical issues

never abandon their fishing work. It was only appropriate that the call for ‘alternative livelihood’ was challenged on the floor and found resounding support.

During the discussions on the SSF Guidelines, it was mentioned that FAO should not only push for their implementation but also monitor it, producing periodic country reports on the status of execution, a kind of report card. If done, this would immensely help the SSF communities in their struggle to make their respective governments accountable.

The Summit vociferously and unanimously claimed the right to participate in the Committee on Fisheries (COFI), FAO Council’s subsidiary body that is the only global inter-governmental forum where FAO members meet to consider issues related to fisheries and aquaculture. COFI provides periodic global recommendations and policy advice to governments, regional fishery bodies, civil society organizations,

and actors from the private sector and international community. “Nothing for us without us” was the resounding clamour at the Summit. It was felt that the SSF organizations should have a permanent international hub at FAO to co-ordinate among themselves and make timely interventions on critical issues. This would help oversee the process of implementation of the SSF Guidelines.

Save Water, Save Fish, Save Fisher People...

Small-scale Fishworkers of the World, Unite!

For more



National Federation of Small-scale Fishworkers

<https://smallscalefishworkers.org/small-scale-fish-worker-organisations/national-platform-for-small-scale-fish-workers-inland/>

“Customary tenure rights and social development should be at the heart of small-scale fisheries governance”: A reflection on the 2nd FAO Small-scale Fisheries Summit

<https://pureportal.strath.ac.uk/en/publications/customary-tenure-rights-and-social-development-should-be-at-the-h>

Out of the Trenches

Future SSF summits should help small-scale fishing communities defend their spaces in all international forums in the context of conservation and marine and coastal area development

We arrived in Rome with two questions, at the very least. One: will it be possible to develop a small-scale fisheries meeting based on the efforts and negotiations of the real fisheries movements, on their principles, values and efforts? Two: will the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) be able to maintain the urgency of addressing the issues of this subsector as a priority in the fulfilment of its mandate to reduce hunger and poverty?

From my point of view, the SSF Summit guaranteed a fresh and innovative space for discussions on fisherfolks' movements. It strengthened what has been a fundamental struggle of fishers towards the implementation of a human rights perspective in the approach to protection, development and sustainable use of water resources. Much of this success was due to the hard work put in by the International Planning Committee for Food Sovereignty (IPC). The success also drew from the collaboration, camaraderie and fundamental respect among like-minded organizations for providing and managing spaces for dialogue. FAO must be acknowledged for sharing a space that, although not neutral, allowed an excellent logistics support for the complex conversations held at the Summit.

On the other side, the SSF Summit demonstrated the fragility of the process needed to implement the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication (the SSF Guidelines), agreed on ten years ago in 2014. It made evident the loss of a decade as well as the acute and difficult situation confronting the subsector. Given the 'voluntary' nature of the mandate, national governments have not done

enough to recognize its value and the need for a comprehensive, inter-institutional and responsible approach to its implementation.

The SSF Summit did provide the opportunity for personal interactions among varied stakeholders. One aspect that came up was the need to go beyond the agenda of FAO's Committee on Fisheries (COFI). Participants understood the need to extend the struggle to other spaces that governments use for the discussion of conservation and coastal and marine development. The supporters of small-scale fishers have been absent from these spaces. This absence can result in national governments abandoning their responsibility to stay within the bounds of a human rights-based vision that posits greater equity and justice in the distribution of benefits from political and economic decisions supposedly aimed at ensuring the sustainability of the small-scale fisheries sector.

There should be a third, a fourth and a fifth summit, and FAO and other organizations interested in the conservation and sustainable use of the oceans should be required to support, and continue to support, fisher movements to conduct such meetings every two years.

Understanding that small-scale fisherfolk will now fight for their rights in other forums and other spaces as well, these organizations should learn from their struggles and demands, and make up their minds to support them. If not, they will find themselves stuck in the trenches that trap those who suffer the cost of ocean conservation and development.

This is what we hope will begin to change, thanks to future fisheries meetings inspired by the SSF Summit. ♣

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A Space in Progress

The 2024 SSF Summit was a platform for mutual learning also a multi-dimensional opportunity for building a community, making connections and coming together as a collective

In early July 2024, the second Small-scale Fisheries (SSF) Summit was held in Rome. It commemorated the tenth anniversary of the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication (SSF Guidelines). Funded by the European Commission and hosted and organized by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and its partners, the Summit

I attended the Summit for the first time this year as an academic and researcher. In this short note I reflect on the challenges and successes that the Summit faced; I also offer some thoughts on possible future pathways. One primary question frames my observations: What does a space like the Summit offer and mean for its participants?

Situating the Summit

The first SSF Summit was held in September 2022 as part of the year-long series of events organized around the International Year of Artisanal Fisheries and Aquaculture (IYAFA). It was attended by 145 participants from 47 countries. The 2024 event was bigger, with nearly 300 attendees.

The increase in scale had entailed a change in venue. Unlike in 2022, the Summit moved to the main FAO building, with its more stringent access rules and requirements. From its architecture to its flags and airport-level security, FAO affirms, as much through its space as its influence on policy-making, that it not only has a seat at the table but, in fact, possesses the capacity to convene the table itself.

The bulk of the sessions over the three days of the Summit were held in the Red Room, an imposing space featuring screens and facilities for simultaneous translation at every desk. Portraits of former FAO chairpersons lined the walls. From the flags that covered the rear wall of the Red Room to the break-out rooms named after countries and the cadences of multiple languages, this was undeniably an international space, and perhaps even a trans-national one.

Space and voice

The SSF leaders at FAO were grassroots leaders with long experience in engaging, challenging and negotiating

By bringing together over 300 SSF representatives, activists, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), FAO staff and academics for three days of intense discussions and debates, the Summit was, in many ways, an unqualified success

aimed to not just celebrate a milestone but also to take action towards a more robust implementation of the SSF Guidelines.

By bringing together over 300 SSF representatives, activists, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), FAO staff and academics for three days of intense discussions and debates, the Summit was, in many ways, an unqualified success. The weight of history made the SSF leaders' presence at the FAO particularly poignant; the 2024 Summit was held almost 40 years to the day after fisher leaders had protested outside the FAO building against their exclusion. Now, 40 years later, fisher leaders were in the heart of a building whose scale, architecture and design served as perpetual reminders that this was one of the most powerful spaces in global fishery governance. To see them being heard and acknowledged within the imposing FAO precinct in Rome was a reminder that this presence was a hard fought victory and the culmination of decades-long efforts by SSF actors globally.

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Panel discussion during the SSF Summit 2024. one of the key strengths of the Summit was the multi-faceted nature of the space it offered

with their governments. A space like this, however, presents its own possibilities and challenges. In speaking with leaders and activists, I heard a refrain: Whom was the Summit meant for?

Was it primarily (or even solely) a space for SSF leaders to engage with one another and learn from each other's experiences, victories and concerns? Was it for SSF to arrive at a common platform for assertions that were global in scale and local in implementation, such as those of customary tenure rights? Was it to share perspectives on contentious issues of the day such as individual transferable quotas (ITQs) and the Convention on Biodiversity's 30x30 Agenda? Or was it a space for SSF to speak to FAO fisheries experts and communicate their concerns, frustrations and aspirations? What is the role of outsiders, be they whether environmental NGOs, funding agencies or academia?

These omnipresent questions were given particular force by the fishers' perceived exclusion from the FAO Committee on Fisheries (COFI) meeting that was scheduled to commence the day after the Summit closed. Attended by bureaucrats and governmental representatives, COFI's theme of supporting and highlighting the contributions of SSF struck many Summit attendees as particularly ironic.

There were also considerable questions about the role of FAO. While FAO staff saw their role as facilitators in creating a space that was pliable and transformative for those within the SSF community, many fisher leaders felt

otherwise. For them, FAO was perceived as a body with significant influence over global fisheries governance; they felt strongly that FAO should play a more openly persuasive role in pushing their governments towards adopting SSF-friendly policies.

In sum

In many ways, the Summit is still in a nascent stage. Should it go on to achieve a regular periodicity, it is possible to suggest ways that the Summit might be more responsive to SSF needs and demands. These include fostering more and deeper conversations among the SSF leaders, recognizing the diversity of perspectives within the global SSF community, and supporting women and indigenous leaders within such global platforms.

For me, however, one of the key strengths of the Summit was the multi-faceted nature of the space it offered. The power of having one's presence not just welcome but affirmed cannot be gainsaid, particularly given the long history of exclusion and marginalization that SSF have faced. Not only did the Summit seek to serve as a platform for mutual learning, led by SSF leaders, it also offered opportunities for building a community, for making connections, and for coming together as a collective. During sessions, and between them, over lunches and dinners, I saw conversations flourish, cards exchanged, and ideas spark. It is the power of such interactions, and their afterlives, that ultimately determine the success of spaces like the SSF Summit. 📌

For more

IYafa 2022: 1st Small-scale Fisheries Summit Report, 2-4 September 2022

<https://icsf.net/resources/iyafa-2022-small-scale-fisheries-summit-report-2-4-september-2022-citta-dellaltra-economia-rome-italy-by-fao-2022/>

Unrecognized Tenure

<https://icsf.net/samudra/tenure-rights-india-unrecognized-tenure/>

2nd Small-scale Fisheries Summit (SSF Summit 2024), Rome, Italy

<https://icsf.net/resources/2nd-small-scale-fisheries-summit-ssf-summit-2024-rome-italy/>

Dig in Together

Non-governmental organizations, civil society organizations and government representatives need to work collectively to advance the agendas of small-scale fisheries and fisher communities

For as long as I can remember I have been absolutely in awe of the struggle, resistance, resilience and triumph of fishing communities and their inseparable knowledge of, and relationship with, their marine environment. However, there was a distinct turning point in my personal and professional life when I met Hector, a fisherman from a small coastal town in the Gulf of California, Mexico. Hector

programme. I cherish this position and honour due to the incredible people I get to work with day in and day out, both our amazing staff and our community partners. And this is also a position I occupy with great care, caution and humility due to our collective knowledge and recognition that the conservation movement has not always respected the rights and well-being of indigenous peoples, local communities, and small-scale fishing actors. However, this is exactly why I have consciously decided to become a part of this movement; we have the opportunity and responsibility to turn this around.

It was in this capacity that I was fortunate enough to attend the second Small-scale Fisheries (SSF) Summit, ahead of the 36th Session of the Committee on Fisheries (COFI) of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) in Rome in July 2024. Walking through the grand entrance of the FAO building to the Summit meeting room, I was struck by a sense of optimism and hope. The Summit would be held at the FAO building for the first time in advance of the 36th Session of COFI. Not only was the venue official, but small-scale fisheries would be featured on the agenda of the formal COFI session.

I spent the next several days learning from, and engaging in, interesting conversations with fishers and fishworkers, funders, academics, government officials and NGO actors. The topics included the importance of secure tenure and access for small-scale fisherfolk and the right to decent work and social protection in the fishing sector. Following the Summit, during COFI, it was heartening to see a special session dedicated to the tenth

... it was heartening to see a special session dedicated to the tenth anniversary of the SSF Guidelines...

and I spent hours together on his small fibreglass vessel, hauling in nets from the dark early morning hours until the blazing midday sun was so unbearable even our tepid coffee from the thermos felt refreshing and cool.

Through his stories and his friendship, my heart and mind were split wide open to the realities of being a fisher and the countless challenges he endured, matched by an unwavering desire to steward the life force that sustained him. I forged my life and career based on this intimate understanding that Hector shared with me through his words and practice. I feel so grateful to have had the opportunity to learn from, and establish relationships with, small-scale fishers, fishworkers and communities from around the world for the greater part of my adult life.

Now, I represent an international environmental non-governmental organization (NGO) as the director of the Coastal Community Fisheries

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Group photo: The Summit can spend less time on presentations and reallocate more time for smaller break-out groups to workshop certain issues and ideas

anniversary of the SSF Guidelines and to hear countless interventions from delegates around the world calling for greater recognition of SSF and the critical role of indigenous peoples, local communities, women and youth. It feels as though we are finally gaining momentum in global dialogues. I sincerely hope this continues to move forward.

Despite the optimism, I recognized that we still have a long way to go to build trust and relationships, and to mend past harms as we strive for a successful global small-scale fisheries movement. I believe this must begin with the full accountability and responsibility on behalf of conservation NGOs. To echo some of the critical comments we heard from SSF representatives, conservation must not come at the expense of the rights of fishing communities; the criminalization of SSF must not happen under the guise of conservation; and we must unlearn conceptions of sustainability and conservation that threaten the rights of SSF. This is a role and responsibility we can, and

must, take first by advocating for change within our own respective organizations.

Trust cannot be built between conservationists and SSF actors through an event held every other year. This type of trust requires a real commitment to engage and follow through, repeated interactions, and it also requires time. This trust will be built through informal conversations

... we must unlearn conceptions of sustainability and conservation that threaten the rights of SSF.

over coffee or lunch or through connecting over smartphones, but not by listening to presentations. While the SSF Summit offers us an important occasion to meet every two years, we need to find additional opportunities to keep the conversation going and work towards a collaboratively defined

CORNELIE QUIST



SSF Summit Day 2024. While the SSF Summit offers us an important occasion to meet every two years, we need to find additional opportunities to keep the conversation going and work towards a collaboratively defined partnership based on commonly shared values and commitments to respectful engagement

partnership based on commonly shared values and commitments to respectful engagement.

Given this, the SSF Summit itself can be redesigned to support greater trust building and engagement both at the meeting itself and beyond. First, the Summit can reserve more time for informal interactions through free time, field trips, group meals or other activities. Perhaps these activities could be thoughtfully and intentionally designed so that people who do not normally feel comfortable in interactions can get to know one another.

Second, the Summit can spend less time on presentations and reallocate more time for smaller break-out groups to workshop certain issues and ideas. The last SSF Summit offered space for smaller groups to discuss tenure rights and social development issues but there was not sufficient time to get to concrete next steps, action items, or ideas for how to advance this work collectively before the next Summit.

Third, perhaps participants can organize into working groups around specific themes or issues of interest, for example, advocating for secure tenure. Or regional working groups that transcend institutions, for example, a West African working group with NGOs, civil society organizations and government representatives to advance certain issues or geographic priorities

before the subsequent Summit. In this way we could have more continuous and fluid engagement without losing momentum.

In closing, please know that the SSF movements have allies in conservation NGOs. We take your Call to Action and Rules of Conduct to heart. We will always respect and never undermine your rights, realizing that there is nothing about you without you and the right to your own voice, and that working with you also means funding you.

We are open and willing to hear your feedback, learn from you, improve our practice and way of working, and find ways by which we can work collectively to advance the agendas of small-scale fishers, fishworkers and communities. But we cannot wait for the next SSF Summit to do this. We need to start this important work now, so that when we come together for the next meeting in Rome, we are ready to roll up our sleeves and dig in together. So that the SSF movement's voice is heard loud and clear on an international stage like never before. 📢

For more

Center for Oceans

<https://www.conservation.org/about/center-for-oceans>

Alienated Marginalized

<https://icsf.net/samudra/alienated-marginalized/>

Critical interventions

<https://icsf.net/yemaya/critical-interventions/>

Looking Back, Moving Forwards

Small-scale fisheries organizations and other non-State actors could well transform the SSF Summit into a permanent space for global collective action

The year 2024 marked the 40th anniversary of the first International Conference of Fish Workers and Supporters, held in Rome in 1984 on the initiative of a number of individuals engaged in small-scale fisheries (SSF) around the world. It was convened as a counter-conference to the World Conference on Fisheries Management and Development, organized by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) in which small-scale fisheries actors were not represented. At that time there was no global SSF organizations or social movement.

This counter-conference sparked the foundation of organizations able to fill that gap, namely the International Collective in Support of Fishworkers (ICSF), and about a decade later, the World Forum of Fish Harvesters & Fish Workers (WFF) and the World Forum of Fisher Peoples (WFFP).

About another decade later, in 2008, the first Global Conference on Small-scale Fisheries was co-organized in Bangkok by FAO and the government of Thailand. Its theme was 'Securing Sustainable Small-scale Fisheries: Bringing Together Responsible Fisheries and Social Development', and it was convened in collaboration with the Southeast Asian Fisheries Development Center (SEAFDEC) and the WorldFish Center. It was preceded by a preparatory civil society workshop organized by ICSF, WFFP, the Sustainable Development Foundation of Thailand (SDF), the Southern Fisherfolk Federation of Thailand, and the International Planning Committee for Food Sovereignty (IPC).

A 'Statement from Civil Society' delivered at the conference included a "call on the FAO's Committee on Fisheries (COFI) to include a specific chapter in the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries (CCRF) on small-scale fisheries, recognizing the obligations of States towards them".

COFI listened. Its deliberations in 2011 launched a participatory process; ICSF, WFFP and WFF joined forces under the umbrella of the IPC Working Group on Fisheries to consolidate views of SSF actors from around the world. The result was the endorsement of the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication (SSF Guidelines) by COFI in 2014, providing the world with a globally negotiated and agreed reference document to support the subsector. Albeit altered in many parts through the negotiation process, the SSF Guidelines reflect specific wording coming from SSF communities.

A 'Statement from Civil Society' delivered at the conference included a "call on the FAO's Committee on Fisheries (COFI) to include a specific chapter in the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries (CCRF) on small-scale fisheries, recognizing the obligations of States towards them"

The first decade

Since their endorsement in 2014, global policy processes and instruments, within fisheries and beyond, have taken up the SSF Guidelines, such as instruments of the Committee on World Food Security, the UN Declaration on the Rights of Peasants and Other People Working in Rural Areas, and, more recently, the G20 Agriculture Ministers Declaration. Regional policies and initiatives also firmly embrace the SSF Guidelines: the Regional Plan of Action for Small-scale Fisheries in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea brokered by the General Commission for the Mediterranean and the Black Sea (GFCM) or the Policy Framework and Reform Strategy for Fisheries and Aquaculture in Africa.

More importantly, National Plans of Action for Small-scale Fisheries now exist in Tanzania, Zanzibar, Uganda, Namibia, Malawi, Madagascar, Senegal

This article is by Nicole Franz (Nicole.Franz@fao.org), Equitable Livelihoods Team Leader, FAO

and the Philippines. Partners from civil society, the NGO sector and academia, among others, are developing tools or taking action to support the SSF Guidelines uptake and implementation on the ground.

The SSF Summit

Collective efforts of many partners around the world have increased the visibility and consideration of SSF, leading, among other things, to the celebration of 2022 as the International Year of Artisanal Fisheries and Aquaculture (IYAFA). In a meeting at the margins of the Ocean Conference in Lisbon in June 2022, FAO proposed to GFCM, the SSF Hub and IPC the organizing of a major convening for small-scale fisheries stakeholders as part of the IYAFA celebrations. No sooner said than done, the first SSF Summit took place in September 2022 in Rome, immediately prior to the COFI session, to create synergies between the two events.

Despite the short time available for preparation, over 100 participants, mostly from SSF organizations, gathered over three days for increased dialogue among fishers and fisher representatives. The result was constructive strategic discussion across SSF organizations, NGOs and others. While much could have been done better, the SSF Summit concluded with a renewed feeling of camaraderie and continued focus for collective implementation of the SSF Guidelines. Importantly, some official COFI delegates joined the SSF Summit, which resulted in the 35th Session of COFI emphasizing “the unique opportunity to gather commitments and recommendations at a Summit on small-scale fisheries, which is encouraged to be held every two years prior to COFI, subject to resourcing, to sustain and inform continued support to the subsector”.

SwedBio joined the somewhat ad hoc organizing committee of the first SSF Summit to not miss the opportunity created by this COFI recommendation. Financial support from the European Commission, matched by contributions from other partners, allowed the holding of the second SSF Summit in July 2024, again prior to COFI. It took place in FAO, symbolically redressing the situation of 1984. This time around, the non-State actors—primarily SSF organizations and social movements—invited government members to attend the SSF Summit in the FAO building.

Reflections: the participants

Attended by close to 300 people, representing, in particular, small-scale fishers, fishworkers and their affiliated organizations, the SSF Summit 2024 achieved the objective of providing a platform for engagement. The gender balance was great, but geographical balance needed improvement. Low participation from Asia can reflect a gap in terms of regional organizations, which could help facilitate the flow of information and the identification of participants. The selection process for participants from SSF organizations, social movements and support organizations could be improved, to prioritize those with leadership roles or demonstrated leadership capacities or potential, to support the next generation to constructively drive change and ensure the Summit experience is shared on the ground.

The participation of governments was welcomed and constructive. Brazil, Chile, Tanzania and the US are but some examples of that, as they carried messages about, and from, the SSF Summit into the COFI discussions that followed. NGOs represented another important group of participants; they enabled the participation of many SSF representatives. At the same time, pre-existing tensions between some SSF support groups and NGOs could be felt. The question is whether the Summit could become a space to carve out and address the underlying issues to advance together or however in an overall agreed direction, in line with the SSF Guidelines.

Format and content

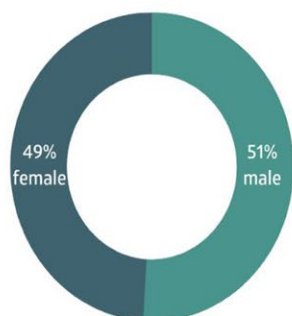
Plenary sessions allow all to enjoy the same experience, while break-out sessions allow for drilling deeper, and hearing more voices directly, ideally in a shared language, without interpretation. Arranging for interpretation in many languages is costly, but a pre-condition for inclusion, which is why a lot took place in the plenary. But having regionally organized break-out groups in the Summit was generally perceived as positive, and having the mid-term review of the GFCM Regional Plan of Action for SSF built into the Summit agenda also elevated its importance.

Time is always too short—what was missing was more time for informal discussions and exploration of more innovative and interactive formats, which would also have allowed

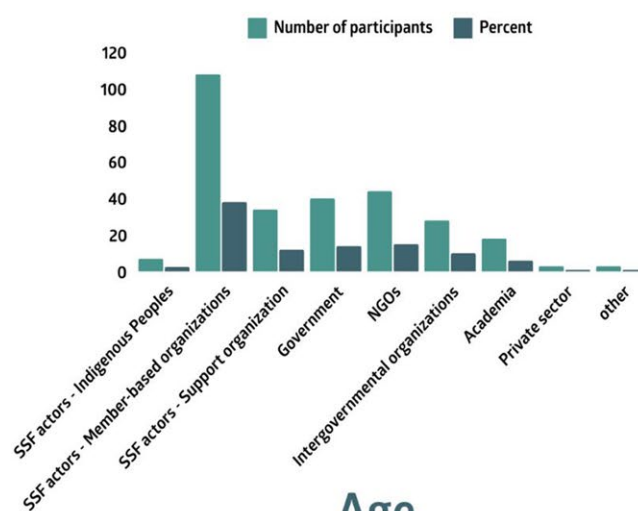
The SSF Summit 2024 brought together 285 people, primarily representatives of small-scale fisheries organizations and fisherflocks, support organizations, but also inter-governmental organizations, academia, NGOs and governments. A total of 78 countries were represented at the event.

