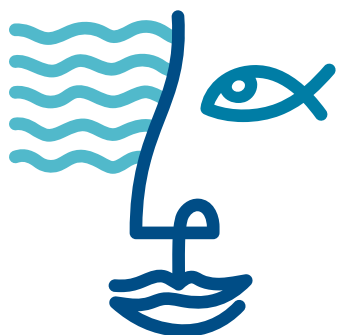




Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations



INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF
ARTISANAL FISHERIES
AND AQUACULTURE

2022

The International Year of Fisheries and Aquaculture (IYAF) 2022 in Africa: Final report





FAO/Eugene Uwimana

Abebe Haile-Gabriel

*Assistant Director-General and
Regional Representative for Africa
Food and Agriculture Organization
of the United Nations*

“The International Year of Artisanal Fisheries and Aquaculture (IYAFA) 2022 was a unique opportunity for collaboration, both large and small, to focus on the particular needs of small-scale fisheries and aquaculture in Africa.

The message is clear: the role of fishers, fish-farmers and fish-workers is central. They are custodians of aquatic resources for all. In scores of events and other engagements across Africa in 2022, organized by the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and our valued partners, what has been at the very heart of the shared vision is the need for food security and nutrition, the eradication of poverty and the sustainable use of natural resources.

The economic volatility stemming from the COVID-19 pandemic and the war in Ukraine put a harsh light on the vulnerability of those involved in artisanal fisheries and aquaculture – particularly women and those involved in economic activities managed on a household level. The impacts of climate change and gender inequality add additional burdens to artisanal communities.

Many of the obstacles facing small-scale fisheries in Africa are also found in other regions, but some are unique to Africa and need innovative remedies at local and regional levels. Improving the global understanding of the problems faced by those involved in small-scale fisheries and aquaculture is key. Exchanging knowledge and providing lessons about what works well and what needs further consideration is seen by FAO and partners as the way ahead for growth.

IYAFA 2022 brought into focus the importance of FAO’s Four Betters as set out in FAO Strategic Framework 2022-2031: better production, better nutrition, a better environment and a better life, leaving no one behind.

This publication is a bookend to the International Year’s observance in Africa, as well as a starting point for future collaboration for and with Africa’s fishing communities.”



IYAFA 2022 in Africa: a timeline

Scores of events across Africa took place in 2022, from workshops and TV campaigns to meetings and conventions. Some of the most notable were:



Facts and figures

THERE ARE CURRENTLY 12 MILLION PEOPLE ON THE AFRICAN CONTINENT

who directly and indirectly depend on fisheries and aquaculture for their livelihoods.



WOMEN MAKE UP AROUND 40% OF THE WORKFORCE

involved in small-scale fish production in Africa. They do most of the selling and marketing of fish and fishery products.



Small-scale production in Africa is estimated at more than a million tonnes which is worth just under

USD 6 BILLION.



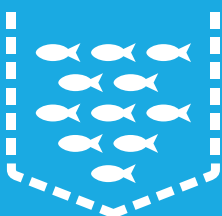
Fish is a huge global export and with efficient management to increase the sustainability of African fishing,

GLOBAL PRODUCTION COULD INCREASE BY A FURTHER 15% BY 2030.



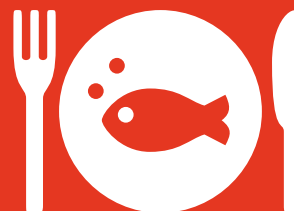
RURAL FISHERIES ARE A MAJOR SOURCE OF INCOME

for many countries in Africa. It's not just the contribution from coastal fishing either: more than half of the small-scale workforce fish away from the sea, with almost a third of the output coming from inland waters.



IN THE PAST 30 YEARS,

global consumption of fish has rocketed, leading to better nutrition for many communities, particularly in small, vulnerable economies that rely on the fish caught by local fisheries to provide the bulk of their protein.



Making aquaculture attractive to young people in Gabon

Many young graduates in Gabon are struggling to find a job in a country where unemployment in this age group is around a third. The fisheries and aquaculture sectors have enormous potential to meet employment challenges, food security and nutrition.

In Gabon, as in most countries in the Central African sub-region, fish is a sought-after protein, with per capita consumption at around 35 kg per year. But despite the potential for its development, fish farming remains largely under-exploited.

The lack of interest in fisheries and aquaculture among the young has resulted in an ageing community of fish farmers. More than four hundred aquaculture workers are in Gabon, less than a quarter of whom are under 35. This hinders the development and economic profitability of fish farms and their future.

More positively, that seems about to change. A dozen young people took part in a training course organised by FAO on intensive production techniques to promote aquaculture commercially in peri-urban areas. Requested by the Government of Gabon and funded by FAO, the training gave them practical knowledge of the manufacture of floating cages for aquaculture, and best practices for selecting aquaculture sites and raising fish.

