

INTERNATIONAL LEGAL INSTRUMENTS RELEVANT TO FISHERIES AND FISHING COMMUNITIES: A HANDBOOK. International Collective in Support of Fishworkers. 2006.

A practical road map

A review of a unique handbook on international legal instruments relevant to fisheries and fishing communities

The easy-to-navigate eight-volume thematic handbook on *International Legal Instruments Relevant to Fisheries and Fishing Communities*, published by the International Collective in Support of Fishworkers (ICSF), is both wide-ranging and comprehensive, and is accompanied by a CD-ROM. The information is also available on ICSF's website at <http://legal.icsf.net>.

The handbook offers a compendium of 114 instruments, including 'hard law'—those with legal effect that are binding on parties, such as treaties and conventions—and 'soft law'—those that are voluntary, such as United Nations General Assembly Resolutions, the 1995 Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries, and Action Plans.

The handbook has important and commendable features that are tailored to a readership concerned about fisheries management, many of whom may not have more than a nodding acquaintance with international legal processes or a firm understanding of the suite of issues involved. Equally, experts in various aspects of fisheries and fishing communities, who have spent a lifetime devoted to international processes that have shaped these instruments, would gain knowledge in complementary areas to round out their experience.

This reference guide was originally developed for an ICSF training programme held in 2003 for fishworkers and non-government organizations (NGOs), and it was realized that the handbook could be important in the

advocacy and campaign activities of these and many other stakeholders.

To that end, the legal instruments were grouped into seven themes:

- Human Rights, Food Security, Women and Development
- Environment and Sustainable Development
- Oceans and Fisheries Management
- Environmental Pollution
- Fishing Vessels and Safety at Sea
- Labour
- Trade

The thematic approach is of great value because it fosters an integrated approach towards fisheries management and underlines the impact of current globalization dynamics—for example, the rapidly expanding development of trade measures in fisheries.

Practical information

For each instrument, practical information is provided on the mechanisms for implementing the international instruments, including decision-making bodies and implementing agencies. The frequency of the meetings of the bodies and agencies is described, as are rules for participation by States and NGOs. Monitoring agencies and regional bodies relevant to the instrument are also listed. Importantly, the handbook highlights key provisions of each instrument that are relevant for

moved to individual quota management with strict limits on transferability in the late 1980s, eliminating the race for fish and many wasteful practices. The licence holders fund and manage dockside monitoring, and contribute significantly to funding the government-based scientific stock assessment through co-management agreements. In many ways, the midshore Area 12 crab fishery is a model fishery except in one crucial area: the equitable distribution of resource rents.