

ILO contribution to the Report of the Secretary General

The ocean as source of sustainable food – a focus on aquaculture

- Aquaculture is one of the fastest growing agri-food sectors globally – a phenomenon coined as “the Blue Revolution”. The sector has grown dramatically over the past five decades and now accounts for half of the world’s fish food supply. It provides direct employment to more than 20 million people, with many more people employed along the supply chain.
- With the growing world population and environmental pressures, aquaculture is increasingly recognized as holding potential for sustainably addressing the challenges of food and nutrition security. In view of aquaculture’s important contribution to alleviating rural poverty in a number of developing countries, there is also growing appreciation of its role in enterprise development, job creation and livelihood diversification, especially for the rural poor. In order to promote the sustainability and growth of the aquaculture sector and harness its potential to advance sustainable development, inclusive growth and decent work, there needs to be a stronger focus on addressing employment and labour challenges facing the sector.
- [ILO’s recent research on the future of work in the sector](#) analysed the economic and employment trends and developments and the key decent work issues in various countries. The research examined the impact on the sector of the evolving megatrends such as demographic transition, globalization, technological advancement and environmental degradation and climate change, all of which are key drivers of change in the world of work.
- The research was presented and discussed at a [Technical meeting on the future of work in aquaculture in the context of the rural economy](#) (13-17 December 2021) that brought together representatives from governments, employers and workers to discuss the decent work challenges and opportunities in the aquaculture sector. The meeting adopted [conclusions](#) that will assist governments, workers and employers to take measures to tap the potential of the sector to support full and productive employment and decent work for all, so contributing to food and nutrition security and making sure that no one is left behind. The conclusions underscore that harnessing aquaculture’s potential to effectively contribute to feeding the world’s growing population in the decades to come will require concerted efforts to promote sustainable enterprises and decent work for its workforce.

- As a follow up to these conclusions the ILO is building the capacity of its constituents to develop strategies and engage in effective social dialogue to promote decent work and enable a just transition to a sustainable future of work in the sector. In this respect, the ILO is updating the [2013 guidance on addressing child labour in the sector](#) with a view to provide recent insights into the nature, scope, causes, contributing factors and consequences of child labour as well as guidance and examples of good practices on how this challenge can be addressed in a systemic and sustainable way. The ILO is also working on a new Code of Practice on Safety and Health in aquaculture that will be discussed and adopted at a forthcoming Meeting of Experts at the end of 2025. The code will promote awareness and effective management and control of the of the hazards and risks associated with aquaculture aiming to prevent occupational accidents and diseases and improve the working environment. It will encourage cooperation among tripartite constituents and other stakeholders to enhance occupational safety and health, fostering positive attitudes in the sector.
- At country level the ILO is working towards the promotion of resilient, inclusive and sustainable supply chains in the aquaculture sector in selected countries sch as the [Philippines](#). In Latin America and the Caribbean, the ILO is advancing decent work in the aquaculture sector through promoting cooperative development among small scale fish farmers. In August 2023, in collaboration with UNIDO, the ILO organized a [regional training of trainers' workshop](#) on the adaptation of ILO's Think.Coop and Start.Coop tools to the aquaculture sector and in December 2023, the ILO supported national training workshops [in Peru and in Ecuador](#), with a view to adopt the tools at the national level and to institutionalize the use of the two tools in the sector. This would contribute to the strengthening of aquaculture cooperatives to advance decent work, promote formalization, and improve productivity.

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