



A Call for Governments to Stop Supporting the Global Partnership for Oceans (GPO) and Rights-Based Fishing (RBF) Reforms

Date: 20th March, 2013

We, the *World Forum of Fisher Peoples* (WFFP) and the *World Forum of Fish Harvesters and Fish Workers* (WFFH), call on governments from all over the world, as well as inter-governmental institutions, to abandon the World Bank initiated Global Partnership for Oceans (GPO) and the unprecedented drive toward 'Rights-Based Fishing' reforms. Instead we urge you to endorse the human rights-based approach to fisheries, which shows greater sensitivity to the provisions articulated in the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and international treaties¹.

We share the concern of the GPO that oceans remain under severe threat from pollution, unsustainable harvesting of ocean resources, habitat destruction, ocean acidification and climate change. Yet, having analysed the available information about the GPO, it is clear that reforms at the global level for the introduction of Rights-Based Fishing (RBF) constitute the main pillar of the GPO. In a response to a comment that there is too much emphasis on RBF, the GPO Interim Working Group² stressed that “the GPO framework document rests on the fundamental notion of tenure rights in fisheries”³.

At the Economist World Oceans Summit, on 24 February 2012, the World Bank President, Robert B. Zoellick announced that the new GPO is set to mobilise US\$ 1.5 billion over five years⁴. Subsequently, the GPO was shaped by an exclusive alliance of stakeholders, and the GPO Declaration for Healthy Oceans was presented at the formal launch of the GPO at the Rio+20 Summit. In October 2012, a draft framework document for the GPO was made available to signatories of the declaration, yet it was only made publicly available in January 2013. It is clear

1 Including the: International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR);
International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR);
Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW);
Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD).

2 <http://globalpartnershipforoceans.org/about?active=4>

3 Pg. 23: <http://www.globalpartnershipforoceans.org/sites/default/files/images/Comments%20to%20GPO%20draft%20Framework%20Document.pdf>

4 <http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/NEWS/0,,contentMDK:23126181~pagePK:34370~piPK:34424~theSitePK:4607,00.html>

from this process, that the vast majority of fisher peoples⁵ from around the world are effectively excluded from contributing in any meaningful way to this ‘global partnership’.

The GPO Interim Working Group is determined to finalise the GPO framework document in March or April 2013. The GPO is thus approaching the critical stage of identifying grand-scale projects (Priority Oceans Areas for GPO Support and Action Plans) and secure significant amounts of funding from the World Bank, governmental partners, and other stakeholders. The GPO is expected to show 'concrete commitments'⁶ no later than June 2013, in time for the next Assembly of Partners.

This makes March and April 2013 a critical time for governments and inter-governmental institutions to intervene by sending a clear message to the GPO Interim Working Group. We urge governments and inter-governmental institutions to take a clear stand against this grand-scale initiative, which has been pushed through without any meaningful input from the vast majority of the world's small-scale fisher people.

Below, we reflect on the understanding, reasoning and consequences of ‘Rights-Based Fishing’ – which is only vaguely described by the GPO – and its implication for the vast majority of the world's fisher people. We also suggest an alternative solution and reiterate our call upon governments to take concrete action.

Rights-Based Fishing

The GPO proposes Rights Based Fishing (RBF) as a cure all for the worlds’ fisheries. In the GPO draft framework document, numerous references are made to 'rights-based management', 'rights-based fisheries', 'clear and secure access rights', 'responsible tenure arrangements', 'spatial rights' or simply 'fishing rights' or 'rights'. These terms are used interchangeably and refer to 'rights' as private property in terms of fish stocks or quotas and/or designated coastal areas (coastal land and/or water areas).

The GPO does not give a clear description of what these terms refer to, yet it is clear that they refer to RBF. The GPO does, however, stress⁷ that RBF has been applied successfully in a number of countries⁸, but the only argument provided in favour of RBF is that private ownership of resources provides incentives for good environmental practises. The framework document lacks documentation and references as to why RBF is the key to achieve the GPO objectives in fisheries and aquaculture.

