

# The Human Rights-based Approach in Practice for Small-scale Fisheries and Food Security

International Collective in Support of Fishworkers (ICSF)  
Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (UN OHCHR)  
Food and Agriculture Organization (UN FAO)

CFS 46 Side Event: 'Treasures of the oceans and inland waters: Ensuring food security and nourishing nations'

Rome | 14 October 2019

# Trends in global fish production

- **SSF catch share in decline:** 50-percent reduction in some countries since 1980s
- **Capture to culture:** Aquaculture (marine and inland) contributes 53 percent of food fish today
- **Non-food uses:** Fish meal and fish oil industry impacts on local food security and sustainability (e.g., West Africa and South Asia)
- **Inland fisheries:** Direct human consumption; diverse and complex fisheries and ecosystems; vulnerable and marginalized communities

# Importance of small-scale fisheries

*Rooted in communities; largest employer; low environmental impact; fish as food; gender-equitable value chain*

- **Marine:** Contribute half of total fish catch in many developing countries. Employs 90 percent of fishers and fishworkers (half are women)
- **Inland:** Employ 60 million. Entirely small-scale and concentrated in the developing world. (LIFDCs contribute 43 percent globally)

# Human Rights Principles and the Right to Adequate Food

- Human rights are **universal** and inalienable; indivisible; **equality** and non-discrimination; full **participation** and inclusion; transparency, **accountability** and rule of law; **respect of cultures**
- “The **right to adequate food** is realized when every man, woman and child, alone and in community with others, has **physical and economic access at all times to adequate food or the means for its procurement.**” (CESCR, 1999)

# The SSF Guidelines

- Promote a **human rights-based approach**, also at the heart of the **Sustainable Development Goals**
- Incorporate principles of the **Tenure Guidelines** and the **Right to Food Guidelines**
- Benefit **women, indigenous people, and vulnerable and marginalized groups**
- Advocate for **social development** (education, health, housing, sanitation, decent work) as a **pathway to sustainability** of the fisheries

# The Human Rights-Based Approach in practice

(ICSF's 9-country project on SSFG implementation, supported by FAO)

- **Consultation and participation:** Implementation plans for national fisheries policies; engaging local governments (**India**)
- **Secure tenure:** Recognize and protect indigenous people's rights to natural resources (**Brazil**)
- **Labour and decent work:** Documenting child labour and trafficking in fisheries (**Ghana**)
- **Right to Food:** Emphasis on food security and sovereignty ('**de-carpization**'); livelihoods (**value chain approach**); and sustainability (**ecosystem approach**)

# Conclusions

- **Small-scale fisheries** *contribute to and have a stake in* food and nutrition security
- A **Human Rights-Based Approach** empowers fishers and fishworkers to improve livelihoods, sustain their fisheries, and achieve nutritional and development outcomes
- **Inland fisheries** make a major contribution to food security and livelihoods, especially for vulnerable and marginalized communities

**International Year of Artisanal Fisheries and  
Aquaculture - 2022**