

Report of the

**NEAR EAST AND NORTH AFRICA REGIONAL CONSULTATIVE
MEETING ON SECURING SUSTAINABLE SMALL-SCALE FISHERIES:
BRINGING TOGETHER RESPONSIBLE FISHING AND SOCIAL
DEVELOPMENT**

Muscat, Sultanate of Oman, 26–28 March 2012



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PREPARATION OF THIS DOCUMENT

This is the final report of the Near East and North Africa Regional Consultative Meeting on *Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries: Bringing Together Responsible Fishing and Social Development* that was held in Muscat, Sultanate of Oman, on 26–28 March 2012. It was jointly organized by FAO and the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries Wealth, Sultanate of Oman. The document also includes the summary report of the *Regional Meeting on Reducing Vulnerability of Fishing and Fish Farming Communities to Natural Disasters and Climate Change Impacts in the Near East and North Africa*, also held in Muscat, Sultanate of Oman, on 25 March 2012.

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ABSTRACT

As a key strategy for developing the international guidelines for small-scale fisheries (“SSF Guidelines”) that the twenty-ninth session of the FAO Committee on Fisheries (COFI) in 2011 recommended, the FAO Secretariat has engaged in an extensive consultative process with governments, regional organizations, civil society organizations, and small-scale fishers, fish workers and their communities. A consultative workshop for the countries in the Near East and North Africa region was convened in Muscat, Oman, from 26 to 28 March 2012: *Near East and North Africa Regional Consultation Workshop on the development of Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries*. The event was hosted by the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries Wealth, Sultanate of Oman, with the support of FAO and its Regional Office for the Near East and North Africa. The meeting complemented a series of regional consultations held earlier (in Africa, Asia-Pacific, and Latin America and the Caribbean in October 2010).

The workshop confirmed the importance of small-scale fisheries in the region as a contributor to poverty alleviation, food and nutrition security, and economic development, and that the SSF Guidelines will be an important tool for securing sustainable small-scale fisheries governance and development. In this context, it was recognized that small-scale fisheries in the region are characterized by great diversity between subregions and countries with regard to, for example, the type and numbers of actors involved, the production and market structures and the resources and means of the sector. Moreover, many countries are currently going through a period of transition which may have implications also for the small-scale fisheries sector.

There is a need to promote small-scale fisheries and secure their access to the resources necessary for sustainable livelihoods. Small-scale fisheries often represent traditional values and a way of life. Achieving sustainable governance and development of the sector will require concerted efforts, including organizational development and strengthening of capacities at all levels.

CONTENTS

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS	vi
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	1
INTRODUCTION	2
OPENING OF THE WORKSHOP	2
OVERVIEW PRESENTATIONS.....	3
International guidelines for securing sustainable small-scale fisheries – why, how and what.....	3
International instruments relevant to small-scale fisheries.....	4
Regional DRM and CCA meeting.....	6
Fisheries in the Near East and North Africa.....	7
Small-scale fisheries in North Africa	8
The ArtFiMed project.....	9
Discussion	10
WORKING GROUP DISCUSSIONS	11
Arrangements	11
Group 1: Governance of access to resources, resource management and stewardship	11
Group 2: Social and economic development and achieving equality and equity	12
Group 3: Disaster risk management and climate change	13
Group 4: Policy coherence, institutional coordination and collaboration	15
WORKSHOP CONCLUSIONS AND WAY FORWARD	15

APPENDIXES

APPENDIX 1- List of participants.....	19
APPENDIX 2 - Workshop agenda.....	25
APPENDIX 3 - List of working group participants	26
APPENDIX 4 – Summary of the Regional Meeting on Reducing Vulnerability of Fishing and Fish Farming Communities to Natural Disasters and Climate Change Impacts in the Near East and North Africa, Muscat, Sultanat of Oman, 25 March 2012	27

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AECID	Spanish Agency for International Cooperation for Development
ArtFiMed	Sustainable development of Mediterranean artisanal fisheries in Morocco and Tunisia (FAO project)
CCA	climate change adaptation
CCRF	Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
COFI	Committee on Fisheries (FAO)
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DRM	disaster risk management
EAF	ecosystem approach to fisheries
GNI	gross national income
IDP	internally displaced person
IGO	intergovernmental organization
ILO	International Labour Organization
ISDR	International Strategy for Disaster Reduction
IUU fishing	illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing
MPA	Marine Protected Area
NGO	non-governmental organization
oPa	occupied Palestinian territory
RECOFI	Regional Commission for Fisheries
RFMO	regional fisheries management organization
RNE	Regional office for Near East and North Africa (FAO)
SNE	Subregional Office for North Africa (FAO)
SNO	Multidisciplinary Team for Oriental Near East (FAO)
SNG	Subregional Office for the Gulf Cooperation Council States and Yemen (FAO)
SSF	small-scale fisheries
UN	United Nations
UNCLOS	United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
WSSD	World Summit on Sustainable Development

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Near East and North Africa Regional Consultative Meeting on *Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries: Bringing Together Responsible Fishing and Social Development* was held in Muscat, Sultanate of Oman, from 26 to 28 March 2012. It was jointly organized by FAO and the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries Wealth, Sultanate of Oman. The workshop was attended by over 30 participants representing governments and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) from 17 countries. Staff from FAO headquarters, regional and subregional offices, and projects participated as resource persons.

The workshop confirmed the importance of small-scale fisheries in the region as a contributor to poverty alleviation, food and nutrition security, and socio-economic development, and that the international guidelines for small-scale fisheries (“SSF Guidelines”) will be an important tool for securing sustainable small-scale fisheries governance and development.

In this context, the workshop recognized that:

- Small-scale fisheries in the region are characterized by great diversity between subregions and countries with regard to, for example, the type and numbers of actors involved, the production and market structures and the resources and means of the sector.
- Many countries are currently going through a period of transition which may have implications also for the small-scale fisheries sector.
- There is a need to promote small-scale fisheries and secure their access to the resources necessary for sustainable livelihoods. Small-scale fisheries often represent traditional values and a way of life. Achieving sustainable governance and development of the sector will require concerted efforts, including organizational development and strengthening of capacities at all levels.

Four working groups discussed the topics of (i) governance of access to resources, resource management and stewardship, (ii) social and economic development and achieving equity and equality, (iii) disaster risk management and climate change and (iv) policy coherence, institutional coordination and collaboration. The two last working groups also integrated aspects of research, information and capacity needs. A summary of discussions and key findings was adopted by workshop participants on 28 March 2012.

With regard to providing further support to the small-scale fisheries sector and for the continuation of the SSF Guidelines development process, the workshop suggested the following:

- The organization of a workshop, including both governments and the CSO community, on special needs of vulnerable groups in the small-scale fisheries sector focusing on issues such as gender, youth employment and child labour (a CSO of Tunisia offered to host such an event).
- The organization of additional consultation meetings at subregional and national level to increase the awareness of the need for sustainable governance and development of the small-scale fisheries sector and to provide inputs into the SSF Guidelines development process. Regional and national stakeholders are encouraged to take the initiative for organising such events, including identifying the necessary funding.
- Discussions on the small-scale fisheries sector and the SSF Guidelines should be included in the agenda of relevant regional organizations. Other channels to increase the awareness of the importance of small-scale fisheries, such as public media and networking, should also be used.
- Both governments and the CSO community of the region should ensure that they take an active role in discussions in international fora on the issue of small-scale fisheries. Increased experience sharing, within the region and internationally, is needed.

INTRODUCTION

The Near East and North Africa Regional Consultative Meeting on *Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries: Bringing Together Responsible Fishing and Social Development* was held in Muscat, Sultanate of Oman, from 26 to 28 March 2012. It was jointly organized by FAO and the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries Wealth, Sultanate of Oman. The workshop was attended by over 30 participants representing governments and civil society organizations (CSOs) from 17 countries. Staff from FAO headquarters, regional and subregional offices, and projects participated as resource persons (see list of participants in Appendix 1). Arabic/English simultaneous interpretation was provided.

The workshop was convened to allow for the sharing of policies and practices in support of small-scale fisheries in the region and thereby contribute to the small-scale fisheries guidelines (“SSF Guidelines”), currently under development by the FAO Secretariat in close collaboration with its partners. Accordingly, the expected outputs of the workshop were to compile experiences in the region in support of small-scale fisheries; provide comments and suggestions for the overall principles and contents of the SSF Guidelines; and consider how to bring about effective implementation of the SSF Guidelines in the region. The workshop was also asked to provide recommendations with regard to next steps in the Guidelines development process, including the potential need for further consultations at national and local levels. The Workshop Agenda is attached as Appendix 2.

