

A Sustainable, Equitable, Small-scale Fisheries

The following Statement was issued at the National Summit for Small-scale Fishers, held in Port Elizabeth, South Africa, during 1-2 November 2007

22

We, the participants at this National Summit, representing 100 representatives of traditional small-scale fisher and coastal communities from the four coastal provinces, researchers, academics, community and non-governmental organizations working with fisher communities,

Noting that:

This is a historic moment as it is the first time in South Africa's history that small-scale fishers have been recog-

This is a historic moment as it is the first time in South Africa's history that small-scale fishers have been recognized by government and come together to participate in a national summit...

nized by government and come together to participate in a national summit, together with government representatives and representatives from civil society;

We comprise many different fisher communities, traditionally harvesting marine resources from the nearshore zone for our livelihoods. Some fishers harvest for immediate food security, others harvest for both food and for a cash income to cover their basic needs;

We include fishers who refer to themselves as 'subsistence', 'artisanal',

'small-scale' and 'traditional' but most of us move within this range of fishers;

We harvest a wide range of marine species in the intertidal and nearshore zone, using low- and medium-cost, primarily low- and medium-tech gear;

Our families have a long tradition of harvesting marine resources and our forefathers and mothers have utilized and developed ways of protecting the country's marine and coastal resources for generations, contributing to a rich tradition, culture and body of indigenous knowledge;

Whereas previously we could utilize the resources we needed to sustain our livelihoods, the apartheid regime took away many of our fishers' rights; in many instances, communities were separated from their means of livelihood;

Our coastal and fisher communities have experienced the systematic erosion of our rights to the sea, increasing poverty and other social problems;

Many coastal and fisher communities are still very marginalized, with very little access to infrastructure, services and information;

Noting further that:

This small-scale sector has not received the attention that it deserves in the legislative and policy processes following the introduction of democracy in South Africa;

This Statement was adapted on 2 November 2007 at the Nelson Mandela University, Port Elizabeth, South Africa

Subsistence fishers have been issued exemption permits on an inconsistent, late and haphazard basis;

The Long-term Rights Allocation Policy (2005) focused on the commercial sector;

Most traditional, small-scale fishers were excluded from the rights allocation process;

This sector is extremely vulnerable to exploitation by opportunistic forces;

The individual quota system introduced during the medium- and long-term policies has divided our communities and has not led to sustainable management of our intertidal and near-shore resources;

The industrialized commercial sector continues to exploit and control the intertidal and nearshore zone;

Fishers have not participated equally in the development of policies or management systems;

Noting, in addition, that:

South Africa's Constitution and the Bill of Rights therein protects the rights of all people, especially previously disadvantaged communities, to food security, traditional and cultural practices, equitable access to natural resources and substantive participation in decision-making processes that affect their well-being;

South Africa has signed the Code of Conduct on Responsible Fisheries as well as a number of other international and national policy and legal instruments that recognize the contribution that the small-scale sector makes to food security and poverty eradication;

Fishers' rights to their livelihoods are indivisible from their human rights, and the development of a sustainable fisheries management system is dependent on fishers' access to basic socioeconomic rights;

Fishers have the right to participate equally in policy- and decision-making;

Our marine resources are vulnerable to overharvesting, climate change and other factors, and we need to develop mechanisms for adapting our management systems and responses to these issues.

We resolve that:

A new policy for the small-scale sector, incorporating subsistence, artisanal and traditional small-scale fishers, be developed.

This Summit should identify a Task Team, representing fishers and government from all four coastal provinces, to take this Statement and the outcomes of this Summit and to integrate these into a new Draft Policy.

This Task Team should then advise on the process for taking this Draft Policy to communities for discussion, debate and acceptance.

This Draft Policy should include the following:

Our Vision

Our vision is a sustainable, equitable, small-scale fisheries in which communities have been empowered to secure their human rights, dignity and social, economic and gender justice, and the well-being and livelihoods of our fisher and coastal communities and marine ecosystems are ensured.

Our Objectives:

To recognize and protect fishers' human rights and their traditional fishing rights, in full compliance with national, regional, and international legal obligations;

To restore the rights of those traditional fishers and fisher communities



Artisanal fishers in the Western Cape of South Africa march on Parliament to hand over a memorandum to the President in March 2006