

Towards Support for Development  
of Guidelines for Voluntary  
Guidelines for Small-scale Fisheries:  
Malawi Process

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# Introduction

- Malawi used as case to support development of the guidelines
- One of a number of cases worldwide

# Malawi - Fisheries

- Fish contributes over 50% to animal protein
- Fisheries believed to contribute about 4% to GDP
- Over 60,000 people directly employed as fishers and over 300,000 employed in post-harvest sector

# Approach

- National workshops (for DoF staff)
- Local workshops for local stakeholders (fishers, fish farmers, processors/traders, chiefs, women)
- Introduction to workshop objectives
- Outline of process for use of findings as contribution towards developing GSSSF

# Guiding questions

- What are the critical issues facing fisheries?
- What problems did they face as fishers, fish farmers, women in fisheries, traders/processors or DoF staff

# Fishers

- Declining catches
- Too many fishers
- Imported nets do not last long
- Lack of capital
- Competition with other sectors (e.g. increasing loss of access to beaches)
- Social issues - Lack of support and infrastructure in most rural fishing communities (schools, hospitals, poor roads, etc)

# Fish farmers

- Slow growing species used for aquaculture
- High costs of feed
- Lack of capital
- Lack of technical support
- Theft of fish

# Traders

- High competition for fish
- Lack of preservation & processing infrastructure
- Poor transport systems (predominant use of public transport)
- Post-harvest losses (especially during rainy season)
- Lack of storage facilities at markets



# Women

- For married women
  - ✓ Difficulties of straddling between family and fish trading (children, trust & image issues)
  - ✓ Husbands still made decisions about use of earnings
- Inappropriate use of money by husbands
- Demand by fishers for sexual favours in return for fish

# DoF staff

- Declining catches
- High levels of illegal fishing
- Inadequate funding for management and extension activities
- Lack of equipment and infrastructure
- Low morale

# Insights on human rights approach

- Whose responsibility is it for provision of social amenities and infrastructure for fishing communities?
- Whose responsibility is to ensure sustainability of fishery?
- If it is government's responsibility, does inability to provide social amenities, infrastructure and manage fishery constitute infringement of citizens' human and social rights & abrogation of responsibility?

# Implementation of human rights approach

- Should governments be compelled to implement the voluntary guidelines once they have signed up?
- If yes, how could this be done and who should do this?
- Would pressure from the international community (e.g. through aid) be used to apply pressure?
- Can communities be organised to pressurize their governments? How could they be organised for such action?

# Problems

- Lack of organization among fishing communities around human and social rights
- Weak or lack of human rights civil society organizations that can help organize fisher communities round their human rights using the guidelines

# Possible ways of compelling governments to implement the guidelines

- Awareness raising among communities around the guidelines and how these could be used to fight for their rights
- Organizing communities and other stakeholders around fighting for rights using the guidelines
- National human rights (civil society) organizations in coalition with international organizations around fisher human rights