



GLOBAL CONFERENCE ON SMALL-SCALE FISHERIES

Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries:

Bringing together responsible fisheries and social development

13-17 October 2008 in Bangkok, Thailand

It is widely recognised that small-scale fisheries have the potential to significantly contribute to sustainable development, in particular with respect to such key issues as poverty reduction, food and livelihood security, balanced nutrition, wealth creation, foreign exchange earnings and coastal-rural development. The important role of small-scale fisheries in equitable and inclusive development and attaining the millennium development goals (MDGs) has received growing attention in national, regional and international fora by governments, intergovernmental and non-governmental organisations, private sector groups and civil society organizations.

There are, however, a number of significant impediments to small-scale fisheries realising their full potential. Small-scale fishers often face precarious and vulnerable living and working conditions because of insecure rights to land and fishery resources, inadequate or absent health and educational services and social safety nets, and exclusion from wider development processes due to weak organizational structures and representation and participation in decision-making.

At its 27th Session, the FAO Committee on Fisheries, Rome, 5-9 March 2007 expressed its support for a strategy of action aimed at bringing together responsible fisheries with social development to strengthen capacity and incentives of fisherfolk to invest in defending their fishing rights based on a number of principles including the consideration of the rights of present and future generations.

Scope, focus and objectives

The Conference will have a broad scope allowing for the discussion of a wide range of issues including, inter alia, wider social and economic development and human rights issues, governance, fisheries policy processes and systems, fisheries management approaches and market access aspects and means of increasing post harvest benefits. A special focus of the conference, however, will be on the issue of securing access and user rights by small-scale fishers, indigenous peoples, and fishing communities to coastal and fishery resources that sustain their livelihoods.



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Within each of three broad themes, the Conference will address various sub-themes as follows:

- **Securing social, economic and human rights** – such as inclusion and integration of small-scale fisheries stakeholders in policy and decision-making; gender equality; meeting health and education needs of small-scale fishing communities; ensuring decent and safe working conditions and livelihoods; creating “safety-net” alternatives; as well as promoting basic democratic governance principles.
- **Securing sustainable resource use and access rights** – including access/user rights to fisheries resources, water resources, littoral and riparian areas; legal, practical and local prerequisites and requirements for decentralised and shared management; comprehensive assessments and monitoring underpinning strategic planning and effective management including coastal zone management and the conservation of ecosystems supporting small-scale fisheries; and preparedness, adaptability and resilience to natural disasters and climate change.
- **Securing post-harvest benefits** – including the role of the post-harvest sector in fisheries management, inclusion of fish processors, traders and other stakeholders in commercial, development, and fisheries management groups, and threats and opportunities created by increased (international) demand for fishery products, vertical integration and other market factors including eco-labelling and traceability.

The Conference will aim at generating the following outputs:

- improved knowledge of the factors supporting social development, establishment of sustainable livelihoods and use of responsible fisheries approaches in the small-scale fisheries sector; and
- a synthesis of key issues to secure small-scale fisheries and enhance their contribution to food security, poverty alleviation and sustainable development.

Participants

The subject matter and focus of the Conference is of particular importance to developing countries and stakeholders from directly concerned countries are encouraged to participate. Since management issues as well as valuable experience from different systems and approaches exist also in industrialised countries, those concerned with small-scale fisheries in the North and sub-tropics are also encouraged to participate.

The organizers look forward to the participation of fish workers, fisheries managers, social scientists, government officials, representatives of professional associations, NGOs and other civil society organisations, the private sector, and international and regional development partners and agencies.

Given the important role of women in the small scale fisheries sector, the organizers will ensure their presence and as wide as possible participation in the conference. Since the issues to be discussed combine social development and fisheries management, officials, professionals and representatives dealing with both – or one or the other – of the two issues are invited to participate. Representation from the local community level is sought.

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Conference Design

The programme of the conference is divided into plenary sessions and concurrent working group sessions. During plenary sessions simultaneous interpretation will be available for English, French and Spanish. Working group sessions will be facilitated to generate inputs from all participants on an equal basis, and their summarized outputs will be reported to the plenary. While working groups will work primarily in either English, French or Spanish, arrangements will be made to overcome language barriers through interpretation arrangements.

Conference partners and supporters

The Conference is co-organized by FAO and the Royal Government of Thailand. It is convened in collaboration with the Southeast Asian Fisheries Development Centre (SEAFDEC) and The WorldFish Centre.

To date, expressions of willingness to support the Conference have been received from the Canadian International Development Agency, Government of Norway, German Technical Cooperation Agency (GTZ), Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida), United Kingdom Department for International Development (DFID), International Collective in Support of Fishworkers (ICSF), The World Conservation Union (IUCN), and the World Bank's PROFISH Program.

