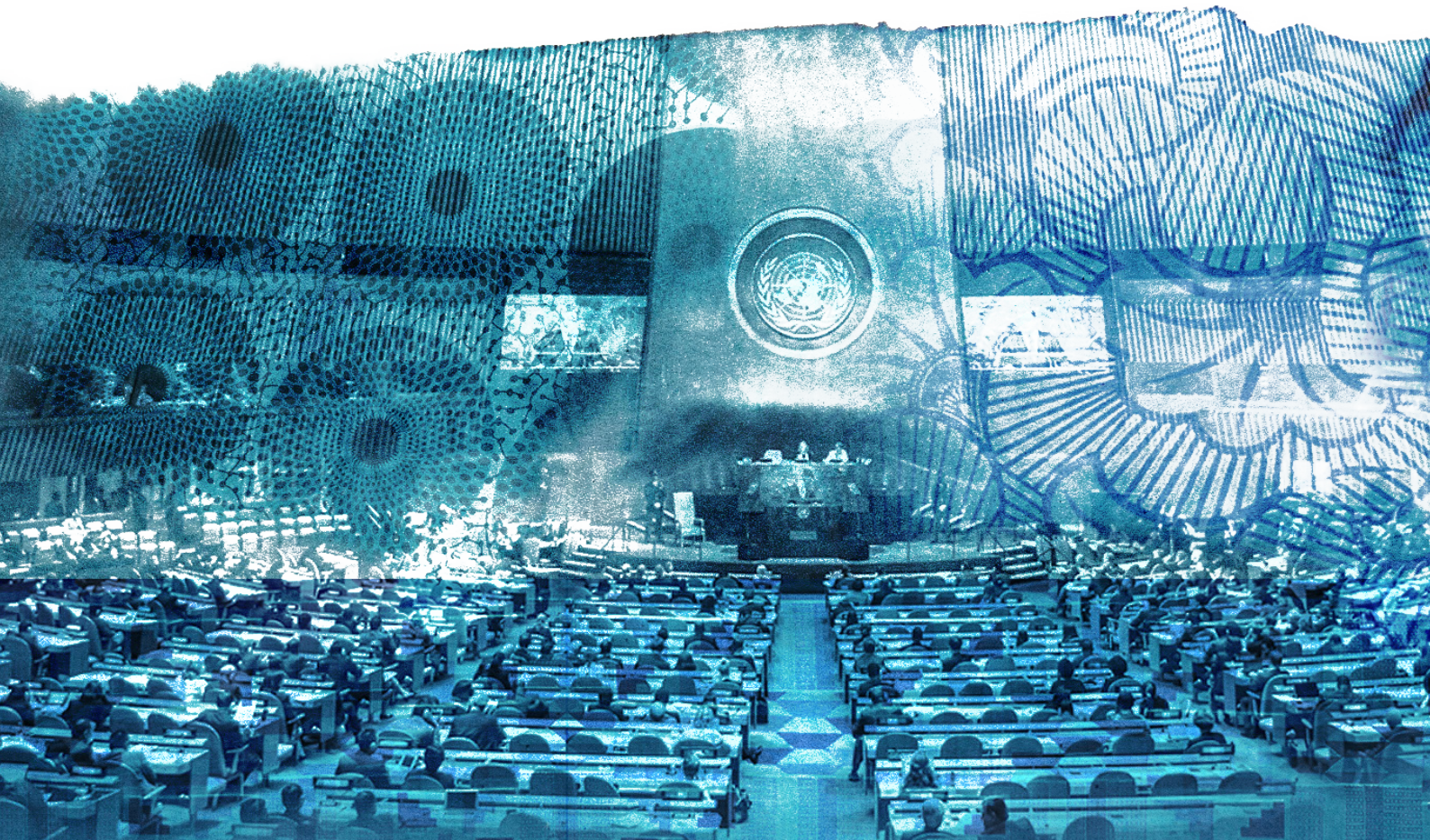


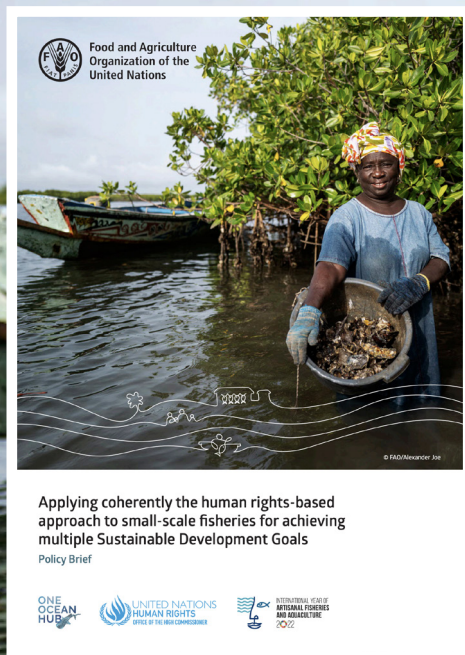
# IMPACT STORY

## Research and Action Across Scales:

Shifting ways of working in  
international organisations



The Hub, the FAO, and UN High Commissioner for Human Rights developed a joint policy brief – the first ever to be co-sponsored by the FAO and the High Commissioner.



## The One Ocean Hub seeks to increase the capacity of international human rights and ocean-related bodies to support States to recognise the human rights of Indigenous peoples and small-scale fishers (SSFs) and monitor national-level compliance.

Through our operations in both local and international settings, we have earned the trust of the individuals and institutions we work with. Thus, not only has the Hub helped to inform international guidance (see “Impacting UN Guidance” case study), but we also influence how UN bodies and international organisations work, by:

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facilitating cooperation across and within previously unconnected UN bodies;
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helping organisations shift from a top-down approach to one responsive to local contexts; and
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embedding innovative good practices in the work of international organisations.

## Facilitating cooperation across and within UN bodies

Through our work across multiple scales of governance, from local to national to international, we have come to be a trusted partner of many different institutions. This broad web of relationships has made it possible for the Hub to act as a bridge between international actors that have not collaborated before, to promote a human rights-based approach to ocean governance.

For example, our 2021 work with the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) to support international recognition of small-scale fishers (SSFs) as environmental human rights defenders resulted in connections with the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and the UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights and the Environment. When the Hub then co-developed a programme of work with the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) for the **International Year of Artisanal Fisheries and Aquaculture (IYFA 2022)**, we were able to bring this area of work to the attention of those two high-level actors.

This led to an address by the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights on World Oceans Day in June 2022, a first for the Commissioner. **The Hub, the FAO, and the High Commissioner’s Office then developed a joint policy brief** – the first ever to be co-sponsored by the FAO and the High Commissioner.

## The Hub bridges the gaps between human rights actors



Released on International Human Rights Day, 10 December 2022, the brief addresses the need for all the human rights of SSFs to be coherently protected as a way to achieve multiple Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

It clarifies what a human rights-based approach to implementing the FAO Guidelines on Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries requires. This case demonstrates the value of the Hub's ability to see these gaps and help make linkages.

Another example of acting as a bridge-builder is our **roundtable on the WTO Fisheries Subsidies Agreement and SSFs' human rights** held at the IYAFSA closing event in Rome in March 2023. A new multilateral fund has been established to support the recently adopted WTO Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies, which will eliminate harmful fishery subsidies. A 2022 Hub journal article highlighted the potential negative impacts of subsidy removal and its broader human rights implications; in it, we recommended that as funds become available from the elimination of fisheries subsidies, they should be re-invested in the protection of SSFs' human rights.

Building on that article, the roundtable laid out how the FAO could provide capacity building to countries implementing the Agreement.

The roundtable helped to connect distinct international processes, while also facilitating connections within international institutions. Aimed at FAO officers in legal, fisheries, and trade, the roundtable brought together people working on fisheries subsidies and on small-scale fishers, two areas that do not otherwise coordinate. The FAO Committee on Fisheries' Sub-Committee on Fish Trade will meet later in 2023 and could take up these recommendations.

### Shifting from a top-down approach to one responsive to local contexts

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- Prof Elisa Morgera, One Ocean Hub Director



Photo: Elisa Morgera

An example of acting as a bridge-builder is the Hub's roundtable on the WTO Fisheries Subsidies Agreement and SSFs' human rights held at the IYAFA closing event in Rome in March 2023.

We have been collaborating with the FAO to support national implementation of the FAO *Guidelines on Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries* through national legislation. In 2021, we co-designed a [regional virtual workshop](#) for government officers, fishers, and researchers in South Africa, Namibia, and Ghana. The workshop sought to identify legal barriers to the protection of SSF human rights and to opportunities for SSFs to meaningfully contribute to government decisions.

In working together to design the workshop, South African Hub researchers involved in the Coastal Justice Network encouraged the FAO officers to move away from a focus on what international law requires of States. Instead, they suggested an approach informed by local context, in which international law is drawn upon to respond to specific SSF needs when national law falls short.

In addition, various methods were used to make sure that SSF representatives could personally participate in the workshop, such as submitting voice or video to communicate their priorities. Such seemingly small changes in a workshop's organisation are important steps towards shifting how international organisations such as the FAO engage at different scales of governance. And as ways of working at the local and national level are gradually transformed, this may influence global work.

**UN and NGO officers expressed great enthusiasm for the transformative potential of the art-based methods that were shared.**

**Embedding innovative good practices in the approaches of international NGOs and donors**

The Hub has developed new partnerships with WWF, the Danish Institute for Human Rights, and the SSF Network, a network of NGOs and donors arising from the first "SSF Summit" in 2022. These partnerships have been geared towards disseminating learning on SSFs' human rights at the 2023 IYAFA high-level closing.

We developed a series of activities to reach out to international organisations to show how they can integrate our findings and methods in their future work. In addition to the aforementioned roundtable on the WTO Fisheries Subsidies Agreement and SSFs' human rights, we held two other trainings.

**A workshop on art-based approaches** to the protection of SSFs' human rights in South Africa (see Empatheatre *Umkhosi Wenala* case study) was targeted at development officers in international organisations and NGOs. The workshop used innovative methodology to create an interactive and dynamic learning experience. Participants explored the use of creative methods to better engage with and secure the rights of SSFs within ocean governance.

The workshop addressed how these approaches could support more inclusive and meaningful consultation processes with SSFs, and identified ways in which more collaboration between SSFs, researchers, fisheries specialists,



Photo: Elisa Morgera



Photo:

environmental NGOs, and human rights practitioners can protect the human rights of SSFs and ocean wellbeing.

At the workshop, UN and NGO officers expressed a new awareness of the limitations of their own participatory processes in engaging with communities.

They expressed great enthusiasm for the transformative potential of the art-based methods that were shared and were interested in integrating these methods in their work.

### IMPACT!

Fisheries-focused experts came away with a better understanding of the relevance of human rights law to their own work.

We held a follow-up meeting with WWF to explore specific opportunities to integrate these approaches into their existing and future projects, and the Hub will propose art-based methods in the organisation of the next SSF Summit in 2024.

At the IYafa event, we also held a **training session on human rights and fisheries** to encourage fisheries and environment experts in the UN and NGOs to engage more with international and national human rights bodies in order to protect SSFs' human rights. This training event was co-organized with the UNOHCHR and the Danish Institute for Human Rights

The training laid out the full range of human rights of SSFs and the crucial importance of ensuring their comprehensive and coherent protection. It also explored how SSF representatives

and their support networks, as well as fisheries and environmental NGOs, can work with international and national human rights mechanisms. Fisheries-focused experts came away with a better understanding of the relevance of human rights law to their own work.

These events shared lessons from our research, the methodologies we've developed, and the relationships we've built. They are some of the ways we have built the capacity of international actors to work with and for SSFs in meaningful ways.



Video-message from Ms Michelle Bachelet, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights was shown as part of the World Ocean Week 2022 Hub-led event "Exploring Challenges, Opportunities and Alliances for the Protection of Small-scale Fishers' Human Rights" Photo: Video screenshot

