

# Towards Synthesis

## A draft synthesis document offers a sound basis for consolidating civil society views on the Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-scale Fisheries

Since the Bangkok Workshop of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) in October 2008, held prior to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) conference titled “Securing Sustainable Small-scale Fisheries: Bringing Together Responsible Fisheries and Social Development” (4SSF), fishworker and support organizations have been advocating for an international instrument on small-scale fisheries. The decision of the 29th Session of FAO’s Committee on Fisheries (COFI) in 2011 to develop such an instrument to complement the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries, was, therefore, widely welcomed by them.

CSOs representing fishworker and support groups set up a co-ordination committee to engage with the process of developing the Guidelines. The committee comprises representatives of the World Forum of Fisher Peoples (WFFP), the World Forum of Fish Harvesters and Fishworkers (WFF), the International Collective in Support of Fishworkers (ICSF) and the International NGO/CSO Planning Committee for Food Sovereignty (IPC).

Between September 2011 and April 2012, a period of just eight months, CSOs conducted 14 national consultations as well as one regional consultation in Africa that brought together representatives from 16 countries. Indonesia, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Thailand and the Philippines held more than one sub-national consultation, with Thailand hosting one specifically for women fishers. More than 1,600 people participated in these consultations. Reports and statements

from all these workshops have been made available on the civil society website <https://sites.google.com/site/smallscalefisheries/>

The team at the Environmental Evaluation Unit, University of Cape Town, South Africa, was requested by the civil society co-ordination committee to develop a synthesis report, based on the reports and statements from all the above workshops.

The first draft of the synthesis report was made available for

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discussion at the civil society workshop, held on 7 and 8 July, prior to the 13th session of COFI from 9 to 13 July 2012. It remains a draft as it will be updated based on reports and statements from the next round of national and regional consultations to be held between August and December 2012.

The final version of the synthesis report will be made available in January 2013. It will be used to provide feedback on FAO’s zero draft of the Guidelines that is now available for comments on the FAO website ([ftp://ftp.fao.org/FI/DOCUMENT/ssf/SSF\\_guidelines/ZeroDraftSSFGuidelines\\_MAY2012.pdf](ftp://ftp.fao.org/FI/DOCUMENT/ssf/SSF_guidelines/ZeroDraftSSFGuidelines_MAY2012.pdf)).

### **Comprehensive**

The draft synthesis document provides a comprehensive compilation

*This article has been written by **Chandrika Sharma** ([icsf@icsf.net](mailto:icsf@icsf.net)), Executive Secretary, ICSF*

CLAIRE PATTISON VALENTE



Participants at the workshop in Praia do Canto Verde, Ceara, Brazil. Over eight months, CSOs conducted 14 national consultations as well as one regional consultation

of principles considered key by CSOs. These include: recognition of human rights; commitment to the right to equality and freedom from discrimination; recognition of the right of women and men to full and effective participation in all aspects of governance and management of fisheries resources; recognition of the right to free, informed and prior consent; promoting and securing good governance and creating the conditions necessary for such governance; and the 'do-no-harm' principle to assess the costs of conservation and development.

The draft synthesis document also brings together proposals from CSOs on interventions needed in 11 key areas: the governance and management of marine and inland fisheries resources; securing social and economic development rights; protection of the environment and sustainable use; support across the value chain; improved labour and social-security rights and conditions; gender equality and equity; promotion of food security and sovereignty; safety at sea; climate change and disaster preparedness; awareness raising, capacity development, training and education; and research and information needs.

In short, the draft synthesis document provides an excellent basis

for CSOs to consolidate and compile their views, identify key gaps and debate contentious issues on which various perspectives may exist. The process adopted to develop it sets the stage for CSOs to engage in the FAO negotiation process in an accountable, legitimate, coherent and systematic manner, and provides the basis for CSOs to spell out in clear terms, what they would actually like to see in the Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-scale Fisheries. 3

#### For more



[sites.google.com/site/smallscalefisheries/](https://sites.google.com/site/smallscalefisheries/)  
**Draft Synthesis Report of the Workshops**

[www.fao.org/fishery/ssf/en](http://www.fao.org/fishery/ssf/en)  
**FAO on Small-scale Fisheries**