The meeting complemented a series of regional consultations held earlier (in Africa, Asia-Pacific, and Latin America and the Caribbean in October 2010). Analogous to these consultations, the workshop was preceded by a one day regional meeting focusing on reduction of vulnerability to disasters and climate change impacts among fishers, fish farmers and their communities. The findings of this meeting are also presented in this report (see Appendix 4).

OPENING OF THE WORKSHOP

After the opening prayer, Mr Ahmed Mohammed Al-Mazroui, Acting Director General, Fisheries Resource Development Department, Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries Wealth, delivered the opening remarks on behalf of the Sultanate of Oman. Mr Al-Mazroui explained the importance of the fisheries sector to his country, which has 36 000 fishers. The Omani Government is committed to the development of small-scale fisheries and Mr Al-Mazroui was pleased to see so many representatives of governments and CSOs from the countries in the region gathering for the important discussions on the SSF Guidelines. He expected the meeting to contribute to the drafting of principles and the provision of guidance on how to improve the small-scale fisheries sector for the benefit of small-scale fisheries communities. Mr Al-Mazroui thanked His Excellency Dr Fuad Jaffer Al-Sajwani, Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries Wealth, for his patronage and support of the workshop and wished all participants fruitful deliberations.

Mr El Zein M El Muzamil, FAO Representative in Oman, welcomed the participants on behalf of FAO. He thanked the participants for their presence and recalled that the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries (CCRF), approved in 1995, includes among its objectives to improve the contribution of fisheries to food security and poverty alleviation. In 2003, small-scale fisheries became a stand-alone item at the FAO Committee on Fisheries (COFI), recognising their importance as a source of income and provider of employment. Mr El Muzamil noted that over 90 percent of the world’s fishers and fishworkers are small-scale operators and that about half of those employed in the sector are women. The integration of fisheries as a contributor to sustainable development, ending the marginalization of the sector, is an important goal. The SSF Guidelines constitute a key step in this direction and they will play an important role in increasing awareness and transferring knowledge about the sector. All stakeholders should be involved in their development and the purpose of the current meeting would be to contribute to their contents. Mr El Muzamil thanked the host country, the

Sultanate of Oman, and the workshop participants for their presence and concluded by again stating the importance of the SSF Guidelines as a prominent step towards attaining the aspirations of small-scale fisheries communities.

Mr Rolf Willmann, Senior Fishery Planning Officer, FAO, addressed the participants to recall that the region, with its long history and cultural richness of artisanal and small-scale fisheries, can provide important guidance in the SSF Guideline development process. The guidelines should complement the CCRF in particular with regard to social, economic, and cultural issues. Mr Willmann noted that small-scale fisheries face difficult challenges including the loss of resource access due to overfishing, habitat degradation and competition from other economic activities. These trends have to be reversed to place the sector on a sustainable footing and realise its full potential to contribute to food and nutrition security, poverty alleviation and economic growth. The SSF Guidelines will constitute an important tool in this process but there are also other events and developments to engage in to bring about change. In June 2012, the international community will gather in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, for the Rio+20 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (UNCSD). Fisheries is expected to feature prominently in this conference, which will provide an occasion to renew commitments and agree on actions for sustainable fisheries and sound oceans governance.

Mr Piero Mannini, Senior Fishery Officer, FAO, again welcomed the participants to the workshop and at his suggestion, meeting participants agreed to the following chairs: for the first day, Mr Ahmed Mohammed Al-Mazroui from Oman, Mr Dahej El Mokdad from Lebanon on day 2 and Mr Youssef Ouati from Morocco on day 3.

OVERVIEW PRESENTATIONS

International guidelines for securing sustainable small-scale fisheries – why, how and what

Ms Lena Westlund, Consultant, FAO, provided a description of the SSF Guidelines process including an overview of past events, current status and the way forward, and key outcomes of the *Workshop on International Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-scale Fisheries* that took place from 7 to 10 February 2012 in Rome. She recalled the importance of the small-scale fisheries sector in terms of contribution to food security and poverty alleviation but also as a way of living. While there is still a lack of recognition of the sector's importance in this respect there have been important steps in improving the situation, including the Global Conference on Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries¹ held in Bangkok in 2008 and the consultation process that led up to the agreement by the twenty-ninth Session of COFI mandating FAO to develop an international small-scale fisheries instrument – the SSF Guidelines.

After this decision, the consultation process intensified with a strong engagement by the CSO community.² To consolidate the knowledge and information available and to facilitate the continuation of the consultations, the FAO Secretariat prepared a SSF Discussion Document in July 2011.³ This document contains a discussion on the general considerations and various principles that the SSF Guidelines could be based on. It also gives an overview of different thematic areas – based on the consultations carried out so far and other related activities – that have been proposed to be covered by the SSF Guidelines. The SSF Guidelines are to be global in focus but with a special focus on developing countries, address both inland and marine fisheries along the entire value chain and focus on poverty alleviation and social and economic development within a perspective of good governance

¹ See *Report of the Global Conference on Small-Scale Fisheries - Securing sustainable small-scale fisheries: Bringing together responsible fisheries and social development*. Bangkok, Thailand, 13-17 October 2008. FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Report No. 911, Rome, FAO. 2009. 189 pp.

² Reports from consultation meetings can be found at <http://sites.google.com/site/smallscalefisheries/> and www.fao.org/fishery/ssf/meetings/selected-events/en

³ Available at www.fao.org/fishery/ssf/guidelines/en (also in French, Spanish and Arabic).

and sustainable resource utilization. The FAO SSF Discussion Document also contains references to key existing instruments, approaches and initiatives.

From 7 to 10 February 2012, a workshop was held in FAO, Rome, bringing together some 30 participants representing a wide spectrum of small-scale fisheries stakeholders, including CSOs, governments, regional organizations and fisheries bodies, and academia. The workshop discussed a wide range of subjects based on the SSF Discussion Document. A summary of selected workshop recommendations includes:

- The **characterization** of small-scale fisheries is difficult due to the wide diversity of the sector. However, criteria can be defined and then specified in the national and local context.
- The SSF Guidelines will be a complement to the CCRF. Key **guiding principles** include good governance, human rights and equity. The guidelines should also take economic viability into account and apply the ecosystem approach to fisheries (EAF) as well as holistic and integrated approaches.
- A new concept in the context of governance of resources may be needed: **livelihood based community rights**. Access should refer to land and aquatic resources, but also to information, legal systems and social services.
- Conventional **enforcement** systems should possibly be substituted with **stewardship** regimes in which rights and responsibilities of small-scale fisheries come together.
- **Holistic approaches** are required to ensure social and economic development. Poverty is a complex issue and refers not only to income but also to access to education, health and social services, decent working conditions and participation in decision making.
- **Disaster risk management (DRM)** and **climate change adaptation (CCA)** are cross-cutting issues with implications for all thematic areas that the guidelines deal with.
- **Equity and equality** refer to gender aspects but also to issues like migration and child labour and consideration of vulnerable groups. The links between equity and equality are important for long-term development.
- **Research, information and capacity development** also need to be considered as cross-cutting issues in the SSF Guidelines. Information is often equal to power and it needs not only to be available but also accessible to communities.
- **Policy coherence and institutional coordination** are important to support the development of the small-scale fisheries sector. The needs of small-scale fisheries communities should be integrated into national development plans and strategies.
- The SSF Guidelines will only become effective if **implemented**. The visibility of small-scale fisheries needs to be enhanced to receive political and financial support.

The report of the February workshop is about to be finalized and will provide inputs for the preparation of a Zero Draft of the guidelines in April 2012. This Zero Draft will constitute the basis for continued consultations leading to the preparation of draft SSF Guidelines to be submitted to negotiations. The aim is to have a negotiated text to be approved by COFI in 2014.

International instruments relevant to small-scale fisheries

Mr Rolf Willmann, Senior Fishery Officer, FAO, gave an overview of relevant international instruments for the SSF Guidelines prepared by Ms Margret Vidar of the FAO Legal Office. While there is a long list of relevant instruments, some of the most important ones are the *Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries (CCRF)*, the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* and the *Voluntary Guidelines on the Progressive Realization of the Right to Adequate Food in the Context of National Food Security (the Right to Food guidelines)*. Also the *Voluntary Guidelines on Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Contexts of National Food Security*, recently negotiated through the Committee on World Food Security, have important links to small-scale fisheries and the SSF Guidelines (see also Box 1).

