

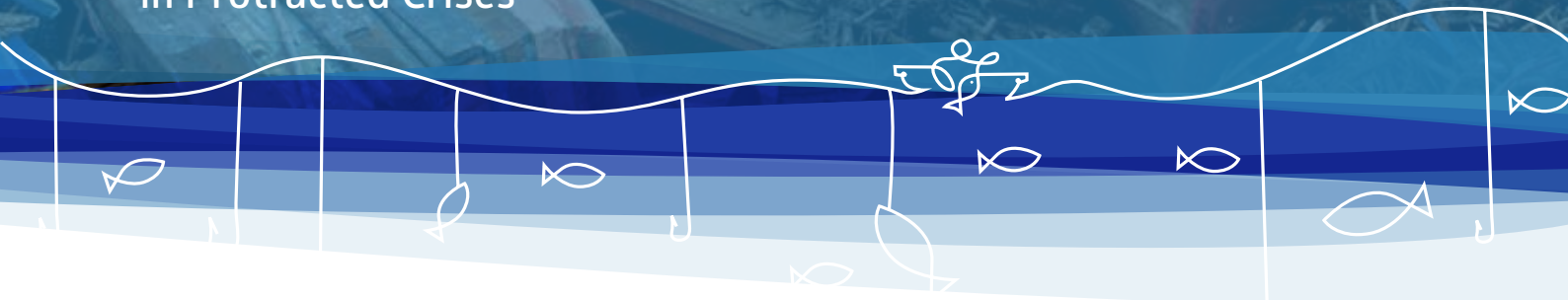


Food and Agriculture  
Organization of the  
United Nations



©FAO/Ami Vitale

Linkages between the  
**Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries**  
in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication  
and the  
**Framework for Action for Food Security and Nutrition**  
in Protracted Crises



## Making a difference in food security and nutrition, together

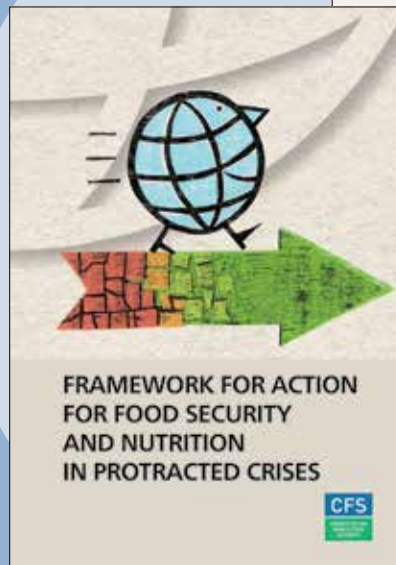
The small-scale fisheries sector, including pre-harvest, harvest, and post-harvest activities, plays an essential role in the nutrition and food security of millions of people worldwide. This is especially true in developing countries, where it is estimated that 97 percent of the world's fishers and fish workers live. Of those, 90 percent work in small-scale fisheries (World Bank, 2012).

Small-scale fisheries communities in coastal areas or close to freshwater bodies are often highly vulnerable to a range of hazards (climate change, etc.) beyond their control. These hazards can turn into protracted crises, which usually are characterized by a combination of natural disasters,

- pressure on natural resources, climate change, disease outbreaks, or other man-made situations such as conflicts and terrorism (CFS, 2015).
- Protracted crises are, therefore, situations of prolonged or recurrent crisis where a significant portion of the population is vulnerable to death, disease and disruptions in livelihoods over a prolonged period (FAO, 2017).
- Frequent social, economic and political marginalization makes small-scale fisheries communities particularly susceptible to being affected by protracted crises. Two international instruments provide guidance on how to better address these issues.



The Committee on World Food Security Framework for Action for Food Security and Nutrition in Protracted Crises (CFS-FFA).



- The Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication (SSF Guidelines).