Following this, FAO provided the trainees with equipment and inputs for the new 'aquapreneurs' to begin operations.



©FAO/Bob Inanga Manana Siengoy

Levedy Céleste Lossangoye grew up on her family's fish farm, 80 km from Libreville. The 30-year-old Gabonese woman is an agricultural engineer by training and an entrepreneur at heart. On the back of the FAO training, Céleste is now thinking big with fish farming.

"Aquaculture is a profitable activity that allows you to feed your family and provide for your financial needs. I encourage young people to get involved. Thanks to this new knowledge, I decided to invest myself in my father's farm... to improve the profitability."



©FAO/Levy Bouassa



FAO/Eugene Uwimana

Beyond IYafa, the road ahead

Regional cooperation for aquatic management of fisheries must be encouraged. This can be achieved through the establishment of effective monitoring, control and surveillance. As well as the development of improved conservation and sustainable use of fisheries resources, the involvement of Regional Fishery Management Bodies and Regional Fishery Advisory Bodies for this goal would be key to address stock management and regulations surrounding fishing gear practices. Small-scale operators would benefit from this protection.

To secure a sustainable future for small-scale fisheries in Africa, the exchange and sharing of knowledge to avoid past problems is vital and will keep the momentum going far beyond IYafa. Fishers and fish workers are among the most vulnerable to disasters and climate change, as well as a lack of secure tenure of fishing waters. Policies and actions should support building resilience to these threats for the sector's long-term continuity. Encouraging awareness and implementing guidelines to avoid overfishing - a palpable threat to the community-led industry - would improve the maintenance of fish stocks, as would the implementation of a closed season for fishing activities.

Women make up around forty percent of the workforce involved in small-scale fish production in Africa, not only in the post-harvest and service sectors but also in subsistence fishing. They do most of the selling and marketing but are often constrained by high transportation costs and post-harvest losses, as well as gender inequality when it comes to earnings. It's important to acknowledge that women and men involved in small-scale fisheries and aquaculture are equals.

FAO wants to see that, beyond IYafa, efforts continue to help develop and deploy technology and digital innovation to support women in all sectors. As well as being good news for the fishing industry, the women themselves will benefit; it promotes equality and improves lives.

The promotion of academic research that looks at ways to safeguard access to aquatic resources for all is key. Over-fishing of some fish species, such as tilapia on Lake Victoria, could cause certain species to disappear altogether. Fish and sea life are also at risk when lakes and seas become polluted with poisons. Regional cooperation must be encouraged to collectively fight illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing operations by establishing effective monitoring, control and surveillance.

Keeping the public informed about the benefits of smaller fisheries for the wider population is important. Taking a fresh approach to organizing events - such as food tastings, cooking demonstrations and exhibitions - can be just as effective as engaging audiences online to spread the word. As one fisherwoman says, small actions can have big impacts, like a ripple effect. She points out that fishers understand how to maintain a balance in the ecosystem, and any decisions made will affect their way of life and work.

FAO in Africa, and our partners, are calling on all those involved in the fisheries and aquaculture sectors to continue the momentum of the past year. Small-scale fisheries and aquaculture can benefit from a new era of support because despite being small in scale, they are big in value.

As custodians of shared resources, the small-scale fishers themselves have a fundamental role in responsible management and sustainable use of aquatic resources and ecosystems. Effective participation in any decision-making process will ensure their traditional knowledge is maintained to help shape laws and policies. Improving access to markets and infrastructure will safeguard the provision of aquatic products that are both affordable and of good quality. With all sides holding onto those strong principles, the path forward can be a resilient one.

An innovative approach to better production and better nutrition in Rwanda

A trial project in the rice fields of Rwanda's Rwamagana District has seen rice farmers add fish to their rice paddies in an innovative and symbiotic approach with great dividends for farmers' livelihoods and access to nutritious foods.

The farmers have been able to harvest fish and rice while at the same time boosting the production of both. The new rice-fish farming model uses organic manure from the fish to fertilize the rice crops, and the fish in turn eat any pests – so no added fertilizers or pesticides are needed.

One of the farmers, **Joseph Nsekanabo**, is positive about the new approach:

"I have been farming rice for many years, but this new approach is the most fruitful one. We are implementing it in 20 acres, and so far, it is very promising. We have already harvested more than one tonne. But before this, we used to get only 800 kilograms in the same area."

Similar success under the project have been seen in two other participating countries, Burundi and Ethiopia.





**Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations**

Regional Office for Africa
www.fao.org/Africa
@FAOAfrica

Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations
Accra, Ghana

Cover photography: ©FAO/Eugene Uwimana



Some rights reserved. This work is available
under a CC BY-NC-SA 3.0 IGO licence