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ASIA-PACIFIC FISHERY COMMISSION

Executive Committee

Seventy-sixth Session

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SUPPORTING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE VOLUNTARY GUIDELINES FOR SECURING SUSTAINABLE SMALL-SCALE FISHERIES IN THE CONTEXT OF NATIONAL FOOD SECURITY AND POVERTY ERADICATION

SUPPORT TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE VOLUNTARY GUIDELINES FOR SECURING SUSTAINABLE SMALL-SCALE FISHERIES

1. In June 2014, the FAO Committee on Fisheries (COFI) endorsed the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication (SSF Guidelines). The SSF Guidelines, available as EXCO/17/INF 07, are the first internationally negotiated instrument that deals specifically with small-scale fisheries. Furthermore, the SSF guidelines are also the first negotiated instrument that fully explores the social and economic aspects of fisheries governance. They represent a global consensus on the need for more holistic and integrated approaches to improve the livelihoods of more than 500 million people, a significant portion of which live in the APFIC region.

2. According to the results of the 2015 FAO Code of Conduct Questionnaire¹, SSF in Asia account for between 61-70 percent of total fisheries production, both in terms of value and volume; employ 81-90 percent of the total fisheries workforce; and represent a significant element of diversified livelihood portfolios, whether directly in fisheries, post-harvest or other associated activities.

¹ See 2016 COFI document COFI/2016/SBD.1

3. Cognizant of the importance of SSF in the region, APFIC - along-side many partners throughout government, CSO and development agencies - supported the development of the SSF Guidelines through global, regional and national workshops and consultations, such as the Asia-Pacific regional workshop “Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries: Bringing together responsible fisheries and social development” in 2010 as well as multiple consultations supported by the BoBLME and the RFLP projects.

4. The SSF Guidelines provide a comprehensive framework for States and other stakeholders for supporting the visibility, recognition and enhancement of the already important role of small-scale fisheries and to contribute to global and national efforts towards the eradication of hunger and poverty. However, the objectives of the SSF Guidelines will only be met if they are implemented.

5. Therefore, since their endorsement, the FAO has been working with Members and partners to support implementation of the SSF Guidelines, including 10 national workshops and the following two regional workshops in the APFIC region:

- August 24-27, 2015. South East Asia Regional Consultation Workshop on the Implementation of the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication. Ramada Bintang Bali Resort, Indonesia. FAO.
- November 23-26, 2015. Colombo, Sri Lanka. South Asia FAO-BOBLME Regional Consultation on the Implementation of the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security. FAO.

6. The FAO has also supported consultations organized by partners and, through the Global Umbrella program, has directly supported SSF guidelines implementation in Cambodia.

7. The Bali (2015) and Colombo (2015) regional consultation workshops recommended succinct areas of action for SSF Guidelines implementation in the South East Asia and South Asia regions, respectively. Excerpts from these are provided below and the full summaries are provided in EXCO/17/INF 08.

South East Asia (Bali, 2015)	South Asia (Colombo, 2015)
Governance of tenure in SSF and resources management (Chapter 5 of SSF Guidelines)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve current arrangements for access to fishery resources for SSF • Review existing tenure rights systems (for fisheries and land) to protect SSF • Follow an ecosystem approach to fisheries (EAF) and apply a human rights based approach (HRBA) • Ensure equitable participation of SSF in co-management and other initiatives and frameworks • Ensure that appropriate fora, including regional human rights and legal mechanisms, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Representation of small-scale fisheries actors, including women and marginalized groups, in decision-making needs to be strengthened. • Multi-tier platforms for joint management are also needed at the regional level for management of shared resources • Mechanisms for effective and meaningful consultations with communities, including consultative committees at district, state and national level (as appropriate) and regular visits to fishing communities by policy makers, should be set up by fisheries

