

# Fishing for Food Security

The following are the recommendations of Report No. 7 of the High Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition (HLPE) of the Committee on World Food Security (CFS)

## 1. Fish deserves a central position in food security and nutrition strategies

States should

- ra) Make fish an integral element in inter-sectoral national food security and nutrition policies and programmes with special regard to promoting small-scale production and local arrangements (such as procurement through local markets, for example, for school meals) and other policy tools, including nutrition education.
- rb) Include fish in their nutritional programmes and interventions aiming at tackling micronutrient

good investments that support food security and nutrition in relation to sustainable fisheries (such as infrastructure and capacity development), or to improve the livelihoods and economic possibilities of fishing community residents.

States, national and international research institutes and development agencies should

- re) Conduct regular intra-household studies to better understand the pathways between fish, gender and the nutritional status of individuals and households, including on the impact of overfishing. These studies need to be conducted based on gender-disaggregated data.
- rf) Review fisheries' discarding practices and options through a food security and nutrition lens as well as with regard to resources and ecosystem sustainability.

**Fish deserves a central position in food security and nutrition strategies.**

deficiencies, especially among children and women, in the respect of cultural specificities, promoting local procurement, and taking into account costs and benefits.

- rc) Strengthen international assistance and co-operation to build the capacity of developing countries to negotiate better terms in fishing agreements to protect the food security and nutrition of their populations.
- rd) Eliminate harmful subsidies that encourage overfishing, to make progress toward halting the current decline in global fish stocks. Revenues available to States from foregone subsidies could be redirected towards public

## 2. Threats and risks for world fisheries, including effects of climate change

States should

- 2a) Mainstream climate change adaptation strategies relevant to fish and food security and nutrition into all aquaculture and fisheries policies and actions at national and subnational levels, including by linking them to climate and weather research and prediction agencies, developing specific studies and introducing, where needed, flexibility in management and governance mechanisms.
- 2b) Engage in inclusive dialogue and analysis to build scenarios to understand the possible impact

*The HLPE Report No. 7, titled 'Sustainable fisheries and aquaculture for food security and nutrition', has been dedicated to the memory of **Chandrika Sharma***

of climate change on the food security and nutrition of most vulnerable zones (for example, coastal and small island States) that could be affected and develop and implement the necessary actions through inclusive processes.

FAO should

- 2c) Take the lead in a global effort to redevelop resource assessment tools and governance concepts suitable for use in improving the contribution of fish to food security and nutrition, including by developing new approaches for use in the multispecies, multigear fisheries and more adapted to the specific characteristics of small-scale fisheries.

### 3. Opportunities and challenges in aquaculture

National and international research organizations (such as the CGIAR Centres), funded by the governments and other agencies, should

- 3a) Lead research and development initiatives that aim at enhancing sustainability and productivity of aquaculture, both in small- and large-scale systems. Research should focus on health control and food safety, improved feed stocks that do not directly compete with human foods, domestication and genetic improvement of key traits contributing to the various dimensions of food security and nutrition, integration of aquaculture in agroecological models of production at the farm and landscape levels, and improved linkages with food chain, with due consideration to ecosystems' integrity.

States and other private and public stakeholders and international actors should

- 3b) Put in place appropriate actions to reduce further the use of fishmeal and fish oil as feed in aquaculture and livestock production, and should encourage their elimination by the use of alternate sources as well as by the promotion of low trophic-level fish (herbivores and omnivores).

- 3c) Put in place the conditions to develop and implement South-South collaborations to encourage sharing and learning experience in aquaculture.

### 4. Small-scale versus large-scale fishing operations

Governments and other private and public stakeholders should

- 4a) Recognize the contribution of small-scale fisheries to food security and nutrition, and take into account their characteristics in the design and implementation of all national and international policies and programmes related to fisheries, including through appropriate and inclusive representation.
- 4b) Support self-organized, local professional organizations and co-operatives, as these arrangements strongly contribute to foster the integration of small-scale operators into markets.

National and regional agencies responsible for fisheries should

- 4c) Give high priority to the support of small-scale fisheries through adequate planning, legislation and the recognition or allocation of rights and resources. Where small-scale fisheries are in competition with larger-scale operations, governments should promote the former's contribution to food

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Artisanal fishers in Brazil. The contribution of small-scale fisheries to food security and nutrition, especially in developing countries, ought to be recognized

security and nutrition and, in particular, develop national policy regulations that protect small-scale fisheries.

