



Food and Agriculture Organization  
of the United Nations

# Leaving no one behind



## How Blue Growth can benefit women, youth, indigenous groups and migrants

Blue Growth promotes the sustainable development of aquatic resources for the benefit of communities who rely on them for their livelihoods and food security. It seeks to maximize economic and social benefits while minimizing environmental degradation from activities within the fisheries and aquaculture sector. These goals are closely aligned with the three pillars of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which pay special attention to traditionally marginalized groups.

Analysing the needs and interests of women, youth, indigenous peoples and migrants is central to the Blue Growth approach. An approach that prioritizes working with governments, communities and civil society to advance policies and incentives that unlock the economic and social potential of marginalized groups and empower them to safeguard natural resources while enhancing opportunities to access decent work.

\* Indigenous peoples is the internationally agreed term (United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples) and it encompasses tribal peoples, natives, First Nations, *pueblos originarios*, *pueblos autóctonos*, nomadic and pastoralists, aboriginal and traditional peoples.



## Women and youth

Women play a key role in the fisheries and aquaculture value chain, and yet their contribution is often overlooked or undervalued. As a result, many women working in the sector have limited access to natural resources, credit, technology and training, mobility and bargaining power. They also face discrimination in rights to land or fishing grounds. Existing power structures combined with financial and social capital constraints often limit women's ability to obtain fish and sell the products of their labour for a fair price. This inequality of access to fisheries resources greatly undermines women's productivity and results in substantial post-harvest losses with negative implications for food security and nutrition.

While 120 million young people reach working age every year, the agricultural workforce in many developing countries is rapidly ageing. Nevertheless, in the fisheries and aquaculture sectors, youth still experience limited

access to investment resources and skills development. The long-term viability of the sector depends on promoting youth and establishing Blue Growth policies that facilitate their pursuit of innovation and entrepreneurship. Investing in youth can result in better resource management, greater decent work opportunities and reduced waste, as young people are more inclined to adopt new technologies and techniques. Rural fisheries and aquaculture projects can also create valuable employment opportunities for young people who often feel pressure to migrate for work.

Women and youth require access to credit in order to purchase equipment and fish and to pay for transport without resorting to borrowing from exploitative moneylenders or fish wholesalers. Innovative financing is an integral component of Blue Growth that can

### Empowering women clam collectors in Tunisia

In Tunisia, FAO provided technical assistance to women clam collectors to help establish their own association in order to negotiate fairer prices and lower transport costs. A new agreement with an Italian seafood importer has created a direct commercial linkage to these women, allowing them to set a fixed sale price for their clams, which boast a fair trade label designed by the community. This fair-trade agreement greatly increases the transparency of the process and will more than double their earnings.



facilitate community-based microfinance systems that benefit women, men and youth, and help communities diversify livelihoods, reinforce local resilience, and contribute to poverty reduction. Community Savings and Credit Cooperatives, owned and directed by local resource users, can also provide much-needed financial services to these underserved groups.

Capacity building in business development and entrepreneurship help unlock new livelihood opportunities for women and youth by improving the efficiency and viability of their activities, and instilling a sense of confidence in their negotiation and decision-making abilities. Dialogue and initiatives within a Blue Growth framework can strengthen the collective action of women fish workers and youth, amplifying their economic returns and bargaining power. By pooling their resources, women and youth can more easily access credit and benefit from economies of scale when purchasing inputs and selling on the market.

Blue Growth dialogues can also assist in bringing the voices of women and youth into policy-making and planning. Traditionally, fisheries policy has focused on the role of men, often senior leaders, in harvesting, with less attention paid to the women dominated pre- and post-harvest subsectors. Political commitment is needed to ensure mainstreaming of gender and youth related issues across development and resource management agendas.

### Promoting agricultural diversification to reduce poverty, fight malnutrition and enhance youth employment opportunities in Eastern Africa

FAO supported young, rural and peri-urban farmers, most aged 15-35, with start-up kits and intensive training in business oriented aquaculture production. The project has benefited 944 fish farmers in Kenya and Uganda, linking them to national and regional markets and creating decent jobs as service providers in the aquaculture industry. Thanks to these trainings, participating hatcheries increased production by 70 percent over the course of the project.