Both are built on existing human rights obligations under international law

Aim for the progressive realization of the right to adequate food

Non-binding documents

Global in scope

Focus on the most vulnerable and marginalized groups

Both are to be implemented following a human-rights-based approach (HRBA)

Tools to guide dialogue, policy processes, and action at all levels, from local communities to global fora

### CFS-FFA

- Endorsed at the 42nd Session of the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) in October 2015.
- Result of global multi-stakeholder consultation processes which included governments, United Nations agencies, civil society organizations and non-governmental organizations, research institutions, private sector, philanthropic foundations and regional financial institutions.
- Represent the first global consensus on how to mitigate the threat to food security and nutrition during protracted crises.
- Provide a broad framework to be used by all stakeholders who may have a role in improving or impacting food security and nutrition in protracted crises.
- Strive to strengthen policy coherence in line with the progressive realization of the right to adequate food, by fostering coordination of policies and actions taken in the fields of humanitarian assistance and human rights.

### SSF Guidelines

- Endorsed at the 31st Session of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) Committee on Fisheries (COFI) in June 2014.
- Result of a bottom up participatory process that directly involved more than 4 000 participants from more than 120 countries.
- First international instrument entirely dedicated to a sub-sector: small-scale fisheries.
- Intended to support the visibility, recognition and enhancement of the role of small-scale fisheries in global and national efforts towards the eradication of hunger and poverty.
- Encourage all stakeholders to recognize that natural and human-induced disasters and climate change affect small-scale fisheries and their communities.
- Advise states to design adaptation and mitigation strategies and to build resilience through policies and plans, in consultation with the communities.





## Equipping small-scale fisheries to deal with protracted crises: a path towards better food security and nutrition

Disasters leading to protracted crises can occur in isolation or they can happen at the same time and reinforce each other. For instance, natural disasters, such as tsunamis, cyclones and other extreme events, which over the past few decades have become more frequent and increasingly destructive and deadly, often lead to a large number of casualties and tangible losses such as damage and destruction of houses and other types of property such as landings and fish processing facilities, and to a loss of production. Small-scale fishing communities are often situated in low lying coastal areas, which makes them particularly exposed to these disasters and hence more vulnerable (FAO, 2007).

Outbreaks of diseases are another form of protracted crisis. In 2020, the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic<sup>1</sup> are being felt in all aspects of people lives around the world. Although it is too early to assess the impacts COVID-19 has on small-scale fishing communities, evidence is emerging to show that it is having a direct effect on their health, which will be exacerbated by their limited access to health care systems. Their incomes are also being affected as markets are closing worldwide, leaving small-scale fishers and fish workers unable to sell their fish and, therefore, without an income to buy other food items. Furthermore, as countries have imposed lockdown measures, small-scale fishers are unable to go out to fish, although in some cases they have defied orders and chosen to fish at night, which is an added risk to their lives (Al Jazeera, 2020). All of this disrupts seafood supply chains that feed millions of people.

Disasters leading to protracted crises can also be human-induced, as recognized by both the SSF Guidelines and the CFS-FFA. The SSF Guidelines, stipulate that in such situations the responsible party should be held accountable (paragraph 9.5). As an example, environmental damage, such as the one caused by oil spills may cause fisheries and landing

- sites to close, which often impacts the health of the communities and leads to displacement. During these types of crises, temporary alternative forms of employment might be offered to the communities, but as fishers are highly dependent on fishing for their livelihood, their survival is at risk if resources are not re-established. The environmental damage often has a wider and incalculable impact with direct consequences on the health of fishing communities, the surrounding populations in general and for the consumer.

- Another example of human-induced disasters are armed conflicts and terrorism, with long lasting consequences for populations leading to humanitarian crises. Wars leave people without homes, food, sources of income, and they cause massive displacement. Fishing communities are no exception to this, especially as conflicts over access to natural resources such as land and water are spreading (FAO, 2007). The CFS-FFA call for states, parties involved in conflict, and other stakeholders to consider how their policies and actions could impact food security and nutrition in protracted crises, and consider relevant appropriate actions (paragraph 26).

