



"FISHING FOR LIFE"

South and South-East Asian Conference on Small Scale Fisheries and Aquaculture (SACSFA)
19-20 September 2022

"FISHING FOR LIFE"

South and Southeast Asian Conference on Small-scale Fisheries and Aquaculture SACSFA 2022

STATEMENT

We, the representatives of Sri Lanka Forum for Small Scale Fisheries, academics, researchers and civil society organisations working towards securing sustainable small-scale fisheries, from South and Southeast Asian countries, having participated virtually at the *Fishing for Life: South and Southeast Asian Conference on Small-scale Fisheries and Aquaculture 2022* (SACSFA 2022) from 19 to 20 September 2022;

Recognizing that the small-scale fisheries subsector, marine and inland, including women and men along the value chain, contribute to food security and nutrition, employment and poverty eradication, as well to the way of life and culture of coastal and riparian communities in South and Southeast Asia;

Mindful of the ethnic, religious, caste, cultural and historical diversity, colonial legacy and patterns of migration in the region, and their impact on social and economic relations, as well as the dynamic nature of small-scale fisheries;

Conscious of the degradation of the marine environment, the heightened anthropogenic threats (e.g., pollution, overfishing, etc.), injustices caused by the blue growth process, and serious natural (e.g., climate change, extreme weather events, etc.) risks facing inland and marine small-scale fishing communities;

Concerned about unregulated technological change in marine and inland fishing, cross-border conflicts from destructive fishing methods, overfishing pressures, and their adverse impact on small-scale fisheries;

Realizing how sustainable small-scale fisheries can be secured through effective legislation, regional cooperation and collaboration, strengthening community-based institutions and the protection of the human rights of small-scale fishers and fishworkers, especially to participate in decision-making processes and intra- and inter-sectoral dialogues;



"FISHING FOR LIFE"

South and South-East Asian Conference on Small Scale Fisheries and Aquaculture (SACSFA)
19-20 September 2022

Cognizant of the need to protect tenure rights and promote social development, improve safety at sea, ensure gender equality and promote resource stewardship among small-scale fishers and fishing communities;

Interested in promoting sustainable development and greater visibility of small-scale fisheries and accountability of all small-scale fisheries actors; and

Acknowledging how the implementation of the *Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication* (SSF Guidelines) in the region can enhance sustainable use and management of fisheries resources, equitable development of small-scale fishing communities, and contribute to poverty eradication.

Recommend:

Recognize the contribution of small-scale fisheries to nutrition and food security and strengthen documentation of fish production from small-scale fisheries and of other products along the value chain, and develop robust methodologies for data collection in the region;

Respect human rights, including livelihood rights of small-scale fishers, and their right to sustainably use and manage fisheries resources and ecosystems, consistent with paragraph 5.5 of the SSF Guidelines;¹

Promote the stewardship of small-scale fisheries through: broadscale engagement and collaboration of all stakeholders, building their knowledge and capacity, monitoring, communication, education and outreach;

Uphold a rights-based approach to small-scale fisheries development that recognizes the rights of access to resources and human rights as integral to human development;

Encourage sustainable development of small-scale fisheries for balanced social, economic, and regional development in coastal and rural areas and create new opportunities within an ecosystem approach to fisheries and regional cooperation; Reverse all forms of discrimination against women, apply intersectionality principles (e.g., recognizing the different needs of groups and people according to age, gender, education, class, ability, etc.), develop skills, promote technological inclusion and empower women to participate in fisheries decision-making processes, especially to strengthen their contribution to economic wellbeing and to address wage disparities along the fisheries value chain. Also, promote sharing

¹ "States should recognize the role of small-scale fishing communities and indigenous peoples to restore, conserve, protect and co-manage local aquatic and coastal ecosystems."



"FISHING FOR LIFE"

South and South-East Asian Conference on Small Scale Fisheries and Aquaculture (SACSFA)
19-20 September 2022

of reproductive and care work to create opportunities for women to engage in paid work;

Promote an interactive, inclusive and multi-stakeholder approach to fisheries governance going beyond the scope of conventional fisheries management, towards articulating power through the involvement of local communities, and representative organizations, by means of training and capacity building;

Strengthen vulnerability coping mechanisms, establish effective, integrated, inclusive, participatory and holistic co-management platforms, and deliver on securing fishers' rights and social development within the framework of the SSF Guidelines;

Empower fishers' and fishworkers' organizations, including fisheries cooperatives, through training and capacity building and other assistance, at the local level, to safeguard fishers' and fishworkers rights, to provide affordable access to basic social services, to promote social security, to support livelihoods, and to meet their essential needs;

Adopt "bottom up" processes as well as cross-sectoral collaboration towards realizing a balanced and equitable partnership in the implementation of the SSF Guidelines, acknowledging that fishers, fishworkers and their organizations are the main drivers of bottom-up processes, and are supported by academia, NGOs and CSOs;

Promote consultation with small-scale fishing communities while undertaking tourism, aquaculture, industry, infrastructure developments and other activities in coastal areas that impact small-scale fisheries, protect their human rights and secure their informed consent before commencing these activities;

Design and innovate appropriate risk transfer tools (e.g., social insurance) and risk retention measures (e.g., social assistance) to deal with climate change and disaster events adversely impacting coastal and inland fishing communities; and

Mainstream the SSF Guidelines into relevant policies, strategies and legislation at the national and local levels, and develop national plans of action for sustainable fisheries and socio-economic development of fishing communities, as has been initiated by several countries in the region and other parts of the world (e.g., Sri Lanka, Tanzania, Malawi, Madagascar and Namibia).
