

Post-2015 and SDGs



Nourishing people, Nurturing the planet

March 2014

FAO AND THE POST-2015 DEVELOPMENT AGENDA ISSUE PAPERS



14
THEMES

Highlights

- Oceans, seas and coastal areas provide mankind with manifold goods and ecosystem services fundamental to human well-being, global food security and nutrition. They form an integrated and essential component of the Earth's ecosystem and are critical to sustainable development.
- Fisheries and aquaculture offer ample opportunities to reduce hunger and improve nutrition, alleviate poverty, generate economic growth and ensure better use of natural resources.
- If the current trend in unsustainable uses of marine resources is not reversed, the ability of our oceans to deliver food for future generations will be severely compromised.
- Curbing overfishing while promoting responsible and sustainable fisheries and aquaculture practices and preserving healthy marine environments are among humankind's best opportunities to deliver highly nutritious food to a growing population.
- Investing in Blue Growth - the sustainable management and use of aquatic resources and adoption of ecosystem approaches - can boost economic growth, increase food security, improve nutrition and reduce poverty.
- The FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries provides principles for promoting sustainable fisheries and aquaculture.

Fisheries, aquaculture, oceans and seas

Overview

The planet's oceans, seas and coastal areas provide manifold goods and ecosystem services that are fundamental to human well-being, global food security and nutrition, international trade and economic development, climate regulation, storm protection, energy generation, waste absorption and recycling, recreation, and others. Coastal areas are home to a large percentage of the world's population and often depict above average rates of urbanization, economic development and population growth.

Fisheries and aquaculture are a vital source of nutritious food and protein for billions - worldwide nearly 3 billion people receive 20 percent of their daily animal protein intake from fish. Employment in fisheries and aquaculture has continued to grow faster than in agriculture - providing about 55 million jobs worldwide. Including ancillary activities (e.g. processing and packaging) and dependants, these sectors support the livelihoods of 10-12 percent of the world's population.

- 40 percent of the world's population is estimated to live within 100 km of the shore line.
- Every day capture fisheries and aquaculture harvest more than 400 000 tonnes of fish.

Key challenges

The bulk of capture fisheries production comes from coastal waters, where both the productivity and quality of fish stocks are severely affected by pollution.

Fisheries and aquaculture supplied the world with 157 million tonnes of fish in 2012 (with a total export value of USD 130 billion), of which over 130 million tonnes was used as food for people. With sustained growth in fish production and improved distribution channels, world fish food supply has grown dramatically in the last five decades, with an average growth rate of 3.2 percent per year in the period 1961-2009, outpacing the increase of 1.7 percent per year in the world's population. World per capita food fish supply increased from an average of 9.9 kg in the 1960s to some 19 kg in 2011. Fish imports rose by 108 percent from 2002-2012 with developing countries representing 54 percent in total fishery exports by value. Aquaculture, the world's fastest growing food production sector, will continue to expand. Total fish supply is projected to increase to 186 million tonnes in 2030 with fisheries and aquaculture contributing equal amounts. However, aquaculture is expected to provide close to two thirds of global food fish.

Capture fisheries and aquaculture are also threatened by competing demands from hydropower development and water diversion for industrial use. Furthermore, the vital contributions of fisheries and aquaculture to the world's well-being and prosperity remain constrained by poor governance, management and practices. Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) Fishing continues to be an obstacle to achieving sustainable fisheries. Climate change is adding a further challenge.

Stresses caused by human activity on the oceans' life support systems are widely acknowledged to have reached unsustainable levels. Today, 50 percent of fish stocks worldwide are fully exploited, 30 percent are overexploited, with 90 percent of large predatory fish stocks already depleted. Our oceans and seas are under risk of irreversible damage to habitats, ecological functions, and biodiversity because of overfishing, climate change and ocean acidification, pollution, unsustainable coastal area development and the unwanted impacts from the extraction of non-living ocean resources.

If the current trend in unsustainable uses of marine resources is not reversed, their ability to deliver food

for future generations will be severely compromised. At risk are hundreds of millions of people who depend on fisheries and aquaculture for their livelihoods, food security and nutrition, with small-scale coastal fishing communities particularly affected.

Fleet overcapacities result in large economic losses - estimated at USD 50 billion/year - through inefficient utilization of resources that otherwise could support economic development and growth.

What needs to be done?

The Rio+20 outcome document 'The Future We Want' stresses the need to reverse these trends by utilising the oceans' vast potential wealth wisely and reducing its vulnerability to ocean-related hazards. Putting the uses of oceans and seas onto a sustainable path and adapting to climate change requires concerted and responsible actions across a wide range of actors and economic sectors.

Promoting sustainable fishing and fish farming practices and strengthening fisheries management capacity can ensure the conservation and sustainable use of the oceans and seas and of their resources. Enabling mechanisms include the adoption of an ecosystem approach to fisheries and aquaculture with fair and responsible tenure systems.

Investing in Blue Growth - the sustainable management and use of aquatic resources and adoption of ecosystem approaches - can boost economic growth, increase food security, improve nutrition and reduce poverty - and is of particular significance to Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and coastal areas around the globe.

Today there is an increasing need for cooperation and coordination among all stakeholders and at all levels for more sustainable fisheries management and better conservation. Further capacity development efforts are needed, in particular those strengthening the policy environment, institutional arrangements as well as collaborative processes that empower fishing communities, civil society organizations and public entities. The 1995 FAO [Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries](#) - and its associated guidelines - provides the principles and framework for promoting responsible and sustainable fisheries and aquaculture.