5 Definition of small scale fisher peoples: In the policy for the small scale fisheries sector in South Africa (<http://www.nda.agric.za/docs/Policy/PolicySmallScaleFishe.pdf>) small scale fishing means 'the use of marine living resources on a full-time, part-time or seasonal basis in order to ensure food and livelihood security... fishing also means the engagement (by men and women) in ancillary activities (pre and post harvesting)'. In the Zero Draft International Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-scale Fisheries

(ftp://ftp.fao.org/Fi/DOCUMENT/ssf/SSF_guidelines/ZeroDraftSSFGuidelines_MAY2012.pdf) members of a small-scale fishing community are defined as '... all those dependent on the aquatic resources for all or part of their livelihoods and well-being: fishers, those involved in post-harvest and upstream activities, and their family members. Small-scale fishers and fish workers can be engaged in the sector full time or part time, or on an occasional basis as a supplement to other livelihood strategies. The activities can be for commercial purposes or for subsistence needs, or a combination of the two.'

6 <http://globalpartnershipforoceans.org/sites/default/files/images/GPO%20-%20First%20Virtual%20Meeting%20of%20the%20Interim%20Working%20Group.pdf>

7 GPO second draft Framework Document page 11:

<http://www.globalpartnershipforoceans.org/sites/default/files/images/GPO%20Framework%20Document%20Draft%20-%20clean%20%2818%20February%202013%29.pdf>

8 Iceland, Namibia, New Zealand, Norway and the US.

What is Rights-Based Fishing?

The literature is full of information on “Rights-Based Fishing”⁹, and the proponents of this system openly refer to RBF as a form of individual private property rights. At the extreme, proponents talk openly of “the privatization of the oceans”. In the United States these programs are now called ‘Catch shares’. In Iceland, Chile and New Zealand, they are called Individual Transferable Quotas (ITQs), the European Commission refers to Transferable Fishing Concessions (TFCs), while in Africa the New Economic Partnership for African Development (NEPAD) and the African Union (AU) call them ‘Wealth-Based Fishing’.

Over the last few decades, we have witnessed a shift from state ownership toward private ownership of fishing rights in the countries where rights-based fishing is introduced. The characteristic features of such programmes are that the ‘rights’ are freely given to selected owners, are fully transferable (can be leased, bought or sold), are effectively permanent, and are based on “catch history”¹⁰.

Social and environmental impacts of Rights-Based Fishing

Firstly, it is important to stress the relevance of small-scale fisheries. At the global level, approximately 140 million people are engaged in catching fish in rivers, lakes and at sea. Approximately 90 percent of the fisher people work in the small-scale fishing sector, and predominantly in the Global South. These small-scale fisher people catch half of the world's total catches by volume. For each fisher in the small-scale sector, an additional four people (on average) are engaged in land-based activities, such as the preparation of equipment, fish processing, and marketing. In total, more than half a billion people depend on fisheries for their livelihoods. These numbers are confirmed by the World Bank¹¹.

When governments introduce RBF, we witness a number of consequences, which are all equally important to understand and acknowledge. Many of these consequences are unknown to stakeholders, who are not deeply engaged in small-scale fisheries, and because the sector attracts relatively little attention, the consequences are often poorly documented. Herein we highlight some of the critical consequences of RBF.

All over the world we see a similar pattern when RBF has been introduced: a concentration of fishing rights in the hands of a few people, and a reduction in the number of boats and people who make a livelihood from fishing. A study of RBF in four out of the five countries described by the GPO as ‘well-known cases...[that] have shown sizable economic, social and environmental benefits’¹² – concludes that ‘the negative impacts often fall on less powerful segments of the fishing

9 See for example: The Privatization of Oceans. Rognvaldur Hannesson. 2006 or Understanding and contextualizing social impacts from the privatization of fisheries: An Overview. Julia Olson. 2011: <http://www.gmri.org/upload/files/Olson%20Understanding%20and%20contextualizing.pdf>

10 Seth Macinko. 2012. In [Fisheries Governance for Food Security: What lies behind the concept of Rights-Based Fisheries?](http://masifundise.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2013/02/follow_up_report_EN_final_ebook-11.pdf) http://masifundise.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2013/02/follow_up_report_EN_final_ebook-11.pdf

11 “One billion people in developing countries depend upon fish and seafood for their primary source of protein. Over half a billion people in developing countries depend on fishing as a livelihood. Half are women.” - from: <http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/NEWS/0,,contentMDK:23126181~pagePK:34370~piPK:34424~theSitePK:4607,00.html>

12 GPO second draft Framework Document page 11: <http://www.globalpartnershipforoceans.org/sites/default/files/images/GPO%20Framework%20Document%20Draft>

industry, namely the crew, or the small business owners without a fleet of vessels or vertically integrated business'.¹³

