



Third Community-Based Fisheries Dialogue

14-15 November 2023

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Outcomes and actions report from the 3rd Community-Based Fisheries Dialogue

CBFD3



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Background

1. In August 2020, the First Regional Fisheries Ministers Meeting (RFMM1) endorsed a regional mechanism aimed at enhancing the engagement of civil society organisations (CSOs) and other non-state actors (para 16, Statement of Outcomes from RFMM1) to give effect to the decision of the Pacific Island Forum Leaders', made in September 2016, concerning coastal fisheries (as stated paragraph 10, 47th Leaders Communiqué).
2. The new mechanism involves convening a two-day dialogue on community-based fisheries (CBF) within the Regional Technical Meeting on Coastal Fisheries and Aquaculture (RTMCFA). The dialogue, known as the Community-Based Fisheries Dialogue (CBFD), serves a primary objective:
 - a. Providing the CSOs and other NSAs actively involved in community-based fisheries in the region, the platform to provide advice on key needs and issues associated coastal fisheries resources across the Pacific Island region. This is done through the RTMCFA to the Heads of Fisheries, to assist with informing regional fisheries ministers and Pacific leaders about priority issues associated with the sustainable access and use of coastal fisheries resources.
 - b. An avenue for CSOs and NSAs actively involved in community-based fisheries in the region to exchange experiences and lessons from Community-based initiatives to strengthen efforts to maintain productive and healthy ecosystems, and their associated fisheries resources, which are critical to the wellbeing of over 10,000 coastal communities in the Pacific Island countries and territories.
 - c. Fostering a dialogue with government and other partners on the management of coastal fisheries in the region.
3. The first CBFD (CBFD1) in 2021 focused on establishing an appropriate administrative foundation for future dialogues through the consideration of the provisional CBFD Terms of Reference (ToR). The Pacific Community (SPC) 14th Heads of Fisheries meeting (HoF14) considered and endorsed the agreed ToR, which include the appointment of a Community-Based Fisheries Dialogue Convenor and Vice-Convenor to work with the Pacific Community's (SPC) Division of Fisheries Aquaculture and Marine Ecosystems (FAME) and the Community-Based Fisheries Dialogue Advisory Group (CBFD-AG) in organising logistics for future CBFs and the facilitation of CBFs.
4. The 2nd Community-Based Fisheries Dialogue (CBFD2) was convened in hybrid in October 2022 at the SPC Headquarters in Noumea, New Caledonia, with the dialogue being held in association with the 5th Regional Technical Meeting on Coastal Fisheries and Aquaculture (RTMCFA5). The CBFD2 focused on engaging and hearing the voices of CSOs and other NSAs through identification of important community-based fisheries issues that are common across the region or sub-regions and discussed ways to address or enhance them. The CBFD2 participants also expressed their hopes and expectations for future CBFD process.



Third Community-Based Fisheries Dialogue (CBFD3)

5. The 3rd Community-Based Fisheries Dialogue (CBFD3) was held on 14-15 November 2023 at the SPC Headquarters in Noumea, New Caledonia, as a meeting within the 6th Regional Technical Meeting on Coastal Fisheries and Aquaculture (RTMCFA6).
6. The dialogue was chaired by Mr Eugene Joseph from the Federated States of Micronesia and the Vice Convenors, Ms Delvene Boso and Ms Aydah Akao from the Solomon Islands.
7. The CBFD3 focused on hearing the voice of the CSOs and NSAs, defining and adopting the selection criteria for CBFD participants, identifying national focal points and process, establishing the selection process for the Convenor and Vice-Convenor. The session was delivered in the broader context of scaling-up community-based fisheries management (CBFM) guided by the Pacific Framework for action on scaling-up CBFM, through discussions on strategic information, awareness and communication, and gender and social inclusion. The final session was on gathering Pacific voice to inform the planning and shaping of the Global Small-Scale Fisheries Summit 2024.
8. This report outlines the outcomes and action points of consensus among CBFD3 participants highlighting priority issues and needs to be actioned by CSOs and other NSAs, SPC members, provide guidance to SPC's Coastal Fisheries and Aquaculture Programme (CFAP), and identify key recommendations to be taken to the 16th Heads of Fisheries Meeting in April 2024.