## Indigenous peoples

Today there are more than 370 million indigenous peoples living in some 90 countries, according to UN-DESA. Throughout the world, indigenous peoples are disproportionately impacted by environmental degradation, political and economic marginalization and development activities that negatively affect their ecosystems, livelihoods, cultural heritage and nutritional status. FAO recognizes the importance of indigenous peoples in the fight against hunger and malnutrition and their role in implementing the 2030 Agenda. A Blue Growth approach to fisheries and aquaculture considers indigenous peoples not only as recipients of development assistance but also as equal partners in the development decisions that affect them. Indigenous peoples are valued as custodians of biodiversity and ecosystem management through their traditional knowledge and practices.

Through an approach that prioritizes balancing the sustainable use of aquatic resources with economic and social benefits, Blue Growth can provide indigenous peoples with a voice in policy and decision-making. This

### Promoting sustainable small-scale fisheries in Central America

Approximately 70% of the Central American Caribbean coast is located in territories inhabited by indigenous peoples. Their involvement is key to ensuring the sustainability of small-scale fisheries through policies tailored to their needs and cultures. FAO worked with the Fund for the Development of Indigenous Peoples of Latin America and the Caribbean (FILAC) and the Indigenous Council of Central America (CICA) to deliver a workshop for implementation of the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries. The workshop raised awareness and recognition among indigenous leaders and fisheries professionals of the role indigenous peoples play in the fisheries sector and how to strengthen their contribution to food security, nutrition and the eradication of poverty. Through training programmes and capacity development, FAO is working to promote the social, economic and environmental transformation of the sector through support for better policies, strategies and initiatives focused on indigenous coastal fishing communities.



approach also contributes to more resilient communities and helps preserve cultural heritage. Blue Growth addresses some of the most pressing challenges facing indigenous groups, including improved livelihoods and decent work (particularly among women and youth), food security and nutrition, environmental degradation, tenure rights and equitable access to natural resources. A Blue Growth approach to fisheries and aquaculture development can also create new sources of income through access to markets, private partnerships and other investment opportunities.

## Migrants

United Nations figures show that worldwide, there are roughly 214 million international migrants, thousands of whom cross the Mediterranean Sea every month. Coastal



### Protecting local fisheries livelihoods and integrating displaced people: Example from Somalia

Migrants and refugees from Ethiopia and Somalia travelling through Yemen and Saudi Arabia on their way to Europe are generally trafficked on board fishing dhows (vessels) engaged in illegal fishing activities. Migrants passing through Somali ports are currently excluded economically from local fisheries with little prospect for change in the near future. Acknowledging this, FAO Somalia developed a programme that trains displaced people to dry fish purchased from local fishing communities as both an economic activity and a source of food security and nutrition. Local fishing communities now welcome this activity as migrants represent an additional market for their catch.



communities in many parts of the world are experiencing both the positive and negative effects of unprecedented levels of migration to the coasts. Migration has the potential to promote the economic and social development of migrants, as well as their communities of origin and destination countries. At the same time, however, large movements of people can create serious challenges for coastal communities in terms of economic, social and political instability due to human smuggling and other factors. With the arrival and transit of migrants, large-scale migration can also strain natural resources, livelihoods and government services.

The multi-faceted nature of migration means that migrants move for different reasons and along various routes, where they are in contact with a multitude of actors, including smugglers. Any response to migration flows requires comprehensive and multi-sectoral responses, which recognize the positive contribution that empowered individuals can make to their fellow migrant and host communities. There is a need for coordinated solutions and multi-stakeholder partnerships that facilitate effective integration, access to services and livelihoods opportunities for migrants and support for the self-reliance of host communities.

Blue Growth can contribute to addressing the challenges facing coastal and migrant communities by improving the economic, social and ecosystem resilience of fisheries and aquaculture-based livelihoods in those communities, and enhancing the positive linkages between migration and development. Blue Growth dialogues provide a means for local stakeholders and migrants to determine tailored solutions that will best benefit their communities.