In **South Africa** – one of the countries not cited by the GPO – RBF was introduced in 2001. After introduction, the incentive for taking care of marine resources vanished in many areas. For generations, small-scale fishers have maintained a traditional system of taking care of the environment. This stewardship builds on the multi-species character of small-scale fisheries, where fishers shift from catching one species to another depending on species availability (migration patterns), and insights in fishery biology and ecology, for example, fishing bans in specific fishing areas and in breeding seasons. The system builds on traditional regulations and is passed on from the one generation to the next. The introduction of single species RBF led to the exclusion of 90% of the country's 30.000 fisher people. The minority 10% of the fishers who were allocated a quota under the new system were only allowed to catch one particular species, and hence, the traditional multi-species fishery was lost.

Furthermore, as 90% of the fishers had their right to fish removed, it also meant that they lost the means to feed their families. The response of many was to disobey the law and become the first in a chain of illegal fishing and export. In this process, fishers lost respect for the traditional rules and practises. Many went fishing at night, and aimed to catch as much as possible – partially because the criminal middlemen offered a very low price for the catch. Today, after the government abandoned the RBF system for small-scale fisheries, and instead endorsed a specific policy for small-scale fisheries, the fishers are still fighting to re-introduce traditional practices.

When the South African government opted for RBF, it included a safeguard system to ensure that the previously disadvantaged people (Apartheid victims) from fishing communities would benefit under the new system. It was argued that this system produced a trickle-down effect for the benefit of the previously disadvantaged. However, in practice these two mechanisms were incompatible from the start: RBF limits the number of quota holders, while the safeguard system was designed to expand the number of rights holders. Rather than spurring a meaningful social transformation, and the expansion and stabilization of the industry, RBF reform marginalised fishers whose livelihoods depend on marine resources¹⁴, divided communities into the haves and have-nots, and fostered violent social conflicts.

In response, the excluded fishers and fisher organisations took the Minister for Fisheries to court on the grounds that the RBF legislation was unconstitutional, arguing for their rights to practice their livelihoods and to be included in fisheries policy. In May 2007, just before the inquiry was due to begin in the Equality High Court, the Minister of Environmental Affairs and Tourism admitted that the fisheries policy failed to recognise the constitutional rights of small-scale fishers. The claimants and the minister came to an agreement, which the judge made an Order of the Court, to draft a new small-scale fisheries policy for South Africa.¹⁵

[%20-%20clean%20%2818%20February%202013%29.pdf](#)

13 Understanding and contextualizing social impacts from the privatization of fisheries: An overview. J. Olson. 2011. <http://www.gmri.org/upload/files/Olson%20Understanding%20and%20contextualizing.pdf>

14 Individual transferable quotas, poverty alleviation and challenges for small-country fisheries policy in South Africa. Isaacs, Moenieba (2011), University of Western Cape, South Africa, MAST 2011, 10(2): 63-84.

15 Equality Court Order, the High Court of South Africa, (File no: EC 1/2005) http://www.lrc.org.za/Docs/Judgments/George_Fishers_Order_2May2007.doc

In **Denmark**, RBF has led to a substantial draining of the fleet from traditional fishing communities – many communities no longer have any active fishing vessels, and others have less than 50% of the vessels that were active prior to the introduction of RBF in 2005¹⁶.

Passed by **Chile's** Legislature in December 2012, a new law sets quotas for fishing for the next 20 years. This RBF system allots a combined 92 percent of overall quotas to four companies, and the significant majority (68%) of the country's 127,000 people working in the fisheries sector have to share the remaining 8 percent of the quotas¹⁷. It is inevitable that the RBF law in Chile will result in significant loss of livelihoods and increased poverty. Chile has already implemented RBF, and this new law is simply an entrenchment of that system. It is also important to mention that documentation of cheating under the RBF system has been published by Chilean scholars¹⁸ – even though RBF is supposed to promote stewardship,

The **US** Catch Share system (RBF) was introduced in New England in 2010 to halt what was perceived as a 'race for fish' system. Only a couple of years later, in 2013, the Catch Share system had resulted in a significant accumulation of quotas on bigger vessels. This has, according to the director of marine fisheries in the state of Maine, significantly contributed to declines in fish abundance¹⁹. In Alaska, fishery managers have also recognised the problem. There, small fishing communities have disproportionately lost fishing rights, and especially Alaska native villages are vulnerable²⁰. "Related social changes, including the emergence of a lost generation ... pose challenges for community sustainability' and 'place-based', collective fishing lifestyles are being replaced by individual private fishing rights for the elite"²¹.

