

# The Simonstown Declaration

The Simonstown Declaration by Small-scale Fishers was adopted at Cape Town on 5 November 2004

**W**e, the representatives of civil society and small-scale fishers and fishing communities\* from the SADC region gathered in Cape Town, take note of the existence of the SADC Protocol on Fisheries, its objectives in Article 3, and, in particular, the content of Article 12, as well the formal endorsement of this protocol by the respective SADC governments in August 2001.

(\* Small-scale fishers and fishing communities refer to all men and women who are involved in all aspects of small-scale fisheries, regardless of their geographical location.)

This conference notes the following:

- the lack of legal recognition of artisanal and traditional fishers in certain SADC countries.
- the lack of recognition of the dignity and integrity of artisanal and traditional fishers in certain SADC countries.
- the failure of certain governments to protect the sustainable livelihoods of artisanal and traditional fishers as required by the protocol.
- that many governments have largely not protected artisanal and small-scale fishers against the social and economic impacts of globalization, that is, increased marginalization and poverty.
- the absence of equitable and sustainable access to inland and marine aquatic resources in certain countries.

- the cumbersome and bureaucratic licensing procedures in South Africa and Namibia, in particular.
- the lack of involvement and participation of the small-scale fisher community in the policy formulation and related decision-making processes in certain SADC countries.
- the lack of access to credit facilities, infrastructure and subsidies on fishing inputs.
- the continued marginalization and unfair treatment of women in all sectors of the fisheries.
- the absence of health, safety and fair labour practices.
- the absence of concrete steps to put in place measures regarding shared aquatic resources in certain SADC countries.

We call on our SADC governments:

- to urgently take responsibility to secure the following rights for small-scale fishers:
  - equitable and fair access to living aquatic and fishing resources
  - social security measures for small-scale fishers
  - food security for small-scale fishers
  - sustainable livelihoods for small-scale fishers.



- active participation in policy formulation and related decision-making processes
- to recognize, respect and ensure dignity of traditional and artisanal fishers.
- to incorporate indigenous knowledge systems of small-scale fishers into resource management processes.
- to take concrete and practical steps to involve the traditional and artisanal fishers in the management of aquatic resources and ensure fair distribution of costs and benefits among beneficiaries.
- to ensure that the forthcoming NEPAD fisheries conference takes cognizance of this declaration and makes provision for the participation of fisher representatives in the NEPAD process.

**We further call on our SADC governments:**

- to assist in empowering and building the capacity of small-scale fishers through:
  - regional exchange visits and networking
  - promotion of micro-financing enterprises
- to safeguard the livelihoods of artisanal fishers against the social and economic impacts of globalization.
- to ensure harmonization of law and regulations, and the fair distribution of resources in respective countries.

**This conference resolves:**

That, considering that fishing communities are particularly vulnerable areas for HIV/AIDS transmission, governments and civil society organizations should take a leading role in the following areas:

- provision of health facilities
- supply of anti-retroviral drugs
- awareness and educational campaigns
- provide infrastructure support to orphans and the aged

**This conference further resolves:**

- to maintain this network of small-scale fishers within the SADC region on an ongoing basis.
- to request Masifundise, together with Coastal Links, to play an interim secretariat role for this network.
- to undertake the following activities in our respective countries:
  - disseminate and share information (with the support of WWF, Masifundise, PLAAS and ICSF)
  - engage with the ILO process towards developing new labour standards for the fishing sector, with a view to reaching a greater portion of the world's fishers, particularly small-scale and artisanal fishers
  - raise awareness of the NEPAD fisheries process and advocate for the full participation of fisher representatives in this process
  - advocate and lobby for programmes to improve the plight of small-scale fishers
  - mobilize and organize small-scale fisher groups and networks in all our countries
  - constructively collaborate with respective governments in terms of the implementation of the protocol
  - exchange visits and lessons learned

This declaration was adopted on 5 November 2004 at the Southern African Small-scale Fishers' Conference at Cape Town