SSF SUMMIT 2024 PARTICIPATION BY GENDER, STAKEHOLDER TYPE, GEOGRAPHY AND AGE

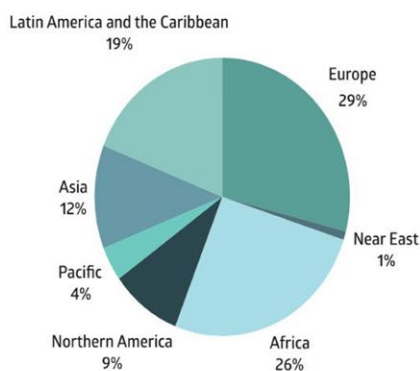
Gender



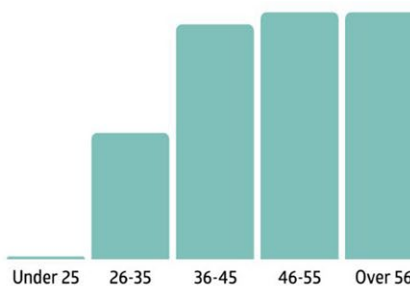
Stakeholder type



Geography



Age



Source: <https://www.fao.org/voluntary-guidelines-small-scale-fisheries/key-thematic-areas/ssf-summit/en>

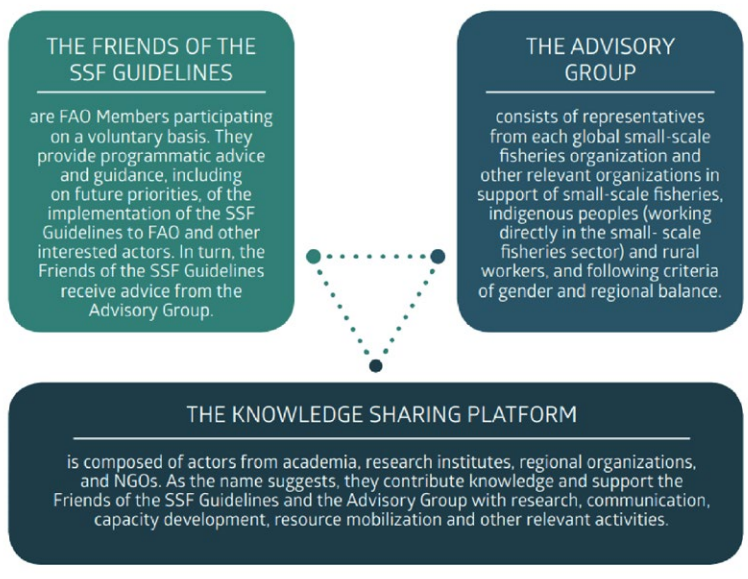
participants to get to know each other better, a stated objective of the Summit. But new connections developed, leading, for example, to the integration of the Pacific region into the global SSF movements.

In terms of content, sharing experiences about the SSF Guidelines implementation and a focus on two issues—tenure and social development, chapters five and six of the SSF Guidelines—was, in principle, good. In practice, sessions could have benefited

from a more systematic preparation, introduction and discussion, to carve out key gaps as well as good practices to inform the way forward. An open question is if a forum of this size can do this, or if the Summit could be better used as a more general, non-technical, accessible space “to collaboratively address governance and development challenges in small-scale fisheries while proposing and sharing solutions to foster and strengthen the implementation of the SSF Guidelines”.

FAO

The Global Strategic Framework in support of implementing the SSF Guidelines is made up of three main components, facilitated by a Secretariat in FAO:



Source: https://www.fao.org/fileadmin/user_upload/ssf/images/newsImages/Diagram.gif

Asia and the Pacific, respectively. Additional components of the SSF-GSF are the ‘Friends of the SSF Guidelines’ (governments), as well as a loose group of stakeholders (NGOs, academia, and others) as a Knowledge Sharing Platform (KSP). FAO supports facilitation among these components. A group of ‘Friends’ met a few times, including with the Advisory Group, while the KSP never really materialized.

As COFI has renewed its support to the Summit, it would seem natural to use the momentum to rethink how to operationalize the SSF-GSF; to use the Summit as a regular in-person convening of the SSF-GSF and related partners to review and advance action to implement the SSF Guidelines.

How could this be done? SSF organizations, together with other non-State actors, should drive both the SSF-GSF and the SSF Summit. Rethinking the composition of the SSF-GSF Advisory Group, for example, to ensure regional, gender and age balance and organizational inclusion, and its connection to the SSF Summit organizational committee could be one important step to consolidate a powerful global institutional construct for collective action for SSF.

Piloting the SSF-GSF could be the next important step to explore its potential and impact, for example, in relation to a specific issue or policy process. The Advisory Group could identify and engage with governments as ‘Friends’, inviting them to include views of small-scale fishing communities in their statements and actions. These views could benefit from input provided by the would-be members of the KSP. The Summit could then be the moment to collectively analyse what worked and what did not; how to improve; what to focus on; and how to move forward. It could allow to ground discussions and actions in local realities, but it could also provide ways to make global processes relevant at national and local levels.

All of this would take time, and there would be a lot of learning needed. But, with some patience, the effort could really make a difference for the visibility, voice and impact of SSF representatives in decision-making processes and activities that affect the livelihoods of those that depend on the subsector. **3**

This leads to a reflection on the objective of the Summit “to further develop and consolidate the Global Strategic Framework in Support of the Implementation of the SSF Guidelines (SSF-GSF), as a partnership mechanism giving small-scale fishery actors, government representatives and other stakeholders a space to collaborate at a global level”.

Quo vadis?

Implementing the SSF Guidelines takes combined efforts by many actors. These actors—in particular, the non-State actors—need ways to exchange ideas and concerns, and a space for collaboration. For this, IPC proposed the SSF-GSF as a partnership mechanism, giving small-scale fishery actors, government representatives and other stakeholders such an opportunity to collaborate at the global level. The SSF-GSF gives small-scale fishery actors an opportunity to advise others on how they would like to see the SSF Guidelines put into action.

The SSF-GSF, therefore, has an advisory and facilitative role. COFI welcomed the SSF-GSF in 2016. An Advisory Group, consisting primarily of SSF representatives, was established, later complemented by Regional Advisory Groups for Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, and

For more

Report of the FAO World Conference on Fisheries Management. Rome, Italy, 27 June - 6 July 1984
<https://openknowledge.fao.org/items/b3a29b46-f832-4f3d-9eb0-09c9d5112b76>

Rallying to Rome: Special People. Collective Processes. A Unique Event
https://www.icsf.net/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/930.ICSF251_ICSF-Rallying-to-Rome.pdf

A global assessment of preferential access areas for small-scale fisheries
<http://icsfarchives.net/21288/>

Beyond Business as Usual
<https://icsf.net/samudra/beyond-business-as-usual/>

Small in Scale, Big in Value
<https://icsf.net/samudra/small-in-scale-big-in-value/>

Better Recognition Now

At the 36th Session of the FAO Committee on Fisheries (COFI) several participants felt that issues relating to small-scale fisheries would have been better served if discussed under a stand-alone agenda item

The 36th Session of the Committee on Fisheries (COFI) of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) was held at its headquarter in Rome, from 8 to 12 July 2024. Small-scale fisheries (SSF) issues were included under all major agenda items, unlike in previous COFI meetings where SSF issues were discussed under a stand-alone agenda item.

Speaking first, the Tanzanian delegation drew attention to the 10th anniversary of the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication (the SSF Guidelines). The delegation spoke with appreciation of the development of national plans of action for SSF (NPOAs-SSF) in African countries like Namibia, Uganda, Malawi and Madagascar. Further, initiatives of the African Union-Interafrican Bureau for Animal Resources (AU-IBAR) and the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP), in support of SSF, were mentioned. In future, the delegation was keen to see SSF retained as a stand-alone agenda item in the regular sessions of COFI. The Philippines delegation also supported the 10th Anniversary of the SSF Guidelines and informed COFI about its NPOA under development.

At a high-level special event on the 10th anniversary of the SSF Guidelines, held during the lunch break of the opening day of COFI, FAO brought to light the SSF legislation already in place in 20 member countries, the development of NPOAs-SSF in seven member States, and a decennial action plan in pipeline for the Mediterranean region.

Minister Abdullah Hamis Ulega, for Livestock and Fisheries, Tanzania, spoke on the occasion in support of what his government has done for SSF. Sergio González Guerrero, Minister of Production, Peru, encouraged all FAO members to implement the SSF Guidelines. Formalizing 12,000

artisanal fishing vessels and designating the high-value giant squid fishery to the subsector were shared as key Peruvian government decisions to benefit artisanal fisheries. Additional support included a dedicated low-interest credit scheme, the development of an extension system, and protection of the ancestral and traditional knowledge of artisanal fishing communities.

Drusilia Bayate, Undersecretary for Fisheries of the Philippines, spoke about the NPOA-SSF under development in her country. Preferential access for small-scale fishers to municipal waters (inland, coastal and marine waters up to eight nautical miles from the low-tide line, excluding the marine

Small-scale fisheries (SSF) issues were included under all major agenda items, unlike in previous COFI meetings where SSF issues were discussed under a stand-alone agenda item

protected areas or MPAs) was being operationalized. Schemes were being introduced to replace lost fishing gear and to support parametric insurance. A management initiative for sardine fisheries was being developed. Seaweed farming was proposed as an alternative source of income for municipal fishers.

Charlina Vitcheva, Director of the Directorate General, Maritime Affairs and Fisheries of the European Commission, commended FAO for making the Summit a genuine platform for dialogue. While scoping of SSF into the WTO instrument on fisheries subsidies was seen as essential, she cautioned against any undue expansion of its scope. She agreed that the SSF subsector was more vulnerable than other sectors in coastal areas. While men fished and caught different species in different geographic areas, women were active in fish processing.

*This article is by **Sebastian Mathew** (icsf@icsf.net), Executive Director, ICSF*

FAO / GIUSEPPE



Committee on Fisheries 36th Session (COFI), Rome Italy, 8-12 July 2024. It is a matter of great concern that many non-State actors who had prepared knowledge-based statements on COFI agenda papers, were forced to resort to spreading their message only online

The women's role, however, was overlooked. The Director expressed concern about the existential threat to small-scale fishing from illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing, and competing activities such as offshore windfarms and MPAs. Safeguarding secure access to resources for small-scale fishers was necessary, she observed. Fishers, both men and women, were to participate in decisionmaking, especially in relation to marine spatial planning (MSP) and management of MPAs. She sought a regional approach to data collection. In addition, promoting consumer awareness and engaging with local value chains were needed, she added.

Mahlet Mesfin, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Ocean, Fisheries and Polar Affairs of the United States (US) Department of State's Bureau of Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs, was keen to see a better understanding of SSF, and was appreciative of the information and analyses provided by the 2023 Illuminating Hidden Harvests (IHH) study. She was supportive of participatory and inclusive management of SSF, and sought to empower the role of women in SSF, considering that they formed a significant share of the workforce. She emphasized the importance of decent work and poverty alleviation and the urgency to criminalize forced labour.

Lorena Ortiz of Confederacion Mexicana De Cooperativas (CONMECOOP) was keen to see greater recognition extended to the SSF Guidelines and better recognition of SSF at COFI. Despite legal protection, the blue economy approach marginalized SSF, she feared.

She was keen to see greater protection of coastal and marine territories. Rather than a private-property approach, a human-rights-based approach was to be promoted. She identified climate change and environmental destruction, including from pollution, large construction projects, changing migratory patterns of fish and the Kunming Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KMGBF) target such as '30x30' acting as major threats marginalizing SSF. Greater investments were to be made in reparation and protection of nature, and better access had to be provided to small-scale fishers and fishing communities to climate-change adaptation and mitigation funds. Gender-based discrimination was to be addressed. She would like COFI to remain a strategic forum, and SSF to be a stand-alone agenda item at COFI.

Concluding the side event, Manuel Barange, Assistant Director-General and Director of FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Policies and Resources Division (NFD), applauded the SSF Guidelines and hoped to see the instrument acting as a catalyst to empower small-scale fishing communities to help them become full actors in the sector.

Under the agenda item 6, Decisions and Recommendations of the Nineteenth Session of the COFI Sub-Committee on Fish Trade, Indonesia expressed concern about poor market access for SSF, in general, and certification of fish and fish products not benefitting the SSF subsector, in particular. Several other delegations concurred with this view.

Under the agenda item 7, Decisions and Recommendations of the First Session of the COFI Sub-Committee on Fisheries Management, China sought clarification of the definition of SSF. The Philippines drew attention to SSF being practised across different habitats and expressed concern about how SSF was the most vulnerable subsector to climate-change impacts.

Canada recognized malnutrition as an issue and saw a role for aquatic foods in providing both nutrition and livelihoods. While doing so, Canada sought integrating biodiversity protection into food security and nutrition. Aquatic foods were a vital source of micronutrients for small-scale fishing communities, observed the US. New Zealand saw aquatic foods as a pathway for food security and nutrition. Australia drew attention to

indigenous peoples and their need to access aquatic foods.

Food security and heritage go hand in hand, observed Brazil, and drew attention to the role of small-scale artisanal fisheries in valorizing ancestral work, upholding a way of life, life style and culinary skills, and contributing to gastronomic heritage.

Under agenda item 10, Fisheries and Aquaculture in Food Security and Nutrition, Norway, considering the importance of SSF for food security and nutrition and socioeconomic development, wanted to ensure representation of small-scale fishers in decision-making processes.

Ecuador spoke in support of protecting sustainable sources of livelihood of marginalized people. Chile upheld the right to adequate food in the context of blue transformation, and was keen to bring SSF back to COFI as a stand-alone agenda item.

Indonesia shared information about its school feeding programme, based on aquatic foods. Marshall Islands also wanted to provide healthy diets in local schools.

Under agenda item 11, Impact of Climate Change on Fisheries and Aquaculture, New Zealand and Chile drew attention to fishery resources as a low-carbon source of protein. The US said the coastal fishing communities were greatly affected by climate change and pointed out changes in fish distribution and abundance as a result of climate-change impacts, requiring a longer-term, and a more flexible and holistic approach to fisheries management.

Chile said climate change exacerbates the El Niño phenomenon and highlighted the need for adaptation plans for fisheries, aquaculture and biodiversity. The Republic of Korea shared plans to move its national fisheries to carbon neutrality by 2030. Saudi Arabia was keen that the social, cultural and economic aspects of climate change be looked into.

Several delegations spoke in support of integrating climate change into regional fisheries management bodies (RFMBs). Vietnam said it was the country most vulnerable to climate change. Maldives was aware of climate change affecting fisheries and migration of fish to cooler waters of the ocean. The Philippines drew attention to bleaching of coral reefs. India observed that small-scale fishers and marginalized

communities dependent on aquatic food systems in the South Asian context were particularly impacted.

The SSF in small island developing States (SIDS) were particularly vulnerable to risks, slow-onset events and disasters from recurring climate-change impacts, observed Fiji. The implications for lives, livelihoods, food security and resource management were to be better understood and there was an urgent need to mobilize resources and to act. The nationally determined contributions (NDCs) under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) were to be made available to the aquatic food sector. Fiji was also worried about the intrusion of salt water into freshwater aquifers.

Although of significant concern and interest to SSF, the agenda item 12, on the Implications of Fisheries and Aquaculture of Global Biodiversity Frameworks, did not elicit any discussion on the SSF implications of biodiversity, and biodiversity conservation. Similarly, agenda item 13, on Marine Plastic Pollution and Fisheries and Aquaculture, also did not have a focus on the implications of plastic pollution for SSF.

Although SSF issues were dealt with under most of the agenda papers, the discussions during COFI, especially on topics such as climate change, biodiversity conservation and plastic pollution, did not deal sufficiently with SSF, begging the question if SSF, in relation to all major agenda items, would fare better if discussed under a stand-alone agenda item. The need for a stand-alone agenda item was supported by Tanzania, Chile and civil society organizations.

Although enhanced transparency was the aim, it is a matter of concern that a significant amount of time of all the delegations was committed to vetting the COFI report in the plenary on screen, at the expense of discussion time on each of the agenda item. It is a matter of great concern that many non-State actors who had prepared knowledge-based statements on COFI agenda papers, or wanted to air some of their concerns or positions, were forced to resort to spreading their message only online, denying them an opportunity to reach COFI members through all the UN languages. They were unable to thus benefit from the excellent FAO interpretation facilities. 3

For more



Report of the Thirty-sixth Session of the Committee on Fisheries, Rome, 8–12 July 2024 by FAO, 2024

<https://www.icsf.net/resources/report-of-the-thirty-sixth-session-of-the-committee-on-fisheries-rome-8-12-july-2024-by-fao-2024/>

Statement at COFI36 on Agenda Item 10: The Role of Fisheries and Aquaculture in Food Security and Nutrition

<https://www.icsf.net/resources/statement-at-cofi36-on-agenda-item-10-the-role-of-fisheries-and-aquaculture-in-food-security-and-nutrition/>

Statement at COFI36 on Agenda Item 11: Impact of Climate Change on Fisheries and Aquaculture, and Aquatic Foods as a Climate Solution by ICSF

<https://icsf.net/resources/statement-at-cofi36-on-agenda-item-11-by-icsf/>

Statement at COFI36 on Agenda Item 12: The implications for fisheries and aquaculture of global biodiversity frameworks and agreements by ICSF

<https://icsf.net/resources/statement-at-cofi36-on-agenda-item-12/>

Statement at COFI36 on Agenda Item 13: Marine Plastic Pollution and Fisheries and Aquaculture by ICSF, 2024

<https://icsf.net/resources/statement-at-cofi36-on-agenda-item-13-marine-plastic-pollution-and-fisheries-and-aquaculture/>

Keep on Engaging

As negotiations continue within the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) process, it is important for the small-scale fisheries subsector to remain continuously engaged – and noticed

Living up to its theme, the 16th meeting of the Conference of Parties (COP16) to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), held in Cali, Colombia from 16 October to 2 November 2024, “the People’s COP” highlighted the role of indigenous peoples and local communities (IPLC) in conserving biological diversity through small-scale fisheries stewardship. In the lead-up to COP16, the Subsidiary

positions during a press conference, and they participated in various side events. A press conference, titled “Fisher Peoples in Action: A Human Rights-Based Approach to achieve Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KMGBF) Targets in Coastal and Marine Conservation” was held on 23 of October, coinciding with the first week of the COP16 negotiations. SSF and IPLC’s leaders from Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica, Colombia, Panama and Thailand made their statements, including Zoila Bustamante from Chile representing World Forum of Fish Harvesters & Fish Workers (WFF) and Latin American Union of Artisanal Fishers (ULAPA). The press conference was covered by the COP16 media through the UN Web TV.

In discussions moderated by Vivienne Solis-Rivera of CoopeSoliDar R.L./ICSF, the key role of artisanal/small-scale fishers in the context of IPLC was emphasized. The SSF leaders highlighted how conservation of aquatic biodiversity is a consequence of the sustainable resource management practices employed by IPLC, with SSF contributing to such conservation through their traditional practices. The importance of recognizing the rights of these communities in conservation efforts was stressed, with calls made to include fishers in decision-making processes and to prevent limiting their access to resources.

The link between conservation and food security was underscored, with the understanding that conservation cannot be achieved without addressing the basic needs of people. SSF was presented as essential for the food security of fishing communities and beyond. Concerns were raised about the negative impacts of large-scale projects and infrastructure on fishing communities and the environment.

The meeting also introduced informal and more inclusive sessions for sharing of the experiences and key strategies adopted by the Parties in developing their national targets

Body on Implementation (SBI-5) held its fifth meeting from 16 to 18 October to review the progress of the National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs) of the Parties. The meeting also introduced informal and more inclusive sessions for sharing of the experiences and key strategies adopted by the Parties in developing their national targets.

The proposals from the SBI-4, SBI-5 and the 26th meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA-26) were then taken up by COP16 from 21 October to 2 November 2024. Due to the large number of decision texts that was left bracketed and requiring further negotiation, the work of COP16 is yet to be completed.

During the proceedings of COP16, small-scale fisheries (SSF) of IPLC were made known at the Blue Zone where the COP16 negotiations took place. Fifteen indigenous and artisanal fishers issued statements and shared their

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Plenary photo from Sixteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (COP 16), 21 October–1 November 2024 - Cali, Colombia. Many of the decisions do not explicitly mention SSF or artisanal fisheries

The fishers argued for prioritizing local management practices as other effective area-based conservation measures (OECMs) over the establishment of protected areas to ensure a balance between conservation and sustainable use of aquatic biodiversity.

Informed by the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication (the SSF Guidelines) and decades of community-led conservation efforts, the SSF community called for recognition of their rights and role in managing inland, marine and coastal biodiversity.

Although there were limited opportunities for direct engagement in the closed negotiation sessions, the presence of SSF community members served as a reminder of the need to address gaps in targets concerning aquatic biodiversity. Target 3 or the 30x30 target, for example, represents a convergence point for SSF delegates.

The caucus of the IPLC recognized the current gaps in the inland, coastal and marine components of

the KMGBF targets. As the primary implementation mechanism of the CBD, the KMGBF is meant to guide the development of the NBSAPs of Parties to the Convention. Therefore, gaps in Target 1 on Spatial Planning, Target 2 on Restoration, Target 3 on Protected Areas and OECMs, and Target 5 on Sustainable Use, present opportunities for SSF community representation. These targets require the participation of coastal communities as both field experts and partners in local implementation and supported by Target 22 on balanced representation. This is especially true for most of the developing countries where governments have limited capacity and resources. Community-based resource management experiences in Southeast Asia (e.g. Indonesia and the Philippines), for instance, can be leveraged and replicated in the implementation of these targets.

While many of the decisions do not explicitly mention SSF or artisanal fisheries, key decisions adopted by the Parties have created more opportunities for SSF participation.

Here to Stay!

An account of a press conference organized at the meeting of the Convention on Biological Diversity in Colombia, to discuss fisherfolk in action

The sixteenth meeting of the Conference of Parties (COP16) to the UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) was held in Cali, Colombia, from October 21 to November 1, 2024. On the third day of COP16, the International Collective in Support of Fishworkers (ICSF) held a press conference. It was titled 'Fisher Peoples in Action: A Human Rights-Based Approach to Achieve the Kunming Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KMGBF) targets in Coastal and Marine Conservation'. Its hosts were representatives of small-scale fishers and their organizations. The conference was moderated by Vivienne Solis. The following fifteen representatives spoke at the conference: Jesus Chaves, Costa Rica; Minfer Perez, Colombia; Alfonso Simon, Panama; Marta Machazek, Panama; Zoila Bustamante, Chile; German Hernandez, Honduras; Eduardo Mercado, Panama; Aaron Chacon, Costa Rica; Lazaro Mecha, Panama; Libia Arcinieges, Colombia; Luis Perea, Colombia; Julian Medina, Colombia; Albert Chang, TICCAS, Flavio Lontro, Brazil and Rungrueang Rahmanyah, Thailand.