For further information and registration, a conference web site will become active in March 2008: www.4SSF.org

Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries:

Bringing together responsible fisheries and social development

Background

It is widely recognised that small-scale fisheries have the potential to significantly contribute to sustainable development, in particular with respect to such key issues as poverty reduction, food and livelihood security, balanced nutrition, wealth creation, foreign exchange earnings and coastal-rural development. The important role of small-scale fisheries in equitable and inclusive development and attaining the millennium development goals (MDGs) has received growing attention in national, regional and international fora by governments, intergovernmental and non-governmental organisations, private sector groups and civil society organizations.

There are, however, a number of significant impediments to small-scale fisheries realising their full potentials. Small-scale fishers often face precarious and vulnerable living and working conditions because of insecure rights to land and fishery resources, inadequate or absent health and educational services and social safety nets, and exclusion from wider development processes due to weak organizational structures and representation and participation in decision-making. The opportunity of small-scale producers, processors and marketers to benefit from globalization including expanding trade in fish and fishery products is often compromised by inadequate access to markets, financial services, know-how and capacity to meet increasingly demanding sanitary requirements. This situation is exacerbated by fishery resource declines, coastal habitats loss and user conflicts within and outside the fishery sector.

In recent years, the international community has on several occasions reviewed issues related to small-scale fishing communities, including their low profile in national policies and fisherfolks' vulnerable and precarious living and working conditions. It has also recommended practical strategies for creating an enabling environment to better fisheries livelihoods and increase this sector's contribution to poverty alleviation and food security.

At its 27th Session, the FAO Committee on Fisheries, Rome, 5-9 March 2007 expressed its support for a strategy of action aimed at bringing together responsible fisheries with social development to strengthen capacity and incentives of fisherfolk to invest in defending their fishing rights based on the following principles:

- ❖ Addressing over-exploitation that threatens resource sustainability and the flow of benefits from fisheries to the wider economy is the priority objective of a shift towards rights-based fishing.
- ❖ As well as defining rights to fish, the rights of present and future generations to benefit from the resources should be included. Building the value of the resources should be an explicit objective of fisheries management in the small-scale sub-sector.
- ❖ A rights-based approach, in defining and allocating rights to fish, would also address the broader human rights of fishers to an adequate livelihood and would therefore include poverty-reduction criteria as a key component of decisions over equitable allocation of rights, including in decisions over inclusion and exclusion, gender equality, and the protection of small-scale fishworkers' access to resources and markets. It would also include addressing deficiencies in fishing people's rights of equitable access to health care, education, justice and the rule of law.
- ❖ Transition to rights-based fishing requires relationships between fishing rights holders and duty-bearers (such as governments) to be transparent and based on mutual trust and accountability. This requires empowerment of fishing communities, both through their social

inclusion and building their capabilities. There is a specific need to protect the poor from adverse impacts of the transition to rights-based fisheries management.

- ❖ In countries where fisheries make significant economic contributions, integrating responsible fisheries policies with wider poverty reduction policies, such as Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers, is a necessary condition to achieve inter-sectoral policy coherence and maximise the contribution of fisheries to meeting poverty targets such as the Millennium Development Goals. It is also important for ensuring that fisheries agencies receive a fair allocation of central and local government budgets.

COFI also requested the FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Department to examine the convening of a broad-based international conference focussing specifically on small-scale fisheries.

Scope, focus and objectives

The Conference will have a broad scope allowing for the discussion of a wide range of issues including, inter alia, wider social and economic development and human rights issues, governance, fisheries policy processes and systems, fisheries management approaches and market access aspects and means of increasing post harvest benefits. A special focus of the conference, however, will be on the issue of securing access and user rights by small-scale fishers, indigenous peoples, and fishing communities to coastal and fishery resources that sustain their livelihoods.

Within each of three broad themes, the Conference will address various sub-themes as follows:

- **Securing social, economic and human rights** – such as inclusion and integration of small-scale fisheries stakeholders in policy and decision-making; meeting health and education needs of small-scale fishing communities; ensuring decent and safe working conditions and livelihoods; creating “safety-net” alternatives; as well as promoting basic democratic governance principles.
- **Securing sustainable resource use and access rights** – including access/user rights to fisheries resources, water resources, littoral and riparian areas; legal, practical and local prerequisites and requirements for decentralised and shared management; comprehensive assessments and monitoring underpinning strategic planning and effective management including coastal zone management and the conservation of ecosystems supporting small-scale fisheries; and preparedness, adaptability and resilience to natural disasters and climate change.
- **Securing post-harvest benefits** – including the role of the post-harvest sector in fisheries management, inclusion of fish processors, traders and other stakeholders in commercial, development, and fisheries management groups, and threats and opportunities created by increased (international) demand for fishery products, vertical integration and other market factors including eco-labelling and traceability.

The Conference will aim at generating the following outputs:

- improved knowledge of the factors supporting social development, establishment of sustainable livelihoods and use of responsible fisheries approaches in the small-scale fisheries sector; and
- a synthesis of key issues to secure small-scale fisheries and enhance their contribution to food security, poverty alleviation and sustainable development.