Box 1: Key international instruments relevant to small-scale fisheries

- International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
- International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
- International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination
- Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)
- Beijing Declaration and Beijing Platform for Action (1995)
- Convention on the Rights of the Child
- International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families
- Declaration on the Right to Development
- ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work; and Work in Fishing Convention, many other conventions relating to above Covenants
- ILO Convention 169 on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples
- Rio Declaration on Environment and Development and Agenda 21
- International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR) and the Hyogo Framework
- United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)
- The World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) and the Johannesburg Plan of Action
- United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS)
- UN Fish Stock Agreement

The *CCRF* is relevant in most or even all parts to small-scale fisheries. It makes specific references to small-scale fisheries in several places, including in particular in paragraph 6.18 that states that the contributions of small-scale fisheries to employment, income and food security should be recognized and that the rights of fishers and fishworkers should be protected, particularly those engaged in subsistence, small-scale and artisanal fisheries.

The *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* declares a number of key civil, cultural, economic, political and social rights. A human rights based approach to development was agreed upon as a comprehensive approach to be mainstreamed throughout the entire UN system. The declaration and other human rights instruments are the basis for a human rights based approach, which in FAO are often listed as the acronymic PANTHER: Participation, Accountability, Non-discrimination, Transparency, Human dignity, Empowerment and Rule of law (recourse). Interpreted in the context of small-scale fisheries, this could mean, for example:

- stakeholder and small-scale fisheries representation in fisheries management bodies;
- devolution of fisheries management to local communities;
- fisheries legislation with clear provisions on institutional roles and responsibilities of different actors;
- breaches of fisheries law are punished and deterred;
- fisheries legislation pays special attention to indigenous groups, women, minorities, protection of children;
- clarity and communication of fisheries management measures, including consideration for traditional fishers and differentiation between small-scale and large-scale fishing;
- quota and other fishing rights allocations are published;
- fisheries enforcement measures respect human dignity;
- fishworkers and fishers have dignified conditions of work;
- small-scale fishers know their human and fishing rights and how to claim them;
- small-scale fishers have access to general and specific education to help them improve their livelihoods;
- decisions on fisheries are taken in accordance with law and on the basis of legal authority;

- information about recourse is easily accessible to all, including small-scale fishers; and
- special measures for access to justice for small-scale fishers.

The Vienna Declaration on Human Rights – the key outcome of the World Conference on Human Rights held by the United Nations in Vienna, Austria, in 1993 – reaffirmed the interdependence of democracy, economic development and human rights, which means that one does not look at any human right in isolation from others. The declaration states that all human rights are indivisible and interdependent and interrelated.

The *UN Declaration on the rights of indigenous people* contains important provisions for self-determination; development “with identity”; free, prior and informed consent; rights to land and natural resources; cultural rights; and collective rights.

The right to food (according to the *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights*) recognizes the right to adequate food (as part of the right of everyone to an adequate standard of living) and also the fundamental right of everyone to be free from hunger. The *Right to Food Guidelines*⁴ include provisions that are directly relevant to small-scale fisheries, including the following issues and topics:

- inclusiveness and non-discrimination;
- fair return from labour, capital and management;
- women, vulnerable groups, traditionally disadvantaged;
- small-scale and traditional fishers;
- respect and protect resource access, especially for livelihoods;
- economic opportunities for vulnerable groups; and
- sustainable management of fisheries.

The SSF Guidelines need to take these and other already existing provisions into consideration. It will be important to build on the existing frameworks and apply the general provisions in these instruments to the specific context and needs of coastal and inland fishing communities.

Regional DRM and CCA meeting

Ms Florence Poulain, Fishery and Aquaculture Officer, FAO, briefly summarized the conclusions and recommendations of the Regional Meeting on Reducing Vulnerability of Fishing and Fish Farming Communities to Natural Disasters and Climate Change Impacts in the Near East and North Africa held in Muscat on 25 March 2012. The meeting decided to focus discussions on natural disasters, climate change impacts and political instability and conflict such as piracy, transition in Arab world, war and their impact on the fisheries and aquaculture sector. Specific reference was made to the regional importance of the water scarcity issue and its ability to cause both man-made and natural disasters (conflicts and drought). Impacts from identified risks include: decline in fishery production and ecosystem productivity at national and regional levels, physical destruction of property, lack of access to sea, natural resources and markets, lack of security, displacement and migration. Challenges and opportunities identified for improved preparedness and effective response to threats and emergencies affecting fishers, fish farmers and their communities included the following:

- improve coordination, information and monitoring, early warning and contingency planning at national and regional levels;
- strengthen community organizations and improve community participation in fisheries; management, disaster preparedness and response using existing tools such as the CCRF;

⁴ Voluntary Guidelines to support the progressive realization of the right to adequate food in the context of national food security, adopted by the FAO Council in 2004.

- improve donor engagement in DRM and CCA for fisheries and the access funds and expertise for rapid response;
- configure social safety nets to cope with sudden changes in needs;
- develop capacity of vulnerable communities, including alternative livelihood;
- promote innovation and adaptation to better cope with risks and reduce pressure on scarce resources;
- strengthen policy integration in fisheries, climate change and DRM;
- develop lessons learnt and best practice to inform policies and programming;
- increase awareness amongst governments and civil society;
- harmonize tools, standards and develop vulnerability indicators; and
- improve risk assessment based on best available scientific information and modelling.

In relation to cross cutting issues, the meeting noted that men and women have fairly defined roles in the sector and that special needs should be recognized in each case. The level of vulnerability may be further increased when fishing community members are also refugees or internally displaced persons (IDPs). Sector intervention with regard to DRM should be informed by a human right approach. For the full report, see Appendix 4.

Fisheries in Near East and North Africa

Mr Piero Mannini, Senior Fishery Officer, FAO, gave a brief overview of fisheries production patterns and trends in the Near East and North Africa region and of the FAO Regional Priority Framework. The region is very heterogeneous in terms of fisheries production and ecosystems. It extends over four regional seas and can be divided into the following ecosystems with similar characteristics: the Atlantic, the Mediterranean, the Red Sea, the Gulf Area and the Arabian Sea. The region is also heterogeneous in terms of human development. Indicators such as GNI per capita, literacy rates, urbanization and female education vary greatly from one country to another (Human Development Report 2011). Additionally, there are large differences throughout the region in apparent fish consumption per capita and the regional average is below the global average. Trade in fish products also varies but the majority of countries are net fish importers with decreasing trade balances during the last years.

Statistics collected from FAO member states in the region indicate that fish production has increased during the last 50 years, with the Atlantic and Northwest Indian Ocean being the largest contributors to regional production, followed by the Mediterranean, the Gulf area and then the Red Sea. At a more detailed level, marine fish capture production in the Atlantic has also shown a steady increase while production in other regional seas have either levelled off or has not been consistent from one year to another year. Species compositions in the various parts of the region vary. Small pelagics constitute the major part of the catch in the Atlantic countries while large pelagic and demersal catches are more important in the catches in the Northwest Indian Ocean and the Red Sea, respectively. Inland fisheries also play an important role in certain countries in the region, particularly in those that border the Nile and the Tigris-Euphrates Basin.

With particular reference to small-scale fisheries and fisheries management, there are a number of “new” species that have recently been recorded as caught in some countries and that could be processed and exported to foreign markets, e.g. jellyfish and the swimming crab. Specific fisheries measures for some species may be required, as the experience in some countries of the sea cucumber fishery.

FAO regional office for the Near East and North Africa (FAO RNE) covers 19 member states. Within the region, there are also three subregional offices: the Subregional Office for the Gulf Cooperation Council States and Yemen (SNG), the Multidisciplinary Team for Oriental Near East (SNO) and the Subregional Office for North Africa (SNE). The priorities agreed for fisheries and aquaculture in the region and subregions are given in Table 1.