The following text is the edited transcript of the press conference:

[Vivienne Solis (VS) speaks]: We are very happy to be here because we are going to talk about small-scale fishermen and women around the world. These people represent 40 per cent of the marine and continental fishing carried out in the world. Up to 45 million women depend on small-scale fishing and 50 million depend, at least partially, on small-scale fishing.

The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) recognizes, for the first time in history, the human rights—the fundamental principles for life—of a sector that has long been absent from most discussions regarding the sea. We count on you so that your message of peace, your message of life, your message oriented towards participation in the decisions and decision-making regarding the oceans, also counts among the huge discussions that are taking place here for the conservation of the sea. Let's listen.

[VS]: What is the opinion of small-scale fishers on conservation?

My name is Jesus Chavez. I am a small-scale fisher and a co-ordinator of the Responsible Fishing and Marine Territories Network in Costa Rica. Within the framework of biodiversity, we are not against conservation because we are part of it. But we have a message: we cannot do conservation without people. And we are there. We are the people who are there. We do not accept to be displaced from our marine spaces. We have acquired rights through time.

I am Rungrueang Rahmanyah from Thailand. I am very pleased to meet and get to know fishers from many countries.

*The transcript of the video (<https://webtv.un.org/en/asset/k15/k15icg47f5>) prepared by Mythili DK (mythilidk@ramdk.com), Independence Researcher based in Chennai, India; with inputs from **Ronald Rodriguez** (rrodriguez.icsf@gmail.com), Programme Officer, ICSF*

And I would like to support what we are doing. And I think that our fishers are the food producers of this world.

My name is Minfer Perez. I am a representative of small-scale fishing in Colombia. Small-scale fishing in the world is facing great threats today. Among them is displacement and the loss of our fishing territories. The violation of rights, such as the right to decent work, lack of access to health and social security, and the lack of access to economic funds to strengthen the small-scale fishing sector, these are some of the other problems we face. Also, contamination resulting from exploitation of hydrocarbons in the sea. Today we make only one demand at a global level for small-scale fishing. And that is that governments give us participation in decision making. That they listen to us. That we are recognized...as small-scale fishers, as the main actors in the conservation of marine biodiversity, of which we are a part.

My name is Julian Medina. I am a legal representative of the Colombian ethnic fishing network. The main threats that we as fishers face are expansion of the commercial fishing industry, destruction of mangrove forests, sedimentation of swamps, and bleaching of corals due to climate change and pollution. Each of these contributes to the degradation of coastal marine ecosystems. The productivity of fishers is being threatened. Therefore, we have a food insecurity in the territories. Governance must be given back to the fishing communities.

Let's take an example. What is happening in the territory? Alfonso, could you tell us what is happening?

My name is Alfonso Simon. I come from Panama, from the indigenous region called Ngabe-Bugle. I want to make public to this crowd that is present today at COP16 that in 2010, we, the indigenous people of Ngabe-Bugle, were excluded without any consent, consultation or warnings. We have been excluded until now. There has been no support in favour of the fishers of that region. And this happens frequently in our territory, as much as it happens also in other territories of the world, where there are small-scale fishers.

Marga, when you talk about a focus on human rights in marine conservation, what are we talking about for small-scale fishers?

[Marga Machazek from Panama]: When we talk about our rights being violated, it means decisions are made without prior consultation with the citizens. Our rights are violated when we are evicted from our areas. Our rights are violated when our families have to leave our fishing areas. Not only are we evicted but we also lose a physical space, we lose part of our identity, we lose our culture, we lose our future, since they send us to other places where our families are not used to living. They violate our rights when they do not give us free access to the sea. And we lose the right to fishing, which is an ancestral right that guarantees food security, not only of the fishing communities but also of the communities of our people who are not directly involved in fishing. We feel vulnerable every time decisions are made in regard to public spaces like this and no voice of a fisher is heard. Fishers must be present when decisions are made.

Can we say that women fishers in the society are sufficiently supported in their socioeconomic development?

My name is Zoila Bustamante Cardenas. I am from Chile. I am the president of WFF/ULAPA. We are here like a small speck on earth. When we arrived for this event, we were not considered in any way. So for us it is very important that you are here today listening to us because, in this way, we can make visible what the world of artisanal fishing really is like. All of us here are artisanal fishers who represent the world of fishing, not just ourselves. We represent millions of artisanal fishers in this world who also feed you and your communities. Therefore, it is very important that you listen to us, that you know where we come from. There are many countries represented here. We are fighting so that the goals of artisanal fishing are reflected like this message I have on my T-shirt, which is KMGBF Target 23. And today, at 7.15 p.m., if God wills, we will be able to include the concerns of artisanal fishing. So, we want to be heard. We do not want anyone to make decisions in our name. That is why we are here, so that we are recognized as a sector that feeds all the peoples in this world.

We are seeing here a sector of artisanal fishing being organized. German, how does this work?

My name is German Hernandez. I am from Honduras. I represent two million fishers in Honduras. I am also representing fishers worldwide, since we have organized them. We are organizing a voice to be heard at the United Nations, asking them to invite fishers from all over the world so that we can participate, so that no one speaks for us, but we speak for ourselves, because we are the ones who know our sectors and our way of life. And we want to tell the whole world that the fishers are organized and deserve to be part of all events worldwide. Yet we do not know what is going on, and small-scale fishers have been in this situation for a long time.

Eduardo, can you tell us how you do this?

My name is Eduardo Mercado, an Afro-Caribbean fisher from Panama. Today I am representing fishers in Latin America and also the world. We, the artisanal fishers, use ancestral methods of fishing, in which we use the right fishing gear so as not to destroy our marine species. We do not capture species that are in the process of reproduction. We only capture species that we are going to consume and that the people need for food.

[A young SSF activist]: Hello and good morning, everyone. My name is Aaron Chacon. I am a small-scale artisanal fisher from the Central Pacific region of Costa Rica. Precisely because of this, we want to say that here we are looking for inter-generational equity and telling the new generations, yes, there is a future in fishing. And this is where we want to say that it is a great opportunity for us young people, where we can preserve our culture and our territories, not only for us but also for the next generations.

Small-scale fishing has been going on at sea, but what we are defending is a territory of life. And there, in that territory of life, there is the sea, there are the lagoons, there are the rivers. Libia, why don't you tell us more?

[Libia Arcinieges, artisanal fisher, represents the small-scale fishers of Colombia and is from the National Women's Network Confederation]: As fishers, we ask our governments to respect us and give us back our fishing areas and the governance of our waters, so that our ecosystems including rivers, swamps and sea will be sustainable and will continue to provide us with food. The communities of fishers around the world call for action to support small-scale artisanal fishing.


We have with us Chief Lazaro Mecha of Maje Embera Drua in Panama.

[Lazaro Mecha]: In relation to the indigenous peoples of the entire continent, we are committed to discuss the issues of the continental territories, territories that include rivers and lakes, that are part of the food security systems of the world. In all countries, there are lakes and rivers that form part of these territories. Therefore, it is also important to take into account this issue within the framework of COP16. This is very important when more than 500 million people of the world feed off the continental territories.

I am Luis Alberto Perea of the Colombian Pacific, of the Choco Department. We must also thank the organizers of this event and the UN for allowing us to raise our voices in this space. And what we have to say is that humanity and governments must be re-educated in the decision-making processes that have been made so far. Conservation starts from rural territories. Genuine conservation is carried out by the people who are both the users and beneficiaries of their ecosystems and marine species. We contribute in guaranteeing food security. There are important territories that have helped to reach the goals based on the real experience of species management, creating their own dynamics and governance that help to reach the goal of 30x30. And what we want to say is that governments are in debt to all the rural fishers whom we represent here, fishermen and fisherwomen. We have, in most of these territories, contributed towards this goal. And even as we are helping to reach these goals, we do real work. Yet we are not taken into account. We ask to be given the same treatment, the same considerations that we give to the national government. Our territories are the ones that help reach these big goals. Conservation without food security does not exist, not without satisfying the basic needs of the people.

My name is Albert Chan. I come from Mexico, from a Mayan community. I currently work with the ICCA Consortium and we are promoting an initiative in Mesoamerica on coastal marine territories of life. It is important to see that conservation is the result of the use and management of nature that we indigenous peoples and local communities do. In this particular case, we are talking about small-scale fishing as a practice that allows conservation, not as an objective but as a result of the management that indigenous peoples and local communities are engaged in. It must be very clear that in the face of the problems and threats from mega-projects and mega-infrastructure, there is so much evidence to show that the best conservation in these territories revolves around recognizing that management is carried out locally first, and, that conservation cannot be guaranteed through the establishment of more protected areas, as is currently being discussed. What is being sought is not a limitation of access to rights but rather recognition of the free determination and autonomy of indigenous peoples and local communities.

And finally, we must not be afraid to discuss this relationship between indigenous peoples and local communities because we are not talking about just any local community, we are talking about communities that have a strong relationship with their territory and a capacity to govern in their territory. And that as a result of good governance and good relationships, conservation is achieved.

I would like to thank CoopeSolidar, the University of Magdalena and ICSF for being here and for helping us. I just want to say that small-scale fishers is here to stay and from now on we will be present at all events in one way or another. 

Source: <https://webtv.un.org/en/asset/k15/k15icg47f5>

RONALD RODRIGUEZ/ICSF



Press Conference: Fisher Peoples in Action – United Nations Biodiversity Conference 2024, 23 October 2024. We are organizing a voice to be heard at the United Nations, asking them to invite fishers from all over the world so that we can participate, so that no one speaks for us, but we speak for ourselves, because we are the ones who know our sectors and our way of life

Notably, a decision was made at COP16 to establish a more permanent body for IPLC, reflecting the growing recognition of their crucial role in biodiversity conservation and sustainable use of natural resources. The establishment of the Subsidiary Body on Article 8j institutionalizes the participation of IPLC within the Convention and in its implementation. This opens up an opportunity for the SSF subsector to be better represented in the CBD process as it transitions to its implementation phase. The call for better inclusion of coastal communities within the Convention was further supported by the adoption of a decision on formally recognizing the role of people of African descent, and the inclusion of the text “embodying traditional lifestyles.” Sustainable traditional fishing practices of inland and coastal communities can be promoted and supported within this body.

The fisheries sector was only included in discussions under Target 18 on Harmful Subsidies. Discussions and development of actions cannot be separated from the fisheries subsidies decisions and negotiations at the World Trade Organization (WTO). Nonetheless, COP16 agreed to move all references to fisheries under this Target and in related decisions to a footnote or

an Annex. In previous and current CBD decisions, fisheries, however, is directly referenced only to draw attention to negative impacts of human activities on biodiversity. The discussion on repurposing incentives can be guided towards supporting community-based resources management initiatives. Financial transfers in the form of direct support to community-based resource management activities and social protection are to be explored as both a means to repurpose harmful subsidies and to enhance positive incentives. The traditional knowledge and traditional fishing practices of inland and coastal communities can serve as guide to ensuring that incentives contribute to biodiversity protection and restoration. The current financing mechanism does not specify how the SSF can access funding and resources within the CBD. Therefore, the representation and membership of the SSF within the IPLC caucus is needed.

To maximize engagement with the CBD as a Party-driven process, a deeper understanding of its negotiation context is needed. Balancing a Party-driven process with a whole-of-society approach requires considering the positions and motivations of the Parties to the Convention. The negotiations are not simply driven by the issues or

decisions being considered by the COP. Rather, Parties come to the meeting under certain conditions that limit or motivate their positions.

Commitment with Flexibility

Parties are given the flexibility to make commitments and retain the option to interpret these commitments consistent with their national sovereignty. Although the negotiated language restricts the ability of the agreements to bind the Parties to specific actions, the continued participation of Parties creates opportunities for other actors to engage them in other venues for collaboration. After all, countries tend to maintain a sense of consistency in their positions and previous agreements.

Contribution to Current Workload and Burden on Resources

Parties are motivated to limit any additional burden or workload associated with complying with new biodiversity commitments. They seek to balance their international obligations with domestic priorities and resource constraints. The provision and allocation of financial and other resources is an ongoing point of discussion, reflecting the underlying equity concerns within the biodiversity framework. Parties must navigate the tensions between “providing” and “receiving” resources.

Russia and Indonesia initially opposed the proposal for a Subsidiary Body on Article 8j due to concerns about its potential implications for their respective countries, including increased representation at CBD meetings and the need for more resources. Furthermore, this could have increased the financial burden on the CBD. However, after extensive negotiations, the Parties reached a compromise that will establish the body and define its mandate and scope.

Geopolitical Context and Resource Mobilization

The nuances of Target 19 of the KMGBF on financial mechanism and resource mobilization reflect these dynamics in the negotiation. Parties from the developing world are generally willing

to commit to additional or increased actions on current biodiversity commitments in exchange for financial, technical and technological support.

Within the context of extraction of benefits from biodiversity resources, Parties from Africa and Asia-Pacific region would argue that equity requires greater financial commitment from the developed world that has benefited and continues to benefit from extraction of natural resources from the developing world. This stance guided the arguments of Parties during the negotiations on financial mechanisms and resource mobilizations. It also allowed the least developed countries (LDCs), developing countries and small island developing States (SIDS) to leverage their incomplete National Targets and NBSAPs to gaining greater financial support from the developed world. Parties called for

... Parties from Africa and the Asia-Pacific region would argue that equity requires greater financial commitment from the developed world...

provisions for an enhanced support and implementation mechanism that would encourage developed countries to comply with their commitments on achieving the target funding for implementation.

Parties from the developed world aim to maintain current policy instruments and mechanisms, developed over the course of the negotiations. However, they are open to committing to changes, provided they can retain a significant level of control over the process that could affect their levels of resource commitments. Commitments under Target 19 would limit access to natural resources and would put pressure not only on the Parties’ governments but also on their local economies and the private sector. Both Parties and non-Party actors need to take these into consideration in developing proposals towards increasing recognition, participation and direct involvement in implementation.

To maximize the negotiation process and to achieve meaningful outcomes, it is crucial to:

- Develop a deep understanding of the key positions and priorities of each Party on the various agenda items under negotiation. This requires thorough analysis of its national interests, domestic constraints and historical positions.
- Engage in extensive country-level dialogues and build strategic coalitions among different caucuses, such as developing countries, developed countries and regional groups. These alliances can help amplify shared concerns and increase leverage during negotiations.
- Identify and leverage regional alignments on specific issues, as Parties often align themselves with their geopolitical counterparts. Tapping into these regional dynamics can be a powerful negotiation strategy.
- Engage proactively with human rights-based-approach (HRBA) champions from civil society and other non-State actors. Their participation can help ensure that the negotiated outcomes reflect the needs and perspectives of all stakeholders.
- Adjust engagement strategies to account for the underlying “min-max” approach of the Parties, where they seek to maintain sovereignty and minimize additional burdens or obligations. This requires flexibility, creativity and a willingness to find mutually acceptable compromises.
- Acknowledge the constraints of the COP meetings, which often restrict observer interventions during critical contact group negotiations. This underscores the critical role of preparatory meetings in introducing language and conducting consultations with key Parties that can influence the negotiation process. The consistently active Parties include the European Union (EU), the United Kingdom (UK), Canada, Brazil, Russia and the African Union (AU) and the Pacific while some Parties from Asia are generally less active.

Engaging through IPLC serves as a primary avenue for SSF communities

to directly and effectively participate in the biodiversity negotiations. However, it is important not to overlook the potential for conflicts due to the diversity of interests, knowledge systems and power dynamics within this stakeholder group. While it is crucial for the SSF to create a space for recognition of the subsector’s concerns and interests, it should not introduce or encourage division amongst the IPLC. This issue became apparent during the negotiation on Conference Room Paper #9, where the AU spoke against the recommendation of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Peoples and introduced the possibility of separating the Indigenous peoples from local communities. With support from Asia and the Pacific, the Parties highlighted the need to maintain the recognized collective identity and to avoid further fragmentation.

Opportunities to Further the Engagement of SSF within the CBD

Engaging in planning, implementation, monitoring and review, as well as accessing resources need to be guided by the CBD process and current areas of interest. Inclusion of areas that overlap with the territories of SSF is crucial (for example, mangrove areas and seagrass beds in the context of biodiversity and climate change), as it ensures the recognition and integration of this important subsector into the broader biodiversity conservation and management efforts. The participation of SSF communities in key platforms such as SBI, SBSTTA, the Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group (AHTEG), Advisory Committees and the new Subsidiary Body on Article 8(j) and Related Provisions will provide a valuable opportunity for their voices, knowledge and perspectives to be heard and incorporated into decision-making processes. Their meetings occur in between the COPs and, therefore, set the initial language to guide decision making and adoption of agreements by the Parties. Within these processes, the SSF need to convince Parties and the major groups that its traditional inland, coastal and marine fishing practices can offer ways to sustainably use inland, coastal and marine resources



Participants of the Capacity Strengthening Session of SSF delegation to CBD-COP16, Cali, Colombia. The future merits of SSF engagement with the CBD process will depend on whether the Convention will be able to secure the financial resources required to implement its targets

while promoting the conservation of aquatic biodiversity. There is a need to balance its demand for support within the Convention with a commitment to serve as local partners to protect and restore biological diversity.

Furthermore, the recognition of the role of regional, subnational and local entities in biodiversity conservation and sustainable use is essential, as these entities often have a more intimate understanding of the local contexts and can facilitate the effective implementation of biodiversity policies and programmes. The exploration of alternative financing mechanisms can also help unlock additional resources to support the participation and inclusion of SSF communities in the CBD processes.

To ensure meaningful representation and engagement, it is important to secure membership for SSF communities in the IPLC, women, and youth groups, as well as ensure their active participation in SBI and SBSTTA. Fishworker organizations are to be supported to send representatives to meetings, with a particular emphasis on ensuring regional representation from Latin America, Africa and Asia. This approach can help bring the SSF Guidelines and the Call to Action for consideration, while also contributing

to the development of complementary indicators. Where the Parties are not too keen on making changes to the established language, it is important to work within this practice by ensuring links to adopted languages such as “embodying traditional lifestyles”, which is seen inclusive of SSF communities’ relationship with inland, coastal or marine biodiversity.

Addressing Target 18 of the KMGBF, which focuses on eliminating or reforming incentives, including subsidies, harmful for biodiversity and to scale up positive incentives for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity.

Crucial aspect

The HRBA is another crucial aspect, and the guidance provided by AHTEG on Section c on monitoring can be a valuable resource for ensuring the needs and rights of SSF. However, the subsector must also recognize that Parties are currently very restrictive on proposals that could bind them to this commitment. Further work is needed to identify key allies among the Parties. At present, the Parties have limited the use of “human rights-based approach” and only maintains the references to Section C to highlight the whole-of-society approach in the current decision

For more

Statement at COP16: Call for Inclusion of Small-scale Fishers as Partners in the Implementation and Monitoring of the Biodiversity Targets

<https://icsf.net/resources/icsfs-statement-at-press-conference-fisher-peoples-in-action-23-october-2024/>

Summary of Proceeding: Subsidiary Body on Implementation, SBI-05 Meeting (Day-1), COP16, Cali, Colombia, 16 October 2024 by Ronald Rodriguez, ICSF

<https://icsf.net/resources/summary-of-proceeding-subsidiary-body-on-implementation-sbi-05-meeting-day-1-cop16-cali-colombia-16-october-2024-by-ronald-rodriguez-icsf/>

Press Conference: Fisher Peoples in Action – United Nations Biodiversity Conference 2024, 23 October 2024

<https://icsf.net/resources/press-conference-fisher-peoples-in-action-united-nations-biodiversity-conference-2024-23-october-2024/>

Summary of the 2024 UN Biodiversity Conference: 21 October – 1 November 2024 by IISD, ENB, 2024

<https://icsf.net/resources/summary-of-the-2024-un-biodiversity-conference-21-october-1-november-2024-by-iisd-enb-2024/>

Sixteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (COP 16), 21 October–1 November 2024 - Cali, Colombia

<https://www.cbd.int/conferences/2024>

texts. Nonetheless, the SSF Guidelines, as an instrument promoting the HRBA, and the National Plan of Action-SSF (NPOA-SSF) as developed by several countries, provide an opportunity to showcase the subsector's efforts in both promoting the HRBA and contributing to the targets on biodiversity and climate change.

Within the biodiversity and climate-change nexus, the direct reference to mangroves and seagrass beds as critical areas that contribute to climate-change mitigation and adaptation provides an additional opportunity to highlight the role of coastal communities that are present and actively contribute to the protection and restoration of these areas. This will also require increased representation and participation of SSF in the climate change Convention.

However, the future merits of SSF engagement with the CBD process will depend on whether the Convention will be able to secure the financial resources required to implement its targets. According to the Global Environment Facility (GEF), a total of USD383 million has been pledged under the Global Biodiversity Framework Fund (GBFF) as of 2024. Although the COP16 was able to secure USD163 million during its pledging conference, the current total GBFF at USD383 million' and 'well below' and the USD200 billion target per year by 2030, as set by the Convention. According to the GEF, the 2024 selection round of GBFF targets aims at having a portfolio with 26% allocation to small island developing states (SIDS) and least developed countries (LDCs) and 35% allocation to support actions by IPLC. As of September 2024, the GBFF has allocated a total of USD110 million for projects in 24 countries, 13 of which are SIDS/LDCs. Consistent with the targets of the KMGBF, the Fund will support projects that focus on a range of key action areas, including biodiversity conservation and restoration, land and sea-use planning, supporting the stewardship and governance of lands, territories, and waters by IPLC, policy alignment and development, resource mobilization, sustainable use of biodiversity, biodiversity mainstreaming in production sectors, addressing invasive alien species, and

capacity building and implementation support for the Cartagena and Nagoya protocols.

While the establishment of a dedicated biodiversity fund is considered by Parties from the developing world as necessary, Parties from the developed world prefer the conventional GEF funding mechanism. Parties and major groups within the Convention have called for political will and equity in establishing the fund. Parties express varying views, with some supporting the fund and others raising concerns about its potential impact on resource mobilization. Although implementation remains limited, further exclusion of SSF in the process is expected to lead to exclusion from access to the resources being generated by the CBD.

Recognizing that the fisheries sector is most often not under the environment ministry, it is likely that the SSF will also be excluded in the development and implementation of biodiversity programmes and projects. This calls for greater participation from the SSF within the CBD. The CBD's areas of concern overlap with the inland, coastal and marine territories where SSF are actively present. Therefore, decisions made by the Convention without the SSF will further limit their access to biodiversity resources in these areas. Continued engagement with the CBD processes will ensure that SSF are recognized as active participants in the negotiation and implementation of the agreements.

The COP16 negotiations have not concluded, and these issues remain open. For the SSF subsector, participation through IPLC will help secure access to these resources and technical and technological support when they become available. Therefore, it is important to continuously engage with the ongoing CBD process.

