Terms and Concepts

Small-scale fishers/Small-scale fisheries/Small-scale fishing: There is no standard legal definition of "small-scale fishers," "small-scale fisheries," or "small-scale fishing" that applies throughout the world. Many countries choose to use metrics about the size of fishing vessels (smaller boats), fishing gear used (traditional and low-technology gear), and distance travelled from shore (close to shore) to define small-scale fishing. This is often done to distinguish and protect small-scale fishing from larger scale and industrial fishing that can be done by bigger boats, with larger and more complex gear, further from the shore. Countries in which communities traditionally engage in small-scale fishing often limit the definition of small-scale fishers to traditional fishing communities. Some countries also limit the definition of small-scale fishers to fishers who primarily rely on fishing for their livelihoods, distinguishing them from others who only occasionally fish. Often, definitions of small-scale fishers include fishers who engage in commercial activities (selling their catch) and subsistence activities (eating what you catch). Some countries use other similar terms instead of small-scale fishers, such as artisanal fishers.

Open Access: Open Access fisheries generally do not limit who can fish or how, do not limit the number of fishers or fishing vessels, and do not limit catch. This means that there is no requirement for fishers to live in a certain area or have specific fishing knowledge or family history of fishing, and anyone who wants to start fishing in that fishery can. Open access is not a recommended system of fisheries management, as it has proved unsustainable.

Managed Access: Generally, Managed Access provides fishing rights to specific fishers and sets restrictions on catch in fishing grounds. Belize's Fisheries Resources Act of 2020 states that "managed access" in Belize establishes fishers' secure fishing rights to fish in specific areas, also called Territorial Use Rights for Fishing (TURFs). However, in Belize at present, Managed Access has not been fully implemented, as there are no restrictions on the number of fishers being licensed to fish in the Managed Access Zones, no description of the class of fishers who can fish in TURFs, and no catch limits for most species (except conch).

Territorial Use Rights for Fishing (TURF): Area-based fishing rights – rights to fish in a designated area that are granted to a defined group of fishers (for example, residents of a certain municipality or members of a fishing association). The word TURF also means a fishing area, in which a defined group of fishers can fish. Creation of exclusive zones for small-scale fishers helps protect their access to fishing resources, providing them with a reliable food supply and increasing their economic security. TURFs vary in size. TURFs are often granted to fishers for specific areas based on traditional use (such as family history of fishing in that location) or proximity to where fishers live. TURFs are usually co-managed by the fishers granted fishing rights in those specific areas.

Fisheries Co-management: A fisheries management approach in which the government and community members share responsibility for the management of fisheries resources. There are different types of co-management, with community members playing a larger or a smaller role in the decision-making. Some examples of co-management include Councils and Committees on which fishers participate, co-management agreements between the government and fisher organizations, creation of fisheries management plans with input from fishers, and participation of fishers in monitoring of fishing areas.

Precautionary Approach: An approach to environmental management that requires caution when there is insufficient information. This approach forbids people from using the lack of information as a reason

for postponing or failing to take conservation and management measures. In practice, this means that when there is a threat that some action might damage a fishery or is damaging a fishery, that action should be stopped or not allowed to start. Section 7 of the Belize's Fisheries Resources Act of 2020 mandates and defines the precautionary approach.

Ecosystem Approach: A management approach that recognizes that all parts of the ecosystem, including the land, water, air, and living creatures, are connected to each other and affect each other. The ecosystem approach calls for an integrated management strategy of land, water, and living resources that promotes conservation and sustainable use of a resource. Section 7 of the Belize's Fisheries Resources Act of 2020 mandates the use of the ecosystem approach.