

Statement by Malawi at COFI Session - February 1-5, 2021

On behalf of the Malawian delegation, let me thank you, Mr Chair, for giving Malawi the floor.

The Small-scale fisheries in Malawi are a major source of livelihoods to over 180,000 people directly engaged along the fish value chain mainly in fishing, processing and trading. We also have nearly 2 million people who engaged in other fish-related businesses. Almost half of those engaged in the post harvest sector are women mainly involved in fish processing and marketing. The SSF also provide animal protein to 1.5 million and source of animal protein. Fish accounts for more than 60 percent of the animal protein intake in the country.

Noting that poverty in small-scale fishing communities is of a multidimensional nature Malawi has adopted the [*Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication*](#) (SSF Guidelines), endorsed by the FAO Committee on Fisheries (COFI) in 2014. Actually, Malawi was among the few countries that participated in the surveys as part of the process of developing the SSF Voluntary Guidelines.

Mr Chair, Excellencies and Distinguished Delegates, it is pleasing to report that with support from FAO and other partners Malawi is currently implementing a two-year project called *Empowering women in Small Scale Fisheries for Sustainable Food Systems* along Lake Malawi. The project started last year and one key challenge we are experiencing is the Covid 19 pandemic.

The project is aiming at supporting the small-scale fishers especially women to increase their participation in the whole fish value chain thereby increase their incomes from fishing, fish processing by using energy saving or climate smart technologies.

The project has 2 outcomes

First, Raising awareness through knowledge products and outreach services targeting fisheries staff and relevant stakeholders about the SSF Guidelines, understand their principles and provisions, and apply these in their work; and

Second, Empowering stakeholders through capacity development and institutional strengthening

There are plans to broaden the intervention by looking at Flexible Multi-Partner Mechanism (FMM), hence we will be implementing the **Small-Scale Fisheries Guidelines for gender equitable and climate resilient food systems and livelihoods**.

In conclusion, Mr Chair and distinguished delegates, Malawi supports implementation of the SSGF guidelines especially with a focus on women actors along the fish value chain. The youth should also be targeted with consideration of some incentives.

On Illuminating Hidden Harvests (IHH) in which Malawi, participated mainly in its survey, one key message we can put across is that most of the data collected in fisheries and aquaculture is not gender disaggregated. Therefore we should consider

gender disaggregated data in various surveys or studies such as Catch Assessment Surveys, Frame surveys, climate change adaptation and other socio-economic studies. Valuation of the SSF is also necessary.

Malawi also welcomes the 2022 as the International Year of Artisanal Fisheries and Aquaculture ask FAO to continue developing a roadmap with recognition of the role of artisanal fisheries to the majority of lakeshore-based or coastal communities.

I thank you, Mr Chair