Looking Ahead and Beyond

At COP16 to the biodiversity convention, small-scale fishers from all over the world lobbied for an approach based on human rights to marine biodiversity conservation

Wearing T-shirts emblazoned with important messages for small-scale fisheries (SSF), artisanal fishers from all over the world gathered recently to press for their governments to embrace a human rights-based approach in the implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KMGBF) during the sixteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP16) to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). Their messages included 'No to the Blue Economy', 'Human rights before conservation', and 'Biodiversity framework can't be achieved without us'.

CoopeSoliDar, a Costa Rica-based co-operative of professionals interested in establishing bridges between conservation and development, primarily for local communities, supported the participation of a group of small-scale fishers to the multi-stakeholder dialogue convened ahead of the COP by Swedbio and other organizations. From the first day, CoopeSoliDar reminded the COP presidency, Colombia, of the importance of taking into account the implementation of the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication (SSF Guidelines), approved by governments at the Committee on Fisheries (COFI) of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) in 2014.

With the support of Swedbio, CoopeSoliDar and the ICCA (Indigenous Peoples and Community Conserved Territories and Areas) Consortium organized a capacity-building space for small-scale fishers in order to reach a common understanding of fisheries issues at stake at the COP. The encounter enabled an informed, organized and

visible participation of fishworkers in the conference's strategic spaces.

Artisanal fishermen and fisherwomen from indigenous peoples, Afro-descendant peoples and local communities joined efforts in order to include the SSF Guidelines for discussion on item 20 of the conference agenda, about marine and coastal biodiversity.

Jesus Chavez, a fisherman from the North Caribbean coast of Costa Rica and co-coordinator of the Marine Areas of Responsible Fishing and Marine Territories of Life Network, highlighted the importance of enforcing the right to free, prior and informed consent before governments create new marine protected areas (MPAs), and respecting local governance models, such as Costa Rica's Marine Areas of Responsible Fishing, under which local communities have managed to keep their access to the sea and fishing resources, consequently defending their marine territory of life.

The group of fishermen and fisherwomen participated proactively in the discussions on the KMGBF's Target 3, sharing the reality in their territories and urging everybody to recognize the contribution of SSF to marine conservation and the right to information.

It was the first time that a delegation of nearly 30 small-scale fishworkers and supporting organizations were able to make progress towards effective and inclusive participation in the Convention. A press conference on SSF was also organized to highlight the sector's links with the Convention and, in particular, with KMGBF. Members of the delegation also participated in a wide range of side events, meetings and negotiations in the COP16 Blue Zone and Green Zone, also known as the people's COP.

The delegation visited various negotiating groups, such as the

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Group photo. COP16 approved the creation of the Subsidiary Body of Indigenous Peoples, Local Communities and Afro-descendant Communities, which should include small-scale fishers in its conceptualization

Women’s Caucus, a very important platform to lobby for the rights of women in marine, coastal, continental and wetland fisheries. Fair and equal access to land tenure and decent work was considered key for small-scale fisherwomen. This is already reflected in GBD’s Target 23 and it is essential for empowerment and for making women visible in decision making at local, national and global levels.

The fisherwomen participated in debates on the role of human rights in ecosystem restoration and the importance of SSF support networks to encourage a change in perceptions around traditional knowledge, mechanisms of prior, free and informed consent and other instruments such as the SSF Call to Action or the SSF Guidelines. While it was felt that the guidelines certainly approach gender issues, an effective implementation that takes into account monitoring and funding is necessary, it was also pointed out.

COP16 made important decisions for indigenous peoples, local communities and peoples of African descent. During COP16 the sector strongly advocated for the creation of a subsidiary body of the Convention that would, in the process, establish a permanent space for representation.

COP16 approved the creation of the Subsidiary Body of Indigenous Peoples, Local Communities and Afro-descendant Communities, which should include small-scale fishers in its conceptualization. The permanent subsidiary body becomes the main

advisory body on topics concerning indigenous peoples and local communities under the Convention. Given the current focus of the parties to the agreement on marine conservation, it is expected that the new subsidiary body will bring to the table the interests, participation and needs of the small-scale fishermen and fisherwomen who belong to these communities.

Ramiro Batzin, chair of the indigenous caucus (the International Indigenous Forum on Biodiversity, precursor to the recently approved subsidiary body), talked to the delegation of SSF representatives and expressed great interest in establishing contacts in order to integrate their interests beyond COP16. While it is important to acknowledge that the new body includes small-scale fishing communities, it is worth highlighting that their representatives are now better prepared to participate in decisions concerning their work, marine conservation and the sustainable use of fisheries in their territories.

CoopeSoliDar feels that COP16 brought hope for progress in the local implementation of KMGBF, so that the real stakeholders see its good intentions become tangible in their territories. The conference also highlighted the importance of having community stakeholders present, in an informed manner, in international fora.

For more 

The SSF Call to Action
<https://www.ssfcalltoaction.org/>

CoopeSoliDar
<https://coopesolidar.org/>

Sixteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, 21 October–1 November 2024 - Cali, Colombia
<https://www.cbd.int/meetings/COP-16>

Women on Par

Target 23 of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework aims for gender equality as well as a gender-responsive approach for biodiversity action

At the fifteenth Conference of the Parties (COP15) to the UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), a monitoring framework to ensure the progress of implementation was adopted along with the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KMGBF). This framework includes a set of agreed indicators designed to track progress toward the framework's goals and targets. Indicators are essential tools that summarize data on environmental and socio-economic issues, helping to measure overall status, trends and progress toward objectives. They play a vital role in monitoring biological diversity, and offer feedback to enhance biodiversity management programmes. When used to evaluate national or global trends, these indicators connect policymaking with scientific research.

The monitoring framework features headline or binary indicators recommended for national, regional and global monitoring. They are meant to capture crucial elements of each goal and target of the KMGBF. The framework also features component indicators that capture key elements not adequately captured by the headline indicators, and complementary indicators that provide an additional resource that could be used to track specific aspects of the goals and targets. While the latter are optional, they can provide additional insights into the monitoring of the targets.

The framework is critical for member countries to prepare their National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs), as well as to submit their national reports on implementation of the NBSAPs. Parties to the Convention decided to establish an Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group (AHTEG)

on Indicators to advise on the further operationalization of the monitoring framework for the KMGBF. At the 26th meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA26) the outcomes of the AHTEG on Indicators was reviewed. At COP16 in Cali, Colombia, from October 21 to November 1, 2024, Parties were expected to consider the recommendations of SBSTTA26 towards furthering the development of the monitoring framework. While delegates approved the text decision on the updated monitoring framework, it was not adopted due to the suspension of the COP. However, the Parties

While delegates approved the text decision on the updated monitoring framework, it was not adopted due to the suspension of the COP

recognized that an indicator for the national implementation of the Gender Plan of Action (2023–2030) was developed in response to the adoption of the framework. It sits as a component indicator for Target 23.

The work towards building the methodology began in 2023, with the first draft being developed by UNEP-WCMC in April 2024 and Women4Biodiversity facilitated the co-development of the indicator by involving key stakeholders and several Parties, by facilitating dialogues and bilateral testing with Gender and Biodiversity Focal Points, National Focal Points and members of the AHTEG on indicators to test the metadata. In August 2024, the metadata also underwent a process of peer review. This updated and peer-


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reviewed metadata is now available for use.

At COP15, the Parties adopted Target 23 on gender equality and participation. The KMGBF also stresses that the successful implementation of the framework will depend on ensuring gender equality and empowerment of women and girls. At the same time, the Parties also adopted the post-2020 Gender Plan of Action (2022-2030) or GPA at COP15. The 2023-2030 GPA is a framework that highlights

levels of progress for each response as well as to track progress for each expected outcome and cumulative progress towards GPA.

At a side event to launch the indicator methodology at COP16, organized by Women4Biodiversity, UNEP-WCMC and Swedbio, the Parties highlighted that the component indicator provided a clear actionable direction to implement GPA and helped them analyse areas of work on gender-responsive biodiversity planning and management, in their respective contexts. Till date, 19 Parties from Asia, Africa, the Americas, Europe and Oceania have provided their valuable feedback and tested the methodology for their specific contexts. Overall, the Parties have expressed satisfaction about the methodology and the calculation tool. They found that the methodology was easy to understand and apply, and the calculation tool was easy to use. The member-states have also appreciated the methodology and tool for accessing progress on Target 23 and for implementation and planning of GPA since it identified gaps, and highlighted future areas of work. Currently, UNEP-WCMC is exploring the integration of the tool in relevant platforms used by CBD for monitoring and review.

Gender-sensitive indicators are essential for measuring progress towards the commitments made by the Parties regarding gender-responsiveness in the implementation of the Kunming Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework. 

Gender-sensitive indicators are essential for measuring progress towards the commitments made by the Parties...

specific gender-responsive actions, deliverables and timelines for various stakeholders, including the Parties to the Convention, the secretariat, the Global Environment Facility (GEF), women's groups/networks, and other relevant organizations, marking significant progress from previous plans. The component indicator on the National Implementation of GPA is, therefore, crucial in enabling the Parties to track progress towards Target 23 more accurately and in providing valuable information that can feed into the binary indicator for this target.

The developed indicator methodology includes 18 survey questions that have been translated from 18 indicative actions outlined in GPA for which the Parties are the lead responsible actors. These questions have been updated to include a link to the binary indicator 23.b. The answer options have bracketed guidance and the option to provide supporting evidence or examples to further illustrate the chosen answers. The indicator methodology is accompanied by an index-calculation tool that will enable the Parties to quantify their progress towards the national implementation of the GPA, based on their responses to the 18 survey questions. The calculation tool has been updated to reflect categorical

For more

Women4Biodiversity

<https://www.women4biodiversity.org/>

15/5. Monitoring framework for the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework

<https://www.cbd.int/doc/decisions/cop-15/cop-15-dec-05-en.pdf>

Monitoring framework for the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework

<https://www.cbd.int/doc/c/5044/ea79/105d29801a3efae8df742c93/cop-16-l-26-en.pdf>

15/11. Gender Plan of Action

<https://www.cbd.int/doc/decisions/cop-15/cop-15-dec-11-en.pdf>

Component Indicators - Indicators for the Post 2020 Global Biodiversity Framework | Indicator Repository

<https://gbf-indicators.org/component-indicators>

COP16 Side event: Indicator methodology on national implementation of the Gender Plan of Action

https://www.youtube.com/supported_browsers?next_url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.youtube.com%2Fwatch%3Fv%3DxpjKJdYmJjk&t=1s

A Monumental Moment

At the Conference of the Parties to the UN Convention on Biological Diversity, a particular focus was on the rights of indigenous peoples and local communities

Two weeks of negotiations for the sixteenth Conference of the Parties (COP16) to the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) focused in large part on how to implement and finance the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KMGBF), adopted two years ago, as well as how to measure progress. Held from October 21 to November 1, 2024, in Cali, Colombia, it was the biggest CBD COP to date.

The fortnight saw a frenzied move to adopt several decisions that would set the stage for the effective implementation of the KMGBF, adopted at the previous CBD COP. 'Peace with Nature' was the official tagline for COP16. Some of the key highlights were the finalization of a monitoring framework for GBF; assessment of the status of national-level implementation through the National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs); securing and bolstering of adequate means of implementation, including resource mobilization, financial mechanisms, capacity building, technical and scientific co-operation, and access and transfer of technology; and the finalization of progress on access and benefit sharing of—in particular, but not limited to—the digital sequence information on genetic resources.

However, one of the pivotal moments of COP16 was the establishment of a permanent Subsidiary Body on Article 8(j) and related provisions for the full and effective participation of indigenous peoples and local communities in the work undertaken under the convention. A new Programme of Work (PoW) was also adopted, which now, with the New Subsidiary Body, would be instrumental

in ensuring that traditional knowledge, practices, innovations and indigenous peoples and local communities are recognized, respected and included in the implementation through their full and effective participation, subjected to free prior informed consent (FPIC).

Article 8(j), a history

Highlighting the recognition of the traditional knowledge that indigenous peoples and local communities

'Peace with Nature' was the official tagline for COP16

particularly hold towards the access and sustainable use of biodiversity, Article 8 of the Convention focuses on in-situ Conservation. Its section J states the following: "(j) Subject to its national legislation, respect, preserve and maintain knowledge, innovations and practices of indigenous and local communities embodying traditional lifestyles relevant for the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity and promote their wider application with the approval and involvement of the holders of such knowledge, innovations and practices and encourage the equitable sharing of the benefits arising from the utilization of such knowledge, innovations and practices".

The first decision to implement Article 8(j) was taken at COP3 in 1996 in Buenos Aires, Argentina. This was followed by establishing the Ad-Hoc

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ICSF



In a historic decision, COP16 establishes a Subsidiary Body on Article 8(j). Indigenous peoples and local communities continue to fight and protect their territories while facing violence and a lack of visibility worldwide

Open-Ended Inter-sessional Working Group on Article 8(j) at COP4, held in Bratislava. The subsequent COP adopted the PoW for the implementation of Article 8(j), which will operationalize its implementation and related provisions.

Between 2000 and 2024, the Working Group on Article 8(j) met twelve times to review the progress on the implementation of the PoW, and to develop various guidelines, including the Akwe: Kon Voluntary Guidelines on the conduct of cultural, environmental and social-impact assessments, the Tkarihwaie:ri Code of Ethical Conduct to Ensure Respect for the Cultural and Intellectual Heritage of Indigenous and Local Communities, the Mo'otz Kuxtal Voluntary Guidelines for the development of mechanisms, legislation or other appropriate initiatives to ensure “prior and informed consent”, “free, prior and informed consent” or “approval and involvement”, depending on national circumstances, of indigenous peoples and local communities for accessing their knowledge, innovations and practices, for fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from the use of their knowledge, innovations and practices relevant for the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity, and for reporting and preventing

unlawful appropriation of traditional knowledge, among others.

COP16 Deliberations on Article 8(j)

In 2023, the 12th Working Group (WG8j-12) in Geneva developed five recommendations, some of which were the key focus for deliberations within COP16, under Agenda Item 14 on Implementation of Article 8(j). These included the development of a new PoW and Institutional Arrangement; in-depth dialogue on the role of languages in the inter-generational transmission of traditional knowledge, innovations and practices; the updated knowledge management component of the KMGBF; review and update of the four adopted traditional knowledge indicators; and the recommendations from the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues pertaining to CBD.

Through multiple Contact Groups spread out over the two weeks, negotiations spanned prioritizing the various activities underlined in the new PoW, institutional arrangements and a new text proposal from Colombia and Brazil, backed by the Group of Latin America and the Caribbean (GRULAC), which asked for the recognition of people of African descent with traditional lifestyles in the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity in the implementation

of Article 8(j) as well as of the GBF through NBSAPs.

The new PoW has nine guiding principles and eight elements, which will enable the realization of Article 8(j) implementation. Every element has various tasks under it that parties to the convention will implement and will be subject to revision and updating after 2030. These eight elements are:

1. Conservation and restoration
2. Sustainable use of biological diversity
3. Sharing of benefits from the utilization of genetic resources and digital sequence information on genetic resources, as well as traditional knowledge associated with genetic resources
4. Knowledge and culture
5. Strengthening implementation and monitoring progress
6. Full and effective participation of indigenous peoples and local communities
7. Human rights-based approach
8. Access, including direct access, to funding for indigenous peoples and local communities for the conservation, restoration and sustainable use of biodiversity


Within the institutional arrangements, which proposed the establishment of a Permanent Subsidiary Body (SB_{8j}), the discussion was informed by budget estimates for possible scenarios concerning the institutional arrangements on Article 8(j) and related provisions carried out by the Secretariat of the CBD. These estimates show that establishing a new Subsidiary Body would, in principle, have the same cost implications as the existing WG_{8j}.

When it was finally adopted in the plenary on the late night of November 1, the final text established the SB_{8j} with a mandate to advise the COP, other Subsidiary Bodies (including the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice and the Subsidiary Body on Implementation) and the COP/MOP to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety and the Nagoya Protocol on Access to

Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits arising from their utilization. It also mandated the SB_{8j} to finalize the modus operandi, which would be considered during COP17. Until then, the modus operandi of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice and the established procedures and practices applied under WG_{8j} will prevail.

In the final plenary of COP16, five decisions under this agenda item were finalized, which included the adoption of the new PoW, the establishment of the new subsidiary body through institutional arrangements for the full and effective participation of indigenous peoples and local communities in work undertaken under the CBD, the role of languages in the inter-generational transmission of traditional knowledge, the role of people of African descent, who embody traditional lifestyles, in the implementation of CBD and the recommendations from the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues pertaining to CBD.

Reflections Post-COP16

While there is definite positive progress in recognizing indigenous peoples and local communities in a global advocacy context, at national and sub-national levels the path ahead is long. Indigenous peoples and local communities continue to fight and protect their territories while facing violence and a lack of visibility worldwide. The first step is the recognition of rights, and their incorporation in crucial decision-making processes, including through national legislation, and establishing a National Focal Point for the Subsidiary Body on Article 8(j). 

For more

Women4Biodiversity

<https://www.women4biodiversity.org/>

Decision III/14 on Implementation of Article 8(j)

<https://www.cbd.int/decision/cop/default.shtml?id=7110>

Budget Estimates

<https://www.cbd.int/doc/c/ced9/1504/c2717fcaabbc6e18396758ff/cop-16-inf-36-en.pdf>

Decision 14/17

<https://www.cbd.int/doc/decisions/cop-14/cop-14-dec-17-en.pdf>

Towards Inclusive Solutions

Discussions and decisions on complex marine ecosystems came up at the sixteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP16) to the biodiversity convention

The United Nations (UN) Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) recently convened in Cali, Colombia, for the Sixteenth Conference of Parties (COP16) from October 21 to November 1, 2024. It monitored the progress made for biodiversity conservation worldwide. Unlike COP15, where the focus was to come up with an ambitious and transformative framework, the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KMGBF), COP16 was more about the implementation mechanisms and assessing the progress made by countries.

As a signatory to the CBD, India submitted its updated National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP) on October 30, 2024, just after the deadline. The plan outlines 23 Targets aligned with the KMGBF and allocates approximately ₹816,640 for biodiversity conservation during 2025-2030. India also commits to protecting 30 per cent of its terrestrial, inland waters and marine coastal areas while working towards the ambitious 30x30 target. India voiced a strong need for international financing to urgently mobilize and meet the financial resource needs from developed countries, as agreed upon in Target 19 of the KMGBF (at least US \$20 billion per year by 2025 and \$30 billion by 2030).

Apart from this, the Indian delegation actively participated in the discussions on Digital Sequence Information (DSI), which involved genetic information sourced from plants and animals for drug development, often from the Global South by Global North companies. Developing countries have for long called for the need to have an international mechanism where the benefits of DSI are shared with the people—countries, including indigenous peoples and local communities—from where the sequence was obtained. During the discussions in the closing plenary before the establishment of the Cali fund, India intervened strongly to push for a clause on national access and benefit sharing. India is one of only 16 countries with national laws on DSI and access-benefit sharing.

A number of contentious issues regarding marine and coastal biodiversity were finalized at COP16. Some of these took up to eight years to fructify over many working groups and inter-sessional meetings. Some of the important developments regarding

A number of contentious issues regarding marine and coastal biodiversity were finalized at COP16

The theme this year was 'Peace with Nature'. It was a call to improve the human-nature relationship by integrating the principles of human and nature rights, good governance and sustainable resource management. Even though the conclusion of COP16 was far from ideal, with a number of agenda items still to be finalized, good progress was made on a number of other fronts. For example, the setting up of the Subsidiary Body for indigenous peoples and local communities (IPLCs) ensures that they are now a part of the decision-making process. The setting up of the Cali fund for benefits arising out of the use of genetic resources was another highlight, as also the positive progress made for marine and coastal biodiversity. COP16 is considered to be the biggest 'Ocean COP' yet due to the significant strides taken, including the declaration of 27 October as a dedicated Ocean Day.

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COP16 - High-level thematic Ministerial Dialogue. While COP16 led to extensive discussions and decisions on marine ecosystems, integrating the complexities of these ecosystems into policy implementation remains a significant challenge

marine and coastal biodiversity and their implication in the Indian context are outlined below:

a) The finalization of the text on Ecologically and Biologically Significant Areas (EBSAs) was a significant turning point for COP16, after years of deliberations. This decision has direct links and enables countries to achieve progress towards the 30x30 target. Parties finally agreed on the guidelines for identifying and modifying areas designated as EBSAs, which provides flexibility to revisit not just the designated areas but also textual descriptions, and rework them as new scientific information/technology. Information on traditional knowledge, innovations and practices of IPLCs are also made available. The text makes it clear that identifying EBSAs does not designate a region as a Marine Protected Area (MPA) but only allows countries to identify areas that may be best candidates to be considered for MPAs. This is a significant step for several countries, including India, where MPAs are yet to be officially implemented. The idea of MPAs as no-take zones in most countries will not work for India where local

communities have close ties and traditional sustainable practices for the use of natural resources. This decision ensures that designation of EBSAs or even MPAs cannot be done without recognition/consultation of the local communities. As an example of such a step, researchers in India have been identifying and demarcating Important Shark and Ray Areas (ISRAs) that function exactly as EBSAs, putting such biologically important zones in focus for continuous monitoring.

b) Parties agreed to the revised marine and coastal biodiversity programme of work at COP16, focusing on conservation and sustainable use of marine, coastal and island biodiversity. This is a cross-cutting section that is interlinked to other items in CBD, especially the monitoring framework. Marine ecosystems have been historically overlooked in national policies and so having dedicated indicators in the monitoring framework, particularly headline indicators, will ensure progress is reported in national strategies. The monitoring framework is crucial for measuring progress towards the KMGBF, but many indicators are optional and

require voluntary integration by national governments. Even though this is far from ideal, India has a few marine ecosystem-specific national indicators in its revised NBSAP targets, notably Target 1 (spatial planning), 2 (restoration), 3 (30x30), 5 (sustainable harvest and use), 9 (sustainable management), and 21 (communication and awareness). National indicators provide opportunities for countries to integrate local contexts, and these limited indicators underscore the need for India, with its complex fisheries landscape, to adopt more inclusive indicators that reflect the diversity of species and the livelihoods of fishing communities that are intrinsically linked to marine ecosystems.

- c) On the issue of geoengineering, CBD, in contrast to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), reaffirmed its long-standing opinion on a precautionary approach. Geoengineering refers to a range of technologies that aim to reflect some of the incoming sunlight away from the Earth to control global temperature or to remove carbon dioxide from the atmosphere in the land/ocean systems. In the ocean systems it works as a way to increase carbon dioxide absorption, such as through ocean alkalinity enhancement, algae/biomass cultivation and sinking, ocean fertilization, and so on. While the agreement at UNFCCC already has begun to receive proposals for large-scale marine-based geoengineering technologies as a source of carbon credit/offset, CBD has taken a very decisive approach to employ precautionary measures or a moratorium as the scientific evidence for the impact on biodiversity and nature is uncertain and the stakes are very high. This was welcomed by most parties and will prove to be a boon for countries like India, which have great marine biodiversity.
- d) Synergy between climate and biodiversity was stressed throughout COP16, including the interlinking of decisions across the three Rio Conventions. These conversations

extended to include decisions “welcoming” the adoption of the High Seas Treaty (or Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction, BBNJ) by member countries. India, which recently signed the BBNJ agreement, will soon ratify it. This is a significant step as the legally binding treaty deals with the sustainable use of marine resources beyond national jurisdiction, including access-benefit sharing of utilization of genetic resources, MPAs, area-based management, capacity building and marine technology. For a country like India, with a huge coastline and weather systems influenced significantly by the ocean, these synergies between UNFCCC and other conventions would prove critical.