Table 1: FAO regional priorities

Regional priorities	SNG Subregion priorities	SNO Subregion priorities	SNE Subregion priorities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase of fisheries and aquaculture production in a sustainable manner; • Implementation of policies for effective and sustainable management of fisheries and aquaculture; • Promotion of stakeholders participation in planning and managing fishery resources utilization; • Optimization and rationalization the exploitation of fisheries and aquaculture resources and implementation of product valorization throughout the fish chain. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support capacities for strict compliance to the CCRF to protect fisheries resources; • Provide more support to RECOFI⁵ to address pressing needs and challenges in member countries; • Enhance existing fisheries databases; • Encourage the multiple use of water from aquaculture. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formulating policies and strengthening capacities (institutional and human) of countries in fisheries and aquaculture management, monitoring and conservation; • Adopting and implementing the CCRF; • Supporting the role of fisheries in food security, nutrition and poverty reduction through promotion of micro enterprises, better marketing, post harvest handling and awareness-raising; • Support regional exchange of knowledge and technology in aquaculture. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management and conservation of fisheries (research, data, training) • Planning and policies for fisheries and aquaculture, infrastructure, marketing; • Improving the contribution of fishing and aquaculture to food security and sustainable livelihoods for the most vulnerable populations; • Develop approaches to address aquaculture as a separate entity recognizing its differences in terms of issues, expertise and needs for capacity building.

Small-scale fisheries in North Africa

Mr Cherif Toueilib, Fishery Officer, FAO, talked about economic and social opportunities for and external threats to small-scale fisheries in North Africa (Algeria, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco and Tunisia). He pointed out the economic and social importance, highlighting that the subregion produces a total of 2.3 million tonnes of fish annually and the sector employs almost 800 000 people. Fishery products constitute an important export commodity in several of the countries with main markets in Europe and Asia (Japan).

Small-scale fisheries communities in the region tend to be vulnerable and under threat from a number of developments – both provoked by humans (unsustainable fishing, pollution, competing uses of space and resources, and conflicts) and due to climate change and natural events (coastal inundations because of increasing water levels, increasing and accelerating erosion, storm waves, loss of habitats, increasing sea surface temperature, and increasing salinity levels). While the countries generally have basic legal and institutional frameworks in place for the conservation of resources, only three countries have implemented fisheries management plans. All countries have set up marine protected areas (MPAs) but often lack specific and adequate legal frameworks for their management. Countries in the subregion tend to have ratified the international conventions and agreements relevant to fisheries and

⁵ Regional Commission for Fisheries (member countries include Bahrain, Iraq, Islamic Republic of Iran, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates).

the protection of marine habitats but there is a need to strengthen capacities in order to ensure their application and implementation. There is also a lack of subregional cooperation with regard to management, safety and surveillance.

The ArtFiMed project

Mr Matthieu Bernardon, Fishery Officer, FAO, shared experiences from the region by presenting the ArtFiMed project: Sustainable development of Mediterranean artisanal fisheries in Morocco and Tunisia. The ArtFiMed project which ran from 2008 to 2011 was funded by the Spanish Government through the Spanish Agency for International Cooperation for Development (AECID).

The objective of the ArtFiMed Project was to contribute to poverty reduction in target artisanal fisheries communities by improving their livelihoods and to promote their involvement in fisheries management and coastal development. Expected results concerned three different levels: i) at the level of the three small-scale fisheries communities covered by the project; ii) at country level (Morocco and Tunisia), particularly with regard to lessons learned and the promotion of the role of artisanal fisheries at national level, and, iii) at the Mediterranean level by strengthening the information on artisanal fisheries and promoting lessons learned and methodologies at regional scale.

A participatory approach based on the involvement of beneficiaries and local actors was used throughout the project. Some of the project results with regard to situation analysis and priorities included:

Diagnosis of initial situation:

- high level of dependency on the limited exploited resources;
- high level of vulnerability and poverty;
- low level of education, lack of access to social services, health and other basic services;
- small-scale fishers, fishworkers and communities marginalised and not participation in decision-making;
- high dependence on local suppliers providers;
- higher level of vulnerability and marginalization among women; and
- contribution and multiple roles of small-scale fisheries not known/recognized.

Priority actions identified in collaboration with communities:

- combine fisheries management and social development;
- apply holistic approaches to governance and development;
- promote co-management and participatory mechanisms;
- support alternative livelihoods;
- support security-at-sea and lawful fleet operations (combat illegal, unreported and unregulated [IUU] fishing);
- promote social and gender equality; and
- provide training to increase human capabilities and capacities.

The project supported fishers' organizations to be able to engage in co-management. Two cooperatives were created and fishers received training in administration and financial management of producer organizations. This improved their awareness of rights and responsibilities and enhanced their role as recognized actors in the region. In addition, hundred boats were legalized in Ghannouch (Tunisia).

The project also addressed enforcement and information needs. This included improving monitoring of small-scale fisheries, including the implementation of monitoring systems by fishers or community members themselves. The project helped produce updated bio-ecological, social and economical data. Fishers and producer organization were trained in data collection and their abilities to participate in decision-making were strengthened. Improved data also increased the understanding of the importance of the small-scale fisheries.

Safety-at-sea and improvement of working conditions were addressed by training courses on safety for fishers. Moreover, safety equipment, first aid materials and winches at landing sites were also provided. In order to establish alternative livelihoods, fishers and fishing community members were also trained in postharvest and fish processing, bee keeping as well as traditional embroidery and carpet weaving. Fishermen trained and equipped as beekeepers with the support of the project are now organized in a cooperative and develop this activity which generates new income for the community. Moreover, an association of fishers' wives was established and they were trained in net making and repair. As a result, women could access additional and securer income.

The principles of the CCRF and EAF were promoted through dissemination of publications discouraging illegal practices and promoting responsible fishing. Links and collaboration between small-scale fisheries communities, research and administration for fisheries management were developed and reinforced. The project also promoted secure access to resources and to social security and other services for small-scale fisheries communities.

Discussion

The workshop welcomed the decision by COFI last year and the efforts being made to develop international guidelines for small-scale fisheries. Still, the suggestion was made that there should also be a special section within FAO dealing with the sector in order to ensure that it receives adequate attention. It was noted that several different approaches (e.g. additional in the CCRF or an International Plan of Action) had been discussed in the last couple of COFI sessions but that, at the moment, the international guidelines constituted the strategy that had been chosen for implementation. This does not exclude that additional actions are taken in the future but this discussion may be better continued in COFI. The workshop was also reminded that the CCRF does include provisions for small-scale fisheries but the purpose of the new guidelines is to complement the CCRF in this respect and provide more detailed guidance.

With regard to the contents of the SSF Guidelines, a question was raised concerning their coverage of other sectors and their links to small-scale fisheries. One important aspect mentioned was pollution. It is felt that this could be an important threat to the sector, in particular in the region where transport of oil is common and the preparedness for potential oil spills may not be well developed in all countries.

The difficulty to characterize small-scale fisheries was brought up and it was noted that the definition of small-scale fisheries would likely need to be different in different countries of the region. There are a number of different criteria that can be used to describe the sector, e.g. size and type of vessel and engine, ownership, fishing grounds, utilisation of catch, etc. The FAO SSF Discussion Document includes some discussion on this issue.⁶ The topic was also addressed in the February SSF workshop where it was recommended that a participatory process be applied for defining the sector in national and local contexts.

A CSO representative thanked FAO and the Omani workshop organizers for including the CSO community among the workshop invitees. Because of its institutional structure – with member States constituting its governing body – and mandate, FAO has tended to work only with governments but this is now changing. In this workshop, 15 CSO representatives were present. Still, it was felt that the collaboration could be further improved with CSOs providing additional inputs into the SSF Guidelines development process as well as engaging in other matters more directly.

It was noted that one of the causes for not achieving environmental and sustainable development goals is due to the lack of participation of communities themselves through co-management and shared decision-making. In order to allow for their effective participation, support to capacity building and organizational development is needed, including also vulnerable groups. In the region, vulnerable

⁶ See also the table in Appendix 3 of the FAO SSF Discussion Document.

groups would include people under conflict or occupation who, in accordance with human rights, should be allowed to enjoy dignified and sustainable livelihoods. They are also, like all other citizens, part-owners of their country's natural resources and fishing is often part of a culture and a way of life in coastal communities. A CSO participant mentioned the importance of food sovereignty in this context.

Transparency and accountability are key concept in all development activities in order to achieve equitable outcomes. Unfortunately, many countries in the region have outdated legislative and policy frameworks and there are sometimes contradictions between old practices and new legislation that need to be reconciled. Access to and governance of shared resources – by two or several countries or in international waters – constitute particular challenges with regard to fair and equitable management. The criteria currently applied in regional fisheries management organizations (RFMOs) do not necessarily acknowledge the importance and rights of small-scale fishers, although the overall human rights principles should apply also in this context. Concerted efforts by FAO, its member States and the CSO community were called for to influence future directions in this respect (noting that FAO is a technical agency that supports countries in a consultative manner).