- An effective response to protracted crises affecting small-scale fisheries and their communities requires a specific understanding of the risks and vulnerabilities of the sector, including pre-harvest and post-harvest activities. Both the CFS-FFA and the SSF Guidelines address the need for states to develop policies, plans, actions, programmes and strategies to assess risks of future threats, to have early warning systems, to mitigate the effects of prolonged crises, to adapt to new circumstances and to build community resilience. The SSF Guidelines add that states should conduct “effective consultation with fishing communities including indigenous peoples, men and women, paying particular attention to vulnerable and marginalized groups” to the different programmes and policies.



<sup>1</sup> On 11 March 2020, the World Health Organization declared COVID-19 a pandemic.

# Promoting the complementary implementation of the CFS-FFA and the SSF Guidelines

The following areas provide major opportunities for synergistic implementation of the two instruments

## Building the resilience of small-scale fishing communities

Building resilient communities is key to dealing with protracted crises. People with resilient livelihoods are better prepared for and can better cope with them. The CFS-FFA states that resilience “boosts the capacity to absorb, prepare for and prevent humanitarian disasters, crises and long term stresses. It also contributes to the adaptation and transformation of livelihoods and food systems...” (paragraph 21).

To build resilient small-scale fishing communities and address the underlying factors of disaster vulnerability, it is crucial for communities to be empowered through capacity development and other initiatives that serve to provide them with the adequate tools to prevent, mitigate and prepare for hazards and crises. For this, it is important to build on their strengths, providing them with practical and tangible strategies and tools. Equally important is to ensure that small-scale fishing communities have adequate access to social services and social protection. The importance of access to health

- services is becoming evident in a situation like the one
- created by the COVID 19 outbreak in 2020. States and
- other stakeholders must consider promoting resilient
- small-scale fishing communities in disaster prevention
- measures, and disaster risk management initiatives.
- 
- In chapter 9, dedicated to disaster risk and climate
- change, the SSF Guidelines call for states to develop
- policies and plans to address disaster risks and build
- resilience in full and effective consultation with fishing
- communities (paragraph 9.2). The SSF Guidelines also
- stipulate that capacity development should include
- building the resilience and adaptive capacity of small-
- scale fishing communities in relation to Disaster Risk
- Management (DRM) and Climate Change Adaptation
- (CCA) (paragraph 12.3). For its part, the CFS-FFA
- calls stakeholders to build on the existing capacities,
- knowledge, practice and experience of affected
- communities as entry points for policies and actions
- (paragraph 22).



### EXAMPLE

#### The case of South Sudan: building the resilience of small-scale fishing communities

South Sudan has suffered from a complex combination of armed conflicts, droughts and floods that have created a very complex humanitarian emergency that persists today. Along with personal security issues and difficulties, the Sudanese people face an additional threat in the form of food insecurity. Here the small-scale fisheries sector plays an important role, since inland water areas in the southern part of the country are estimated to be able to sustain an annual fish production of 80 000 to 100 000 tonnes. However, fishing activities have become difficult due to the scarcity of fishing equipment and the difficulty in accessing fishing grounds because of insecurity.

To contribute towards building a resilient small-scale fishing sector, relief agencies that are active in the area, became aware of the importance of fisheries from a nutritional point of view and included in their action plans the provision of processing inputs and basic technical assistance to provide fishers with the required equipment and fishing gear. After adopting this approach, some observations were made: locations without provision of fishing equipment relied more heavily on traditional sources of animal protein such as bleeding cattle, dried wild meat, insects or poisoned fish as a result of unsustainable and unhealthy fishing methods. On the other hand, in the locations where fishing equipment was provided, fishery products became the main source of cheap animal protein, contributing to the food security of the communities living in such areas. In addition, internally displaced persons (IDP) and other vulnerable population groups with access to fishing equipment have also been able to rebuild lost assets and gain access to other goods and services (Bellemans M, 2002). Ensuring that the fisheries resource management is sustainable must be a part of any provision of fishing equipment.







## Special focus on women in protracted crises

Crises impact women and men differently, as their needs, resources, and coping strategies are diverse. According to the United Nations, women and girls are disproportionately exposed to the effects of disasters. For instance, they are more likely to suffer from sexual violence during humanitarian crises (UN Women, 2015), and globally, natural disasters kill more women than men (WHO, 2014). However, women play a key role in the survival and resilience of families and communities. When women are included in humanitarian actions and disaster risk management strategies, the entire community benefits.