- e) Ocean Day saw a number of ocean advocates, organizations and members participate and talk about the importance of conserving marine and coastal ecosystems, a topic that had been ignored for a long time. The day had a number of engaging and creative events, discussions on various subjects such as the importance of linking climate and biodiversity for marine ecosystems, the role of local communities in ocean conservation, and linking the different multilateral agreements such as BBNJ, UNFCCC and the United Nations Ocean Conference (UNOC) that will take place in Nice, France, in 2025.

While COP16 led to extensive discussions and decisions on marine ecosystems, integrating the complexities of these ecosystems into policy implementation remains a significant challenge. In India, where the waters are rich in marine biodiversity and fishing pressures are increasing across various scales and methods, it is more crucial than ever to mainstream coastal, inland and marine ecosystems not just in policy documents but through effective implementation of these decisions. Understanding the social and economic dimensions of fishing is essential, including ensuring meaningful participation from small-scale fishers, to create inclusive solutions that benefit both people and the ocean. 🌊

For more

Updated National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plan: A Roadmap for Conservation of India's Biodiversity 2024-2030 by MoEFCC, 2024

<https://icsf.net/resources/updated-national-biodiversity-strategies-and-action-plan-a-roadmap-for-conservation-of-indias-biodiversity-2024-2030-by-moefcc-2024/>

CBD

<https://www.cbd.int/conferences/2024/inession>

A Crisis of Drowning

The Lake Victoria Drowning Prevention Project has been designed to mitigate the daily risks small-scale fishers in Tanzania face from occupational hazards

Drowning is a critical yet often overlooked global health issue, claiming an estimated 235,000 lives every year. In Sub-Saharan Africa, the burden of drowning is particularly severe, with the World Health Organization (WHO) reporting some of the highest mortality rates in the world in this region. Despite this alarming trend, data on drowning incidents remain limited, hindering effective policy and prevention efforts.

In Tanzania, Lake Victoria stands out as a high-risk area for small-scale fishers, who face daily threats. In response, the Lake Victoria Drowning Prevention Project (LVDPP) was launched in 2022 to mitigate these risks. The project is spearheaded by the Environmental Management and Economic Development Organization (EMEDO) in partnership with the Royan National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI), along with other key international stakeholders like Irish Aid.

Lake Victoria is a vital economic resource, providing direct employment to approximately 200,000 fishers. However, this population faces significant dangers; drowning is a primary occupational hazard. A 2019 study funded by RNLI revealed that 84 per cent of adult drowning fatalities in communities surrounding the lake occurred during fishing activities. Further situational analysis, conducted in 2021 by EMEDO and Ipsos, a data acquisition and processing consultancy, highlighted several risk factors. This included limited awareness of water safety, inadequate access to personal flotation devices (PFDs), the poor condition of fishing vessels, limited swimming skills, and insufficient emergency-response options.

LVDPP aims to implement effective measures to protect fishers from drowning, generate locally relevant data

to inform policy, and position Tanzania as a model for drowning prevention in small-scale fisheries globally.

The project's primary focus is to design and test strategies that reduce the risk of drowning while providing the tools necessary for local communities to ensure safer fishing practices. The project has set a precedent in the region by aligning its initiatives with the broader global

Lake Victoria is a vital economic resource, providing direct employment to approximately 200,000 fishers

agenda of drowning prevention, setting benchmarks for similar projects worldwide. It encompasses several core activities designed to enhance water safety and reduce drowning incidents. Among these are:

- 1) **Community Water Safety Awareness:** Educational programmes have been launched to raise awareness about the risks of drowning and the importance of water safety practices.
- 2) **Strengthening Local Governance:** The project collaborates with local authorities to improve governance and establish regulations that prioritize drowning prevention.
- 3) **Improving Weather Reporting:** Accurate weather information is crucial for fishers' safety. The project has partnered with the Tanzania Meteorological Authority (TMA) to provide timely weather updates and install weatherboards in key locations like Goziba Island. These boards display critical forecasts using both text and symbols, trying to include all community members.

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EMEDO



Small-scale fishers, Lake Victoria, Tanzania. The devastating impact of drowning on Tanzanian communities, particularly among vulnerable fishing populations, necessitates urgent and co-ordinated action

4) Emergency Response Training: Community-based emergency response systems have been established, equipping local teams with the skills needed to react swiftly to drowning incidents.

5) Formation of the National Drowning Prevention Network (NDPN): As a coalition of stakeholders committed to collaborative action on drowning prevention, the NDPN has played a pivotal role in advocating for national policies. The network has successfully influenced the government to develop a national strategy on drowning prevention, currently in its final drafting stage.

The UN General Assembly declared 25 July as World Drowning Prevention Day (WDPD) to spotlight the global drowning crisis. Since 2021, EMEDO has actively commemorated this day in Tanzania, organizing national and community-level events to raise awareness. The 2024 event at Kawe Beach in Dar es Salaam featured Umyy Hamis Nderiananga, deputy minister to the Prime Minister's Office, and brought together diverse stakeholders, including representatives from WHO, local NGOs, government leaders, and members of the fishing community.

The collaboration between EMEDO and TMA has been a cornerstone of the project's success, enhancing the dissemination of weather-related warnings, and integrating these alerts into community safety protocols. By improving access to reliable forecasts, fishers are better equipped to make

informed decisions, reducing the risk of accidents on the water.

The first National Drowning Prevention Symposium in Tanzania was held in September 2022 and served as a platform for stakeholders to discuss research findings and share best practices. This event underscored the importance of multi-sectoral collaboration in tackling the drowning crisis and highlighted the need for evidence-based approaches.

The devastating impact of drowning on Tanzanian communities, particularly among vulnerable fishing populations, necessitates urgent and co-ordinated action. WHO emphasizes that drowning is preventable through targeted, evidence-based interventions. Moving forward, there is a pressing need for the Tanzanian government, local authorities, NGOs and international partners to strengthen and scale up drowning-prevention initiatives. These include ensuring the availability of affordable safety gear, enhancing communication systems for weather updates, providing training on water safety and emergency response, and developing robust national policies.

By uniting efforts across sectors, we can create safer water environments, protect lives and support the livelihoods of fishing communities in Tanzania. The success of the ongoing LVDPP serves as a testament to what can be achieved when communities and organizations come together with a shared commitment to save lives. 3

For more

Centred-Human Drowning for Design Tanzania in Prevention

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1osvv4BJeM_nV67XF4w7kp6mBFsjMG61X/view

Perceptions of Drowning Risk around Lake Victoria: Findings from Participatory Community Research

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1_zgqglolpLD0azo_E-qj-flGC5rhHWdw/view

Drowning among fishing communities on the Tanzanian shore of lake Victoria: a mixed-methods study to examine incidence, risk factors and socioeconomic impact

<http://icsfarchives.net/21316/>

Buying into a Noble Idea

<https://icsf.net/samudra/tanzania-ssf-guidelines-buying-into-a-noble-idea/>

EMEDO

<https://emedo.or.tz/>

The sociocultural, economic and policy contexts in Tanzania have made fishers vulnerable to environmental, social and work-related problems

https://www.icsf.net/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/4309_art_Sam77_e_art08.pdf

Beyond the Blue Economy

When it applies a Blue Economy approach to protect and strengthen its small-scale fisheries subsector, Indonesia must encourage economic incentives for fishing communities

Indonesia's national planning agency, BAPPENAS, published *The Indonesian Blue Economy Roadmap* in 2023. The document holds up the Blue Economy as the "pathway towards a diversified and sustainable maritime economy". It is defined as "an approach to enhance sustainable marine management and conservation of marine and coastal resources and ecosystems in order to realize economic growth with the principles of community involvement, resource efficiency, minimizing waste and generating multiple revenues" (Paragraph 1 of Article 14, in Law Number 32 passed in 2014). The aim is also to decrease the potential economic, social and environmental risks of ocean ecosystem sustainability.

The roadmap for the Blue Economy identifies two categories of projects. One: those in already established sectors; and two, those in new emerging sectors. The first category focuses on four subsectors, namely: marine capture fisheries and aquaculture; marine-based industry (including marine-based food processing, shipbuilding, and salt and chemical industries); maritime trade, transportation and logistics; and tourism.

The new emerging sector will be focused on renewable energy, biotechnology and bio-economy, research and education, and marine conservation and sustainable management of ecosystem services. The intention is to exploit more of marine and coastal resources, and invite actors to be part of the multi-stakeholder set-up under the flagship of Blue Economy initiatives.

The Ministry of Marine Affairs and Fisheries (MoMaF) has proposed five

programmes: one, expansion of marine protected areas (MPAs); two, quota-based/measured capture fishing; three, development of sustainable marine, coastal and inland aquaculture; four, supervision and control of coastal areas and small islands; and five, cleaning plastic waste in the ocean through fisher participation, also called the monthly Loving Ocean agenda.

... small-scale fisheries (SSF), which forms the backbone of the national fisheries sector, remains marginalized

Meanwhile, small-scale fisheries (SSF), which forms the backbone of the national fisheries sector, remains marginalized. It confronts several issues like minimum protection for tenure rights, competition with industrial fishing vessels and trawlers, limited access to social protection and markets, coastal development and environmental degradation, as well as policy challenges. The new legislation offers a broader and more general definition of a fisher as a person who engages in capture fishing for subsistence, whether in a vessel or otherwise.

A study on the impact of Indonesia's Blue Economy policies on SSF focused on three projects: capture fishing and the quota system; industrial-scale shrimp aquaculture in the Central Java province; and the premium luxury tourism project in Labuan Bajo in South East Nusa province. The research aimed to understand the impacts of

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Traditional fishing craft at Labuan Bajo fishing town, Indonesia. The Labuan Bajo Premium Tourism Site, designated as a National Tourism Strategic Area (KSPN), is one of the government's five Super Priority KSPNs

54

these projects on small-scale fishers comprising the majority of actors in Indonesia's fishery business.

Government Regulation No. 11 of 2023, concerning measured capture fishing (MCF), was enacted as a policy to control, limit and restrict certain fishing zones and quotas of capture fishing in marine waters. The regulation will control the output efforts of capture fisheries in three types of quota in the MCF zone, namely: industrial quota; local fishers' quota; and quota for activities not for commercial purposes. MCF also opens up foreign investment in the form of limited liability companies and co-operatives that utilize industrial quotas in zones one, two, three and four. SSF access to industrial quota is limited to individual business persons, while priority is given to small-scale fishers who had joined co-operatives.

There are also other specific provisions for SSF to deal with special situations. The shrimp estate programme for large-scale upstream and downstream processes in shrimp aquaculture is a case in point that

uses modern technology. Other Blue Economy projects tend to undermine SSF due to lack of public consultation and participation, corporate control of shrimp farmers, and the issue of environmental impacts of aquaculture.

After the job creation law was passed, there have been setbacks in environmental safeguards, especially related to the environmental impacts of shrimp or crustacean farming. The Labuan Bajo Premium Tourism Site, designated as a National Tourism Strategic Area (KSPN), is one of the government's five Super Priority KSPNs. The Labuan Bajo area includes the Komodo National Park as a conservation area for the komodo (*Varanus komodoensis*), designated even before Indonesia's independence.

Long before the Labuan Bajo area was designated as a KSPN, in the 1970s the residents of the Loh Liang indigenous community were forced to move for conservation purposes. In fewer than 30 years, the people of Komodo Island have had to change their livelihoods several times. They

used to hunt and gather food, and work as traditional fishers; now they have become sculptors and sellers of souvenir merchandise. The establishment of a national park as a nature conservation area that maintains the original ecosystem through a zoning system, was meant to be supported by science, research, education, cultivation, tourism and recreation. However, these so-called benefits have been achieved at a high cost—human activities in the area are limited and largely forbidden.


Any effort to protect SSF and help it go beyond the Blue Economy perspective needs to fully identify and recognize the principal actors and subjects of the subsector. Once that is done, it is necessary to collect data on them, an activity that should not be left to the government. Otherwise many SSF actors will remain unregistered; the data generated by the government may be invalid, which will affect efforts to protect the basic rights of SSF actors.

Indonesia has accepted the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication (the SSF Guidelines). However, its implementation is still to take off. Neither the MOMAF nor the government has yet issued a national action plan on the implementation of the SSF Guidelines, as mandated. A law concerning the protection and empowerment of fishers, fish aquaculture and salt farmers was enacted in 2016, two years after the SSF Guidelines were endorsed in 2014. However, no directives on implementation have been issued. The 2016 law has been criticized for not recognizing gender justice and equality.

Tenure protection is fundamental to avoiding agrarian conflicts between SSF and other actors who also access and utilize coastal land and water, as well as marine and fisheries resources. Tenure rights in the form of access rights, control and participation in the utilization of marine and fisheries resources, are still limited. Even where access rights are granted, the rights to control and participate in the

management and utilization of marine and fisheries resources are still non-existent.

Social protection and insurance for SSF are crucial, considering that fishing activities themselves are considered dangerous. Added to that are other social problems such as the right to access services and programmes designed for health, education, food and nutrition, and land for housing. The employment insurance scheme covers only 486,000 fishermen and crew members, without any specific preference for SSF.

The SSF subsector needs economic incentives for its activities, considering that it plays a strategic role as an economic and social engine, guaranteeing food and nutritional security, and employment, apart from providing other multiplier effects to the local economy, while supporting the livelihoods of coastal communities. Nonetheless, fishermen's access to equipment and fuel is still limited and not easily obtained. Also, the working population in fishing communities is not being regenerated adequately, mainly because SSF is not considered an economic solution to community problems. Most of the youth do not want to fish or work in the SSF subsector because they do not see it as a viable economic path to a secure future. One way out of this dilemma may be to encourage the absorption of fishery products from small-scale fishers. Such market intervention can provide sufficient and stable incomes, while also increasing the fishing communities' personal consumption of their catches. 

For more

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Warding the Sea

A study into the various tenure instruments for small-scale fishing communities in the Philippines shows how rights, responsibilities and remedies are enforced and mediated by the State

Tenure rights in Philippines fisheries provide the legal framework for sustainable coastal and marine resource use and management. Recognizing tenure instruments allows for the allocation of specific coastal resources like fishing areas to individuals or communities, preventing overfishing and ensuring sustainable resource use. A deeper look into the various tenure rights of

- 4) Marine protected areas; and
- 5) Special permits, licences and grants.

The researchers also studied how these instruments of tenure are reinforced by the local government code, which emphasizes local autonomy, as well as how special laws and policies are applicable to coastal areas. The study defined the critical responsibilities of the fisherfolk to enjoy the cash and non-cash benefits of these tenure instruments, foremost of which is the registration of both fisherfolk and their craft/gear.

Among the support mechanisms that further strengthen tenure instruments are local policy bodies such as the Fisheries and Aquatic Resources Management Councils (FARMCs), Fisheries Management Areas (FMAs), community-based coastal resources management (CBCRM) programmes, and civil society projects along the coasts. The key challenges to sustaining coastal tenure among small-scale fishers are the limited technical and financial resources of fisher groups at the forefront of implementing tenure instruments on the ground, and the ageing population of fishers. The study suggests that fishers still need capacity building in organizational and institutional skills.

Opportunities in further elevating the discourse on fisheries tenure were also analysed in the study, which recommend enhancing collaboration among government agencies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and other stakeholders in handling development programmes and projects that strengthen existing tenure instruments at the local levels. The various tenure instruments that support and promote tenure in fisheries of the fisherfolk are formally

The study suggests that fishers still need capacity building in organizational and institutional skills

small-scale fishing communities within the municipal waters and coastal resources in two coastal municipalities in the Philippines was conducted by the Tambuyog Development Center and the International Collective in Support of Fishworkers (ICSF).

The study examined the various instruments of tenure available for small-scale fishers and the benefits derived from their access and control over municipal waters and coastal resources. Covering two sites in the Philippines, it investigated how the rights, responsibilities and remedies of the municipal fisherfolk are enforced and mediated by the State through the local government units (LGUs), provide them preferential access and control over the 15-km municipal waters. The study provides a contextual analysis of how five key instruments tenure are implemented at the local levels. They are:

- 1) Fisherfolk registration;
- 2) Municipal waters zoning;
- 3) Community-based law enforcement;

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Fishers of Alabat Island preparing the fishing gear, Lamon Bay, The Philippines. The individual as well as community rights, responsibilities and remedies available to fisherfolk in terms of fisheries access and tenure need to be clearly defined and established

57

codified in the municipal Fisheries Code.

I. Recognition depends on registration

Fisherfolk registration is the operative mechanism for individual tenure of fisherfolk within municipal waters. The preferential treatment accorded is the formal recognition of the tenure of municipal fisherfolk in marine and inland capture fisheries provided in the constitution and the Fisheries Code. However, the Fisheries Code specifically requires individual registration of fisherfolk for them to be able to utilize all fishery-related activities within municipal waters. This is reiterated in the local ordinances in the two case study sites, namely, in the municipalities of Calatagan and Agdangan.

Such registration functions as a basis for both national and local governments in providing social services like health and livelihood support, especially in times of emergencies and calamities. Thus, the fisherfolk registration formally

secures the tenure of municipal fisherfolk in municipal waters while also establishing their legal identity as rights holders entitled to protection and services from the State. It effectively addresses the invisibility of the sector in development programming by the State.

2. The link with conservation

Tenure instruments granted by the LGUs to fisherfolk associations or co-operatives in capture fisheries promote the conservation of fishery and aquatic resources. This is clearly demonstrated by the outcome of the management of marine protected areas (MPAs) by fisherfolk co-operatives or associations. Through an ordinance, a fisherfolk organization that manages a specific ecosystem component, for example, a coral reef or a mangrove forest, is bound by the rules on access and use rights over specific zones within the MPA. It is given specific responsibilities related to the protection, conservation and monitoring of the particular

marine or fishery resource. In turn, the fisherfolk secure their tenure in a specific area within the municipal waters and are given decision-making powers in the allocation of benefits derived from their management efforts. The recognition bestowed by the national government to the LGU and fisherfolk organizations of Calatagan in managing their MPAs, for instance, is proof of the effective management by the fisherfolk organizations concerned.

3. **Securing economic benefits**

Scaling up the economic benefits derived from the tenure instruments for the use of fishery and aquatic resources requires support from the State and even non-State actors like local businesses or enterprises. The use and access rights granted by the various tenure instruments to municipal fisherfolk depend on how the rules of access are enforced and their rights protected from other users such as commercial fishers and those engaged in various forms of illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing.

Likewise, the conversion of such entitlements to concrete monetary and even non-monetary benefits for the municipal fisherfolk requires support from the LGU, such as capital that the LGU can provide only on a limited scale. Most of the support given to them is in terms of training in capacity-building and helping them organize into formal associations.

Tenure instruments alone, though, are not enough. Without production or post-harvest facilities to add value to the catch or improve facilities—like in the case of eco-tourism activities in zones allowed within a protected area—fisherfolk will struggle to enhance and sustain the streams of economic benefits derived from such tenure instruments.

4. **Organizational capacity**

An organized community is a key element to capture the benefits from tenure in fisheries. Both Calatagan and Agdangan share

the historical involvement of civil society organizations in organizing the coastal communities and in engaging with the local government. Members of the organization managing the MPAs, for instance, are former members or leaders of peoples' organizations that were supported by NGOs in terms of capacity-building and organizational management, among other activities, or even academic institutions that provide extension work in coastal communities. Their organizational skills or experiences in advocacy in community issues enable them to carry on the responsibilities as managers or grantees of tenure instruments.

5. **Law enforcement**

The institution of the Bantay-dagat (BD or sea warden) has assumed an important role in the enforcement of the tenure of fisherfolk within municipal waters. Coastal and fishery law enforcement is the primary responsibility of the local police under the supervision of the mayor or the local chief executive. However, the BD, through technical, legal and financial support from their respective Municipal Agriculture Offices under the LGUs and even from NGOs, have assumed a greater role in fishery law enforcement. Membership in the BD, usually voluntary, draws from the coastal communities or barangays. Their rootedness in the dynamics of the community appear to be an advantage or an incentive for an involved participation in ensuring compliance of the members with the community rules on access to fishery and marine resources. Among the challenges faced by the BD are ageing membership and limited financial and technical support.

6. **Local policy influences**

As a consultative body on any fishery-related project or local policy, the FARMC has influenced the allocation of resources and rights within municipal waters. The adoption of local ordinances

granting effective tenure to municipal fisherfolk is fleshed out and tailored to benefit the sector. The FARMC is adequately supported by the LGUs in Calatagan and Agdangan. But, as in the case of the BD, the sustainability of the organization and the challenge of succession by younger leaders remain an issue.

7. Secure tenure and local autonomy

The local autonomy granted to the LGUs provided policy space for the adoption of local ordinances that cater to the grant of secured tenure for municipal fisherfolk. The jurisdiction over municipal waters to the LGU matched with the State policy on preferential treatment of municipal fisherfolk, who are guaranteed a secured tenure. Under the framework of delegated police powers, the LGUs in Calatagan and Agdangan can adopt ordinances granting tenure over specific fishery and marine resources. Part and parcel of such power is the authority to raise revenues, which is the basis for the collection of environment user fees or the imposition of fines as a penalty for violation of the ordinance.


Specific policy recommendations for Calatagan

1. As indicated in the 10-year fishery development plan of the LGU of Calatagan, the registration and renewal procedure should be prioritized in terms of improving the reach and ease of processing the registration of fisherfolk, and their gear and fishing vessels.
2. Other sectors, such as resort owners and small businesses that derive benefits from the management and protection of MPAs in providing support to volunteer Bantay-Dagat and members of the FARMC, should be brought under appropriate regulations of the LGU to specify how such support could be tapped and distributed equitably to the target members and officers of the sea warden and the FARMC.
3. Considering that the law itself is the basis for various tenure rights,

its effective implementation is linked to the sustainability of the tenure of municipal fisherfolk over the fishery resources. Compliance with the law is also a function of effective communication with the public.

Tenure instruments provide fisherfolk the State's guarantee to access fisheries resources. However, to be able to derive full benefits from such access another set of skills and capacities is needed. Tenure then provides just the first—but crucial—step for small-scale fishers to benefit from fisheries resources. A whole range of programme support should be provided to fishers to build up their capacity to manage not only coastal resources but also institutions and organizations.

Collaborative partnerships among government agencies, NGOs and other coastal stakeholders need to look at developing programmes that strengthen existing tenure instruments at the local levels. Foremost among them is institutionalizing programme support for local policy formulation and enforcement bodies such as the BD and the FARMC in the form of technical and financial enhancement that strengthens their operations.