WORKING GROUP DISCUSSIONS

Arrangements

Mr Carlos Fuentesvilla, Fishery Officer, FAO, explained the terms of reference for the working groups. The purpose of the working groups was to compile experiences of good policies and practices in the region in support of small-scale fisheries and provide other comments and suggestions as inputs into the SSF Guidelines development (e.g. with regard to overall principles, thematic coverage, etc).

Each group was led by an FAO facilitator, while a rapporteur ensured that the discussions were documented. The groups were given a brief introduction to the topic by the facilitator at the beginning of the sessions. The FAO SSF Discussion Document was provided to the groups and the relevant parts of this document served as a starting point for the discussions. After each session, the working groups reported back to plenary and time was allocated after each presentation for comments and discussions. The summaries of working group outcomes presented below also take account of comments and additional information made available in these plenary discussions.

There were four different working groups, divided into two sessions, covering the following topics:

- Group 1: Governance of access to resources, resource management and stewardship;
- Group 2: Social and economic development and achieving equality and equity;
- Group 3: DRM and climate change (including research, information and capacity needs);
- Group 4: Policy coherence, institutional coordination and collaboration (including research, information and capacity needs).

Groups 1 and 4 were held in Arabic only while groups 2 and 3 benefited from Arabic/English simultaneous interpretation (for the list of participants of the working groups see Appendix 3).

Group 1: Governance of access to resources, resource management and stewardship

Facilitator: Mr Cherif Toueilib (FAO)

Rapporteur and presenter: Mr Mohammad Qtaishat (CSO Jordan)

The group noted that there is concern in the region with regard to overfishing and threats to ecosystems integrity. This situation also threatens small-scale fisheries communities who need secure access to both fishery resources and land for their livelihoods. There is a need for increased efforts to eliminate IUU fishing – including monitoring mechanisms and regional strategies – and to address overcapacity in the large-scale sector in order to allow for a sustainable small-scale sector and

equitable benefits. Appropriate fisheries management plans should be established and implemented in this respect.

The crucial role of the EAF was highlighted as well as the need for participatory processes in fisheries management to facilitate compliance and implementation of regulations. Participation is also important to reduce conflicts among competing users, especially between large-scale and small-scale fisheries. The importance of regulating small-scale fisheries within a framework of good governance, taking the specificities and capacities of each fishery into account, was noted. While it was felt that fisheries management falls under the responsibility of the government, professional organizations and trade unions should be included among the stakeholder groups to be involved in management. Efforts are needed to support organizational development in this respect since professional organizations are not in place in all countries. It was mentioned that the role of cooperatives and associations to drive the sector is underdeveloped and should be activated.

There is also a need for the fishing sector and fishing communities to collaborate with governments to ensure reliable and regular data collection for management purposes. To the extent possible, management should be based on latest available science. However, currently, lack of data is a concern and there is a need to make better use of both scientific data and local knowledge available with fishers.

The importance of safety-at-sea as well as the need for fishers to have access to education and professional training on this issue was also stressed. Zoning, minimising conflicts between different activities and fleets, can save lives and limit damage on fishing gear. It was noted that in some areas of the region dolphins and sharks present a particular threat to small-scale fishers as they destroy the gear.

Group 2: Social and economic development and achieving equality and equity

Facilitators: Ms Lena Westlund, Ms Nicole Franz (FAO)

Rapporteurs: Mr Matthieu Bernardon, Ms Florence Poulain (FAO)

Presenter: Mr Karim Akrouf (CSO Tunisia)

The region is characterized by a great diversity between subregions and countries with regard to, for example, the understanding of what characterizes small-scale fisheries, the type and numbers of actors involved, the production and market structures and the resources and means of the sector. With respect to markets and trade it was noticed that there is often a lack of infrastructure and market access opportunities coupled with difficulties in meeting import requirements. Small-scale fishers and fishworkers tend not to have direct relations with buyers and are in a weak negotiation position with more powerful middlemen who may hence obtain proportionally higher profit margins. Establishing and strengthening structures and organizations for marketing and trade may be one opportunity to improve this situation.

In terms of poverty and vulnerability, it was noted that small-scale fisheries communities often have inadequate access to health, education and social services. General or fisheries specific systems for social security and pension exist in some countries while they are non-existing or weak in others. It was pointed out that social security needs to be adequate for the particular circumstances of small-scale fisheries, e.g. acknowledging part time activities and that innovative funding mechanism for fishery social security should be explored. It was also noted that among the vulnerable groups, the Guidelines should also include people under conflict and occupation.

When discussing the potential need for alternative livelihoods, it was pointed out that the wish of small-scale fishers and fishworkers who want to continue in their profession should be respected and adequately recognized in fisheries management. There tends to be a lack of alternative livelihood opportunities although fishing activities are sometimes combined with agriculture. Aquaculture and tourism were identified as additional potential alternative activities.

With respect to gender it was stressed that it deals with both men and women and the socially, culturally and economically established roles and relationships between them. In the region, women are usually involved in processing, marketing, shellfish collection, net repairing but some are also boat and gear owners employing crew to fish. It was noted that there can be differences in income and that there may be especial needs in the case of female headed households.

Traditionally, fisheries knowledge is handed down from generation to generation and young people get involved early on through “apprenticeship” arrangement, often within the family (e.g. ‘mousse’ in North Africa). In this context, it was stressed that the difference between child work and child labour needs to be understood and child labour addressed in order to avoid harmful impacts on children’s physical, mental, intellectual and emotional development. Child labour tends to be closely related to poverty but also to a lack of awareness about the impact child labour may have on children’s development and how it can undermine society at large. Child labour can also be a result of the absence of or inadequate schools and education systems. In its worst form, child labour includes slavery and abduction. Countries who have signed up to international conventions on the worst forms of child labour must take action against these. FAO, in collaboration with the International Labour Organization (ILO), has developed guidelines for addressing child labour in fisheries and aquaculture.⁷

Other issues identified by the group in terms of development needs included infrastructure development compatible with sustainable fisheries production; transparent and participatory fisheries management (co-management arrangements; e.g. consultative committees in Oman) and enhanced implementation of socio-economic commitments agreed upon by governments.

Group 3: Disaster risk management and climate change

(including research, information and capacity needs)

Facilitator: Ms Florence Poulain (FAO)

Rapporteurs: Mr Matthieu Bernardon, Ms Lena Westlund, Ms Nicole Franz (FAO)

Presenter: Mr Ahmed Mohammed Al-Mazroui (Oman)

The group started its discussions by exploring examples of likely climate change impacts and disasters in the region with relevance to the small-scale fisheries sector. The following observed changes were identified: changes in ocean currents; sea level rise and increased levels of salinity; differences in rainfall; increased frequency and magnitude of storms; ocean acidification; surface temperature increase and changes in river levels. While it is generally difficult to ascertain the links between cause (and climate change) and effect a number of probable effects of the observed changes were noted, including red tides; alien species, species distribution alteration and increased abundance of jelly fish; coastal erosion; reduction of fresh water availability; habitat destruction; and reduced ecosystem productivity. It was noted that livelihoods are often affected by these eco-biological events. There are also man-made disasters and the region suffers from conflicts and occupation. Industrial and urban pollution, oil spills, theft, collisions between vessels and ghost fishing⁸ were also identified as man-made disaster threats. One type of disaster may lead to another and the combination of climate change consequences and natural and man-made disasters may create a vicious circle of effects.

Based on the initial inventory of climate change and disaster threats and events, practices from the region on how these have been addressed were identified:

- rapid emergency response funds and special funds for supporting fishers after an emergency through cooperatives/professional organizations;
- rescue systems through cooperatives;
- artificial reefs for protection of fish spawning/breeding areas;

⁷ The preliminary version of FAO-ILO Good practice guide for addressing child labour in fisheries and aquaculture: policy and practice is available at ftp://ftp.fao.org/FI/Document/child_labour_FAO-ILO/child_labour_FAO-ILO.pdf

⁸ Ghost fishing is the term used for lost or abandoned fishing gear that continues to catch fish. It is environmentally detrimental and the fish caught is wasted (www.fao.org/fishery/topic/14798/en).

- re-forestation of coastal areas (mangroves);
- monitoring systems for red tide and for water salinity in delta areas;
- regional centre for disaster risk management and regional and/or bilateral agreements in place (but the latter not yet implemented);
- closed areas and bans on unsustainable fishing methods (to tackle ghost fishing);
- dam impact mitigation (with fish passages);
- promotion of alternative livelihoods (fish farming / inland aquaculture); and
- public insurance schemes for emergencies affecting small-scale fishers.