Date and Venue

The Conference will take place in the period 13-17 October 2008 in Bangkok, Thailand.

Participants

The subject matter and focus of the Conference is of particular importance to developing countries and stakeholders from directly concerned countries should be encouraged to participate. Since management issues as well as valuable experience from different systems and approaches exist also in industrialised countries, those concerned with small-scale fisheries in the North and sub-tropics will also be invited to participate.

The organizers look forward to the participation of fish workers, fisheries managers, social scientists, government officials, representatives for professional associations, NGOs and other civil society organisations, the private sector, and international and regional development partners and agencies.

Given the important role of women in the small scale fisheries sector, the organizers will ensure their presence and as wide as possible participation in the conference. Since the issues to be discussed combine social development and fisheries management, officials, professionals and representatives dealing with both – or one or the other – of the two issues should be invited to participate. Representation from the local community level should be sought.

The target total number of participants is approximately 250-300.

Conference Design

The programme of the conference is divided into plenary sessions and concurrent working group sessions. During plenary sessions simultaneous interpretation will be available for English, French and Spanish. Working group sessions will be facilitated to generate inputs from all participants on an equal basis, and their summarized outputs will be reported to the plenary. While working groups will work primarily in either English, French or Spanish, arrangements will be made to overcome language barriers through interpretation arrangements.

The Conference programme design is attached.

Conference partners and supporters

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Preparations

Programmatic preparations will be handled by:

- i) an over-arching Steering Committee;
- ii) a Programme Committee for identifying and organizing speakers, reviewing papers, designing concurrent sessions, etc.
- iii) an Organizing Committee to deal with logistics, headed by the host Government.

Contact person

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CONCEPT NOTE

Conference Design

Time	Day 1	Day 2				Day 3				Day 4				Day 5
08.30		Additional Registration												
09.00		Welcome (10') & Logistical Overview of the Conference (20')				90' Reports of working group outputs regarding the 3 sub-themes of the previous day				90' Reports of working group outputs regarding the 3 sub-themes of the previous day				90' Reports of working group outputs regarding the 3 sub-themes of the previous day
09.30		Conference Keynote(s)												
10.00														
10.30		Break				Break				Break				Break
11.00		60' Day 1 Thematic Keynote(s) : Securing Social, Economic & Human Rights				90' Day 2 Thematic Keynote(s): Securing Sustainable Resource Use and Access Rights				90' Day 3 Thematic Keynote(s): Keynote(s): Securing Post-Harvest Benefits				Plenary discussion (60') Summary of overall conference (30')
11.30														Closing (10')
12.00	Registration	Lunch 90'												Lunch
12.30						Lunch (90')				Lunch (90')				
13.00		Intro to facilitations	Intro to facilitations	Intro to facilitations	Intro to facilitations									
13.30		Concurrent Facilitated Sessions Theme: <i>Securing Social, Economic & Human Rights</i> 14.00 – 17.30				Concurrent Facilitated Sessions Theme: <i>Sustainable Resource Use and Access Rights</i> 14.00 – 17.30				Concurrent Facilitated Sessions Theme: <i>Securing Post-Harvest Benefits</i> 14.00 – 17.30				Post-Conference tours
14.00														
14.30		Group 1A: Subtopic 1	Group 1B: Subtopic 1	Group 1C: Subtopic 1	Group 1D: Subtopic 1	Group 1A: Subtopic 1	Group 1B: Subtopic 1	Group 1C: Subtopic 1	Group 1D: Subtopic 1	Group 1A: Subtopic 1	Group 1B: Subtopic 1	Group 1C: Subtopic 1	Group 1D: Subtopic 1	
15.00														
15.30														
16.30		Group 2A: Subtopic 2	Group 2B: Subtopic 2	Group 2C: Subtopic 2	Group 2D: Subtopic 2	Group 2A: Subtopic 2	Group 2B: Subtopic 2	Group 2C: Subtopic 2	Group 2D: Subtopic 2	Group 2A: Subtopic 2	Group 2B: Subtopic 2	Group 2C: Subtopic 2	Group 2D: Subtopic 2	
17.00		Group 3A: Subtopic 3	Group 3B: Subtopic 3	Group 3C: Subtopic 3	Group 3D: Subtopic 3	Group 3A: Subtopic 3	Group 3B: Subtopic 3	Group 3C: Subtopic 3	Group 3D: Subtopic 3	Group 3A: Subtopic 3	Group 3B: Subtopic 3	Group 3C: Subtopic 3	Group 3D: Subtopic 3	
17.30														
18.00	Welcome Host Country 30'	Posters, Exhibits, Videos & Reception and/or cultural event				Posters, Exhibits, Videos & Reception and/or cultural event				Posters, Exhibits, Videos & Reception and/or cultural event				
18.30	Speeches of Co-organizers 5' x 10'													
19.00	Welcoming Reception & Additional Registration													
19.30														
20.00														
20.30														