



SMALL-SCALE FISHERIES



OVERALL GOAL

Fish is an integral part of our diet, providing an important source of animal protein and nutrients for much of the world's population, and should be a key element of every food security and nutrition strategy. FAO works towards:

- integrating sustainable fish production and consumption in food security and other related strategies at all levels;
- strengthening the capacity of public institutions and other partners to support the fisheries and aquaculture sector to fully contribute to food security and nutrition;
- empowering small-scale fishers and fish farmers and their communities to participate effectively in decision-making processes and to realize their right to food;
- promoting sustainable fish consumption as a valuable source of energy, protein and essential nutrients.

The vital contribution of fisheries and aquaculture to global food security and economic growth cannot be overemphasized. Fisheries and aquaculture provide the primary source of animal protein for 17 percent of the world's population.

In low-income food-deficit countries and small-island developing states that number is almost 25 percent. Small-scale fisheries employ more than 90 percent of the world's capture fishers and provide many local communities in the developing world with a source of food security and livelihoods. It is thus a funding priority for FAO.



THE IMPORTANCE OF FISHERIES FOR FOOD AND NUTRITION SECURITY

Consumption of fish provides energy and high quality protein. Even more importantly, fish is a key source of other nutrients such as minerals, trace elements, fat-soluble vitamins and essential fatty acids. Eating fish is part of the cultural traditions of many peoples and, for some populations, fish and fishery products are a primary source of food and essential nutrients. Often, there are no alternative and affordable food sources for many of these essential nutrients.

By promoting a better understanding amongst policy-makers and other stakeholders of the role of fish and fishery products in food security and nutrition, FAO contributes to ensuring that fisheries is integrated into food-security-related policies, as well as into broader economic and social development agendas and strategies.



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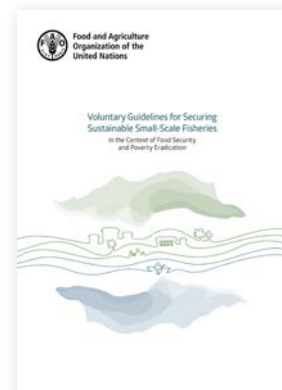
MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Among the different fisheries subsectors, small-scale fisheries and aquaculture require the most urgent action, especially in relation to food security and nutrition policies and processes. Small-scale fisheries contribute around half of global fish catches in developing countries and employ about 90 percent of the world's capture fishers. More importantly, 90 to 95 percent of the small-scale landings are destined for local human consumption. Small-scale fisheries therefore play an important role in directly increasing the availability of nutritious food for local, national and international markets as well as providing a valuable source of income to those directly and indirectly employed in the sector. Despite their importance and potential, many small-scale fishing communities continue to be marginalized and their contribution to food security and nutrition remains unrealized.

FAO is active at all levels – global to local – in promoting and improving the role of fisheries and aquaculture. FAO, also through its Committee for Fisheries (COFI), has the unique comparative advantage to provide a neutral and respected forum to facilitate dialogue among all stakeholders to identify needs and opportunities in fisheries and aquaculture. FAO also provides support to address these needs and take advantage of opportunities. For example, FAO facilitates the setting of global standards and the exchange of good practices.

A recent example of FAO's global activities is the development of *Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication* (SSF Guidelines) which are currently under review and expected to be approved by COFI in June 2014.

This internationally negotiated instrument will provide guiding principles and a framework to enhance sustainable, participatory and responsible small-scale fisheries governance and development. Over 4 000 stakeholders participated in the development process and consultations at global, regional and national levels. Based on a human rights approach and created as a complement to the 1995 FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries (CCRF), the SSF Guidelines aim to enhance the equitable and sustainable development of small-scale fishing communities.





IN PRACTICE

Examples from FAO's work in all regions demonstrate how responsible governance of tenure strengthens the four dimensions that constitute the enabling environment required for a more rapid reduction in hunger:

1. Better policies, programmes and legal frameworks

Support countries to enhance the realization of the right to food through appropriate fisheries and aquaculture policies and their inclusion in other relevant strategies and policies.