Scaling up the discourse on fisheries tenure needs to further investigate the economic viability of tenure instruments. The individual as well as community rights, responsibilities and remedies available to fisherfolk in terms of fisheries access and tenure need to be clearly defined and established. Engaging individuals and groups in enforcing tenure rights need to highlight clear benefits to ensure sustainability. Thus, the policy discourse on fisheries tenure should also look at the economic side particularly the benefits of tenure arrangements to fishers as well as the cost of their enforcement. Moreover, the discourse must factor in the role of youth in ensuring that the hard-earned recognition of small-scale fishers' tenure over fisheries resources is sustained in the future. 

For more

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The Power of Self-reliance

To strengthened the self-governance capacity of participating co-operatives, a programme points to novel pathways

A group of organizations joined hands in 2015 to find ways to strengthen Mexico's small-scale fisheries (SSF) subsector, believing that organization and collective work are key to responsible resource management. The SSF subsector was represented by the Mexican Confederation of Fishing Co-operatives, partnered by the civil society organizations (CSOs), represented by the La Sociedad de Historia Natural Niparaja

strengthen organizations within the sector; the fishers chose one, training, as a priority. As a result, in partnership with Duke University and Niparaja, the National Programme for Strengthening Fisheries Organizations (PNFOP) was developed between 2020 and 2021.

The initial stages involved defining the programme structure and roles of each of the organizations in the collaboration, the objectives and expectations for change, planning a methodology for the selection of co-operatives, designing the content and format of teaching sessions, and outlining the logistics of implementing them in rural and isolated areas in Mexico.

According to the results of the study, co-operatives with high functionality had the capacity to create alliances with other organizations...

Learning how to implement

In 2022 began the implementation of the first pilot programme to facilitate the development of greater functionality in six co-operatives belonging to three federations located in the states of Baja California Sur, Chiapas and Yucatan. Co-operatives and federations chose to participate in the programme at the invitation of the National Confederation of Fishing Co-operatives. The pilot programme engaged fishers in these organizations to co-create improvement plans, based on identified needs, having provided them with tools and training to address those needs while also offering constant troubleshooting support.

One team member who functioned as the community liaison was based in the locality, and was responsible for providing fishers with feedback, advice and overall support throughout the 12-month duration of the intervention. The programme's aim was to ensure that the participating co-operatives complete their collective objectives as identified in their own self-improvement plans. In the process, it was hoped, they would learn techniques and approaches

and Community and Biodiversity. They were joined by members of the academic sector, represented by the Duke University. The collaboration aimed to understand the factors that contribute to make a Mexican co-operative practicably functional.

Towards this end, in 2017 the partners designed and carried out a National Diagnostic study of Fishing Organizations (DNOP). This delineated the factors that contribute to the functionality of 41 federations and 199 co-operatives in six regions of Mexico.

According to the results of the study, co-operatives with high functionality had the capacity to create alliances with other organizations (for example, other producer organizations, CSOs or the government), displayed greater internal administrative capacity for self-governance and monitoring of internal rules and commitments, and also demonstrated external capacity to comply with requirements and processes needed by the State and the markets.

Based on these results, the collaborators designed strategies to

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Map of Mexico showing the three States participating in the first pilot of the programme. In 2022 began the implementation of the first pilot programme to facilitate the development of greater functionality in six co-operatives located in three states

61

to work together to collectively manage their resources in a more responsible manner and, overall, improve their self-governance capabilities.

The self-improvement plan

In order to measure any potential change in their self-governance capabilities the monitoring and evaluation team carried out an initial assessment of the self-governance conditions of the participating co-operatives. This process also allowed the programme to be adapted to their needs. The same assessment was conducted at the end of the programme. The evaluation process was described to participants at the beginning and all results were shared with the co-operatives at the end.

After the presentation of the initial results, a workshop was held to identify, together with fishers, their collective priorities, and co-create a personalized self-improvement plan. This plan served as a roadmap of actions required to address some of their collectively identified concerns and challenges, and a way to assess whether they were achieving them or not.

The details on some aspects of the co-training process, and the importance of providing on-site support and accompaniment throughout the duration of the project, are hereunder:

Co-training process

A group of carefully selected trainers provided 28 courses over nine months, with a total of 50 hours of training, distributed over four weekly sessions, to all members of the participating fishing co-operatives. Training sessions included all members of the co-operative (and not just members in leadership positions) since it was felt that generating changes at the organizational level requires the participation of most of the individuals who make up the organization.

The full suite of programmes included topics such as communication, leadership, co-operatives, administration, fisheries management and commercialization. However, the courses were adapted to the specific needs of each co-operative, based on, for example, their geographic area, fishing resources, level of functionality, age of participants, schooling and

literacy abilities, and other available resources. The main challenge was to maintain the interest and engagement of participants with low levels of schooling who were not used to participating in workshops, and who had to cope with very demanding work schedules and responsibilities at home.

On-site community liaison

For approximately one year, the community liaison from each state worked closely with two co-operatives. In other words, there were three community liaisons, one in each state. On-site and continuous support was vital to create and maintain momentum throughout the development of the co-operatives' plan for self-improvement. The community liaison's responsibility was to link the programme with the co-operatives while facilitating, troubleshooting, guiding and providing whatever was needed to support the programme to assist the co-operatives to achieve their objectives. The community liaison's role was not to do the work for the co-operative, but to facilitate the initiation of collective action when needed. The importance of creating practices of self-reliance and not dependence on the project hinged on the community liaison's personal ability to navigate this delicate balance between providing support and creating dependence. This was particularly important since at the end of the programme the self-improvement plan would be adapted and expanded into an ongoing work plan for the co-operative to be implemented by the fishers themselves, without a community liaison.

How to measure change?

Conducting an initial assessment of the status of co-operatives was necessary to understand whether the training and overall approach was effective or could be improved. For the six co-operatives in the programme, a team, led by collaborators from Duke University, evaluated them before, during and at the end of their participation in the programme. More than 500 surveys were conducted along with 36 focus groups and several interviews with members of the participating co-operatives and federations (including a control group).

During the implementation of the training, participant observation was carried out, measuring, among other things, the time and resources invested by the co-operatives during their participation in the programme.

Changes after one year

The exit evaluations of the co-operatives showed increases in the level of functionality in three of the six participating co-operatives, compared to their initial evaluation. Five co-operatives expressed increased confidence in their future capacity for self-governance. However, only three co-operatives increased their interest in understanding and solving their internal problems. One year after their participation in the programme, the two co-operatives with the most notable changes in their functionality had improved the marketing of their products, changed their internal administration, and formed new alliances with other organizations from the public and private sectors. These two co-operatives also had higher participation and attendance during training sessions throughout the entire year of the programme.

We also observed that most changes came from younger co-operatives with low levels of functionality. More time is needed to see changes in more mature co-operatives with higher baseline levels of functionality, as they have more ambitious goals or require deeper or more complex changes in their work culture.

The learning

Overall, the results showed that the programme was able to generate short-term changes that strengthened the self-governance capacity of the participating co-operatives. Whether they were able to generate change or not seems to have depended largely on their initially sustained level of commitment to participation and their initial level of functionality. There were other factors involved such as support from their own fishing federation leaders, and the close accompaniment of the liaisons that also influenced the outcomes of this process. However, the durability of the project, once it ends, remains to be seen.

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Member of the Jaiberos de la Gloria Cooperative located in the state of Chiapas. At the end of the programme this cooperative was able to formalize the commercialization of its fishery products

63

Some challenges were identified that probably limited the co-operatives' investment of time in this initiative, such as the inability to generate collective interest among co-operative members, lack of sufficient attendance of members in large co-operatives, resistance to changing deeply-rooted habits and ways of working, as well as the ingrained political culture of receiving material support in exchange for participating in capacity-building activities. The practice of receiving material support has been historically promoted by local, provincial and federal authorities.

Several questions remain, such as how long should the community liaison remain in the locality? Will co-operatives be able to maintain collective action and implement changes that will eventually translate into responsible and sustainable management of resources in the long term? In order to find answers to these questions changes must be monitored over time.

Finally, as a partnership among the fishers, the academia and the civil

society, all with different worldviews, collaborators constantly face the challenge of how to collectively build a better and more productive dialogue that leads the group to reach consensus agreements for the benefit of fishing co-operatives and the entire sector. Stock-taking of these and other issues is under way, as also the work on implementing a second pilot, as part of learning what works and what can be improved within the programme.

This time around the programme will work with nine co-operatives located in two regions of Mexico. In each region, the co-operatives will be characterized by their sharing a common fishing area with all the other participating co-operatives. It will be monitored whether they can learn from one another. This second pilot will end in 2025. At the same time, work is ongoing to develop medium- to long-term monitoring measures for the co-operatives from the first pilot. The collaborators will continue to learn from their efforts. ♣

For more



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The Mother of All Battles

A new fisheries law is being mooted in Chile against a backdrop of corruption, overfishing and the exclusion of artisanal fishing and indigenous communities from decision making processes

A new fisheries law is being debated in Chile's Chamber of Deputies. It will replace the current Fisheries and Aquaculture Law that was enacted in 2013 amidst allegations of corruption in its conception and execution. In an unprecedented event in September 2022, the Chamber of Deputies' Maritime Interests and Aquaculture Commission declared the current law on fishing and aquaculture "indisputably null and void". This decision came in response to a decade-long struggle led by a section of artisanal fishers in alliance with coastal

national salmon farming industry, the government announced separate discussions for aquaculture regulations and an exclusive law for this export-driven sector.

During the first six months of discussion and negotiation on the new law, the industry made several attempts to influence the Congressional debate to maintain the current fishing status quo. These efforts included political lobbying and workplace pressure, such as threats of dismissal of workers in processing plants and swaying ministers of the economy and the environment to legislate outside of Congress.

Additionally, industry members attempted to add their own articles into the bill under discussion to preserve their privileges, leveraging their cross-party political and parliamentary support network—it is called the 'fishing caucus'. Faced with growing pressure from social movements and the artisanal fishing sector to amend key articles of the current neo-liberal fishing law, major industrial entrepreneurs have, in recent months, opted to delay discussions and stall negotiations, hoping for the arrival of a conservative or far right government in Chile in 2026.

In response to the inability to get approval for the new fishing law during his administration, in October 2024, President Gabriel Boric removed from parliamentary debate a key article that constitutes the core of the neo-liberal Chilean fishing law: the distribution of quotas (called 'fishing allocation') between the industrial and artisanal fishing sectors. This move aims to correct the asymmetrical and unjust distribution of fishing quotas and access to valuable fishing resources

During the first six months of discussion and negotiation on the new law, the industry made several attempts to influence the Congressional debate to maintain the current fishing status quo...

communities, citizens' organizations and environmental groups.

The 2013 legislation is popularly called the 'Longueira Law' after the right wing minister of economy, Pablo Longueira, who negotiated it with industrial fishing associations and representatives of two artisanal fishermen's confederations. It has been criticized as being one of the most notorious among corruption scandals in post-dictatorship Chilean history (1973–1990).

After a year of negotiations with the industry and consultations with artisanal fishing organizations—seven families control Chilean fisheries—the government of Gabriel Boric sent a draft of a new fishing law to parliament in December 2023. Succumbing to the lobbying power of the large trans-

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DENNIS JARVIS/FICKR



Fishermen getting ready to go out fishing, Chile. Currently, artisanal fishing only accounts for 10 per cent of the total jack mackerel quota

in one of the world's top-ten fishing countries.

It is worth noting that in some of the main fishing regions in the north of the country—the world's second-largest producer of fishmeal and fish oil—the industry owns 90 per cent of the total fishing quotas. This is the case in the Coquimbo region, where the Horizon mega-company, owned by the Angelini family's Corpesca Group, is the main beneficiary. Corpesca was the primary company implicated in bribing parliamentarians and politicians during the negotiations of the controversial privatization law enacted in 2013.

The draft law proposing a new fishing quota allocation aims to restore credibility and legitimacy to the legislation process by increasing the artisanal fishing sector's participation in annual quotas for key fisheries. On October 30, 2024, this draft law achieved its initial victory, winning

the approval of a large majority in the Chamber of Deputies. The approved proposal, in its initial legislative stage, established a quota allocation for the jack mackerel (*Trachurus murphyi*) fishery between the northern Atacama region and the southern Los Rios region, with 65-75 per cent allocated to industry and 35-25 per cent to the artisanal sector. To reach a preliminary agreement, the executive branch agreed to implement a 'dynamic quota' system exclusively for jack mackerel, adjusting annually based on each sector's catches. Currently, artisanal fishing only accounts for 10 per cent of the total jack mackerel quota.

Additionally, any increase in the jack mackerel quota equal to or less than 15 per cent will be fully auctioned through transferable fishing licences for the industrial sector. This percentage still falls short of the artisanal sector's demand for 50 per cent of the catches.

According to the undersecretary of fisheries, Julio Salas, such a percentage would render the government's quota allocation project financially unviable.

The government seeks to get this 'fishing allocation' law passed before the end of 2025 for political reasons. It must now face challenging discussion in the Senate, dominated by a conservative right wing majority, after having its approval in the Chamber of Deputies. Undoubtedly, the seven business families and the trans-national companies that control Chilean fisheries will wage a fierce battle to exert political pressure while attempting to mobilize the industrial fleet and processing plant workers both on the streets and in parliament.

If artisanal fishers and their most forceful organizations fail to unite and build alliances with diverse sections of Chilean society to mobilize autonomously against successive governments and the cross-party political-business class that yearns for the privatization of the nation's fisheries, it is likely that parliament will ultimately pass a watered-down and populist version of the current fishing law. This law, over ten years, has proven to be socially exclusionary and environmentally destructive, with 53 per cent of Chilean fisheries categorized as overexploited or collapsed, alongside increasing economic concentration and vertical integration among major national and international corporations.

The new fishing law is already under discussion in parliament. Given the asymmetric negotiations between the current government and the fishing-aquaculture business community, it is anticipated that there will be no fundamental changes. Only secondary aspects would be changed, consolidating a growing integration of the small-scale fishing sector with the industrial sector and the export model, consolidating the greatest plundering of rights and public goods that has occurred since the end of the civil-military dictatorship.

In this challenging scenario, key aspects that allow changing the current

non-democratic and neo-liberal fishing model have not been touched as part of the demands of the movements of citizens and coastal communities. They are:

- a) Consider aquatic ecosystems as legal subjects of constitutional law that ensure the protection of genetic heritage, and the integrity of the structures, components and functions of ecosystems that are the basis of existing life cycles, as well as the restoration of degraded biodiversity.
- b) Restore to the State absolute and exclusive dominion over Chilean fishing patrimony, restoring its capacity to assign property rights, access and use of the country's marine resources and coastal areas.
- c) Eliminate the indefinite duration of fishing licences and ITQ systems, which are oriented towards a fishing quota market and share transactions on the stock exchange where fisheries are only perceived as negotiable goods and property for the exclusive benefit of investors and owners of licences and fishing quotas or aquaculture concessions.
- d) Recognize that fisheries and coastal territories constitute a common patrimony that cannot be handed over as private property of an indefinite nature that is legally tradeable.
- e) Re-categorization of semi-industrial boats classified as artisanal, that sell their fishing quotas or transfer their catches within the protected first fishing mile to industrial companies and their processing plants.
- f) Restore the access and use rights to fisheries and hydro-biological resources to the artisanal fishers themselves and to the indigenous communities.

For more

Nulidad ley de pesca: Comisión de Intereses Marítimos despachó la iniciativa a su par de Constitución

<https://www.senado.cl/comunicaciones/noticias/nulidad-ley-de-pesca-comision-de-intereses-maritimos-despacho-la-iniciativa>

Debate over Chile's fisheries law exposes industry influence on fish management

<https://news.mongabay.com/2024/10/debate-over-chiles-fisheries-law-exposes-industry-influence-on-fish-management/>

Undoing a Great Wrong

https://www.icsf.net/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/Sam_90_art-08_Report_Undoing-a-Great-Wrong.pdf

No More Blood and Fire

https://www.icsf.net/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/4411_art_Sam_82_art07_Chile_Juan_Carlos_Crdenas.pdf

Chilled Out

https://www.icsf.net/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/4289_art_Sam76_e_art02.pdf

Ecoceanos

<https://www.ecoceanos.cl/>

Exiled at Home

Every day, in the guise of development, new threats undermine the livelihood opportunities of fishing communities in the Sundarbans, the world's largest mangrove forest

The Sundarbans comprise a mangrove area in the delta formed by the confluence of the Ganga, Brahmaputra and Meghna Rivers in the Bay of Bengal. Spread across parts of India and Bangladesh, it is the world's largest mangrove forest. And it has fallen prey to capitalism. Unbridled and indiscriminate growth of tourism is wreaking havoc on the ecosystem. Activities of the forest department threaten to evict the poor and marginalized residents of the area; livelihoods are under constant attack; new threats undermine the livelihood opportunities of the fishers every day.

Today, the people who depend on the mangrove ecosystem for their livelihoods have become exiles in their own houses. They barely manage to subsist as mangroves are cut down, as hotels come up in hordes. The 'tiger widows' and their poverty-stricken neighbourhoods have become special tourist attractions. Resorts and watch towers are springing up in forest department offices and camps deep inside the forest, defying the actual goals of Project Tiger.

The fishers in the area are not allowed to use mechanized boats for fear of pollution, even as thick smoke billows from tourist boats fitted with high-powered engines. Legal restrictions are meant only for the poor, it seems, and do not apply to the tourism business and the activities of a favoured few.

The process of evicting forest-dependent people from the Sundarbans began in colonial India and continued after the country's independence. The present government of the province of West Bengal has set out to hammer the final nails into the coffin. Recently, the

process of incorporating 1,044.68 sq km of reserve forest in Matla, Raidighi and Ramganga ranges into the Sundarban Tiger Reserve (STR) has been completed. The 2023 proposal by the Chief Wildlife Warden of West Bengal, submitted to the National Tiger Conservation Authority for technical clearance and cleared in January 2024, spares not a shred of thought for the fate of ordinary people dependent on these forests. Several wildlife organizations and tourism entrepreneurs have backed the initiative.

The process of evicting forest-dependent people from the Sundarbans began in colonial India and continued after the country's independence...

Of the above-mentioned reserve forest situated between the Matla and Thakuran Rivers, 556.45 sq km has already been designated as the West Sundarban Wildlife Sanctuary. In the remaining 488.23 sq km area, fishing was permitted. But that area has now been acquired for STR. What then is left for the fishers? Forest officials and wildlife lovers have a pat answer: What is there to fear? Although it has been brought under STR, the area has been designated a 'buffer' and remains an area where fishing is permitted.

However, this bureaucratic reply does not dispel the fishers' fears; they know after some time the entire buffer zone will become a Critical Tiger Habitat (CTH) and fishers will be evicted. This happened in 2007, when, in addition to the entire core area of STR, 369.53 sq km of Kholabada, a fishing-

This article is by Milan Das (mdasi640@gmail.com), General Secretary, Dakshinbanga Matsyajibi Forum (DMF) and Secretary, National Federation of Small-scale Fishworkers (NFSF), India

MILAN DAS



Natural fishing harbour inside Chandanpiri Forest in Paschim Bada of Sundarban, India. With the Sundarbans becoming a reserve forest, the communities lost their intrinsic right to pursue livelihoods in the area

68

permitted area, was declared a CTH; the fishers were expelled. Traditionally, the fishers have used mechanized boats in the above-mentioned fishing area. If that now becomes a 'buffer' within STR, mechanized boats will no longer be permitted, as these are not allowed within STR. Yet, these same rules do not apply for surveillance and tourist boats that operate with high-powered engines.

In 1928, the colonial government imposed restrictions on forest-based livelihoods by declaring most of the Sundarban Protected Forest in the undivided 24 Parganas district as a reserve forest. The remaining Protected Forest was also declared reserve forest in 1943.

With the Sundarbans becoming a reserve forest, the communities lost their intrinsic right to pursue livelihoods in the area. The few livelihood avenues and practices that remained continued only at the whim

and fancy of the forest department. In 1973, the government took the first step to evict fishers from the rivers, creeks and forests of the Sundarbans. In the Sundarbans forest, estimated to be of some 4,264 sq km in area, the Pub Bada, situated east of the Matla River, had the most fish wealth. In this area was established STR, measuring 2,584.89 sq km. Out of this area, 1,330.10 sq km was declared as the 'core' area, kept out of bounds for fishers.

In 1976, certain parts outside the core, namely, the 'buffer', were designated the Sajnekhali Wildlife Sanctuary (WLS), measuring 362.40 sq km. Thus, after 1976, fishing was permitted in only 892.39 sq km. The remaining 1,692.50 sq km of STR was definitively out of bounds for fishers. They called this the Bandhabada, meaning forbidden forest. According to the fishers, 70 per cent of the total fish of the entire Sundarbans are to be found in this area; the remaining

892.39 sq km of Kholabada (the open zone) yields only 15 per cent of the fish available in the entire Sundarbans.

Before STR was established in the 2,584.89 sq km of forest, there were about 8,000 fishing boats. After STR was established, only 923 boats were given boat license certificates (BLCs) for fishing in the 892.39-sq km Kholabada area. After STR was established in 1973, 1,679.11 sq km of forest area on the west side of the Matla River, referred to as the Paschim Bada, remained as reserve forest. Three years later, in 1976, about 44 sq km of this forest was declared a wildlife sanctuary. Only 5 per cent of the total fish in the entire Sundarbans can be found there. The remaining 1,635.16 sq km of reserve forest account for only 10 per cent of the total fish production from the Sundarbans. Around 3,700 boats have been granted BLCs and allowed to access this 10 per cent.

The number of fishers fishing in the Sundarbans has been estimated as over 100,000. Some fish in boats while others, fishing in waters adjoining their villages, often do not need boats. However, only those fishing in boats with proper BLCs have legal access to the forests. Unfortunately, only 4,623 boats have permission to fish in the Sundarban forests (923 for the original STR and 3,700 for the non-STR reserve forest). The usual number of fishers per boat is three. Therefore, about 14,000 fishers have legal access to the forests.

Hunger overrides all legislation, however. Thus, most of those fishing or hunting crabs in the traditional fishing grounds of the Sundarbans do so without permission. As a result, they are now seen as unwanted 'intruders' in the very areas they have been frequenting for generations to earn a livelihood. When caught by forest department guards, the fishers are subjected to indescribable humiliation—hefty bribes, beatings, destruction of food and water, confiscation of fish and crabs, and pouring of water into the oil tanks of mechanized boats. The officials often destroy the rudders and oars of the boats.

To evade the forest department officials, fishers row their boats deep

into the narrow forest creeks, where many fall prey to tiger attacks. They thus jeopardize the future of the entire family for the prospect of a little extra income. Even those with BLCs are not immune from persecution. Since the Kholabada has fewer fish resources, the fishers also enter the core or WLS areas to fish. The punishment is a fine of ₹1,150. A second-time offender must pay twice that amount. The third-time offender must pay twice the amount paid for the second offence, and so on. This principle of proportionately increasing fines results in extortion with impunity by government officers and employees.

