



The General Assembly of the World Forum of Fisher People (WFFP)

To the **Countries** represented; India, Sri Lanka, Indonesia, Canada, France, Honduras, Ecuador, Senegal, Kenya, Tanzania, Mauritania, Philippines, Mali, Martinique, Gambia, Bangladesh, Spain, Brazil, New Zealand, Jamaica, Thailand, Malaysia, Uganda, Denmark, Pakistan, the Caribbean Islands and South Africa.

The Leadership of World Forum of Fisher People (WFFP)

Mr Muhammad Alie Shah (Pakistan)

Ms Sherry Pictou (Canada)

Mr Naseegh Jaffer (South Africa)

Delegates : My apologies if I missed out anyone

Allow me to thank you for bringing the 6th General Assembly of the World Forum of Fisher People to the shores of South Africa and indeed to the Western Cape Province. I am sure you have been warmly welcomed by your host organisations, Masifundise Development Trust and Coastal Links. Let me add our heartfelt appreciation for your presence in our country and hope you have made time to visit our coastal shores and fisher communities.

Good evening

Give a man a fish, and you feed him for a day. Teach a man to fish, and you feed him for life. But until the fundamentals of the ocean economy are transformed, he will forever remain trapped in subsistence, catching fish to feed his family. Our aim must surely be for him to one day have his own fisheries his own fish farm and to employ others to produce fish and distribute his fish.

I was made to understand that your conference is focusing on, and I am paraphrasing, the Oceans' Political Economy, its impact on small scale fishers and sustainable livelihood of coastal fisher communities. Also that you paid specific attention to the adverse developments that relates to the privatisation of the World's Oceans "Ocean Grabbing" as you phrased it. I have no doubts, if not carefully regulated or prohibited, privatization of the world's oceans will be detrimental to the oceans' ecosystem stability, hasten the collapse of sustainable marine living resource management and without fear of contradiction, suggest it will worsen the plight of fisher communities dependent on harvesting marine resources for their livelihood. It is therefore in the interest of all of us to promote the world's oceans as a public good and defend it from being turn into a commodity for exchange.

We must however, acknowledged that wild harvest of fisheries are under considerable pressure and their growth is either stagnant or are declining. In a South African context it is the latter. Scarcity of this resource places severe challenges on all of us, Governments, Companies and Coastal Communities. In our attempts to mitigate these challenges, to sustain food security, eradicate unemployment and poverty, as a Government, we had to make policy adjustments to protect

marine resources and balance the competing demands for it. To this end the Marine Living Resources Act (MLRA) of 1998 was enacted which give effect to an environment protected for the benefit of present and future generations through reasonable measures to secure ecological sustainable development and use of natural resources while promoting justifiable economic and social development. It also gives effect to the obligation to achieve equality by measures designed to protect and advance persons disadvantaged by unfair discrimination. The Marine Living Resources Amendment Act, 2014 gave powers to the Minister to publish a framework for the procedure, the declaration of small-scale fishing communities, the establishment of appropriate legal and business entities for such communities, and allocation of rights to them. Deriving from the provision of the MLRA the adoption of the Small-Scale Fisheries Policy was effected in 2013 which gave formally the;

- Legal recognition to artisanal fishing communities
- Move away from the individual quota system to collective fishing rights
- Set out preferential fishing zones for small-scale fishers
- Improved and sustainable marine resource co-management
- Benefits accrue for women, in fishing communities, from both fishing and value chain involvement
- Provide greater access to markets and infrastructural support for the sector

These policy adjustments also dovetailed the provisions of the “*Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication*” as was adopted

by Governments at the Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO) of the United Nations (UN).

Accordingly, the Guidelines are intended to support the recognition and enhancement of the already important role of small-scale fisheries and to contribute to global and national efforts towards the eradication of hunger and poverty. The Guidelines support responsible governance of fisheries and sustainable social and economic development for the benefit of current and future generations, with an emphasis on vulnerable and marginalized people – such as women, children and the elderly, indigenous peoples and food insecure groups –promoting a human rights based approach.

You might have notice the similarity between our MLRA, the SSF Policy and the, *Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication*.

In addition to the legal framework to protect the ocean marine resource economy and balance the competing demands for it. Our government launched early this year, what we called Operation Phakisa (means fast track). The purpose of Operation Phakisa is to unlock the Economic Potential of South African's Ocean Economy. Central to the operation and it is now internationally accepted, the increase supply of fish products to meet demand will be sourced through aquaculture. Accordingly, aquaculture is the fastest growing food production sector in the world growing at an annual rate of about 8-10%. Global aquaculture production reached 68 metric tonnes and increased its proportional contribution to total fisheries from 15% in 1988 to 46% in 2010.

Our research indicates that SA oceans have the potential to contribute to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) up to R177 billion and could potentially contribute between eight hundred and one million direct jobs using a variety of different economic strategies. In 2010 alone, the SA oceans contributed approximately R54 billion to South Africa's GDP and accounted for approximately 316 000 jobs.

Aquaculture is a relatively new sector in SA and contributes a meagre 0.8% of total fish production but steadily growing at 6% annualize rate. There are over 195 operating marine and freshwater aquaculture farms in SA, they are mostly small-scale farmers producing between 5 – 50 tonnes a year. Under Operation Phakisa we plan to grow the aquaculture sector value from two billion rand in 2010, to between four billion rand and six billion rand with a potential job creation of between 160 000 to 210 000 by 2030.

I call upon our fisher communities to diversify their reliance on wild harvesting of marine resources and partner with us as Government to create opportunities in the development of fish farms on our coast land and inland.

Thank You