It was noted that climate change is a global issue that requires global solutions. At regional, national and local levels, actions can be taken to mitigate climate change consequences and disaster impacts, in particular by improving preparedness using the good practices identified above. However, better assessments and monitoring of risks and impacts of climate change and disasters are needed, including, *inter alia*, meteorological information and baseline data on vulnerability and socio-economic profiles. The group also identified a need for better implementation of existing international and bilateral agreements aiming at reducing pollution, CO₂ emissions, etc., as well as further development of rules and regulations in this respect.

Concerning small-scale fisheries, it would be important to ensure that the sector is adequately included in contingency planning at regional and national levels. It was noted that an encouraging development in this respect is the establishment of the disaster risk reduction strategy by the League of Arab States and efforts should be made to ensure that fisheries are considered in related implementation plans.

Communities should be involved in DRM and CCA planning, monitoring and evaluation processes, integrating local and traditional knowledge. Capacity building will be an important tool for achieving this. Efforts should be made to increase the awareness among small-scale fisheries communities about climate change and their abilities to adapt, including how to improve safety at sea. Appropriate tools and media should be used conveying messages and in training (e.g. radio, audio tools). If and when climate change impacts entail changes in the species that are fished, support may be required to small-scale fishers and fishworkers to find new markets for these products.

Capacity building and awareness raising is also required at the ministerial level, among CSOs and other actors involved in the fisheries sector. Moreover, it was suggested that education on climate change and disaster risks should be included in school curricula, in particular in areas vulnerable to impacts.

In addition to the issues already mentioned above, the group also recommended that the SSF Guidelines should address the need for protection of coastal areas and integrated coastal zone management to avoid inter-sectoral conflicts and allow preferential access to small-scale fisheries communities. The need for improved collaboration at both national and regional levels was emphasized, including among governments, research institutions, NGOs, IGOs and communities. With regard to data and information, improved analysis, dissemination and use of data in decision-making were recommended. Moreover, the group stressed the need to address growing threats from man-made disasters, including piracy in the region that causes a constant threat to the livelihoods of fishing communities forcing fishers to stay in inshore waters and thereby further increasing fishing pressure on already heavily exploited fisheries resources.

Group 4: Policy coherence, institutional coordination and collaboration

(including research, information and capacity needs)

Facilitator: Mr Cherif Toueilib (FAO)

Rapporteur and presenter: Mr El Moctar Mohamed (Mauritania)

The group noted that there is a general lack of policy coherence and institutional coordination in the region, in spite of the fact that the small-scale fisheries sector is impacted by developments in other sectors and under threat of several adverse influences including in particular pollution. Contradictory sectoral policies with divergent objectives are not uncommon. As an example, health policies, infrastructure development plans and trade strategies sometimes contain objectives affecting the fisheries sector negatively. Another related issue is that policy objectives often are too ambitious considering the means and resources available for their implementation. Hence, better cross-sectoral coordination and policy coherence are needed – both at national and regional levels.

It was strongly felt that small-scale fisheries should be more explicitly included in policies and development strategies. Policies should be clearly anchored in the principles of sustainability and the CCRF and take the specific characteristics and needs of the small-scale fisheries sector into account. It is urgent to take measures to protect the marine and inland aquatic environments in order to ensure the sustainability of small-scale fisheries. Priority should be given to scientific research and data collection that can inform policy making. At the same time, stakeholder participation in decision-making is essential. There is a need for organizational development in order to facilitate wider participation of fishers and their communities in policy and planning. Better coordination among existing CSOs and professional organizations is also required. Moreover, clear institutional responsibilities would facilitate communication between communities and governments – i.e. it was suggested that, at the national level, one ministry/government agency be responsible for all small-scale fisheries affairs instead, as is now often the case, communities having to liaise with a multitude of different government offices.

The group also noted that there are weaknesses with regard to coordination and collaboration among institutions at the regional and international levels. This is a serious constraint for the management of shared fish stocks and migratory species. Clear international and regional policies were called for in order to limit or eliminate destructive fishing practices (e.g. bottom trawling). It was also suggested that increased efforts should be made to ensure that the role of small-scale fisheries for food security is better understood and taken into consideration in national and regional policies.⁹

WORKSHOP CONCLUSIONS AND WAY FORWARD

The following summary of discussions and key findings was adopted by workshop participants on 28 March 2012.¹⁰

The Near East and North Africa Regional Consultative Meeting on Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries: Bringing Together Responsible Fishing and Social Development was held in Muscat, Sultanate of Oman, from 26 to 28 March 2012. It was co-organized by FAO and the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries Wealth of the Sultanate of Oman. The workshop was attended by over 30 participants representing governments and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) from 17 countries. Staff from FAO headquarters, regional and subregional offices, and projects participated as resource persons.

⁹ CSO representatives suggested that the term “food sovereignty” should be used instead of food security.

¹⁰ This final version of the statement has been slightly language edited by the FAO Secretariat.

The workshop was convened to allow for the sharing of policies and practices in support of small-scale fisheries in the region and thereby contribute to the small-scale fisheries (SSF) Guidelines, currently under development by the FAO Secretariat in close collaboration with its partners.

The workshop confirmed the importance of small-scale fisheries in the region as a contributor to poverty alleviation, food and nutrition security, and socio-economic development, and that the SSF Guidelines will be an important tool for securing sustainable small-scale fisheries governance and development.

In this context, the workshop recognized that:

- Small-scale fisheries in the region are characterized by great diversity between subregions and countries with regard to, for example, the type and numbers of actors involved, the production and market structures and the resources and means of the sector.
- Many countries are currently going through a period of transition which may have implications also for the small-scale fisheries sector.
- There is a need to promote small-scale fisheries and secure their access to the resources necessary for sustainable livelihoods. Small-scale fisheries often represent traditional values and a way of life. Achieving sustainable governance and development of the sector will require concerted efforts, including organizational development and strengthening of capacities at all levels.

Four working groups discussed the topics of (i) governance of access to resources, resource management and stewardship, (ii) social and economic development and achieving equity and equality, (iii) disaster risk management and climate change and (iv) policy coherence, institutional coordination and collaboration. The two last working groups also integrated aspects of research, information and capacity needs.

The following main conclusions were arrived at by the groups:

(i) Governance of access to resources, resource management and stewardship

- There is concern in the region with regard to overfishing and ecosystem health and there is a need for improved fisheries management. This should be based on participatory approaches and informed by the ecosystem approach to fisheries (EAF) and latest available science.
- Small-scale fisheries communities need secure access to both fishery resources and land for their livelihoods.
- Data are generally lacking and efforts are required for improving data collection and analysis. Fishing communities need to collaborate with governments to ensure reliable and regular data for management.
- There is a need for increased attention, including monitoring mechanisms, to prevent and eliminate IUU fishing and to address overcapacity in the large-scale fisheries sector that contributes to intensive fishing and thus allow for sustainable small-scale fisheries.
- Education and training of fishers are needed on various aspects of fisheries including safety measures.

(ii) Social and economic development and achieving equity and equality

- The small-scale fisheries postharvest sector is an important part of the fishery system. Constraints faced by the sector include lack of adequate infrastructure, competition and market access.
- Small-scale fisheries communities often have inadequate access to health, education and social services. Social security needs to be adapted to the particular circumstances of small-scale fisheries taking into account, for example, part time activities.
- There is a need to take into consideration people under conflict and occupation among vulnerable groups.

- In some cases, support to developing alternative livelihood activities could be needed but when small-scale fishers and fish workers want to continue in their profession this wish should be respected and adequately recognized in fisheries management regimes.
- Women are mainly involved in the postharvest sector. Attention should be given to gender, considering the roles of both men and women.
- The difference between child work and child labour needs to be better understood and child labour adequately addressed to avoid detrimental impact on the physical and mental development of children who are the future of society.

(iii) Disaster risk management from natural and man-made events and climate change

- Small-scale fisheries need to be included in contingency planning and crisis response as well as in the League of Arab States disaster risk reduction strategy and regional and national climate change policies and plans. Timely access to funding is also essential.
- Efforts should be made to increase the awareness among small-scale fisheries communities about climate change and their abilities to adapt by using adequate means and tools.
- Improved data and information are needed on disaster risks and climate change with respect to fishing, communities, and ecological and environmental aspects. Data should be analyzed, disseminated and used (for decision-making). Local and traditional knowledge should be utilized and the communication between governments and small-scale fisheries communities need to be improved.
- There is a need to address growing threats from man-made disasters, including piracy in the region that causes a constant threat to the livelihoods of fishing communities forcing fishers to stay in inshore waters and thereby further increasing fishing pressure on already heavily exploited fishery resources.

