

## **Governance of small-scale fisheries: What are the key elements of policies, institutions and management approaches?**

Participants: approx 40

The facilitators introduced the session by briefly elaborating on what the discussion about the governance of small-scale fisheries might focus on, e.g.:

- Policies – is there a small-scale fisheries policy in place?
- Institutions – what are the key elements of the institutions regarding small-scale fisheries?
- Management approaches – what are key elements of the management approaches that might be used in small-scale fisheries?

The group felt it important to begin by addressing definitions of (a) governance and (b) small-scale fisheries (SSF). While the group did not attempt to come up with a definition of SSF, and acknowledging that each country has its own definition, some suggestions were made regarding the level of investment capital that is used, the ownership of a boat, the extent to which operations are labour intensive, seasonal etc. It was also noted that there are two distinct areas in which small-scale fisheries take place – in marine fisheries and inland fisheries.

In talking about the governance of fisheries management, it was noted that fisheries governance is a function of governance in general and that any management needs to address governance structure in a larger context. The difference between governance and management was addressed, with the group preferring to consider management in terms of implementation activities. The group recognized that both governance and management need to take a holistic approach and that, if conflicting interests take over in the implementation phase, management plans will not be implemented. It was pointed out that in many countries there is legislation in place and treaties are signed, but there are often conflicting principles within a country which hinder implementation.

It was recognized that principles for governance ought to include institutional arrangements to facilitate consultation, as good governance includes translating initiatives from the stakeholders into policy, and management. In this context, it was emphasized that governance includes economics and that ministries other than those dealing specifically with fisheries need to be involved in policy formulation etc. The difficulties with donor-led governance reforms were discussed as well as the fact that governance does not only come through policy reforms.

Some felt that many SSF issues need to be addressed at the global level, and that UN involvement (perhaps in the form of a Charter for Small-scale Fisheries) is necessary, while not forgetting that the countries need to take responsibility. In this context, the global mandate to support SSF was raised, recognizing that SSF needs local, national or perhaps regional initiatives. It was noted that the improved networking amongst fishers, NGOs, CSOs, and fisheries managers will be an appreciated outcome of this conference.

### ***Policy***

It was widely recognized that any policy should be underpinned by very clear, specific and consistent objectives, which have to be shared, agreed on and understood, and that it needs to address, *inter alia*, who should have access, to what, and how to divide the resources available.

It was also recognized that legislation needs to underpin and support policy. It was further recognized that politics can cause problems in small-scale fisheries, as politicians want to be re-elected and therefore may not primarily have long-term interests in mind. In this context, it was pointed out that ownership of policy through extensive local-level stakeholder involvement is important and can, in part, address this

shortcoming. Consultation at the local level can overcome lack of political will, as demand for long-term policy can be generated from those affected. In addition, in many instances the small-scale fisheries sector needs to take the initiative to educate and influence politicians and to be active, not only in fisheries management and policy formulation, but also in the broader policy arena.

It was further underlined that resources are needed, not just to define a policy, and the supporting legislation, but that a policy needs to come with resources for its implementation. Some participants noted the need for separate different policies for in-shore and off-shore fishing. Finally, it was acknowledged that most countries have a policy in place, but that implementation, i.e. management, needs to be addressed.

### ***Institutions***

While some thought that in the development of policy, and management plans, government should primarily concentrate (1) on creating an enabling environment, in tackling for example IUU fishing and marine pollution etc., and (2) to delegate power in terms of implementation of policy, on the basis that effective management can not be delivered at the national level.

It was also mentioned that management often has been based on scientific determinations of stock sizes, making it difficult to delegate power to the local level. It was pointed out that any decentralization increases the need for knowledge about the local-level structure, and also the need to link local knowledge with scientific knowledge. It was noted that in some countries there are decentralization initiatives, but no accompanying management policy. It was also pointed out that decentralization requires that stakeholders are genuinely represented when decisions are taken. Importantly, it was pointed out that, in general, policy makers have underestimated the impact of co-management and the need this creates to restructure all institutions, including both research and management bodies, to be service-oriented towards the new managers instead of telling them what to do.

Great emphasis was placed on the need for the fisheries sector to be upgraded within the ministries. In the ranking of decisions that have to be taken by governments. Fisheries are often at the bottom because of their often relatively low contribution to GDP. Means to capture the importance of fisheries within the national economy need to be found, as this was considered the only way to raise the profile and recognition of the importance of fisheries on national government agendas. In this regard, it is necessary to equip stakeholders so that they are able to constructively raise their voices. This aspect of stakeholder capacity is also vital for implementation of fisheries management because the financial capacity of many governments to address fisheries issues and management is a big constraint. Moreover, civil society needs to work together to push - as well as help - the government.

### ***Management approaches***

It was pointed out that fisheries management plans in general, and SSF management plans in particular, are often a sub-section within a larger development plan.

It was further recognized that what is different approaches are applicable in different countries, and that management of SSF has to include post-harvest matters because these can have significant impacts on small-scale fisheries. In this regard, it was noted that donor-driven projects should frequently be regarded as a double-edged sword because they may not necessarily reflect the issues and needs of the people to whom they are directed.

Finally, it was noted that adaptive management and model cases of actually implementing adaptive management would be useful for moving the implementation of small-scale fisheries management forward.