

Protocol on securing sustainable small-scale fisheries for Caribbean Community fisherfolk and societies

The Participating Parties:

Conscious that small-scale fisheries comprise approximately half of the global fish catch and contribute immeasurably to food and nutrition security, poverty eradication and sustainable development;

Recognising that small-scale fisheries also provide services deeply entrenched in the values, cultures, economies, livelihoods and future aspirations of Caribbean coastal communities to sustain their well being;

Committed to the Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism (CRFM) mission to “*Promote and facilitate the responsible utilisation of the region’s fisheries and other aquatic resources for the economic and social benefits of the current and future population of the region*”;

Mindful of the global endorsement of the *Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication* (SSF Guidelines) by the 31st Session of the Committee on Fisheries (COFI) of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations in June 2014;

Recalling the useful integration of the guiding principles of the 1995 FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries into the *Caribbean Community Common Fisheries Policy* (CCCFP);

Appreciating the relevance of the 2010 Castries (St. Lucia) Declaration on Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated (IUU) Fishing to equity, bearing in mind the centrality of human rights and social justice enshrined in the vision of the Caribbean Community;

Noting the participatory process of consultation undertaken with CRFM fisheries stakeholders that showed they support implementation of the SSF Guidelines;

Aware of the advantages of promoting human rights based approaches to small-scale fisheries and sustainable development, including gender equality and equity, in the CCCFP by implementing the SSF Guidelines;

Convinced that the SSF Guidelines will contribute to achieving the mission of the CRFM and enhancing the development of small-scale fisheries through implementation of the CCCFP;

Have agreed as follows:

Article 1: Use of Terms

“SSF Guidelines” means the *Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication* including any amendments

“Policy” means the *Caribbean Community Common Fisheries Policy* and the definitions in Article 1 of the Policy apply to this Protocol

“Protocol” means this instrument, urged under Article 7 and made under Article 20 of the Policy, to incorporate the SSF Guidelines

“Competent Agency” means the Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism

Article 2: Objective of the Protocol

2.1 The objective of this Protocol is to secure sustainable small-scale fisheries for Caribbean Community fisherfolk and societies.

2.2 To support this objective the Participating Parties agree to incorporate the SSF Guidelines into the Policy, and into programmes, plans and other initiatives of their fisheries authorities and the Competent Agency, with special attention to gender equality, equity and human rights based approaches.

Article 3: Implementation of the Protocol

3.1 The SSF Guidelines and hence the implementation of them through this protocol are voluntary in nature. The SSF Guidelines should be interpreted and applied in accordance with the legal systems and institutions of Participating Parties and the Competent Agency.

3.2 Regional implementation of the SSF Guidelines should be guided by meaningful and substantive participatory, consultative, multi-level, inter-sectoral and objective-oriented modern governance and management processes that accommodate and incorporate the voices and perspectives of both men and women, and of both young people and the elderly, utilizing an ecosystem approach to fisheries

3.3 Subject areas of the SSF Guidelines addressed under this Protocol, include:

- i. Governance of tenure and resource management;
- ii. Social development, employment and decent work;
- iii. Value chains, post-harvest and trade;
- iv. Gender equality;
- v. Disaster risks and climate change;
- vi. Policy coherence, institutional coordination and collaboration;
- vii. Information, research and communication;
- viii. Capacity development; and
- ix. Implementation support and monitoring

3.4 Nothing in this Protocol or in the SSF Guidelines should be read as limiting or undermining any rights or obligations to which a Participating Party may be subject under international law.

3.5 The SSF Guidelines may be used to guide change, and inspire new or supplementary legislative and regulatory provisions, including regional or national fisheries policies and management plans, and pathways towards achieving sustainable development and similar global goals.

3.6 Participating Parties are urged to establish, strengthen, support and engage fisherfolk organisations as necessary to effectively implement this protocol and the SSF Guidelines; this being especially through adaptive fisheries management plans that are actively kept under review.

Article 4: Entry Into Force

This Protocol shall enter into force upon on a date to be agreed by the Ministerial Council of the Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism.