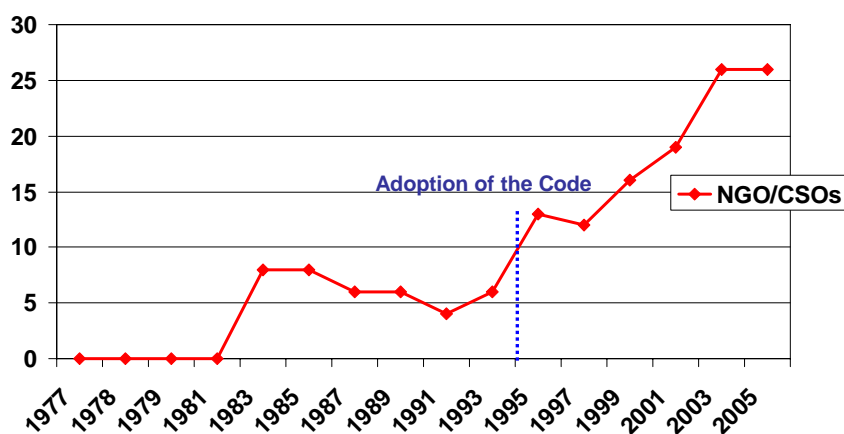


NGO/CSOs Fact Sheet

Historical Context

- Since 1983 the Fisheries and Aquaculture Department has actively encouraged NGO/CSO participation in the work of the Department through participation in the biennial sessions of the Committee on Fisheries and in the work of major field projects.
- NGO/CSOs are an important source of information to FAO, especially for information from small-scale fishing communities. NGO/CSOs bring detailed knowledge of local cultures, fishing practices, political structures and the social motivation of many of their staff.
- The 1984 World Fisheries Conference was a turning point for closer relations between the Department and NGO/CSOs. At the time the Department had little contact with NGO/CSOs that focussed on industrial fisheries issues but limited contact with NGO/CSOs that were concerned with fisheries development issues. During the 1984 Conference NGO/CSOs organized a successful parallel meeting that provided an impetus for the better organization of development NGO/CSOs and closer relations with the Department.
- The 1984 provided a clear mandate for the Department to strengthen ties with fisheries NGO/CSOs.
- The Department forged closer relations with environmental NGO/CSOs at the time of the 1992 FAO Technical Consultation on High Seas Fisheries and in follow-up to UNCED. This involved, *inter alia*, NGO/CSOs participation in the work of some FAO regional fishery bodies and in particular the elaboration of the 1995 FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries.
- The Fisheries and Aquaculture Department maintains close and regular liaison with NGO/CSOs and has a flexible mechanism in place to consult with them biennially, or at other times, as required. This is confirmed by the progressively increased participation of NGO/CSOs in activities of the Department and in participation at sessions of COFI.

NGO/CSOs Participation in COFI



Development of the Code of Conduct

- The 1995 FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries was elaborated between 1993 and 1995. It is a voluntary instrument that seeks to promote structural change in fisheries and aquaculture so that long-term sustainability and responsible behaviour with respect to the harvest and utilization will be achieved. The Code was endorsed by the Twenty-first Session of COFI in 1995 and adopted by the Twenty-eight Session FAO Conference on 31 October 1995.
- The Code of Conduct was developed in a series of open-ended working groups. NGO/CSOs participated actively in the process and made many substantive contributions.
- International NGO/CSOs, in particular, were able to provide information and insights to the elaboration process concerning a broad range of global fisheries and environmental problems and, in some cases, to sensitize government representatives about the extent and severity of these issues. National NGO/CSOs were able to influence the development process through their active involvement in national delegations.
- In adopting the Code of Conduct the FAO Conference called upon all stakeholders, including NGO/CSOs, to collaborate in the fulfilment and the implementation of the objectives and the principles contained in the Code.

Implementation of the Code

- NGO/CSOs are at the forefront in fostering implementation of the Code of Conduct.
- Article 4 of the Code of Conduct requires that FAO monitor implementation on a regular basis. The Committee on Fisheries has requested that the Fisheries and Aquaculture Department report to each Session on implementation. To fulfil this request the Department collects and analyses information on implementation from Members, regional fishery bodies and NGO/CSOs.
- Article 4.4 of the Code notes that stakeholders, including NGO/CSOs, should promote the understanding of the Code among those involved in fisheries including where applicable by the introduction of schemes that would promote voluntary acceptance of the Code and its effective application.
- To give effect to Article 4.4 NGO/CSOs have been working with small-scale and industrial fishers, *inter alia*:
 - Translated the Code and technical guidelines in local languages so as to increase its effective dissemination among fishers and fishing communities.
 - Conducted workshops and meetings so as to enhance understanding of the Code.
 - Prepared materials about the Code for distribution to fishers.
 - Development codes of practice for fishing operations, fisheries management and aquaculture.
 - Encouraged the introduction and adoption by fishers of voluntary management measures as a means of implementing the Code.
- NGO/CSOs were the first (1999) and the third (2003) recipients of the Margarita Lizarraga Medal awarded biennially by the FAO Conference to a person or organization that has served with distinction in the application of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries.

(A link to Margarita Lizarraga Award WebPages)