Session 1 and 2: CBF Dialogue: Hearing the voice of the CSOs/NSAs

9. The Deputy Director for Fisheries Aquaculture and Marine Ecosystem (FAME) division (Coastal Fisheries and Aquaculture officially opened the CBFD3.
10. The CBFD3 noted and acknowledged the outstanding work carried out by the Community-Based Fisheries Dialogue Advisory Group (CBFD-AG) in directing SPC, as the secretariat, on:
 - a. The identification and selection of the CBFD3 participants.
 - b. The identification and selection of the CBFD3 Convenor and Vice-Convenors and
 - c. The development of the CBFD3 agenda.
11. The CBFD3 acknowledged the reporting and endorsement process on the CBFD2 Outcomes and Action report to the SPC Fifteen Heads of Fisheries Meeting (HoF15) and the Fourth Regional Fisheries Ministers Meeting (RFMM4).
12. The CSO/NSA participants proposed CBF issues of importance or interest that are common across the region or sub-regions, and worked to identify the top three priority issues to discuss later in Breakout Groups. In brief, the main issues proposed were:
 - a. Improving monitoring, control, surveillance and enforcement (MCS&E) through the integration of local enforcement within community-based approaches.



- b. Strengthening and expand partnership mechanisms to engage with government agencies, ensuring the coexistence of traditional governance systems alongside formal governance systems.
 - c. Promoting the inclusion of women and marginalised groups in local governance and decision-making processes.
 - d. Strengthening community engagement and participation in data collection, information provision, and resourcing support to address fisheries management issues such as destructive fishing practices (night fishing, nets), climate change impacts, and adverse effects from mining, poaching, and tourism.
 - e. The need for long term coherent and sustained resourcing and support to CSOs and NSAs.
13. From the listed issues of importance, the Cbfd participants identified three common CBF issues across the region for further discussion:
- a. Improving local enforcement through integrating Community-based enforcement.
 - b. Addressing emerging disruptions and pressures to fisheries management such as destructive fishing techniques as night fishing, use of nets with small mesh size, effects of climate change and other external cumulative stresses.
 - c. Integrating traditional governance systems to formal governance systems.
14. Cbfd participants considered the following three common CBF issues identified earlier for discussion in breakout groups. The main points from those breakout groups were:
- a. Integrate and strengthen community-based fisheries compliance and enforcement.
 - i. The Cbfd3 recognised the work carried out by CSOs and relevant government agencies in addressing enforcement at the country level.
 - ii. At the regional level, the Cbfd3 recognised the need to:
 - a) Discuss and developed long-term support mechanisms, systems or initiatives to strengthen enforcement of coastal fisheries laws and rules.
 - b) Coordinate donor investments to ensure the money and efforts are spent in the priority areas of coastal fisheries management, especially enforcement.
 - c) Ensure that fisheries awareness messaging needs to be about sustainable use of the fisheries resources to support livelihood and not about banning fishing.
 - d) Fisheries violations need to be considered as a serious offense.
 - e) Fines need to make sense and appropriate to the context of coastal fisheries.