In **New Zealand**, small fishers were disadvantaged with the introduction of RBF by the fact that commercial banks will not consider their quotas as collateral for lending. A small-scale fisher without either a large quota allotment or a large bank account finds it hard to acquire more quotas when their own share is too small to make an economically viable business. Small-scale fishers cannot borrow against other assets as larger companies are able to do. This has made it easier for large firms to buy up many of the tradable quotas. Many small-scale fishers also lost out because they had relatively lower levels of education and business expertise, and a comparative lack of ambition to develop modern business enterprises²².

In **Namibia**, RBF was introduced in 1992. In a review by Ragnar Arnason, Professor in Economics with almost three decades of experience within RBF, it is stated that in terms of 'stewardship' there is no evidence of increased voluntary compliance by the fishing industry²³. Furthermore, capital

16 Captains of Finance - An Inquiry into Market-based Fisheries Management. Høst, Jeppe (2013), University of Copenhagen, PhD Thesis.

17 <http://www.equaltimes.org/news/chile-intenta-privatizar-el-mar>
http://therealnews.com/t2/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=767&Itemid=74&jumival=9528#.UTCGEGQ-uoM

18 'ITQs under illegal fishing: An application to the red shrimp fishery in Chile'. Chavez et al. 2008. In Marine Policy 32:570-579.

19 <http://www.gloucestertimes.com/local/x1874094025/Catch-shares-tied-to-cod-losses>

20 Fishing rights and small communities: Alaska halibut IFQ transfer patterns. Carothers, C et al. 2010. In Ocean & Coastal Management 53: 518-523.

21 "Rationalized Out": Discourses and Realities of Fisheries Privatization in Kodiak, Alaska. C. Carothers. 2008. American Fisheries Society Symposium 68:55-74.

22 Memon, Pyar and Cullen, Ross, "Fishery Policies and their Impact on the New Zealand Maori." Marine Resource Economics. VII No. 3 (1992): 153-67.

<http://ageconsearch.umn.edu/bitstream/48623/2/18824556.pdf>

23 A Review of International Experiences with ITQs. Arnason, Ragnar (2002).

http://www.port.ac.uk/research/cemare/publications/pdf/files/reportspdf/filetodownload_103922.en.pdf

flight in the fishing industry is rampant under the RBF system. According to the Centre for Public Integrity, companies headquartered in Spain with local subsidiaries control about 75 percent of the Namibian hake market. Their catches in 2010 have brought in about 300 million dollars on Spain's frozen-fish market, while only little wealth is retained in Namibia²⁴.

In **Iceland**, many quota holders sold their rights for windfall profits before the banking and financial crisis. Many smaller fisheries companies were merged with or acquired by bigger ones. In the five-year period 2003–7, some 428 fishing companies ceased to exist. The result is a few vertically integrated fisheries companies with considerable economic power. In 2007, ten of the largest quota holders controlled 51.7 % of the quotas. RBF has led to a situation in which the inhabitants of many fishing towns were more or less excluded from access to their marine resources²⁵. An attempt to introduce a system of community quotas also faced severe problems as it created conflicts between the haves and have-nots²⁶.

Two of the excluded fishers alleged that Iceland's RBF system violated the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), because the system forced them to pay money to a privileged group of citizens – the owners of fishing quotas – in order to pursue their occupation. In October 2007, the Human Rights Committee (HRC) under the ICCPR ruled that Iceland's ITQ system did indeed violate international law. The HRC ruled that the two fishermen should be compensated for their losses, and that Iceland should take measures to give effect to the HRC's decision²⁷.

In summary, these examples document how RBF leads to *de facto* exclusion of small-scale fishers and the concentration of fishing rights with an elite minority. They provide evidence that RBF is incompatible with small-scale fishing, and is likely to result in the loss of traditional fishing management practices. Furthermore, they show that the 'ownership promotes stewardship' thesis is far from a 'universal truth', as claimed by the GPO.

Exclusion of millions of fisher people in the GPO

We, who represents millions of fisher people from all over the world, have not been invited nor involved in any preparatory processes of the GPO, and at the time the GPO declaration²⁸ was drawn up, it was clear that the GPO promotes values and systems that contradict the fundamental value systems underpinning the vast majority of small-scale fisheries around the world.

