

Celebrating Caribbean Fisherfolk Day!

Securing fishers' rights and livelihoods with the Small-Scale Fisheries Guidelines



GUIDELINES FOR SECURING SUSTAINABLE SMALL-SCALE FISHERIES

What are the SSF Guidelines?

The Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication (SSF Guidelines) are a global consensus on the principles and criteria required to improve small-scale fisheries. They were endorsed by the Committee on Fisheries of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) in 2014, after a long participatory development process.

Why are they necessary?

Small-scale fisheries play a key role in ensuring food security and eradicating poverty. The sector is challenged by:

- ◆ A decline in Caribbean fisheries and threats to ecosystems and community livelihoods; and
- ◆ Increased pressure from other sectors (e.g. tourism, aquaculture, agriculture, energy, mining, industry, construction) with often stronger political or economic influence.

HUMAN RIGHTS

APPROACH:

Participation
Accountability
Non-discrimination
Transparency
Human Dignity
Empowerment
Rule of Law

A tool for small-scale fisheries empowerment

The content of the SSF Guidelines was agreed with the direct participation of small-scale fishers and their organizations in a global process. They intend to guide and encourage governments, fishing communities and other stakeholders to work together and ensure secure and sustainable small-scale fisheries for the benefit of small-scale fishers, fish workers and their communities, and the society at large.

They promote a human rights approach in fisheries, which means that:

- Men and women need to participate in decision-making process;
- Men and women need to assume their responsibility for sustainability;
- Men and women need to fully contribute to food security;
- All peoples' rights must be defended.



“Small-scale fishers, fish workers and their communities may lack access to services and have limited participation in decision-making processes, leading to unfavourable policies and practices within the fisheries sector.”



FIND THE SSF GUIDELINES:

SCAN the QR code to the left or go directly to:
<http://www.fao.org/3/a-i4356e.pdf>

How can we put them into action?

Let's use value chains, postharvest and trade as an example!

The situation:

Small-scale fishers and fish farmers often receive the smallest economic benefit from their products. They have difficulty accessing regional and international markets. They require support for the implementation of sanitary and phytosanitary measures, in order to meet regulatory and non-regulatory requirements, such as certification or eco-labelling

The solution:

- ◆ Fishers and fish workers can join efforts to get support from the relevant institutions by creating associations.
- ◆ Women must know the importance of their role in post-harvest activities and join efforts to defend their rights.
- ◆ Government, fishers and fish workers must invest in appropriate infrastructure and technology, promote value-addition activities, ensure safety of small-scale fishery products and reduce post-harvest losses and waste.
- ◆ Government must facilitate market access and promote equitable and non-discriminatory trade for small-scale fishery products.
- ◆ Fishers and fish workers must meet trade regulations to support regional trade and to ensure the sustainability of the activity.
- ◆ Fishers and fish workers must be well informed and understand demand.

The sector requires:

- ◆ Timely and accurate market and trade information that allows them to adjust to changing market conditions;
- ◆ Strong organizations, cooperatives and associations that help improve marketing and sales; and
- ◆ Recognition from government and consumers alike.

Organizations need to organize!

Small-scale fisheries organizations play an important role in voicing common concerns and driving change. In the Caribbean, fishers must strengthen their national associations and regional associations, like the Caribbean Network of Fisherfolk Organizations, in order to play an active role in the future of their fisheries and demand implementation of the SSF Guidelines. They should be represented in relevant advisory and decision-making bodies across all countries of the region.

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