- f) Communities need to understand the meaning of enforcement, and this requires awareness on rules, its existence and how enforcement is meant to help sustain fisheries.
- b. Addressing emerging disruptions/pressures to management – destructive fishing (night fishing, nets)
 - i. The CBF3D3 recognised the work carried out by CSOs and relevant government agencies in addressing emerging disruptions or pressure to coastal fisheries management at the country level.
 - ii. At the regional level, the CBF3D3 recognised the need to:
 - a) Provide platforms, forum, dialogues to discuss and input feedback from fishers to provide their opinion on legislation rules and regulations and reasons why some rules and regulations are not fit for purpose provide feedback loop from community to government.
 - b) Coordinate donor investments to ensure the money and efforts are spent in the much-needed area of coastal fisheries management, especially enforcement.
 - c) Stop allowing importation of illegal equipment such as small mesh nets.
 - d) Do awareness on the impact of destructive fishing methods and other external stressors to the fishery.
- c. Traditional governance systems functioning next to formal governance systems - how to find synergies?
 - i. The CBF3D3 recognised the work carried out by CSOs and relevant government agencies in addressing the integration of traditional governance and knowledge in supporting fisheries management.
 - ii. At the regional level, the CBF3D3 agreed on the need to:
 - a) Encourage and recognise traditional decision making and systems through all levels and bringing experiences from different countries together on how traditional systems are integrated in different contexts.
 - b) Government, NGOs and CSOs need to work on strengthening traditional governance especially on leadership training and strengthening of traditional roles.
 - iii. The CBF3D3 request HoF16 to enable recognition of community level governance systems in national legal frameworks where appropriate.
 - iv. The CBF3D3 acknowledges progress by member country governments on establishing dialogue with CSO and NSA groups. CBF3D3 requests HoF16 to



encourage national agencies to develop and/or foster strong, mutually beneficial partnerships with civil society groups and networks, towards strengthening CBFM nationally.

Session 3 and 4: Cbfd governance

15. The Cbfd3 discussed and agreed upon the following criteria to be use in future CBF dialogue for the selection of the Convenor and Vice-Convenor:
 - a. A Pacific islander based in the region.
 - b. Have extensive experience in dealing with coastal fisheries issues and challenges across the regions, with demonstrated skills in:
 - i. grounded community-based fisheries facilitation
 - ii. proven leadership
 - iii. mediating, communication and/or deliberating at national or regional fora.
 - c. Have affiliation to national, regional or international CSOs who have offices based in the region.
 - d. Candidates should not be from government (no current direct employment with government and/or politics), but preferably with experience in actively working cooperatively with government(s) is important.
16. The Cbfd3 discussed and agreed upon the following criteria to be used in future CBF dialogue for the selection of Cbfd participants:
 - a. A non-government individual from a local civil society organisation, a non-state actors and community-based organisation or entity involved in the management of community fishing area and or fish business at the community and subnational level.
 - b. Have experience at presentations or speaking at national, regional, or international audiences.
 - c. Active as a leader or activist at community, subnational or national levels.
 - d. Be a Pacific Island national or Pacific Islanders residing in their country of representation.
 - e. Gender balance representation.
 - f. At least 3 years involvement in CBFM processes.
17. The Cbfd3 recommended the following to establish a national focal point that will facilitate proper coordination of CSO participants at Cbfd;



- a. recognised differences in context by countries and or subregions and therefore consider tailored approaches to establishing national focal points.
- b. For some countries national focal points were identified:
 - i. Fiji – Fiji Locally Managed Marine Area Network
 - ii. Solomon Islands – Community-Based Resource Management practitioners’ network.
 - iii. Vanuatu – Vanua-Tai Resource Monitoring Network
 - iv. Marshall Islands: Marshall Islands Conservation Society
 - v. Federated States of Micronesia: Conservation Society Pohnpei and Kosrae Conservation and Safety Organisation
 - vi. Kiribati: Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resource Division
 - vii. Palau: One Reef
 - viii. Cook Islands: Te Ipukarea Society

18. The CBFD discussed and agreed for the following subregional representative as new members of the Community-Based Fisheries Dialogue Advisory Group (CBFD-AG);

- a. Melanesia – Mr Laitia Tamata, Fiji Locally Managed Marine Area Network, Fiji
- b. Polynesia – Mr Niegel Rozet, KUA Network, Hawaii
- c. Micronesia – Mr Dua Rudolph, Marshall Island Conservation Society, Republic of Marshall Islands.