### 5. Trade and markets

States should

- 5a) Ensure that food security and nutrition are better taken into

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account in the objectives of policies and mechanisms related to international, regional and local fish trade, including by the inclusive development of guidelines, procedures and regulations to protect the food security and nutrition of local populations.

International agencies, regional economic and fisheries bodies and national ministries should

- 5b) Allocate more policy attention and resources to develop, promote and support domestic and regional fish trade. Investment should take account of the voluntary guidelines for land, fisheries and forests and respect the Principles for Responsible Investment in Agriculture. They should redirect resources to and support capacity building for the different actors involved in local, national or regional fish trade activities, especially through the value chains involving small-scale fisheries, aquaculture and marketing.

Governments, international organizations, private sector and civil society should

- 5c) Support the development and use of existing or new sustainability certification standards which include food security and nutrition criteria and facilitate the engagement of small-scale operators by adequate support and capacity building.

### 6. Social protection and labour rights

States should

- 6a) Ratify the ILO No. 188 Work in Fishing Convention to ensure improved working conditions and social security of those working in the fishing sector.

States, in particular national government labour agencies, in collaboration with fisheries agencies, should

- 6b) Improve national-level regulations for fishworkers, including women workers in processing factories and markets, migrant and local crew on fishing vessels. Owners should guarantee that their vessels are seaworthy and that at-sea working conditions are safe.
- 6c) Take measures to put in place social protection systems in the form of minimum wages and social security schemes for both fishers and fishworkers, including self-employed workers, women and migrant workers.

### 7. Gender equity

States should

- 7a) Ensure that their aquaculture and fisheries policies and interventions do not create negative impacts on women, and encourage gender equality.
- 7b) Enshrine gender equity in all fisheries rights systems, including licensing and access rights. The definitions of fishing must cover all forms of harvest, including the forms typically practised by women and small-scale operators, such as inshore and inland harvesting of invertebrates by hand and the use of very small-scale gear.

The FAO Committee on Fisheries (COFI) should

- 7c) Develop policy guidance on gender equality and economic contributions, for example, technical guidelines on gender in aquaculture and fisheries within the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries.

The CFS should

- 7d) Urge international and national fish sector organizations to fully

address the gender dimension of the fishery and aquaculture sectors in their policies and actions to overcome the unintended gender-blindness of present approaches.

Development assistance programmes should

- 7e) Be gender-aware and give priority to gendered projects.

## 8. Governance

States must

- 8a) Comply with their obligations under international human-rights treaties, including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

States should

- 8b) Assess policies, interventions and investments with direct and indirect links to fisheries and fishing communities in terms of their impacts on the right to food of the affected communities.

- 8c) Use the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security, recognising the articular relevance of article 8.3 on collective rights and common resources, to design and assess policies and programmes, especially those which affect the access of fishing communities to natural resources.

- 8d) Ensure that fishing communities and fishworkers actively and meaningfully participate in all decisions that impact their enjoyment of the right to food.

- 8e) Ensure that food security and nutrition, that are gender-sensitive, are an integral element of fish-value-chain governance mechanisms, including national government policies, certification standards and corporate social responsibility policies.

- 8f) Formally protect the rights and ongoing tenure over sites for food-insecure people, fishing

communities and indigenous and tribal peoples.

- 8g) Support the development of small and medium enterprises, by, for example, helping them access best management practices and credit schemes to stay profitable.

FAO should

- 8h) Lead reform of international fisheries and ocean governance with the objective of improving the transparency and representativeness of all the major international programmes and initiatives to guarantee that the small-scale fishers are fully included in these programmes. These programmes should go beyond their early focus on economic growth with ecological sustainability and aim to prioritize food security and nutrition and poverty alleviation.

The CFS and COFI should

- 8i) Convene a special joint session involving international fisheries and aquaculture bodies and related actors to share views on how to co-ordinate their policies and programmes towards progress in the food security and nutrition outcomes of their activities. 

### For more



[www.fao.org/cfs/cfs-hlpe/en/](http://www.fao.org/cfs/cfs-hlpe/en/)  
**Website of the High Level Panel of Experts (HLPE)**

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