In the small-scale fisheries sector, women represent 47 percent of the total workforce (World Bank, 2012), mainly in post-harvest activities. Despite this important contribution, they are often excluded from decision-making processes that impact their lives. Both, the CFS-FFA and the SSF Guidelines recognize the importance of empowering women and promoting gender equality.

- Principle 5 of the CFS-FFA “empower women and girls, promote gender equality and encourage gender sensitivity” promotes the need for strengthening and building local knowledge in the delivery and design of projects and programmes, and the equal participation of women and men in decision-making. The SSF Guidelines recognize as one of their guiding principles that gender equality and equity are fundamental to any development. Additionally, chapter 8 on gender equality, establishes that gender mainstreaming should be an integral part of small-scale fisheries development strategies (paragraph 8.1) and that specific measures to address discrimination against women should be adopted (paragraph 8.3). Furthermore, specifically in relation to disaster risk and climate change (chapter 9), the SSF Guidelines provide that the state should develop policies and plans for mitigation, adaptation and building resilience in “full and effective consultation with fishing communities” including women and other vulnerable and marginalized groups.

### EXAMPLE

#### The impact of Cyclone Ockhi on women and children in India

In 2017, Cyclone Ockhi killed more than 350 people in the Indian southern states of Kerala and Tamil Nadu. Although material losses caused by other cyclones in the territory were worse, the number of deaths caused by Cyclone Ockhi was particularly high. This made it clear that the country’s disaster response and preparedness had to be assessed.

The International Collective in Support of Fish Workers (ICSF) organized a series of workshops with the affected communities to conduct a participatory study of the situation and to prepare suggestions aimed at improving the assessment of this tragic event. One of the recommendations suggested paying special attention to vulnerable people, specifically women and children, along with isolated communities. The study revealed that the lack of decision-making power among these vulnerable groups of people made them more directly and indirectly vulnerable to these kinds of disasters. In addition, the widows of fishers faced additional challenges in just trying to survive because so many of them had little to no working experience in spite of being better educated. The study suggested that future disaster risk management measures should include employment training for women to enable them to sustain themselves independently in the event of a new hypothetical disaster (Roshan M, 2019).





## Promote sustainable use of natural resources

Principle 10 of the CFS-FFA calls to “manage natural resources sustainably and reduce disaster risks.” In fact, sustainable use and management of fishery resources are crucial for disaster risk prevention and mitigation and to reduce the vulnerability of communities to the impacts of disasters. Issues such as pollution, coastal erosion, overexploitation and the destruction of coastal habitats undermine communities’ chances to adapt to disaster risk. In addition, resources need to be managed considering existing and future changes in the climate. Equally, unsecure tenure rights to resources exacerbate the vulnerability of small-scale fishing communities in times of crises and create a source of conflict because of the struggle for control of resources.

Since resource scarcity can be a major driver for conflict during protracted crises, it is important to ensure the

- sustainability of resources through conflict-sensitive approaches to contribute to long-lasting solutions. Such approaches must also respect legitimate tenure rights in line with the VGGT and with the SSF Guidelines.<sup>2</sup>
- Chapter 5 of the SSF Guidelines on “governance of tenure” stresses the importance for small-scale fishing communities to have secure tenure rights to the resources required “for the basis of their social well-being, their livelihoods and their sustainable development” (paragraph 5.1). It also stipulates that states should facilitate and support small-scale fishing communities by participatively and responsibly managing the resources on which they depend, and by involving the communities in the design, planning and implementation of management measures (paragraph 5.15).

### EXAMPLE

## The importance of mangrove conservation for small-scale fisheries in Viet Nam

Mangroves are particularly beneficial for small-scale fisheries as they form the basis of food chains, serving as shelter for fish, crab, shrimp, and mollusc species, while providing physical protection from storms. Considering the great impact that mangroves have on small-scale fisheries, it is only logical to use and manage them sustainably (Hutchinson J, Spalding M, & Ermgassen P, 2014).