(iv) Policy coherence, institutional coordination and collaboration

- The small-scale fisheries sector is impacted by developments in other sectors and under threat of several adverse influences including in particular pollution. Better cross-sectoral coordination and policy coherence are needed – at national and regional levels – avoiding contradictory objectives.
- The involvement of all stakeholders, including in particular small-scale fisheries communities, in policy and decision-making processes is essential. Improved coordination among CSOs is also required.
- The small-scale fisheries sector needs to be included in national development policies and plans. Such plans should also take the sustainability of resources into consideration.

The workshop also suggested the following:

- The organization of a workshop, including both governments and the CSO community, on special needs of vulnerable groups in the small-scale fisheries sector focusing on issues such as gender, youth employment and child labour (a CSO of Tunisia offered to host such an event).
- The organization of additional consultation meetings at subregional and national level to increase the awareness of the need for sustainable governance and development of the small-scale fisheries sector and to provide inputs into the SSF Guidelines development process. Regional and national stakeholders are encouraged to take the initiative for organising such events, including identifying the necessary funding.
- Discussions on the small-scale fisheries sector and the SSF Guidelines should be included in the agenda of relevant regional organizations. Other channels to increase the awareness of the importance of small-scale fisheries, such as public media and networking, should also be used.
- Both governments and the CSO community of the region should ensure that they take an active role in discussions in international fora on the issue of small-scale fisheries. Increased experience sharing, within the region and internationally, is needed.

It was felt that the workshop had constituted an important opportunity to discuss the issue of small-scale fisheries among both governments and CSOs. This was much appreciated and it was hoped that this participatory and collaborative process will be continued.

Workshop participants thanked the Sultanate of Oman for its warm welcome and excellent organization of the event.

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Workshop agenda

Day 1: Monday 26 March 2012

Opening session including welcome and opening addresses

Overview of workshop objectives and expected outputs

Introduction of participants and appointment of Chairs

Plenary presentations:

- Description of the small-scale fisheries guidelines process – overview of past events, current status and way forward and outcome of the workshop in February 2012
- Overview of relevant international instruments for the SSF Guidelines
- Conclusions and recommendations of the regional vulnerability reduction workshop on 25 March 2012
- Brief overview of fisheries production patterns and trends in the Near East and North Africa
- Explanation of TOR for working group

Parallel working groups: Session 1

- GROUP 1 - Governance of access to resources, resource management and stewardship
- GROUP 2 - Social and economic development and achieving equity and equality

Day 2: Tuesday 27 March 2012

Plenary session:

- Small scale fisheries in North Africa: opportunities and weaknesses
- Experiences from the region: ArtFiMed
- Reports from working group Session 1 of the previous day and discussion

Parallel working groups: Session 2

- GROUP 1: Disaster Risk Management and Climate Change (including research, information and capacity needs)
- GROUP 2: Policy coherence, institutional coordination and collaboration (including research, information and capacity needs)

Reports from working group Session 2 and discussion

Day 3: Wednesday 28 March 2012

Plenary discussion on conclusions and recommendations

Workshop summing up and adoption of conclusions and recommendations

Closing ceremony

Workshop closure

List of working group participants

SESSION 1 – 26 March 2012

Group 1

1. Seham Safar
2. Mohamed Yacoub
3. Amimi Ridha
4. Youssef Ouati
5. Eisa ElYafei
6. Dahej El Mokdad
7. Musallem Rafeet
8. Abdullah AlSiabi
9. Ibrahim AlQartoubi
10. ElMoctar Mohamed
11. Jassim Ahmed
12. Ahmed Sourani
13. Naser Salah
14. Mohamed Qtaishat

Group 2

1. Fareed Mirza Saeed
2. Salim Zenir
3. Ahmed Ahmed
4. Seyyed Mohebi
5. Alawi Al-Hafidh
6. Ahmed Almazroui
7. Hussain Al-Masrouri
8. Jassem Al-Mohamady
9. Mohamed Salih
10. Abdullah Al-Ghurabi
11. Sidahmed Abeid
12. Taleb Harake
13. Razan Zuayter
14. Karim Akrouit
15. Kamal Bin Ramadan
16. Atef Shawki
17. Abdelatie Eid
18. AbdulRahim Al-Jahdali
19. Hassan Jaja

SESSION 2 – 27 March 2012

Group 1

1. Seham Safar
2. Ahmed Mazroui
3. Jassem AlMohamady
4. Mohamed Salih Mohamed
5. Said Nozar
6. Yassar Saker
7. Abdullah Al-Ghurabi
8. Ahmed Sourani
9. AbdulRahim Al-Jahadi
10. Karim Akrouit
11. Sidahmed Abeid
12. Taleb Harake
13. Kamel Ben Romdhane
14. Atef Shawki
15. Abdelatie Eid
16. Simon Boas
17. Lori Curtis
18. Irene Omondi

Group 2

1. Fareed Al-Qayem
2. Ahmed Aly
3. Mohammad Yacoub
4. Salim Zennir
5. Dahei El Mokdad
6. Youssef Ouati
7. El Moctar Mohamed
8. Amimi Ridha
9. Ibrahim Al-Qartoubi
10. Eisa ElYafei
11. Razan Zuayter
12. Mohamed Qtaishat
13. Abdullah Al-Sayani

Summary report of the Regional Meeting on Reducing Vulnerability of Fishing and Fish Farming Communities to Natural Disasters and Climate Change Impacts in the Near East and North Africa, Muscat, Sultanate of Oman, 25 March 2012

The purpose of the regional meeting was to strengthen regional partnerships in the areas of fisheries/aquaculture, disaster risk management (DRM) and climate change adaptation (CCA) in the North Africa and Near East region, identify priority actions for the region and contribute inputs to the Near East and North Africa Regional Consultation Consultant Workshop on the Development of Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small Scale Fisheries.

The regional meeting was attended by 20 participants representing national, regional and international organizations and programmes, including civil society and NGOs. The meeting was organized around presentations, working group and plenary discussions.

The highlights of the group and plenary discussions are reported below.

INTRODUCTION TO THE MEETING PROCEEDINGS

Mr Ahmed Mohammed Al-Mazroui, Acting Director General, Fisheries Resource Development Department, Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, Muscat, Oman, formally opened the meeting. He underlined the importance of the discussions with reference to climate change and disasters in the region and wished participants fruitful discussions.

Mr Piero Mannini, FAO Senior Fishery Officer, Regional office for Near East and North Africa, pointed out that climate change adaptation and disaster preparedness and response are priority areas for FAO work in the Near East and North Africa region, as per FAO's regional priority framework that was adopted by the Thirtieth Session of the FAO Regional Conference for the Near East and North Africa, on 4–8 December 2010 in Khartoum, Sudan. Mr. Mannini underlined that fisheries and aquaculture play an important role in the lives of people in the region for food and nutrition security and as a major source of animal protein. However, the contribution that fisheries and aquaculture makes to the nations of the region is threatened by the increasing vulnerability of the people involved in the sector (including to hazards, climate change and, in some cases, due to political instability). Mr Mannini recalled that in 2009, FAO held together with the WorldFish Centre a regional workshop on “Adapting to climate change: the Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries and Aquaculture in the Near East and North Africa Region” in Abbassa, Egypt. The outcomes of this workshop demonstrated that there remain important challenges that must be addressed in order to prepare the fisheries and aquaculture sector adequately for the impacts of climate change.

Two presentations were made to provide an overview of the importance of fisheries and aquaculture in the region, and discuss the vulnerability context of fishers, fish farmers and their communities with specific reference to climate change and disaster impacts. The outcomes of the tenth sectoral meeting organized by the League of Arab States (LAS) and the United Nations on cooperation in humanitarian assistance in the Arab region, on 22 and 23 February 2012 in Cairo, Egypt, were presented together with the institutional frameworks for disaster risk management for the region. The presentations highlighted the need to strengthen the integration of disaster risk management and climate change adaptation in fisheries and aquaculture strategies and policies at regional and national levels.

The introduction session was followed by two group and plenary sessions.