In time, the boats with BLCs become old and break down. Added to that fact, many BLC owners have quit fishing but, for reasons unknown, their licences are not cancelled. The BLCs continue to be rented out as belonging to 'absentee owners'. Even when a BLC is cancelled, the forest department takes no initiative to re-issue it in the name of some other eligible fisher. Those who do not own a BLC try to rent one to avoid harassment. However, the demand for BLCs is many times greater than the number of BLCs available for rent. Hence, the rent keeps increasing and has now exceeded ₹100,000.

The Kholabada area of the STR, which requires high-rent BLCs, has shrunk in size. In 2007, the forest department declared a further area of 369.53 sq km as CTH. This brought down the area of Kholabada to only 522.86 sq km. It was this part of Kholabada that, along with the WLS, mentioned as a 'buffer' in 2009. Further, 556.45 sq km of the 1,635.16-sq km fishing area was declared as the West Sundarban Wildlife Sanctuary in 2013. The catch area was thus reduced to 1,078.71 sq km. In this way, the fishers have been steadily pushed into an ever-decreasing area of operation. This is how, for 50 years since 1973, the fishers of the Sundarbans have continued to retreat. In the last 50 years, about 50,000 boats belonging to the poor marginal fishers of the Sundarbans have been seized by Forest Department officers and have been rotting in its offices. Depending on

MILAN DAS



70

Fishing in Pub Bada, Sundarban Tiger Reserve, India. Legal restrictions are meant only for the poor, it seems, and do not apply to the tourism business and the activities of a favoured few

size and quality, these boats are valued between ₹30,000 and ₹300,000. At an average price of ₹50,000, the total loss is estimated at ₹2,500 million.

Around 500,000 nets of the poor fishers seized by forest department officers have been ruined. Each net costs anything from ₹3,000 to ₹30,000. At an average of ₹5,000, the total loss is about ₹2,500 million. In the last 50 years, about 8,000 women have become widows after their husbands fell prey to tiger attacks. How does one estimate the monetary value of such a loss? However, the government has come up with a figure for the compensation! The family of a fisher who dies in a tiger attack gets a total of ₹1,24,000. Of this, ₹500,000 is payable by the forest department; ₹500,000 from the Prime Minister's Matsya Sampada Yojana; ₹200,000 from the state government's Matsyajibi Bandhu Scheme; and ₹40,000 from

the National Family Benefit Scheme (NFBS). (Whether the fisher's family actually gets all this money in hand is a different question altogether!) Thus, by government estimates, the compensation handed out to the 8,000 fishers who died in tiger attacks in the last 50 years is ₹992 million! at current rates. But what price can be fixed for all the injuries, humiliation and tears that, for the past 50 years, hundreds of poor marginalized fishermen have had to endure?

What has been gained from the Sundarbans in the last 50 years? Reportedly, there are only 103 tigers left, 79 of which live inside STR and the remaining 24 in the reserve forests. The fishing community has had to bear the cost of supporting these tigers, instead of the society at large. When STR was established, it had no legal basis. Neither did the 923 BLCs originally issued. And how was this number

arrived at? This question has not been answered by the STR administration till date. The forest department did not feel the need to consult with, and obtain the consent of, the fishers dependent on the forest before declaring the West Sundarbans Wildlife Sanctuary in 2013. Also, before finalizing the decision to include 1,044.68 sq km of the forest area of Matla, Raidighi and Ramganga ranges of the three reserve forest ranges in the STR, the fishers were not consulted even, let alone asked for their consent.


As a result of this scheme, only two ranges—Bhagbatpur and Namkhana—will remain outside STR. Soon, these two ranges will also enter STR as the latest in this 100-year long conspiracy to evict fishers from the Sundarbans. The impending disaster affects not only the fishers of the Sundarbans, but also the villages near the Sundarban forests. One often hears of a tiger entering a village. Why has it done so? The answer is evident. The Royal Bengal Tiger finds it difficult to get the food it requires within the forest. A tiger consumes five to 15 kg of meat a day and a full-sized male tiger can eat even up to 30 kg in a day. On average, if a tiger consumes roughly 10 kg of meat per day, then, in a year, an average of about 3.65 tonnes of meat will be needed per tiger. Thus, in round figures, a hundred tigers in the Sundarbans require 365 tonnes of meat annually. If the average weight of a full-grown wild boar or deer is 50 kg, then 7,300 such animals will be needed to feed 100 tigers in a year.

Besides, there are animals like jackals, fishing cats and so on in the forest which also need meat. With so many animals getting killed in a year, how long will the Sundarbans be able to provide sustenance for 103 tigers? And what if, in the coming days, the number of tigers increases from the current level of 103? Unless there are appropriate plans for meeting the nutrition needs of an increasing tiger population, what is to prevent the tigers from entering the forests adjoining villages of the Sundarbans in search of food?

These questions point to another dilemma. As the number of wild animals being slaughtered in the Sundarbans forests to provide for 103 tigers is so large, how many wild animals other than tigers are left surviving in the forest? And if they are surviving in ample numbers, then a doubt arises: are there really 103 tigers in all in the Sundarban forest? Or is there some other story behind the immense expenditure, endless persecution and monumental injustice being perpetrated in the Sunderbans?

In order to display benevolence and good faith, and build stable relations with the villagers, the forest department is undertaking development work by bringing the villages adjoining the forest under Joint Forest Management Committees (JFMCs). However, some argue that the real objective of the move is to use the JFMC members to gather information about those who are fishing in the forest without permission. Moreover, providing the JFMC villages with special financial facilities creates bad blood between the villages receiving the benefits and the remaining. Therefore, when, in the not-too-distant future, the villages adjoining the forests that receive benefits need to be evacuated to increase the area for tigers, these villagers will not receive sympathy and support from their unprivileged neighbours.

Largest mangrove forest

Over 100,000 poor fishers of the Sundarbans remain endangered as the state government of West Bengal, with the active co-operation of some wildlife conservation NGOs and the tourism business sector, continues to devastate the largest mangrove forest in the world. 

For more



Unchecked avarice and abuse of power push Sundarban fishers to the brink

<https://milandas1978.blogspot.com/2024/11/unchecked-avarice-and-abuse-of-power.html>

The Sundarbans Fishers: Coping in an Overly Stressed Mangrove Estuary

<https://www.icsf.net/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/930.ICSF145.pdf>

Profits and Perils of Farming Fish: Case Studies of Shrimp and Carp Aquaculture in West Bengal

https://www.icsf.net/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/930.ICSF228_West_Bengal_Santanu_Chacraverti.pdf

Fishing Community Issues in the Sundarban Tiger Reserve (STR): Report

<https://www.icsf.net/wp-content/uploads/2009/09/930.ICSF025.pdf>

A Sterling Job

This publication from UNCTAD is a timely compilation of knowledge on the emerging sector of energy transition in fishing fleets and its implications for developing countries

A publication of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), *Energy transition of fishing fleets: Opportunities and challenges for developing countries*, released in 2024, is the work of contributors and reviewers under a study team at UNCTAD that included David Vivas Eugui, Claudia Contreras, Mafalda De Braganca Mendes, Regina Asariotis, Anila Premti, Argyro Kepesidi, and Chantal Line Carpentier.

The book, edited and designed by Claire Ward and Wendy Worrall, provides a comprehensive overview of the energy transition in fishing fleets and its implications for developing countries.

alternative energy options in fishing fleets, such as biofuels, green methanol, liquefied natural gas (LNG), biogas, green hydrogen, and green ammonia. The book discusses electric and hybrid engines, wind propulsion, energy efficiency measures, and on-board carbon capture as means of reducing emissions.

Emphasizing the economic, trade, environmental and social considerations for the transition of fishing fleets, including impacts on seafood value chains and social implications, the book calls for collaboration and co-operation among stakeholders to achieve a just energy transition in the fisheries sector. It also discusses the importance of clear regulations, trade facilitation, and the inclusion of carbon footprint criteria in sustainability assessments. It highlights the need for comprehensive national plans, co-ordination, and financial support to enable a sound energy transition and decarbonization process in the fisheries sector.

Drawing on case studies on the experiences of fishing associations and fisheries service centres in different regions, the book highlights the challenges and progress in energy transition. The countries that have analyzed measures for increasing energy efficiency in the fishing sector are Albania, Liberia, Sri Lanka, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Cambodia, Dominica, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, South Sudan and Ecuador, apart from those in the Asia-Pacific region and the European Union (EU).

These countries have included specific measures in their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) or have implemented technologies and practices to improve energy efficiency in the fishing sector. The IMO has encouraged its Member States to

The book discusses the significant contribution of emissions from fishing fleets to climate change and the role of fuel subsidies in exacerbating this issue

Between 0.1 and 0.5 per cent of all carbon emissions come from fishing vessels, which accounts for roughly four per cent of carbon emissions from the world's food production. Emissions from fishing fleets are estimated using different techniques (bottom-up vs. top-down) due to a lack of data. According to academic studies, global fishing fleets released 159 mn tonnes of CO₂ annually during 2016.

The book discusses the significant contribution of emissions from fishing fleets to climate change and the role of fuel subsidies in exacerbating this issue. It explores the regulatory framework, including measures by the International Maritime Organization (IMO) and regional and national initiatives. It also highlights the technological opportunities and challenges for

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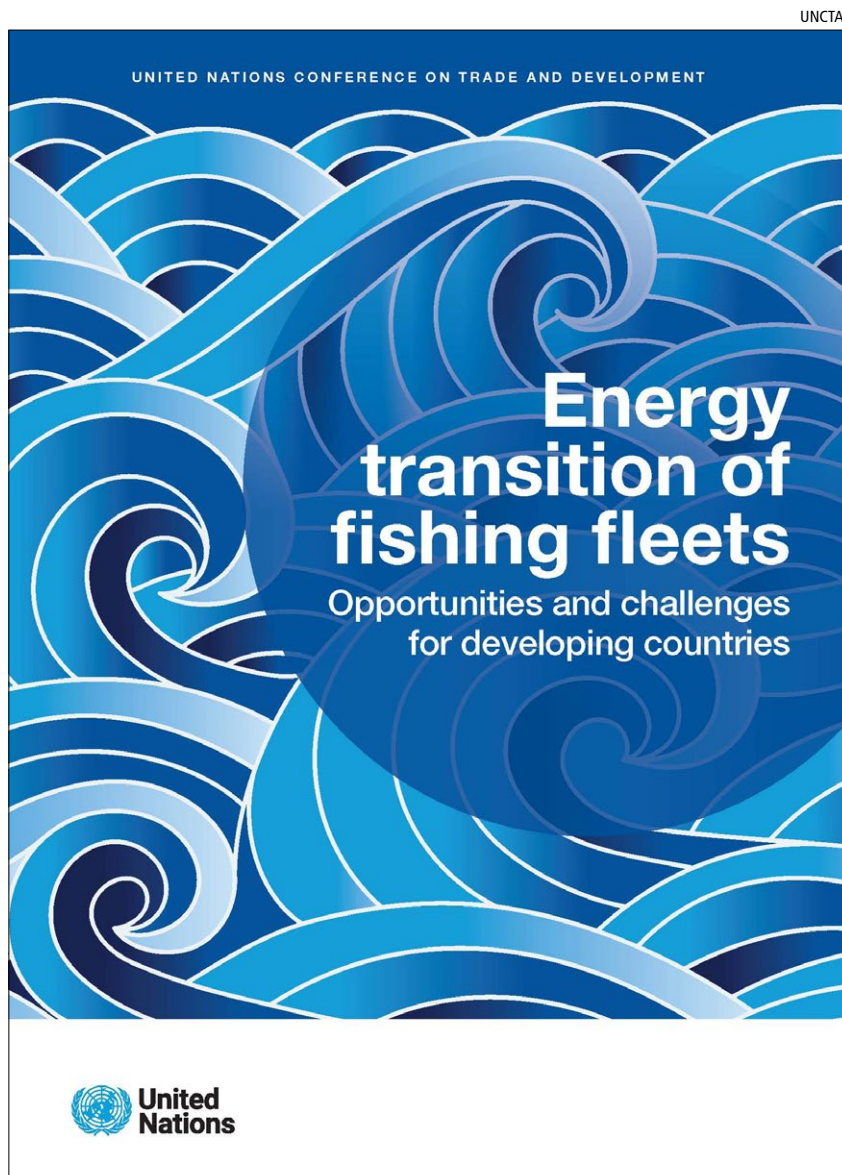
develop national action plans aimed at reducing the greenhouse gas (GHG) missions of the shipping sector. To date, eight national action plans have been submitted by Member States, five of which specifically account for fishing vessels in their emissions calculations (namely, Finland, India, the Marshall Islands, Norway and the Republic of Korea).

Overall, the book aims to support policymakers, stakeholders and fishing associations in making informed decisions and implementing sustainable practices in the fishing industry. Nonetheless, there is only limited discussion on policy and regulatory frameworks. The book briefly mentions the IMO and the World Trade Organization agreement on fisheries subsidies. However, it does not provide detailed analysis or recommendations on how these frameworks can be strengthened or improved to support the energy transition of fishing fleets.

The book acknowledges the contributions of experts and fishing associations, but it does not provide direct quotes or perspectives from these stakeholders. Including their insights and experiences would have added more depth and credibility to the book.

While the book mentions the environmental considerations of the energy transition, it does not provide a comprehensive analysis of the potential environmental benefits and risks associated with different alternative energy options for fishing fleets. In general, the book provides a general overview of the opportunities and challenges in the energy transition of fishing fleets. However, it does not provide specific recommendations or actionable steps for developing countries to effectively navigate this transition.

The backdrop of this book is the IMO support for the decarbonization of the fisheries sector. The IMO has adopted a revised GHG strategy for global shipping that aims to reach net-zero GHG emissions from international shipping close to 2050 and ensure the uptake of alternative zero and near-zero GHG fuels by 2030. While not specifically targeting fishing fleets,



https://unctad.org/system/files/official-document/ditcted2023d5_en.pdf

the IMO's regulations and measures will have an impact on the carbon intensity of fishing fleets and promote the decarbonization of the fisheries sector.

Europêche, the association of national organizations of fishing enterprises in the EU, also supports the decarbonization of the fisheries sector. In the light of these steps from IMO, this book is timely, and as a compilation of knowledge on this emerging sector, UNCTAD has done a sterling job. This book is a necessary addition to any fisheries development researcher's reference collection as also to any specialised subject library. 3

For more

Energy transition of fishing fleets: Opportunities and challenges for developing countries

<https://unctad.org/publication/energy-transition-fishing-fleets-opportunities-and-challenges-developing-countries>

An Indispensable Guide

Filled as it is with analysis and insights, the second edition of Anthony Charles' *Sustainable Fishery Systems* is an absolute must for every fisheries library and bookshelf

For those of us not completely up to date on how capture fisheries are practised and managed, the second edition of Anthony Charles' *Sustainable Fishery Systems* is an absolute must. It has been thoroughly revised. The first edition, published in 2001, counted only 370 pages. This new edition is double that size: not only has the previous text been completely reviewed, the author has added chapters on salient fishery concerns of today, with the achievement of sustainability and resilience at its core.

Anthony 'Tony' Charles is director of the School of the Environment and professor in the Sobey School of Business at Saint Mary's University, Halifax, Canada. He is a long-time observer of capture fisheries. He has a distinguished record of international publications and has played a key role in many international fora, including the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), and the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN). He has led countless research initiatives, including the Community Conservation Research Network (CCRN). He has written about numerous topics, like the nature of conflicts in fisheries, the role of local knowledge, and the position of indigenous peoples in various parts of the world. In short, he is the ideal composer of a handbook on this topic.

The first thing to note about this second edition is the attention that it pays to small-scale fisheries. Each chapter contain a box of relevant quotations from the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication (the SSF Guidelines). The author also makes numerous references to aspects

that are of particular significance to small-scale fishers, such as the role of local knowledge and the importance of participatory management.

The book can be imagined hinging on one particular chapter, positioned in the middle, on the collapse of Canadian cod fishery. This occurred in the 1990s and affected one of the most iconic fisheries of the world; it is a supreme example of management failure, in which fishery fleets, researchers and government authorities together failed to foresee and address the enormous disaster that affected the entire Canadian east coast.

Reflecting as it does on one of the better-managed marine fisheries of the world, the analysis provides not only a warning signal but also an entry point to many of the topics that Charles attempts to address in the book, including the need to acknowledge the role of 'Uncertainty in fishery systems' (chapter ten), 'Conflict in fishery systems' (chapter eleven) as well as the importance of 'Adaptive, robust and precautionary management' (chapter fourteen). Charles points out that the primary victims of the collapse were the small-scale fishers who offered forewarnings of crisis but were largely ignored.

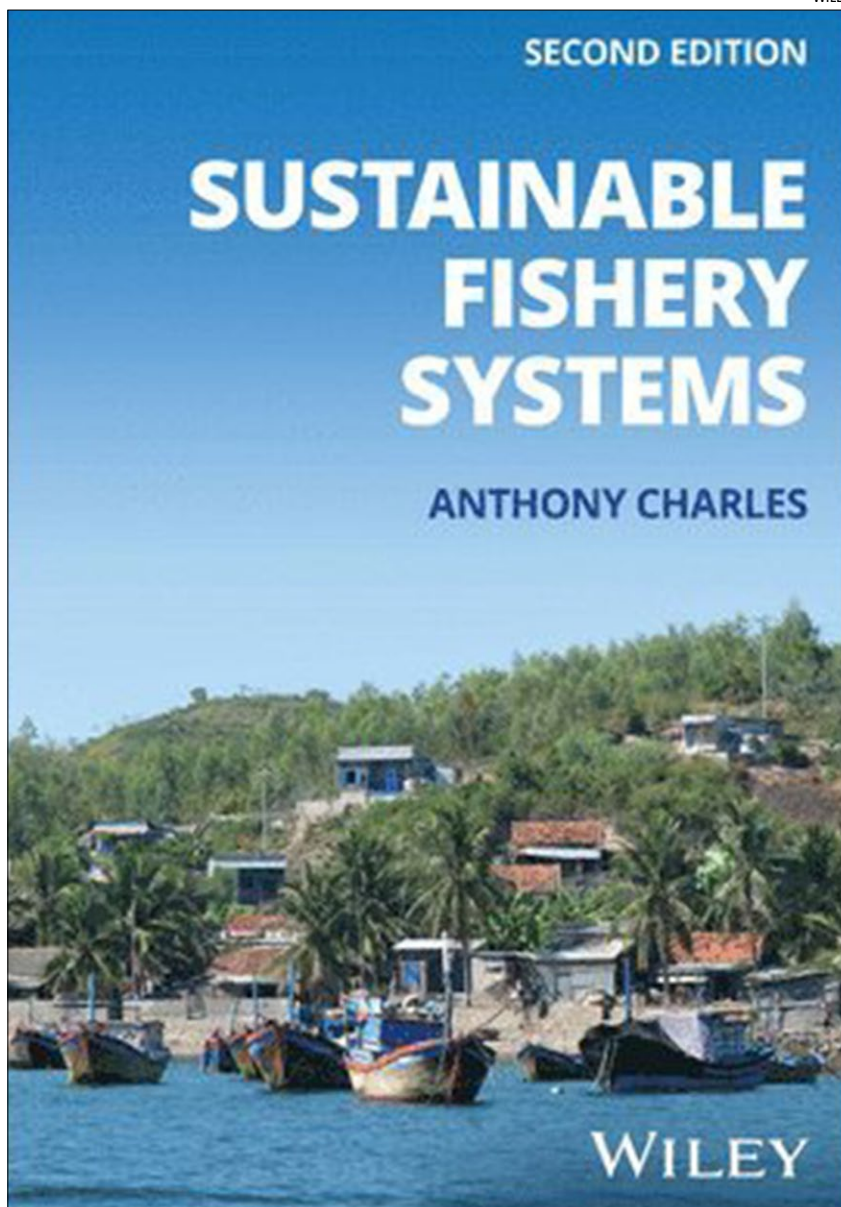
The purpose of the book is to contribute to the cause of sustainable fisheries. The author makes use of a social-ecological systems perspective, whereby the various elements of fisheries (from marine ecosystem through fish harvesting to consumption) are viewed as an interlinked whole. The early part (specifically, chapters two and three) thus describe fisheries from the viewpoint of the fish and the fishery ecosystem, subsequently moving to the human system that includes fishers, fishworkers, processors, traders,

consumers and, finally, the fishing communities that connect them all.

Attention then moves to the governance and management system, considering rationales, possible objectives, and the institutional structures (chapter six). In the next two chapters, Charles describes in detail the range of available management instruments and the many ways in which fishery development is attempted. The latter chapter offers welcome respite from a dominant narrative that suggests that conservation and control are the sole duties of a fisheries manager.

In line with his concern for small-scale fishing communities, Charles pays substantial attention to what he calls 'Fishery knowledge' (chapter nine; this chapter replaces one in the original edition that was entitled 'Fishery research' and was geared toward scientific contributions.) In this newly composed text, Charles expands attention from the knowhow generated by scientists to include the so-called local knowledge in possession of the fishing communities that labour on the seas. Since this knowledge complements scientific knowledge, he argues that it deserves to be taken along in governance and management considerations. The relevance of such knowledge is one reason that Charles pleads for management styles that promote the participation of small-scale fishworkers (and fishers, more generally) in decision-making processes.

The book is specked with examples (and many photographs) from different parts of the world, and Charles is clearly concerned about including the Global South in his deliberations. The text does not, however, belie his Canadian origins and his training in the Western scientific tradition, which emphasizes rational management. In many countries of the Global South, governmental institutions for research and the implementation of management measures are weak, at best, and informal. It might have been useful to have paid more attention to data-poor fisheries and the limited toolbox available to many governing actors in these regions.



Sustainable Fishery Systems, by Anthony Charles, ISBN: 978-1-119-51179-3, June 2023, 672 pages, John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Though there is always a reason to gripe, as it stands, this handbook is not only comprehensive but also well written, providing guidance and insight to those interested in, and committed to fisheries, especially small-scale fisheries. Each chapter includes useful illustrations and concludes with a set of key messages. This book deserves a place in every fisheries library and bookshelf. 📖

For more



Maarten Bavinck: Book Review (Tony Charles' Sustainable Fishery Systems (2nd edition))
Sustainable Fishery Systems, 2nd Edition

<https://www.wiley.com/en-in/Sustainable+Fishery+Systems%2C+2nd+Edition-p-9781119511793>

Anthony (Tony) Charles
<http://www.tonycharles.ca/>

An Apostle of Peace

The scholar of peace and conflict studies will be remembered for critiquing how the industrial model of fisheries was imposed on tropical developing nations

Professor Johan Vincent Galtung died on February 17, 2024, in Norway, aged 93. A sociologist renowned for his contributions to peace and conflict studies, Galtung founded the Peace Research Institute of Oslo (PRIO) and Transcend International, two organizations dedicated to promoting peace and non-violent approaches to conflict resolution. Greatly influenced by Mahatma Gandhi, Galtung had

to extend technical assistance in the form of machinery, aid and expertise to what were called ‘underdeveloped economies’.

