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# The State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture 2012

The world is facing multiple and interlinked challenges ranging from the impacts of the ongoing financial and economic crisis to greater climate change vulnerabilities. At the same time, it must meet the food and nutrition needs of an expanding population. The fisheries and aquaculture sector offers opportunities to increase food and nutrition security, alleviate poverty, generate economic growth and ensure improved use of resources.

In 2010, people consumed about 128 million tonnes of fish. In the last five decades, world fish food supply has outpaced global population growth, and today fish provides more than 4.3 billion people with about 15 percent of their intake of animal protein. Estimates for 2010 point to **fish consumption reaching another new high of 18.6 kg per person.**

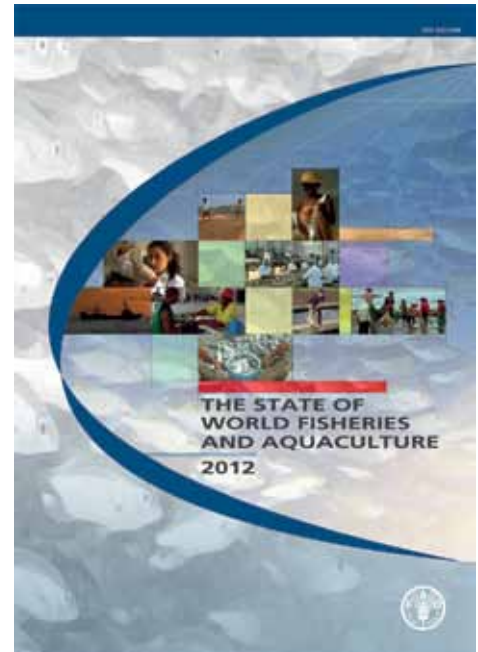
Stimulated by higher demand for fish, world fisheries and aquaculture **production is projected to reach about 172 million tonnes in 2021**, with most of the growth coming from aquaculture. Aquaculture will remain one of the fastest-growing animal food-producing sectors.

In addition, employment in the fisheries and aquaculture primary sector has continued to grow faster than in agriculture – providing about 55 million jobs. Overall, including ancillary activities (e.g. processing and packaging) and dependants, **the sector supports the livelihoods of 10–12 percent of the world's population.**

Fish and fishery products continue to be among the most-traded food commodities worldwide. Following a drop in 2009, world trade in fish and fishery products has resumed its upward trend driven by sustained demand, trade liberalization policies, globalization of food systems and technological innovations. Estimates for 2011 indicate that **exports of fish and fishery products exceeded US\$125 billion**, with average prices increasing by more than 12 percent.

## KEY MESSAGES

- Fisheries and aquaculture are a vital source of food and protein for billions of people worldwide, and they support the livelihoods of more than one out of ten people.
- Aquaculture remains one of the fastest-growing food-producing sectors.
- There is an increasing need for international cooperation for global sustainable fisheries management and biodiversity conservation.
- Mainstreaming gender is an essential component of alleviating poverty and achieving greater food and nutrition security.
- Low-impact fuel-efficient fishing technologies and practices offer scope for maintaining the long-term profitability and sustainability of capture fisheries.
- The FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries, and its associated international plans of action and technical guidelines, can contribute to achieving the goal of a global sustainable food production system.



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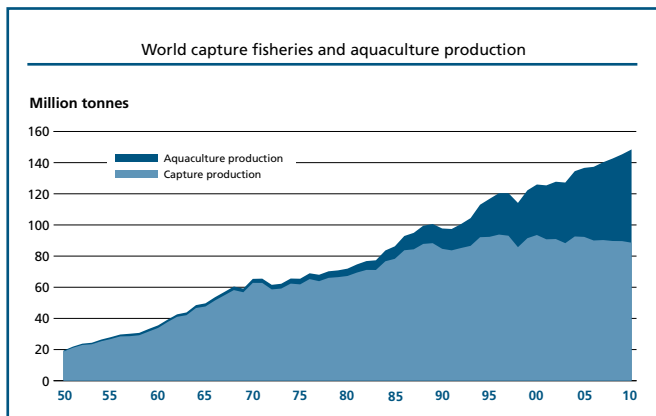
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Subject categories:

**Fisheries, Aquaculture**

*The State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture*, the flagship publication of the FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Department, presents a world review of fisheries and aquaculture including trends and statistics. It highlights issues debated worldwide and profiles future scenarios with a view of providing the most current global view and perspectives on fisheries and aquaculture.



However, the vital contributions from fisheries and aquaculture to the world's well-being and prosperity remain **constrained by poor governance, management and practices.**

The coming decades are likely to see major changes in economies, markets, resources and social conduct. Climate change impacts will increase uncertainty in many food sectors, including fisheries. The **FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries**, and its associated international plans of action and technical guidelines, **can contribute to achieving the goal of a global sustainable food production system** by providing a means for establishing political commitment, a structure for enabling implementation of contributing actions, and a basis for support for strengthening management capacity.

Promoting sustainable fishing and fish farming can provide **incentives for wider ecosystem stewardship.** Enabling mechanisms include the adoption an ecosystem approach to fisheries and aquaculture with fair and responsible tenure systems.

Small-scale fisheries employ more than 90 percent of the world's capture fishers and are important to food security, poverty alleviation and poverty prevention. The FAO Committee on Fisheries has recommended the development of **international voluntary guidelines to contribute to policy development, secure small-scale fisheries and create benefits.**

Illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing continues to be an obstacle to achieving sustainable fisheries, especially in developing countries with limited technical capacity. However, **IUU fishing appears to be moderating in some areas** as policies and measures take effect.

Governance of aquaculture has made remarkable progress where several countries use "best management practices". The 2011 FAO Technical Guidelines on Aquaculture Certification are an important tool and **provide direction for the development, organization and implementation of credible aquaculture certification schemes.**

As regards the state of marine fishery resources, the proportion of overexploited stocks has continued to increase, albeit more slowly, and accounted for about 30 percent of all assessed marine stocks in 2009. There is increasing need for international cooperation to improve global fisheries management of shared marine resources and to preserve the benefits of sustainable fisheries. **Strengthening fisheries management capacity is fundamental in developing countries** in order to facilitate sustainable fisheries, reduce the impacts of IUU fishing and support the implementation of global instruments.

Although women make up at least 50 percent of the workforce in inland fisheries and market as much as 60 percent of seafood in Asia and West Africa, their role is often undervalued and neglected. In addition to working towards the UN Millennium Development Goal of gender equality and empowering women, **mainstreaming gender is an essential component** of alleviating poverty, achieving greater food and nutrition security, and enabling sustainable development of fisheries and aquaculture resources.

Fishers, fish farmers and their communities tend to be particularly vulnerable to disasters and require **improved preparedness for and effective response to disasters in fisheries and aquaculture.** Emergency responses should strengthen food and nutrition security through the sustainable rehabilitation and long-term recovery of the fisheries and aquaculture sector and the livelihoods that depend on it, especially targeting women and other marginalized groups.

High energy prices and greater awareness of ecosystem impacts present major challenges to the viability of fisheries, particularly in developing countries where access to and promotion of energy-efficient technologies have been limited. Fishing industries require an enabling environment for rapid adoption of **low-impact fuel-efficient fishing technologies and practices** that offer scope for maintaining the long-term profitability and sustainability of capture fisheries worldwide.