WORKING GROUP DISCUSSIONS

The meeting participants were divided into two subgroups to discuss disasters and climate change impacts on the fisheries and aquaculture sector in the region, identify lessons learnt, as well as gaps,

opportunities and challenges for improved preparedness and effective response to climate change impacts, threats and emergencies.

Group 1 on disasters and climate change

The group discussed disasters and climate change impacts on the fishery and aquaculture sector in the region. Specific reference was made to the importance of sea level rise and salinization of land and water. The regional importance of water scarcity and its consequence for small scale fisheries and fish farmers was also underlined. In this context, conflicts over natural resources and search for alternative livelihoods, including through migration of communities, were mentioned. Other changes and disaster types discussed by the group included:

- ocean acidification;
- increased water temperature;
- change in current patterns and intensity (and in upwelling system);
- oil spills; and
- cyclones, floods and droughts.

The impacts on the sector were discussed. It was highlighted that changes and disasters could have effects on:

- fisheries production and ecosystem integrity (such as coral bleaching);
- occurrence of invasive and alien species (e.g. jelly fish);
- episode of algal blooms (red tide);
- livelihoods (including the search for alternative livelihoods/income, competition over fisheries and migration);
- loss or damage to infrastructures and assets; and
- food and nutrition security. In this context, it was highlighted that the sector would still have to respond to an (increasing) demand for fish.

The group recognized that small scale fishers, fish farmers and their communities are particularly vulnerable to disasters and climate change impacts and that disaster and climate change impact men and women in a different way.

The group also noted the need for regional cooperation in monitoring of shared stocks, prevention, preparedness and response to climate change and disasters. It was also noted that responses taken unilaterally and nationally can have negative effects on bordering countries and communities. In this regards, it was recalled that there are already existing arrangements between countries of the region on fisheries, aquaculture and/or disaster risk management.

The group emphasised the importance of policy and planning in the context of climate change adaptation and disaster risk management, in particular across sectors and at all levels. The need for participatory planning and for empowering small-scale fishers and fish farmers to this end were highlighted.

The group emphasized that new scenarios need to be developed to prepare and respond to new risks and emergencies in the region. It was noted that countries in the region still have a reactive approach to certain types of disasters such as cyclones and floods. The group recommended to undertake a preliminary assessment of risks and community resilience.

In addition, the group recommended the following actions to address the impacts of climate change and disaster in the region:

- strengthen (sub) regional networks based on existing national research centers and institutes;
- where there is no regional networks or arrangements, initiate information sharing, awareness raising and develop and implement new cooperation arrangements and partnerships;
- undertake a stakeholder analysis at national and regional level;

- raise awareness on climate change impacts and disaster risks amongst governments taking advantage of existing political momentum (ex. Arab Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction 2020);
- strengthen capacity of communities to cooperate and participate in data collection, early warning systems, planning, preparedness, fisheries management, etc.;
- national and regional harmonization of tools and vulnerability indicators for improved monitoring;
- develop and disseminate lessons learnt and best practices for policy integration and use.
- conduct risk assessment for the sector taking into account best scientific knowledge and modeling methods; and
- ensure/advocate for the inclusion of fisheries in relation to disasters and climate change in donor strategies for the region.

Group 2 on protracted crisis

The group decided to focus discussions on political instability and conflict such as piracy, transition in the Arab world, war and their impact on the fisheries and aquaculture sector.

Amongst the consequences, the group noted: the absence of security, which affects in particular the most vulnerable communities; fishers' move to inshore areas and subsequent overfishing; displacement of fishers and their communities; physical destruction of infrastructure and fishing assets; confiscations of fishing assets; shortages of production input; closure of access to the sea and markets; and lack of compensation for fishers and fish farmers.

Impacts noted by the group included: food and nutrition insecurity; overfishing; competition over resources; intensification of existing and development of new conflicts; displacement and population pressure.

The group discussed gaps, lessons learnt and opportunities to improve preparedness and effective response to crises affecting the fisheries and aquaculture sector. The group noted, in particular, the need for information and communication through participatory assessment, documentation and dissemination of information. The group noted that data sensitivity may be an obstacle, but recognized that this could be addressed.

Promoting respect of fishers rights under a human right approach and fisheries law framework and ensuring access rights were agreed to be of high importance, and it was proposed that advocacy could play a valuable role in upholding these rights where they are being violated.

The group recognized the importance of international coordination and partnerships, as well as the need for integration of disaster risk management at all levels of fisheries interventions.

Capacity development of the communities themselves was deemed essential in order to improve preparedness for disasters, reduce their impact, and improve communities' ability to respond to such events. In this respect, the group identified the importance of training in human rights, first aid, conflict resolution, technological innovation, and alternative (or additional) livelihoods.

The group emphasized that in the event of a disaster, rapid response is key. Emergency Response Funds should be available, and should be accessible to national and local organizations. Capacity development programmes for communities/fishing associations to network with donors and access funding may also be needed.

The group made the following recommendations:

- develop or strengthen participatory mechanisms for collection and dissemination of data on vulnerabilities, assets and hazards at national, regional and community level;

- establish a regional disaster response fund and conduct training for local and national organizations to access such emergency financing instruments;
- develop capacity of fishers in first aid and safety;
- promote/advocate the integration of fisheries in disaster risk management strategies and policies at relevant meetings;
- empower fishers to take an active role in promoting disaster risk management in fisheries and aquaculture through participatory planning and awareness raising;
- identify sources of alternative livelihoods and income that are acceptable to fishing communities;
- create an enabling environment for private sector investment in supply chains and marketing; and
- draw and disseminate lessons from recent experiences.

CONTRIBUTIONS BY PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATIONS

The following organizations made brief presentations of their work programmes and how they relate to DRM/CCA and fisheries: Regional Centre for Disaster Risk Reduction (RCDRR), Save the Children, World Fish Centre (WFC), the Egyptian Red Crescent /Regional Disaster Risk Reduction Team (IFRC), the Emirates Wildlife Society (EWS/WWF), the Arab Group for the Protection of Nature, the PARC/ Palestinian Agricultural Relief Committees (PARC), FAO CopeMed II and ArtFiMed projects, and FAO emergency programmes in Gaza and in the region.

SUMMARY OF ISSUES IDENTIFIED AND WAYS FORWARD DURING GROUP DISCUSSIONS

It was generally agreed that a more in depth analysis of climate change and disaster risks on the fisheries and aquaculture sector should be carried out in the region.

The meeting recommended the following ways forward:

- improve coordination, information and monitoring, early warning and contingency planning at national and regional levels;
- strengthen community organizations and improve community participation in fisheries management, disaster preparedness and response using existing tools such as the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries;
- improve donor engagement in disaster risk management (DRM), climate change adaptation (CCA) for fisheries and ability to access funds and expertise for rapid response;
- social safety nets are configured to cope with sudden changes in needs;
- capacity development of vulnerable communities, including alternative livelihoods;
- innovation and adaptation to better cope with risks and reduce pressure on scarce resources;
- strengthen policy integration in fisheries, climate change and DRM;
- develop lessons learnt and best practice to inform policies and programming;
- increased awareness amongst governments and civil society;
- harmonization of tools and development of vulnerability indicators for improved monitoring; and
- improve risk assessment based on best available scientific information and modeling.

In relation to cross cutting issues, the meeting noted that men and women have fairly defined roles in the sector and that special needs should be recognized in each case. Vulnerability can be further increased when fishing communities are also refugees or internally displaced people. Sector intervention in DRM should be informed by a human right approach.

The Near East and North Africa Regional Consultative Meeting on *Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries: Bringing Together Responsible Fishing and Social Development* held in Muscat, Sultanate of Oman, from 26 to 28 March 2012 was attended by representatives of governments and Civil Society Organizations from 17 countries. The importance of small-scale fisheries in the region as a contributor to poverty alleviation, food and nutrition security, and socio-economic development was confirmed and it was agreed that the international guidelines for small-scale fisheries will be an important tool for securing sustainable small-scale fisheries governance and development. It was recognized that small-scale fisheries in the region are characterized by great diversity between subregions and countries, for example with regard to the type and numbers of actors involved, production and market structures and resources and means of the sector. Many countries are currently going through a period of transition which may have implications for the small-scale fisheries sector. There is a need to promote small-scale fisheries, which often represent traditional values and a way of life, and to secure their access to the resources necessary for sustainable livelihoods. Achieving sustainable governance and development of the sector requires concerted efforts, including organizational development and strengthening of capacities at all levels.

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