Being interested in development, Galtung visited INP areas on several occasions between 1960 and 1969 to hold discussions with the Norwegians and Indians charged with the project. More importantly, he came to meet with the fishing communities who were the intended beneficiaries of the activities of the project.

Galtung was attempting an analysis of INP from the standpoint that it did not achieve its primary goal: raising the standard of living of the poorest fisherfolk in the project region. Several ‘achievements’ of the project—such as the introduction of trawlers or facilitating shrimp export to the US—were certainly not among its original stated goals. These were only unintended consequences of unintended activities, undertaken only for the project’s survival.

Coming from a peace studies framework, Galtung examined INP from the perspective of the underlying structural inequalities and power imbalances it was creating. He also pointed to the depletion of resources and the expanded environmental consequences. Following detailed and systematic inquiries and analyses, Galtung wrote an article titled ‘Development from Above and the Blue Revolution: The Indo-Norwegian Project in Kerala’ for *PRIO* Oslo, which he had started in 1966.

His views caused an uproar in Norway because INP had been portrayed as a ‘model’ development project. Following this, many more researchers studied INP from various perspectives, examining how well-intentioned development interventions play out in

Galtung will be remembered primarily for his contribution to peace studies and for his active involvement in mediation and conflict resolution efforts around the world

76

doctorates in mathematics and sociology; he authored over 150 books and more than 1,000 articles.

Readers of the *SAMUDRA Report* might wonder what connected such a profound academic and peace activist with fishworkers and fisheries. The answer lies in 1952, when the UN signed a tripartite agreement on economic development with the governments of Norway and India. Under this was created the Indo-Norwegian Project of Fisheries Community Development (INP) in the southern Indian state of Travancore, which was merged with the new province called Kerala in 1956.

INP was the world’s first development project of its kind. It was inspired by the UN Expanded Programme for Technical Assistance, which was seen as an avenue for post-World War II assistance to the newly independent developing countries. The success of the Marshall Plan in the reconstruction of the war-torn economies of the West was a point of departure for developed economies

This article is by **John Kurien** (kurien.john@gmail.com), Former Professor, Centre for Development Studies, Thiruvananthapuram, India and Honorary Member, ICSF

the dynamic reality of local and global socio-economic and political forces.

Galtung visited India again in 1982. This time he made a stop at the Centre for Development Studies (CDS) in Trivandrum, Kerala, where Sebastian Mathew (now with ICSF) was pursuing an M.Phil. programme. I was a research associate at CDS but away on a year's assignment in Hong Kong. Sebastian introduced Galtung to a lengthy socio-economic and ecological analysis of Kerala's fish economy that I had produced in 1978. Galtung found this to be in line with his own understanding of the evolution of Kerala's marine fisheries since the 1950s.

Sebastian accompanied Galtung on his visits to the remnants of INP and to the villages where the project was concentrated. He wanted to study for himself the transformations there. After returning to Norway, Galtung was gracious enough to write me a letter of appreciation about my research. A very fruitful collaboration had begun. His framework greatly influenced my subsequent work on INP.

In 1984, when we were planned to organize in Rome the first International Conference of Fishworkers and their Supporters, I invited Galtung to make a presentation on the impact of industrialization in the fisheries sector on its workers. He readily agreed and stayed in Rome for three days.

His presentation was greatly appreciated. Accompanied by George Kent, he detailed impacts fishworkers were actually feeling in their lives. For example, conflicts with trawlers over space and resources; poorly paid and exploitative working conditions on fishing vessels and processing plants; and diversion of fish exclusively for exports, jeopardizing local food security.

A press meet was planned during the conference to impress upon the international media gathered in Rome to cover the FAO/UN World Conference on Fisheries Development and Management. The idea was to have a panel of fishworkers from around the world, supported by some speakers of calibre such as Galtung. He suggested that the panel exclusively comprise fishworkers; his presence was going to

merely to assist with translation, as and when needed. And what a presence it was because he spoke eight languages fluently! Following the animated press interaction, Galtung remarked: "This was really a seminar on fishery issues of the highest order!"

In March 1985 I met with Galtung again at Lofoten Islands in northern Norway. It was an international seminar organized by the Norwegian ministry of foreign affairs to evaluate all the fisheries aid projects running with Norwegian assistance. INP was the highlight, naturally—the most discussed and controversial project. Galtung was at his devastating best, giving a detailed exposition of how and why trawlers were introduced into Kerala by the project at a time when they were banned in Norwegian coastal waters, and who in Norway was responsible for it.

Galtung will be remembered primarily for his contribution to peace studies and for his active involvement in mediation and conflict resolution efforts around the world. He facilitated peace processes in numerous conflict zones and has worked tirelessly to promote dialogue, reconciliation and nonviolent resolution of disputes. His work will continue to inspire scholars, practitioners and activists committed to building a more peaceful and just world.

Early critique

The fishery fraternity will remain thankful to him for his early critique of the economic and ecological consequences of imposing the industrial model of fisheries in temperate regions upon many developing nations in the tropics, all under the guise of 'development assistance'. 3



Johan Vincent Galtung

For more

Development from Above and the Blue Revolution: The Indo-Norwegian Project in Kerala

<https://www.transcend.org/galtung/papers/Development%20From%20Above%20and%20the%20Blue%20Revolution%20-%20The%20Indo-Norwegian%20Project%20in%20Kerala.pdf>

Johan Galtung: The Indo-Norwegian Project in Kerala

<https://www.transcend.org/galtung/papers/The%20Indo-Norwegian%20Project%20in%20Kerala-A%20Development%20Project%20Revisited.pdf>

FISHWORKERS ORGANIZATION

Declaration of the WFFP 8th General Assembly, 20 November 2024, Brasilia, Brazil

We, the World Forum of Fisher Peoples (WFFP) have gathered here around the world from 14 to 21 November 2024 in Brasilia, Brazil for the WFFP's 8th General Assembly. Even if the spread of COVID pandemic caused delay in our most important decision-making space, we are continuing to fight in support of fisher peoples, encompassing diverse groups of traditional fishermen and fisherwomen, women and men seafood collectors and gatherers. We invite the world to listen to our voices to advance, protect and safeguard our collective and traditional customary rights, through the implementation of real solutions for our Peoples. We, as representatives of national and regional organizations of fishers from 50 countries counting over 10 mn fisher peoples, reiterate the message that fisher peoples –peoples– are the custodians of our planet's waters and are right-holders working and

mobilising for food sovereignty, biodiversity protection, and lifeways that are in harmony with nature. However, our survival and thriving depend on systemic changes to the global food system, on transformation away from the dominant capitalist model of economic expansion, and on governments recognizing, protecting and advancing our historical customary rights on land, inland waters, coasts, mangroves, seas and all our traditional territories.

<https://icsf.net/resources/declaration-wffp-8th-general-assembly-20-november-2024-brasilia-brazil/>

BIODIVERSITY

Five key takeaways from UNCBD COP16 in Cali, Colombia

At COP16 in Cali, the time

resolve all items on an action-packed agenda. Here are five key highlights shaping the path ahead:

Biodiversity and climate – Two sides of the same coin

Historically, biodiversity concerns—and the outcomes of UNCBD negotiations—have often played second fiddle to climate change on the global stage. However, COP16 signalled a shift, underscoring the urgent need to harmonize climate and biodiversity action. The conference's outcomes reflected this call for integration, with Parties committing to accelerate the alignment of climate and biodiversity goals.

"It has never been clearer that implementing the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework and the Paris Agreement in a synergistic fashion will make peace with nature within reach," said Astrid Schomaker, Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity. Key resolutions emphasized collaboration between scientific authorities, such as the World

Biodiversity Council and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), to bridge the divide. At the

national level, it was underscored that National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs) should be closely aligned with planning instruments of other Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs), including Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs).

A historic milestone for Indigenous representation

"We don't just want to be included; we want to be part of the decisions and the solutions," said Sinéia Wapichana, a Brazilian Indigenous leader, at CIFOR-ICRAF's side event on National Biodiversity Strategies. Her words resonated strongly at COP16's closing plenary, where Parties adopted a historic Programme of Work on Article 8(j) to ensure Indigenous voices are integral to biodiversity governance.

<https://icsf.net/newss/five-key-takeaways-from-uncbd-cop16-in-cali-colombia/>

78

ORGANIZATIONAL PROFILE

Latin American Union of Artisanal Fisheries (ULAPA)

The Latin American Union of Artisanal Fisheries (ULAPA) is an international organization of artisanal fishermen and fisherwomen that brings together national federations from 12 Latin American countries to defend small-scale fisheries (SSF) against global threats. "We are small-scale fishermen and women, representing many other fishworkers, we are the voice of small-scale fisheries in Latin America and we want our voice to be heard at a global scale. We have organized in order to be stronger in our fight for the right to fish, so that small-scale fishing does not disappear and remains, instead, a fundamental pillar of food security."

ULAPA works to protect all small-scale fishing activities in all types of waters: deep seas, inshore, the one-mile strip and inland waters. It includes diving, shellfish and seaweed harvesting, and small-scale aquaculture of fish, shellfish and seaweed.

The union was founded through an agreement signed at the IV Latin American Small-scale Fisheries Congress and

announced at the Our Ocean Conference, both of which took place in Vina del Mar in Chile in early October 2015.

In 2023, ULAPA was officially certified before the notary public at the Latin American Small-scale Fisheries Congress held in Valparaiso on December 12-14.



The resolution was published in the Official Journal on January 31, 2024. Zoila Bustamante Cardenas was democratically elected the organization's president.

ULAPA's membership consists of the following associations of small-scale fishermen and fisherwomen:

- * National Commission for the strengthening of extractive reserves and coastal and marine fishing communities (CONFREM), Brazil
- * National Federation of Small-scale Organizations of Guatemala (FENAPESCA)

- * Artisanal Fisheries Union of Boca de Toro, Panama (UPESABO)
- * Afro-Colombian Association of Fisher Men and Women of the Gulf of Morrosquillo, (Colombia)
- * Artisanal Fisheries Union of Argentina
- * Fisheries Co-operative of Tarcoles, Costa Rica (COOPETARCOLES, R.L.)
- * Association of Artisanal Fishermen (APALE), Panama
- * Association of Fishermen of Florida Isla Venado, Puntarenas (ASLOPE), Costa Rica
- * National Federation of Fisheries Co-operatives of Ecuador
- * Federation for the integration and unification of artisanal fishworkers in Peru (FIUPAP)
- * Federation of Fishing Co-operatives of El Salvador
- * Confederation/National Network of Women in Aquaculture (RENAMUPES), Colombia
- * Mexican Confederation of Fishery and Aquaculture Co-operatives (CONMECOP), Mexico

- * Union of Social Economy Enterprises/National Network of Artisanal Fishermen of Honduras, (REDPESCAH)
- * National Confederation of Artisanal Fishermen of Chile (CONAPACH)

ULAPA represents small-scale fisheries organizations from Peru, El Salvador, Colombia, Brazil, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Argentina, Panama, Mexico, Guatemala, Honduras and Chile. It takes part in national and international meetings between its members and also in those organized by the United Nations (UN), such as the those on climate change, the Committee on Fisheries (COFI) of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN (FAO), and the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), among others.

Contributed by
Monica Moreno Reyes
(conapachperiodista2@gmail.com), a journalist with the National Confederation of Artisanal Fishermen of Chile, CONAPACH (www.conapach.cl)

BIODIVERSITY

The National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan of Japan

The newly formulated National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP) of Japan 2023-2030 sets out such matters to be addressed for the achievement of the GBF based on the experiences gained and lessons learned from the implementation of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets and past national strategies, as well as issues in Japan posed in interaction between Japan and the rest of the world, and the matters to be addressed in response to the challenges at national level.

Regulations and management of existing protected areas based on laws and regulations in existing protected areas*, appropriate management and surveys will be steadily implemented based on laws, regulations, and systems, and if necessary, new areas will be designated or areas will be reviewed. ((Ministry of the Environment (MOE), Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF), Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT), Ministry of Land, Infrastructure and Transport (MLIT))

* Coastal and Marine Protected Areas (Applicable systems will be reviewed as necessary)

Type	Area
Natural parks	19,115 km2
Natural Seashore Conservation Areas	91 areas
Nature Conservation Areas	1 km2
Offshore Seabed Nature Conservation Areas	226,834 km2
Wildlife Protection Areas	661 km2
Habitat Protection Zones (No marine areas designated)	-
Natural monuments	-
Protected water surfaces	28 km2
Coastal fisheries resource development zones, designated marine areas	333,616 km2
Areas designated by prefectures, fishery organizations, etc	-
Common fishery right areas	87,200 km2

Note: The 13.3% share of protected areas in Japan's marine area does not match with the percentage of the total area above due to overlapping areas.

(Data updated based on the Ministry of the Environment's "Survey and Study for Discussions on International Targets after 2021 under the Convention on Biodiversity" report issued in FY2021)...

Improvement of water quality in rural areas by building drainage facilities, and so on Install fisheries community sewerage systems for fisheries communities

In order to improve the water environment of fishing ports and fishing grounds as well as the living environment of fishing communities, efforts will be made to build efficient fisheries community sewerage systems for fishing communities in conjunction with sewage systems and septic tanks, based on the Prefectural Plan for sewage treatment. Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF).

Improvement of water quality by building drainage facilities and others for rural communities

- To conserve the water quality of agricultural wastewater and contribute to the conservation of water quality in Areas of Public Waters, efforts will be made to build efficient rural community sewerage facilities together with sewage systems and septic tanks, based on the prefectural vision for wastewater treatment drawn up by prefectures.
- Water quality conservation facilities will be developed to conserve the environment in rural areas and purify the polluted water from agricultural drainage facilities.
- Facilities to prevent runoff of cultivated soil will be developed to prevent runoff of red soil and others and reduce water quality load from agricultural lands in Okinawa Prefecture and the Amami islands. Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF)

Current status and target

Indicator	Current status	Target value
Population coverage of sewage treatment	92.6%	More than 95%
	(FY2021)	(FY2026)

Transition toward resource management agreement in fisheries resource management

The framework for promoting resource management based on a combination of official regulations by the national and prefectural governments with voluntary efforts by people engaging in fisheries will continue to exist. On the other hand, the resource management plan that prescribes the voluntary efforts is expected to be transitioned to the resource management agreement based on the revised Fisheries Act. By FY2023, the government will complete the transition of the resource management plans toward the resource management agreements based on the revised Fisheries Act (MAFF).

Securing new workers in fishing village areas

The government will support promoting employment and continuous engagement in fisheries through providing financial support to those who have not engaged in fishery industry and through long-term on-site training at fishery sites. Also, the government will support acquisition of licenses such as maritime officers, improving management skills of people engaging in fisheries and other efforts. Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF).

Sustainability Consortium 2030 - for Agriculture, Forestry, Fisheries and Food

Using the Sustainability Consortium for Agriculture, Forestry, Fisheries and Food as a platform, the government promotes dialogue with diverse stakeholders and drives behavioral change from price oriented consumption to sustainability-oriented consumption and accelerates sustainable production and consumption. Ministry of the Environment (MOE), Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF).

Therefore, each of us should become aware that our consumption, supported by natural resources of foreign countries, is based on the loss of biodiversity in the exporting countries and recognize that our life is supported by many lives of various organisms. It is then important for us to make conscious efforts in our daily lives to ensure the sustainable use of biodiversity along with its conservation overseas as well as in Japan. In an era where global biodiversity loss is a concern, it is necessary for us to realize that the importation of a great part of our food, wood and other resources means the importation of large quantities of substances such as nitrogen. For example, excess amounts of nitrogen cause eutrophication of inland waters and the sea.

In coastal areas, there are areas called "satoumi", where there have been human interventions while remaining in harmony with natural ecosystems in order to conserve biodiversity and to achieve high bioproductivity. *Satoumi* areas have historically had close relationships with our life and culture. For example, *satoumi* areas contain areas where fishermen have been conserving biodiversity through voluntary joint management and sustainably utilizing components of biodiversity to harvest marine products. They also contain areas where ecosystems have been conserved through collaboration between various parties for the restoration of seagrass beds, collection of marine litter and other activities.

Rich fishing grounds are conserved through forests in upstream areas being maintained properly with support from fishermen and other interested people. Coastal areas which nurture rich life continuously supply plenty of diverse kinds of seafood to people. In addition, healthy ecosystems are maintained in coastal areas through humans living in harmony with nature.

Source: The National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan of Japan 2023-2030: The Roadmap to Realizing Nature-Positive by 2030
<https://www.env.go.jp/content/000256855.pdf>

INFOLOG: NEW RESOURCES AT ICSF

Publications and Films

Brochure on Social Development and Fishing Communities by ICSF, 2024

<https://icsf.net/resources/brochure-on-social-development-and-fishing-communities-by-icsf-2024/>

This brochure contains the challenges and recommendations from the eight countries' case studies on 'Social Development and Sustainable Fisheries' conducted by ICSF.

Rallying to Rome: Special People. Collective Processes. A Unique Event by John Kurien, 2024

<https://icsf.net/resources/rallying-to-rome-1984-icsf/>

This is a personal account of the collective efforts that went into holding in Rome- parallel to WFC- the first International Conference of Fishworkers and their Supporters (ICFWS).

Review of the state of the world fishery resources: Inland fisheries by FAO, 2024

<https://openknowledge.fao.org/items/2eeb3a23-a35e-42bf-a546-3baeb37dd35d>

This review analyzes trends of inland capture fisheries at global, continental and subcontinental levels.

Small-scale fisheries governance by FAO, 2024

<https://icsf.net/resources/small-scale-fisheries-governance-a-handbook/>

This publication is an overview of the SSF Guidelines and guidance on their implementation in particular with regard to good governance and the enabling environment needed.

Gender Equality and the Convention on Biological Diversity: A Compilation of Decision Texts from COP1 to COP15 by Women4Biodiversity and SwedBio, 2024

<https://icsf.net/resources/gender-equality-and-the-convention-on-biological-diversity-a-compilation-of-decision-texts-from-cop1-to-cop15-by-women4biodiversity-and-swedbio-2024/>

This updated compilation of decisions from COP 1 to COP15 related to gender considerations in the CBD is a crucial step towards mainstreaming gender equality in biodiversity conservation efforts.

Films

Impact of Climate Change on SSF in Bangladesh: Voices from the Ground by ICSF, 2024

<https://icsf.net/resources/impact-of-climate-change-on-ssf-in-bangladesh-voices-from-the-ground-by-icsf-2024/>

Climate Change Impacts and Small-scale Fisheries: Vietnam by ICSF

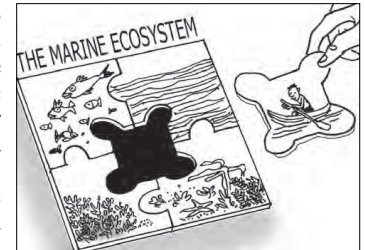
<https://icsf.net/resources/climate-change-impacts-and-small-scale-fisheries-a-case-study-vietnam/>

Tam Tien, a coastal commune in Nui Thanh district, Quang Nam province, Central Vietnam is known for its beautiful landscapes and rich aquatic resources, supporting small-scale fishing, aquaculture, and seafood trading.

FLASHBACK

Reserving a Role for Communities

Communities, if seen as rights holders, can be powerful allies in conservation and management of coastal and marine resources through protected areas. Coastal fishing communities, threatened as they are by biodiversity loss and degradation of coastal ecosystems, have been demanding effective action to protect and manage coastal and marine habitats and resources. In several parts of the world, they have been known to take their own initiatives to protect and manage their resources, given the close links between their livelihoods and the health of the resource base.



Clearly, communities can be powerful allies in efforts for conservation and management of

coastal and marine resources. Problems arise, however, due to conservation approaches with pre-determined agendas that serve to alienate indigenous and local fishing communities. The current target orientation in some countries to expand areas under marine protected areas (MPAs), while short-circuiting participatory processes, is a case in point. Not surprisingly, such approaches are proving ineffective from the perspective of both conservation and livelihood.

In particular, there is a need to recognize the traditional and customary rights of fishing communities to resources, as well their rights to engage in responsible fisheries, in keeping with the principle of sustainable use of biodiversity. Communities traditionally dependent on the resource base must be seen as rights holders in decision-making processes. This means that the choice of appropriate management/conservation tools, objectives and plans, governance structures, provisions for community representation, and implementation and monitoring, should be decided in consultation with local communities, and the governance structure itself ought to represent the various social groups within the community, including women.

As important is the need to adopt appropriate strategies and tools within a wider marine and coastal management framework. Establishing MPAs is pointless if, for example, pollution and uncontrolled development continue to jeopardize the health of coastal and marine ecosystems at the larger level. This was highlighted by participants, including representatives of fishing-community organizations, at a recent workshop on marine reserves in India (see "Declaration of Charter", pg. 47). As CBD's Working Group on Protected Areas meets in Rome, Italy from 13 to 17 February 2008, it would do well to take note of these issues. The future of both effective conservation and millions of livelihoods is at stake...

— from SAMUDRA Report, No. 48, November 2007

ANNOUNCEMENTS

MEETINGS

ICSF's International Workshop on Small-scale Fisheries, 24-26 February 2024, Colombo Sri Lanka

<https://icsf.net/resources/icsf-international-workshop-on-small-scale-fisheries-sri-lanka/>

Second Resumed Session of UN Biodiversity Conference (CBD COP 16), 25-27 February 2025, Rome, Italy

<https://www.cbd.int/doc/notifications/2024/ntf-2024-110-cop16-en.pdf>

2025 UN Ocean Conference, Nice, France, 9 - 13 June 2025

<https://sdgs.un.org/conferences/ocean2025>

20th session Sub-Committee on Fish Trade (COFI-FT), Virtual, 12-16 May 2025

<https://www.fao.org/about/meetings/cofi-sub-committee-on-fish-trade/en/>

WEBSITE

Women4Biodiversity

<https://www.women4biodiversity.org/>

The network provides a platform for sharing knowledge and expertise and brings together various sectors with the intersectionality of gender and the environment looking from the nexus of biodiversity and women's rights.

2nd Small-scale Fisheries Summit (SSF Summit 2024), Rome, Italy

<https://icsf.net/resources/2nd-small-scale-fisheries-summit-ssf-summit-2024-rome-italy/>

The 2nd Small-scale Fisheries Summit (SSF Summit 2024) was held at the FAO headquarters in Rome, Italy, from July 5-7, 2024. Organized by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the International Planning Committee for Food Sovereignty (IPC) Working Group on Fisheries, the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM), the Small-scale Fisheries Resource and Collaboration Hub (SSF Hub), and by SwedBio.



Endquote

Through doors, out the windows

The air was so damp that fish could have come in through doors and swum out the windows, floating through the atmosphere in the rooms.

— from “One Hundred Years of Solitude” by Gabriel García Márquez