The GPO is described as an 'inclusive partnership of public, private and civil society organizations and governments', but it is open only to those who formally endorse the GPO declaration²⁹. As of 28 February 2013, only one or two of the GPO members listed under 'Civil Society Organizations' can claim to directly represent fisher people, and only an extremely limited number – in relative terms – of the world's fisher people.

We perceive Rights-Based Fishing as a main threat to our environment in general, and to small-scale fisheries in particular, and we therefore cannot endorse the GPO declaration. As a consequence we, who by far represents the largest number of fisher peoples around the world, are

24 <http://www.publicintegrity.org/2011/10/04/6769/spain-s-hake-appetite-threatens-namibia-s-most-valuable-fish>

25 <http://www.curra.ca/documents/KBenAKarticle.pdf>

26 http://www.curra.ca/videos_iceland_talk.htm (11:15)

27 http://www.worldcourts.com/hrc/eng/decisions/2007.10.24_Haraldsson_v_Iceland.htm

28 <https://globalpartnershipforoceans.org/sites/default/files/images/GPO%20Declaration.pdf>

29 <https://globalpartnershipforoceans.org/sites/default/files/images/GPO%20Framework%20Document%20Draft%20-%20clean%20%2818%20February%202013%29.pdf>

effectively excluded from engaging in the GPO. Hence, the claim of the GPO to be an 'inclusive partnership' is highly questionable.

This exclusion of the vast majority of the world's fisher people from decision making in reform processes is a fundamental denial of their rights as reflected in numerous international instruments, including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights; the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights; the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women; the Convention on the Rights of the Child; the Declaration on the Right to Development; the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples; and the Millennium Declaration (para. 25).

Furthermore, the GPO is aimed at reducing poverty. According to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, participation is an affirmation of the right of every individual and group to take part in the conduct of public affairs, but also a part of the solution to poverty and social exclusion. Anti-poverty and development policies are more likely to be effective, sustainable, inclusive and equitable if they are the result of participatory processes. Participatory methods are important tools for empowerment, accountability, and ending the cycle of deprivation and dependency in favour of the autonomy and social inclusion of people living in poverty.³⁰

Alternative solution

Below, we highlight some of the most important objectives and principles that must guide development and implementation of ocean and fisheries policy at local to international levels. The explicit focus and priority of these objectives and principles is fundamentally different, and in sharp contrast to, the overarching principle of RBF, upon which the Global Partnership for Oceans is built.

Involvement of small-scale fishers

The importance of empowerment and inclusion of fisher people in fisheries governance and management has been increasingly acknowledged over the past few decades. The development of the United Nations International Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-scale Fisheries is a recent example on how small-scale fisher people are becoming increasingly recognized as key stakeholders. Besides a long and inclusive process involving country and continental-level workshops and conferences, all stakeholders were welcomed to submit comments and suggestions to the Zero Draft by mid February 2013³¹.

Support for empowerment of small-scale fishing communities to participate in decision making is listed as the first objective of the (zero draft) International Guidelines for Securing Small-scale Fisheries³². Similarly, the empowerment and inclusion of small-scale fisher people are enshrined as key principles and objectives in the policy for the small-scale fisheries sector in South Africa³³.

It is imperative that the governance of fisheries continues along this path.

30 <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Poverty/Pages/ParticipationOfPersonsLivingInPoverty.aspx>

31 International Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-scale Fisheries, Zero Draft:
ftp://ftp.fao.org/Fi/DOCUMENT/ssf/SSF_guidelines/ZeroDraftSSFGuidelines_MAY2012.pdf

32 International Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-scale Fisheries, Zero Draft:
ftp://ftp.fao.org/Fi/DOCUMENT/ssf/SSF_guidelines/ZeroDraftSSFGuidelines_MAY2012.pdf

33 The policy for the small scale fisheries sector in South Africa
<http://www.nda.agric.za/docs/Policy/PolicySmallScaleFishe.pdf>

The human rights-based approach

The human rights-based approach to fisheries is distinctly different from the notion of Rights Based Fisheries. We must recognize that the benefits from fish resources cannot be measured purely in economic terms (as with RBF). Non-monetary benefits include the sharing of power, greater dignity, capacity development and empowerment, decreased conflict, increased food sovereignty and enhanced social cohesion. These equate to, or in some cases even exceed, the importance of monetary benefits³⁴.

