

# SMALL-SCALE FISHERIES IN INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENTS

INTERNATIONAL POLE & LINE FOUNDATION (IPNLF)



## Introduction

Small-scale fisheries are recognized as important in a number of multilateral institutions, agreements and policy documents. Given the importance of global tuna fisheries to countless coastal communities, it is critical that the multilateral agreements and the management systems they support safeguard not only the resource but also the people that depend on it.

This document provides a brief summary of the representation of small-scale fisheries in key multilateral institutional documentation, including United Nations agreements, FAO Guidelines, and RFMO treaty texts. It illustrates the explicit recognition given to small-scale, developing country fisheries, which should be central to all management and supply chain practices.

### International Convention for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT)

Document: [Resolution by ICCAT on Criteria for the Allocation of Fishing Possibilities](#)

*IPNLF comment - ICCAT is the only tuna RFMO that references allocation and criteria focusing on protecting artisanal, social, and economic dependence. Originally this was a binding recommendation implemented in 2001 (ICCAT 01-25). This has since expired but they do still have a voluntary resolution all Members agreed to in 2015. Below is the relevant text from the 2015 voluntary resolution (15-13)*

#### III Allocation Criteria

...C. Criteria Relating to the Status of the Qualifying Participants

8. The interests of artisanal, subsistence and small-scale coastal fishers.
9. The needs of the coastal fishing communities which are dependent mainly on fishing for the stocks.
10. The needs of the coastal States of the region whose economies are overwhelmingly dependent on the exploitation of living marine resources, including those regulated by ICCAT.
11. The socio-economic contribution of the fisheries for stocks regulated by ICCAT to the developing States, especially small island developing States and developing territories from, the region.
12. The respective dependence on the stock(s) of the coastal States, and of the other States that fish species regulated by ICCAT.
13. The economic and/or social importance of the fishery for qualifying participants whose fishing vessels have habitually participated in the fishery in the Convention Area.
14. The contribution of the fisheries for the stocks regulated by ICCAT to the national food security/needs, domestic consumption, income resulting from exports, and employment of qualifying participants.
15. The right of qualified participants to engage in fishing on the high seas for the stocks to be allocated.

## United Nations Fish Stocks Agreement

Document: [“Agreement For The Implementation of the Provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea of 10 December 1982 Relating to the Conservation and Management of Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks”](#)

### Article 24: Recognition of the Special Requirements of Developing States

Para. 2: In giving effect to the duty to cooperate in the establishment of conservation and management measures for straddling fish stocks and highly migratory fish stocks, States shall take into account the special requirements of developing States, in particular:

- (a) the vulnerability of developing States which are **dependent on** the exploitation of living marine resources, including for meeting the **nutritional requirements** of their populations or parts thereof;
- (b) the need to avoid adverse impacts on, and ensure access to fisheries by, subsistence, **small-scale and artisanal fishers and women fishworkers, as well as indigenous people** in developing States, particularly small island developing States; and
- (c) the need to ensure that such measures do not result in transferring, directly or indirectly, a **disproportionate burden** of conservation action onto developing States.

### Article 25: Forms of cooperation with developing States

Para. 1: States shall cooperate, either directly or through subregional, regional or global organizations:

- (a) to enhance the ability of developing States, in particular the least-developed among them and small island developing States, to **conserve and manage** straddling fish stocks and highly migratory fish stocks and to develop their own fisheries for such stocks;
- (b) to assist developing States, in particular the least-developed among them and small island developing States, to enable them to **participate in high seas fisheries** for such stocks, including **facilitating access** to such fisheries subject to articles 5 and 11; and
- (c) to facilitate the **participation** of developing States in **subregional and regional fisheries management organizations and arrangements**.

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## FAO Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries

Document: [“Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Small-Scale Fisheries”](#)

### Preface

These Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication have been developed as a complement to the 1995 FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries (the Code). They were developed to provide complementary guidance with respect to small-scale fisheries in support of the overall principles and provisions of the Code. Accordingly, the Guidelines are intended to support the **visibility, 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 fisheries and sustainable social and economic development** for the benefit of current and future generations, with an **emphasis on small-scale fishers and fish workers** and related activities and including vulnerable and marginalized people, promoting a **human rights-based approach**.

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## FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries

Document: [“Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries”](#)

### Article 5: Special Requirements of Developing Countries

5.1 The **capacity** of developing countries to implement the recommendations of this Code should be duly taken into account.