South East Asia (Bali, 2015)	South Asia (Colombo, 2015)
<p>exist to address transboundary issues, including in relation to transboundary resources and migrants and migratory fishers and fish workers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include SSF – and not only fisheries in general – in national and regional climate change adaptation and disaster risk management legislation, strategies and plans. Early warning systems, vulnerability assessments, disaster related social security and insurance systems and other arrangements should be adapted to cater for SSF. 	<p>administrations and other relevant government authorities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a need to legalise legitimate customary tenure rights, both to fishery resources and land. • Human rights violations should be identified, documented and addressed through collaboration including fisheries sector stakeholders and national human rights commissions
Social development, employment and decent work and gender equality (Chapters 6+8 of SSF Guidelines)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Empower small-scale fishing communities through an integrated ecosystem / holistic approach for small-scale fisheries development. • Address tensions generated by transboundary and transborder issues to support an environment for small-scale fisheries communities that have decent work and living conditions. • Enable access to education for all to achieve informed and educated coastal communities • Improve living and working conditions and social protection in small-scale fisheries to contribute to ensuring decent work in the region. • Actively promote and realize gender equality and equity in small-scale fisheries through the development and implementation of gender-sensitive legal, regulatory and policy frameworks. • Ensure effective climate change adaptation, emergency response and disaster risk management in small-scale fisheries by including fisheries and fishing communities, including indigenous people, in related national policies and plans at all levels. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Human capacities of small-scale fisheries stakeholders at all levels should be developed, as a precondition to implement holistic approaches (e.g. EAF). • The high level of vulnerability of fishing communities is often aggravated by the lack of (sector-specific) or the insufficient reach of existing welfare schemes. • Strong and effective community and/or fisherfolk organizations empowered for responsible fisheries management are called for in all countries of the region. • Communities and their organizations need to be empowered to increase their bargaining power to provide equal opportunities and a safe and fair source of income, in particular for women and in inland fisheries
Value chains, post-harvest and trade (Chapter 7 of the SSF Guidelines)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SSF meeting local food security and human development needs, participate as partners in domestic, regional and global value chains and get a fair share of the benefits: 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awareness raising and technical support programmes should be provided to assist women in setting up women's cooperatives/societies and enable their enhanced participation in fisheries value chains.

South East Asia (Bali, 2015)	South Asia (Colombo, 2015)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduction of fish losses and ensure quality of the product to increase fishers' income and support sustainable fisheries management: • Develop a conducive policy and business environment to encourage investment in infrastructure appropriate to SSF: • Establish transparent market information systems for local and international market and trade, facilitate networking between SSF and end users, and promote better access to information through suitable ICT: • Organize SSF associations, facilitate their evolution and strengthening to encourage fair and inclusive environment, improve their bargaining positions through an inclusive legal framework, and promote community-based resource management combining local wisdom and scientific knowledge: 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fair distribution of benefits from fish trade should be ensured through appropriate policies and measures. • Better return from fish and fishery products should be sought through support to post harvest infrastructures, processing technology and capacity development in close consultation with SSF and in line with their needs. • Safety at sea should be promoted to ensure the safety of small-scale fishers, the efficiency of their operations and that fish reach the market.

8. APFIC also supports SEAFDEC in the development and implementation of a regional plan of action to implement the SSF Guidelines.

9. Although fully integrated into the work of the FAO and of APFIC, the Secretariat invites guidance on APFIC-specific activities in support of Members implementation of the VG-SSF, such as a regional consultation on the use of information and communications technology (ICT) in support of SSF.

SUGGESTED ACTIONS BY THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

10. The Executive Committee is invited to:

a. Review the SSF Guidelines implementation recommendations from the Bali and Colombo workshops for their relevance to the APFIC region more widely (or to an APFIC SSF implementation plan).

b. Advise on activities to be supported by APFIC to further implement the SSF guidelines, such as a regional technical workshop the use of information and communications technology (ICT) in support of SSF.

c. Suggest how the APFIC Secretariat might follow-up with member countries and regional partners to develop specific initiatives to support the implementation of the SSF Guidelines.