In Viet Nam, tropical storms have caused considerable losses along the coastline for decades. Mangrove rehabilitation activities along the coastline serve as a good example of the importance of resource management to prevent and mitigate the impact of natural disasters. Since 1994, the Viet Nam national chapter of the Red Cross has collaborated with local communities to plant and protect mangroves along the coast of Viet Nam. Nearly 12 000 ha of mangrove forest have been planted. According to the Viet Nam Red Cross, after the devastating Typhoon Wukong in 2000, the areas that benefited from mangrove rehabilitation remained unharmed while neighbouring provinces lost lives, property and livelihoods (International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, 2001).



<sup>2</sup> In line with the VGGT in, but not limited to, the contexts of climate change, natural disasters and conflicts, and in line with the SSF Guidelines.

# ACTION POINTS

## For governments

- Integrate the provisions of the CFS-FFA and the SSF Guidelines into plans and programmes that aim to improve food security and nutrition in response strategies to protracted crises.
- Ensure that disaster risk prevention, mitigation and management policies and legislation targeting small-scale fishing communities are in place at the national and local levels.
- Ensure that early warning systems in case of national disasters such as cyclones and tsunamis are in place.
- Ensure that disaster rehabilitation, reconstruction and recovery activities are aimed at building back better livelihoods.
- Include mandatory environmental and social impact assessments to projects that can have an impact in the small-scale fisheries sector.
- Hold business accountable and liable for environmental damage and human rights abuses affecting the small-scale fisheries sector.
- Ensure that climate adaptation plans include adequate funds for small-scale fishing communities.
- Ensure coordination at the national and regional level as well as with international agencies and organizations involved in the response and in providing aid during protracted crises, ensuring that resources are benefiting affected people.
- Conduct risk assessments of protracted crises that are likely to occur and assess the possible effects on small-scale fishing communities.
- Conduct livelihood assessments early in protracted crises in small-scale fishing communities.

## For civil society organizations, non-governmental organizations and others

- Conduct capacity development activities on the provisions of the CFS-FFA and the SSF Guidelines with government officials and small-scale fishing communities at risk of protracted crises.
- Disseminate information and raise awareness of the various forms of disaster preparedness.
- Work with small-scale fishing communities and support and develop campaigns to build resilient communities.
- Conduct studies and gather information to understand the impact of disasters on the livelihoods of fishing communities and use the lessons learned to improve future interventions and prevention work.
- During protracted crises, work with state organizations and humanitarian agencies in disaster relief and rehabilitation measures aimed at the small-scale fisheries sector.

## For small-scale fishing communities

- Participate in consultations, dialogues, and decision-making processes with multiple stakeholders on projects and programmes relevant to the CFS-FFA and the SSF Guidelines. Take special care to include women, the elderly, youth and indigenous peoples.
- Strengthen and build knowledge and capacities in order to be resilient in the face of protracted crises.
- Communicate their risks and needs to the relevant stakeholders during protracted crises.

## For all

- Spread the word, inform, and generate consensus and public support on the importance of the CFS-FFA and the SSF Guidelines.
- Raise awareness at relevant events such as:
  - 2021 Global Summit on Food Systems
  - 2022 International Year of Artisanal Fisheries and Aquaculture
  - UN Decade on Family Farming 2019-2028
  - Annual sessions of the Committee on World Food Security (CFS)