Results on the ground: The Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries and its related instruments provide the overall umbrella for FAO's work in fisheries and aquaculture. One specific objective of the Code is to promote the contribution of fisheries to food security, prioritizing the nutritional needs of local communities. FAO supports countries in developing their policies and prepares global knowledge products, for example on *Fisheries and the right to food: Implementing the right to food in national fisheries legislation*. FAO also provides country-level support for implementation of the *Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security*. FAO is currently implementing these Guidelines in Sierra Leone, where secure access rights are a crucial precondition to allow the fisheries and aquaculture sector to fully contribute to food security and nutrition.

2. Increased political commitment

Enhance awareness of the key role of fisheries and aquaculture for food and nutrition security through increased understanding of government representatives, civil society and other stakeholders.

Results on the ground: The SSF Guidelines and their implementation will influence and inform important policy processes at all levels. Already, several ongoing policy processes are taking them into consideration, including the report of the UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food presented at the 67th Session of the UN General Assembly in 2012, the Farmers' Forum of the International Fund for Agricultural Development and in the NEPAD Policy Framework and Reform Strategy for Fisheries and Aquaculture in Africa.

3. More effective coordination

Enhance stakeholder dialogue and coordination mechanisms. Empowered civil society members hold government officials accountable to improve the design and implementation of fisheries and aquaculture policies conducive to the realization of the right to food.

Results on the ground: Throughout the development process of the SSF Guidelines, FAO and its partners – including regional organizations such as the Secretariat of the Pacific Community, the Central America Fisheries and Aquaculture Organization and the New Partnership for Africa's Development – brought together different stakeholders to engage in dialogue and advance the sector's development. At the national level, civil society organizations played a leading role in organizing over 20 national consultations and two regional consultations.

With regard to aquaculture, FAO and NEPAD, in consultation with the African Union, will assist the nine member countries of the Aquaculture Network for Africa (ANAF: Cameroon, Ghana, Kenya, Mali, Mozambique, Nigeria, Uganda, United Republic of Tanzania and Zambia) to agree upon its statutes and procedures, with clear rights and obligations of Members.

4. Evidence-based decision-making

The fisheries and aquaculture sector contributes significantly to food security and nutrition. These interactions must be better understood by leaders, decision-makers and other stakeholders to embed fisheries in their national hunger eradication plan. Data and information about the contribution of fisheries and aquaculture is collected, analysed and disseminated to inform policy and action.

Results on the ground: A recent FAO/WHO expert consultation concluded that a diet containing appropriate levels of fish lowers the risk of women giving birth to children with suboptimal development of the brain and neural system. Strong evidence also underlines how consumption of fish, in particular oily fish, lowers the risk of death due to Coronary Heart Disease (36 percent reduction).

FAO is also a partner of Too Big To Ignore, a global research partnership that seeks to strengthen the evidence base on small-scale fisheries.



SCOPE FOR DOING MORE AND BETTER

FAO recognizes the need for responsible and sustainable use of aquatic resources to meet the developmental and environmental needs of present and future generations. The CCRF is the world's key to building more responsible fisheries governance, supported by the commitment and support of all stakeholders.

Join us in increasing political commitment to support the implementation of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries and related instruments, especially for small-scale fisheries stakeholders.

Reaching a consensus at global level is important but insufficient if action at national level doesn't follow. These good practices and principles need to be translated into policies, programmes and laws at country level.

Help us translate words into action through collaboration, capacity development, policy dialogue and better legislations and regulations.

Constructing a framework that guides fisheries and aquaculture operations and reconciles different objectives requires an effective coordination mechanism where the voices of all actors are heard. The implementation of an effective participatory framework for sustainable fisheries and aquaculture management is needed to coordinate the concern of small-scale fishers, fish farmers, fish workers and their communities as well as of industrial fishers. This requires the establishment and strengthening of partnerships, capacity development and an enabling policy environment.

Enable us to enhance stakeholder dialogue, support co-management initiatives and strengthen the voices of small-scale fishers.

The Committee on Fisheries requested the establishment of a Global Assistance Programme to support the implementation of the SSF Guidelines. FAO is encouraging the sustainable development of the small-scale fisheries sector as a principal contributor to poverty alleviation and food security by bringing together responsible fisheries and social development in coastal and inland fishing communities around the world.

Invest in a hunger-free world by supporting small-scale fisheries!



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