Session 5: From Facebook to Talk Radio to DIY champions: tapping strategic communication to upscale CBFM

19. The CBFD3 noted the implementation progress of the Regional framework for action in the Pacific.
20. The CBFD3 raised the concern of having prolonged process for development and endorsement of national fisheries policy and management plans for implementation in coastal communities to safeguard important coastal marine resources such as sea cucumber.
21. SPC FAME clarified its role in assisting member countries particularly in capacity development and support to develop national fisheries policies and informed CBFD3 that the process of endorsement is led by the national governments.



22. The Cbfd3 noted the importance of communication mechanisms such as radio, news media, television broadcast and social media platforms to convey information in and between communities.
23. The Cbfd3 emphasised the challenges encountered in accessing information and creating dialogues;
 - a. Limitation of funds to procure new communication equipment and infrastructure, and to have enough staff to disseminate information.
 - b. Poor network coverage in some communities and outer islands to access internet and stay in contact with community facilitators.
 - c. Facebook is a common platform used. However not all communities have internet access and some elderly people do not use Facebook.
24. The Cbfd3 identified the following to address the issues raised above.
 - a. The importance of forging partnerships to share CBFM information through faith-based organisations, networks, women’s groups and the government ministries.
 - b. The Cbfd3 noted the need to collaborate with the government where necessary to set up radio programmes and TV broadcast to raise issues from the communities.
 - c. The dissemination and use of CBFM self-facilitated tool kits for countries that have them.
 - d. The newly available Starlink satellite internet capacity could be a viable solution to address the current challenges associated with poor internet connectivity.
25. The Cbfd3 emphasised that the content and messaging of fisheries information in English, French and Pacific vernaculars in the media must be simple for the audience to understand.
26. Cbfd3 encouraged the use of available CBFM tools and information in the Echoes of Oceania online platform.
27. The Cbfd3 encouraged the use of other information tools and platforms available on the internet such as weather apps to share information, biodiversity apps to get identification of unknown species, YouTube channels to share videos, and use of Google groups for people that prefer not to use Facebook.

Session 6: Casting nets of inclusion on CBFM

28. The Cbfd3 acknowledged the challenge of achieving equal representation of marginalised groups and considering women’s voices in decision-making for fisheries resource management.



29. The CBF3 acknowledged the role of women in fisheries management advocacy, as they play a crucial role as teachers in their families and communities, influencers in local women's groups, and leaders in the communities.

30. The CBF3 noted and agreed on the following:

- a. The need to include marginalised community groups in fisheries management committees, to empower them to actively participate and to contribute to the decision-making process.
- b. The inclusion of women enforcement officers to encourage reporting of offences committed by women and other marginalised groups.
- c. Conducting more awareness and capacity development training on gender and social inclusion in the communities including targeted empowerment initiatives for GESI advocates and champions in the communities.
- d. Encouraging more women and youth champions to advocate for fisheries resource management.
- e. Encouraging programs in communities for livelihood diversification and supplementation to increase resilience and ensure equal benefit sharing among women, youths, and people with special needs with a special interest to reduce poverty and hardship for people relying heavily on marine-based livelihoods.

31. All sub-regions noted small progress had been achieved in some communities because of long-term efforts from early women advocates but it is important to recognise that many challenges remain still faced along the way by these advocates.

32. Although progress has been achieved in some communities, overall, it is limited in the region. Representatives from all Pacific sub-regions talked about the difficulties for women and other marginalised groups to fully participate in CBFM and especially in CBFM decision-making.

33. Community representatives from all sub-regions stated that most progress on inclusion in CBFM had been achieved through inviting women to provide their inputs during meetings but challenges still remain to ensure their voices and their inputs were heard and acknowledged.

34. As CBFM scaling-up accelerates, those limited achievements in inclusion of women and other marginalised groups in CBFM decision-making processes continue to risk exacerbating existing inequalities and limit regional achievements on gender equity.

