



THE SANTIAGO DE COMPOSTELA DECLARATION for Equal Opportunities in the Fisheries and Aquaculture Sectors

Women are present in all the activities of the fisheries and aquaculture sectors. Their contribution, although scarcely quantified, is particularly significant both in terms of labour force and wealth generation for those areas and regions that depend on fisheries and aquaculture. Furthermore, they are the predominant human capital in activities such as transforming and trading with fisheries products.

According to the World Bank, 47% of the 120 million people all over the world work in extractive fishing and subsequent activity areas such as processing or selling are women, while in the aquaculture industry, this figure increases to 70%.

Despite this important role, the conventional division of work based on the roles associated with each gender has caused women in many areas of the world to be set aside to housekeeping or tasks related to their private life, as mere caregivers or collaborators in the household economy. For this reason, their activity within this industry has not always been recognised as an "authentic job", but as an extension of their tasks in the household sphere, therefore lacking those rights that legitimately belong to them as professionals and not being registered on the official statistics on employment in the sector.

What is not numbered is not visible and, therefore, is not often taken into account. In this regard, the traditional visibility of women's work has resulted in the absence of a proper gender perspective in sectoral policies at an international level, which prevents countering many of the barriers that women have faced within this sector merely because of their gender.

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Some of these problems and challenges are in relation to the difficulties regarding their incorporation to specific activities traditionally performed by men (such as extractive fishing on board), the lack of natural and financial resources available for them, their low involvement in production procedures and decision-making, limitations in their professional training, the absence of social benefits often due to the informal nature of the activities developed and their evident temporality, double shifts and problems managing family life, or gender barriers that prevent a women's true empowerment and leadership.

Although they are conditioned by the socio-political, economic and cultural context in each country or area, these problems are common for women in the fisheries sector all over the world.

Fortunately, the last few decades have seen significant actions on at a global level to progress in equal opportunities at all activity levels and in all sectors, for the purpose of having fairer and more equitable societies.

In the international sphere, the principle of equality is stated and reaffirmed in the United Nations Charter, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the UN Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). These regulatory and instrumental frameworks recognise the need to guarantee that women fully take part and on equal terms with men in all social areas, urging the different States to develop policies aimed at promoting gender equality and women's empowerment.

In particular, CEDAW is the first instrument that explicitly refers to the situation of rural women –including women working in areas depending on fisheries and aquaculture– recognising their substantial role and forcing member states to take measures to ensure, on equal terms, the participation of women in rural development, as well as improving their access to food, health services, education, training and employment opportunities.

With specific regard to the world of work, there are fundamental Conventions of the International Labour Organization (ILO) that provide tools to eliminate discrimination in all aspects of the workplace and in society as a whole and offer a basis upon which gender mainstreaming strategies can be applied in the field of labour.

Therefore, participants in this I International Conference of Women in Fisheries

Convinced

that the work undertaken by women in the fisheries and aquaculture sectors is fundamental for the development of their regions, as they make an essential contribution to sustainable growth, both from the social and the economic-environmental points of view.

Considering

that there are nearly 56 million women's jobs along the value chain in the fisheries sector at a global level, despite the lack of reliable and updated statistics, with data categorised by sex and territory, corresponding to the different activity sub-sectors.

Aware

of the exceptional hardness of the work performed within the sector and the lack of recognition of the activities traditionally carried out by women in this industry, so they often lack social and labour protection and an appropriate professional status.

Concerned

about the existence of gender stereotypes and barriers that limit the incorporation of women in this sector, and the unequal opportunities given in training, professional development, entrepreneurship and participation in government bodies and sector representation.

Supporting

the principles set forth in international regulations and treaties on gender equality and non-discrimination, as well as the objectives included in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Ready

to collaborate in developing a global strategy in favour of equal opportunities within the fisheries and aquaculture sectors by means of exchanging knowledge and experience and using synergies for implementing a series of acts aimed at improving the situation of women in this activity area

WE STATE that is necessary:

1. To incorporate the gender perspective in designing, executing and monitoring policies and sectoral strategy framework in a way that the specific impact of the problems and interests of women within the sector are taken into account, establishing mechanisms that ensure their participation in decision-making procedures.
2. To increase efforts on statistics in order to foster data categorised by sex for all fisheries and aquaculture subsectors. This will help to identify possible gender gaps and prevent the undervaluation of women's work, both on a quantitative and qualitative level.
3. To fight against pre-established gender roles within the sector that put women at a disadvantage or make them inferior to men, considering and concerning several Administrations, entities and social agents involved in fisheries and aquaculture activities.

4. To foster a fair access to the productive, economic and financial resources that guarantee that women have the goods and resources needed for performing their tasks within the sector available to them.
5. To improve the working conditions of women within the sector, fighting against the informality and precariousness of women's work, segregation both horizontally and vertically, the wage gap and barriers that hinder the reconciliation of work, family and personal life.
6. To guarantee the social protection and safety of workers (women and men) in the sector and to provide professional dignity to their activity so that it can be considered "decent work", according to the ILO definition. And, to this end, to promote the international legal framework for decent work in fisheries, with a view to ensuring that the world's 38 million fishers working on board commercial fishing vessels enjoy decent working and living conditions.
7. To increase women's recruitment and access to training in fisheries or aquaculture, as well as in other complementary matters and areas of knowledge such as new technologies or business management, so that they can professionally develop, improve their working conditions and their promotion opportunities.
8. To encourage female entrepreneurship and business initiatives within the sector, enabling public budgets and making it easier to access grants, credits or other funding sources, as well as appropriate training and advice for the implementation of projects favouring the sustainable development of fishing communities or areas.
9. To break down structural barriers that hinder the incorporation of women into activities where they have historically been underrepresented (such as extractive fishing on board) and, by means of adequacy, from the gender perspective, of working facilities or areas.
10. To guarantee regulatory frameworks that safeguard equal treatment and non-discrimination, as well as implementing mechanisms and instruments for monitoring and enforcing such principles, preventing situations in which women's rights are violated or the power relations between the sexes are abused.

11. To favour the formation of women's associations within the sector and the creation of organisational structures that bring together and represent several professional groups of women in the fisheries and aquaculture sector. In this regard, the creation of a network or international platform of women in fisheries that is supported by the international organisations signed below is fundamental in order to safeguard women's rights and interests therein. This will be one of the main ways for fostering their empowerment and leadership.

In Santiago de Compostela, on 5 November 2018