Fisheries experts and organisations representing fisher peoples from around the world have argued that economic incentives for resource stewardship is insufficient when there are other sources of insecurity in people's lives that are unrelated to the state of fishery resources. More secure, less vulnerable fishers make more effective and motivated fishery managers in the context of participatory and human rights-based approach to fisheries governance³⁵.

The human rights-based approach to fisheries recognizes that development efforts in fisheries should contribute to securing the freedom, food sovereignty and dignity of all fisher people everywhere. The adoption of a human rights-based approach has an intrinsic rationale, in as much as achieving human rights of all citizens is a goal in itself. Adopting this approach also has an instrumental logic in that it is likely to lead to better and more sustainable human development outcomes, recognizing that the development of responsible and sustainable small-scale fisheries is possible only if the political, civil, social, economic and cultural rights of fisher people are addressed in an integrated manner.³⁶

The UN's Special Rapporteur on the right to food has also taken up the issue of fisheries and the right to food, making explicit the link between the right to food and the rights of those who produce it, to

fair access to productive resources such as land and water, and to obtain a fair share of the benefits from their labours. In the Right to Food report transmitted to the members of the United Nations General Assembly in 2012, the Special Rapporteur favors the involvement of local fishing communities in the design, implementation and assessment of the fisheries policies and interventions affecting them, in accordance with human rights norms and standards³⁷.

The (draft) International Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-scale Fisheries are based on principles of good governance and human rights³⁸.

Gender equity

Equal rights between men and women are a fundamental, universal principle enshrined in national and international legislation worldwide. Yet, the fact remains that women have fewer opportunities than men – also in terms of decision making in the fisheries.

34 CAADP Policy Brief 040: CAADP and Fisheries Policy in Africa: are we aiming for the right reform, 2011

35 Allison EH, Ratner BD, Åsgård B, Willmann R, Pomeroy R, Kurien J, Rights-based fisheries governance: from fishing rights to human rights, 2012

36 Fisheries Governance for Food Security: What lies behind the concept of Rights-Based Fisheries? 2012. http://masifundise.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2013/02/follow_up_report_EN_final_ebook-11.pdf

37 Fisheries and the Right to Food. Report of the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the right to food. 2012 http://www.srfood.org/images/stories/pdf/officialreports/20121030_fish_en.pdf

38 International Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-scale Fisheries, Zero Draft: ftp://ftp.fao.org/Fi/DOCUMENT/ssf/SSF_guidelines/ZeroDraftSSFGuidelines_MAY2012.pdf

The critical role played by women within fisheries must be recognised, and mechanisms to promote and protect women's rights to participate in all aspects of marine and coastal resource governance and management should be put in place. Implicit herein is the need for gender equity in governance institutes at national, regional and international levels.

Women within small-scale fisheries should be empowered and encouraged to set up their own groups, organizations and networks. Measures to improve women's access to fish and fish markets, particularly through provision of credit at affordable rates, appropriate technology and infrastructure (including water and sanitation) at landing sites and markets should be implemented³⁹. Gender aggregated statistics should be collected to better describe women's work in both inland and marine fisheries in all aspects of the fisheries chain, and to identify gender gaps in the sector.

The importance of empowerment of small-scale fishing communities, with explicit reference to women and vulnerable and marginalised groups, is listed as an explicit component of the first objective of the draft International Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-scale Fisheries.

A policy for the small-scale fisheries sector in South Africa was endorsed by the South African government in 2012. Interestingly, this policy builds on the above list of principles and objectives and is in coherence with the draft International Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-scale Fisheries. Both pieces of legislation also build on a number of additional principles and objectives, including the recognition of traditional and customary rights, recognition of the great diversity of small-scale fisheries, equity and non-discrimination, transparency and accountability, preferential access for small-scale fisheries, a multi-species approach, co-management, and environmental sustainability.

Our call to you:

The World Forum of Fisher Peoples and the World Forum of Fish Harvesters and Fish Workers, and all our members from across the world, call on governments of each country and inter-governmental institutions to abandon the Global Partnership for Oceans and impose an immediate and complete stop to initiatives pursuing Rights-Based Fishing as a 'cure all' for fisheries. Furthermore, we urge governments of each country and all inter-governmental institutions to direct their human and financial resources towards a strengthened engagement with the world's small-scale fisher peoples and the finalisation and implementation of the International Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-scale Fisheries.

³⁹ Towards International Guidelines for Sustainable Small-scale Fisheries: Submission from Civil Society Organisations to the FAO Consultative process on Small-scale Fisheries, 2012