Session 7: Small-Scale Fisheries Summit 2024 – The Pacific Voice

35. The CBF3 noted the background of Small-scale fisheries (SSF) summit.

36. The following list of CBFM issues was identified for the SSF summit in 2024:

- a. The need for sharing of lessons learned to highlight the Pacific Islands regions and the efforts being undertaken and having the opportunity to learn from experiences in other regions.
 - b. Address the problems of inclusion within traditional governance systems and the need for better enforcement practices in communities with support from appropriate national government agencies.
 - c. Address destructive fishing practices.
 - d. Improve the post-harvest, preservation, reduction of waste and value-adding of harvested marine resources and improving market access.
 - e. Recognise and supporting the importance of gender equality and social inclusion.
 - f. Align global policies with regional policies and down to the community level.
37. The CBFD agreed that the following would be the process for Pacific representation at SSF Summit in 2024:
- a. Accepted in principle the proposed Objectives and Outcomes of 2nd SSF Summit.
 - b. Agreed that the CBFD is an appropriate entity to nominate participants to attend the 2nd SSF Summit, noting that gender equity should prevail in the selection of both men and women from the sub-regions to attend with a minimum of two people per sub-region.
 - c. Supported the development of a funding proposal for the support of Pacific Island participants to attend the 2nd SSF Summit.

Session 8: CBFD4 agenda

38. The CBFD noted the activities to address CBFM issues to improve community enforcement, management, governance, sustainable support mechanism, inclusion of gender and marginalized groups in CBFM as:
- a. Improving local enforcement.
 - i. Develop and deliver training modules and toolkit for community enforcement.
 - ii. Appointment of community enforcement officers with recognised powers.
 - iii. Having equipment to assist with enforcement operations in the communities.
 - iv. Clear demarcation of boundaries for enforcement.
 - b. Ensuring long term continuity in support and resourcing mechanism for CBFM.
 - i. Provide more opportunities on financial literacy.



- ii. Improve and facilitate accessibility to funding.
- c. Inclusion of gender and marginalised groups in local governance and decision making for equality and equity.
 - i. Engage in more storytelling and talanoa to share stories.
 - ii. Promote more women and youth programs.
 - iii. Promote youth engagement campaign for CBFM.
 - iv. Establish and formalise women in fisheries associations.
- d. Governance
 - i. Create mechanisms to engage with government agencies through partnerships.
 - ii. Merging local governance and decision-making systems.
- e. Management
 - i. Participation of communities in data collection for monitoring the effects of climate change.
 - ii. Building capacity of communities to lobby against external drivers such as mining and tourism which is beyond their control.
 - iii. Ensuring adequate information provision to increase awareness in primary school education, knowledge of legal frameworks, rules and regulations and science information for fisheries management.

CBFD3 actions:

39. The CBFD agreed on the following action:

- a. The CBFD3 country participants are requested to send to SPC the full contact details of the national focal point (organisation / network).

The 16th SPC Heads of Fisheries meeting:

40. Recommendations to the Heads of Fisheries:

- a. The CBFD3 *acknowledges* the efforts by national fisheries agencies to increase support and resourcing to community-based fisheries and *requests* HoF16 to provide an update on progress since this request was endorsed at HoF15 and RFMM4 and on plans for sustained support.



- b. The CBFD3 *requests* HoF16 to enable and implement meaningful participation of fishers in developing and reviewing national regulations and rules. This should take into consideration the fishers' need to fish for income and food.
- c. The CBFD3 *requests* HoF16 to enable recognition of community level governance systems in national legal frameworks where appropriate.
- d. The CBFD3 *acknowledges* progress by member country governments on establishing dialogue with CSO and NSA groups. CBFD3 *requests* HoF16 to encourage national agencies to develop and/or foster strong, mutually beneficial partnerships with civil society groups and networks, towards strengthening CBFM nationally.

Session 9: Closing

41. The Convenor, Mr Eugene Joseph, warmly thanked all the participants of the CBFD3, the CBFD-AG and SPC FAME for a successful CBFD3 and closed the meeting.