5.2 In order to achieve the objectives of this Code and to support its effective implementation, countries, relevant international organizations, whether governmental or non-governmental, and financial institutions should give **full recognition to the special circumstances and requirements of developing countries**, including in particular the least-developed among them, and small island developing countries. States, relevant intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations and financial institutions should work for the adoption of measures to address the needs of developing countries, especially in the areas of **financial and technical assistance, technology transfer, training and scientific cooperation** and in enhancing their ability to develop their own fisheries as well as to **participate in high seas fisheries**, including access to such fisheries.

### Article 6: General Principles

6.18 Recognizing the important contributions of artisanal and small-scale fisheries to **employment, income and food security**, States should appropriately **protect the rights of fishers and fishworkers**, particularly those engaged in subsistence, small-scale and artisanal fisheries, to a **secure and just livelihood**, as well as **preferential access**, where appropriate, to traditional fishing grounds and resources in the waters under their national jurisdiction.

### Article 7.2 Management objectives

7.2.1 Recognizing that long-term sustainable use of fisheries resources is the overriding objective of conservation and management, States and subregional or regional fisheries management organizations and arrangements should, *inter alia*, adopt appropriate measures, based on the best scientific evidence available, which are designed to maintain or restore stocks at levels capable of producing maximum sustainable yield, as qualified by relevant environmental and economic factors, including the **special requirements of developing countries**.

7.2.2 Such measures should provide *inter alia* that:

[...]

c) the interests of fishers, including those engaged in subsistence, small-scale and artisanal fisheries, are taken into account

[...]

### Article 12: Fisheries Research

12.12 States should investigate and document **traditional fisheries knowledge and technologies**, in particular those applied to **small-scale fisheries**, in order to assess their application to sustainable fisheries conservation, management and development.

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## United Nations Sustainable Development Goals

### [Goal 14 Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources](#)

#### SDG Target 14.7:

By 2030 increase the **economic benefits** to Small Island developing States and least developed countries from the sustainable use of marine resources, including through **sustainable management** of fisheries, aquaculture and tourism.

#### SDG Target 14.a:

Increase scientific knowledge, develop research capacity and transfer marine technology, taking into account the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission Criteria and Guidelines on the Transfer of Marine Technology, in order to **improve ocean health** and **to enhance the contribution of marine biodiversity** to the **development of developing countries**, in particular small island developing States and least developed countries.

#### SDG Target 14.b:

**Provide access for small-scale artisanal fishers** to marine resources and markets.



### [Goal 2 End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture](#)

#### SDG Target 2.3:

By 2030, double the agricultural productivity and incomes of small-scale food producers, in particular **women, indigenous peoples**, family farmers, pastoralists and **fishers**, including through **secure and equal access** to land, other productive resources and **inputs, knowledge, financial services, markets** and opportunities for **value addition** and non-farm employment.



### [Goal 12 Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns](#)

#### SDG Target 12a:

Support developing countries to **strengthen their scientific and technological capacity** to move towards **more sustainable** patterns of consumption and production.





## ABOUT IPNLF

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The International Pole & Line Foundation (IPNLF) works to develop, support and promote socially and environmentally responsible pole-and-line and handline tuna fisheries around the world. IPNLF's ambition is to contribute to thriving coastal fisheries, including the people, communities, businesses and seas connected with them. As a hub for sustainably-minded organisations, we use the influence of the market to forge change through practical fishery projects and stakeholder cooperation. IPNLF membership is open to organisations involved in the one-by-one caught tuna supply chain. Allied with our Members, IPNLF demonstrates the value of one-by-one caught tuna to consumers, policymakers and throughout the supply chain. We work across science, policy and the seafood sector, using an evidence-based, solutions-focused approach with guidance from our Scientific & Technical Advisory Committee and Board of Trustees.

IPNLF was officially registered in the United Kingdom in 2012 (Charity 1145586), with branch offices in London and the Maldives, and a staff presence in Indonesia.

For more information, please contact IPNLF [info@ipnlf.org](mailto:info@ipnlf.org)



Photo Credit Front Cover

Left to right: St Helena's one-by-one tuna fisher, Waylon, loads the catch © IPNLF; Pole-and-line fishing, Azores © Franklin Tavares; Pole-and-line fishing, Maldives © IPNLF; One-by-one tuna fisher unload their catch in Indonesia © Paul Hilton & IPNLF