## References

- Al Jazeera. 22 March 2020. *Al Jazeera. In Pictures: How Covid-19 outbreak affected S. African fishermen*. <https://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/inpictures/pictures-covid-19-outbreak-affected-african-fishermen-200322080557444.html>
- Bellemans, M. 2002. *Household food security: fisheries intervention in southern Sudan*. Operation Lifeline Sudan (OLS) Southern Sector. Mission report 14–28 July 2001. Special Relief Operations Service (TCOR). Rome, FAO.
- CFS. 2015. *Framework for Action for Food Security and Nutrition in Protracted Crises*. FAO, IFAD, WFP. Rome. [www.fao.org/3/a-bc852e.pdf](http://www.fao.org/3/a-bc852e.pdf)
- FAO. 2007. *Disaster response and risk management in the fisheries sector*. FAO. Rome. [www.fao.org/3/a1217e/a1217e00.pdf](http://www.fao.org/3/a1217e/a1217e00.pdf)
- FAO. 2017. *Improving food security and nutrition in protracted crises: Guidance to implement the Framework for Action for Food Security and Nutrition in Protracted Crises (CFS-FFA)*. FAO. Rome. <http://www.fao.org/3/a-i6752e.pdf>
- Hutchinson J., Spalding, M. & Ermgassen, P. 2014. *The Role of Mangroves in Fisheries Enhancement. The Nature conservancy, Wetlands International and The University of Cambridge*. [www.wetlands.org/publications/the-role-of-mangroves-in-fisheries-enhancement/](http://www.wetlands.org/publications/the-role-of-mangroves-in-fisheries-enhancement/)
- International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. 2001. *World Disasters Report: Focus on Reducing Risk*. IFRC. Geneva. [www.ifrc.org/Global/Publications/disasters/WDR/21400\\_WDR2001.pdf](http://www.ifrc.org/Global/Publications/disasters/WDR/21400_WDR2001.pdf)
- Roshan, M. 2019. *Cyclone Ockhi: Disaster risk management and sea safety in the Indian marine fisheries sector*. International collective in Support of fish workers (ICSF) Trust and FAO. Rome. [www.fao.org/3/ca2904en/CA2904EN.pdf](http://www.fao.org/3/ca2904en/CA2904EN.pdf)
- UN Women. 2015. *Promoting the rights, needs and agency of women and girls in humanitarian action*. UN Women. New York. [www.unwomen.org/-/media/headquarters/attachments/sections/library/publications/2016/world-humanitarian-summit-en.pdf?la=en&vs=4833](http://www.unwomen.org/-/media/headquarters/attachments/sections/library/publications/2016/world-humanitarian-summit-en.pdf?la=en&vs=4833)
- WHO. 2014. *Gender, climate change and health*. WHO. Geneva. [https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/144781/9789241508186\\_eng.pdf;jsessionid=1913AC29FD32C1D00EA69E4A9CF16D0C?sequence=1](https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/144781/9789241508186_eng.pdf;jsessionid=1913AC29FD32C1D00EA69E4A9CF16D0C?sequence=1)
- World Bank. 2012. *Hidden harvest: the global contribution of capture fisheries*. World Bank. Washington, DC. <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/515701468152718292/pdf/664690ESWOP1210120HiddenHarvest0web.pdf>

---

## LEARN MORE

The SSF Guidelines: [www.fao.org/voluntary-guidelines-small-scale-fisheries](http://www.fao.org/voluntary-guidelines-small-scale-fisheries)

Framework for Action for Food Security and Nutrition in Protracted Crises: [www.fao.org/3/a-bc852e.pdf](http://www.fao.org/3/a-bc852e.pdf)

Sustainable fisheries and aquaculture for food security and nutrition. A report by the High-Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition (HLPE): [www.fao.org/3/a-i3844e.pdf](http://www.fao.org/3/a-i3844e.pdf)

Fisheries and aquaculture emergency response guidance: [www.fao.org/3/a-i3432e.pdf](http://www.fao.org/3/a-i3432e.pdf)

Disaster risk and climate change in the SSF Guidelines:  
[www.fao.org/voluntary-guidelines-small-scale-fisheries/guidelines/climate-change](http://www.fao.org/voluntary-guidelines-small-scale-fisheries/guidelines/climate-change)

The committee of World Food Security: [www.fao.org/cfs](http://www.fao.org/cfs)

## CONTACT US

Email: [ssf-guidelines@fao.org](mailto:ssf-guidelines@fao.org)

Twitter: [#SmallScaleFisheries](https://twitter.com/SmallScaleFisheries), [#SSFGuidelines](https://twitter.com/SSFGuidelines), [@FAOfish](https://twitter.com/FAOfish)



Some rights reserved. This work is available under a CC BY-NC-SA 3.0 IGO licence