
Discussion Document on Gender and Fisheries Crime Law Enforcement¹

1. Background

This discussion document is based on the ninth webinar in a series of Blue Justice Forum webinars facilitated by the Blue Justice Initiative Secretariat in conjunction with the UNDP Blue Resilience project.

The theme for the webinar was the ‘**Gender and Fisheries Law Enforcement**’.

The webinar was presented by Lucía Solano Ramírez, Coordinator of the Internal Treaty Working Group of the International Legal Affairs Directorate in Colombia, and Médina Thiam, Deputy Director of the Maritime Safety and Marine Pollution Prevention in the Senegalese Maritime Administration, ANAM (National Agency for Maritime Affairs). A total of 29 participants joined the webinar from a total of 20 countries (Austria, Canada, Colombia, Denmark, Ghana, Greenland, Iceland, Indonesia, Ireland, Israel, Norway, Poland, Sao Tome and Principe, South Africa, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, United Kingdom, and the United States). The webinar was moderated by Marit Svålas of the Blue Resilience project.

2. Topic in Focus

Gender and Fisheries Crime Law Enforcement - Médina Thiam, Deputy Director of the Maritime Safety and Marine Pollution Prevention in Senegal.

1. Women represent just under half of the world’s population (49.6% versus men at 50.4%). From a longevity perspective, their life expectancy is longer than men (75.6 years versus men at 70.8 years). Despite this, women are severely under-represented in the maritime and fisheries domain.
2. Women comprise only 2% of the work force in the maritime domain, which is a male dominated sphere comprising 1.6 million seafarers. Women are mostly involved in cruise activities.
3. In the fisheries sector, according to the FAO 50% of those involved in the seafood industry are women. Further, women - particularly in developing countries - are central to viable fishing

¹ The webinar was held on 15 October, 15:00 CET.

practices in the artisanal sector, contributing to food security as well environmental protection associated with sustainable harvesting.

4. Women are particularly visible in the less lucrative steps of fisheries value chain, such as seafood processing, fish trade, aquaculture and administration. Their representation in terms of ownership, governance, and law enforcement in the sector however, is low.
5. This has relevance to the role of women when it comes to pursuit of the UN SDGs that pertain particularly to the maritime and ocean domain. Specifically, women are unable to contribute equally to achieving these goals and targets which include SDG 14 'life below water', SDG 16 'peace, justice and strong institutions' as well as SDG 1 'no poverty' and SDG 2 'zero hunger'. This has implications too for progress towards SDG 5 'gender equality'.
6. There are a number of pressing challenges related to gender and fisheries crime law enforcement, including:
 - The lack of gender disaggregated data in the sector and in fisheries law enforcement organizations
 - The lack of research and knowledge on women's involvement in fisheries crime as perpetrators and facilitators, as well as their role as victims.
 - An assessment of women's needs in the fisheries sector and fisheries law enforcement sector is needed.
7. Strategies for addressing gender inequality in the fisheries sector will require high level commitment and well as financial support of specialized gendered programs in the sector, including mentoring; targeted education and awareness-raising (in light of the strong matriarchal tradition in developing countries communities in particular, this is key); innovation and research efforts.
8. Combined this will empower and facilitate women to contribute to a fair and sustainable blue economy.
9. These efforts should be complimented by promoting female networking in the area of fisheries crime law enforcement (such as under the LE Femmes network), transparency in the maritime and fisheries domain and equity, as well as bilateral, regional and multilateral cooperation on the matter.
10. The 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda promotes the advancement of gender equality in all aspects of economic and social life. Such empowerment may come from the promotion of women in fisheries crime law enforcement and by enhancing women's capacity to combat fisheries and environmental crimes. In the maritime domain, the SDGs implementation are the key vectors to support female participation in blue justice and economy achievements.

Gender and Fisheries Crime Law Enforcement - Lucía Solano Ramírez, Coordinator of the Internal Treaty Working Group of the International Legal Affairs Directorate in Colombia (personal views).

11. At the global level, more than 40 million people are employed as fishers, with an estimated 90% operating at the small-scale.
12. Within the industry, women are typically found in harvesting, processing, marketing, trading, and leadership roles. FAO for example estimates that women fill 90% of the jobs in fish processing, which includes activities such as canning and gutting. Women thus play a substantial role in the sector, making up nearly half of the overall fisheries sector workforce.

On the whole, however, men dominate in top management positions in the fisheries and maritime sector.

13. On the topic of gender and fisheries crime, there is a chronic lack of reliable information.
14. There is minimal information on the gender of actors in fisheries crime. Anecdotal evidence indicates that social traditions or expectations may prevent women from becoming involved in fisheries crime as they are dissuaded from involvement in the fisheries sector in the first place (e.g., expected to stay home rather than out to sea; the impression that fishing is regarded as dangerous for women). There are exceptions, however, and the related narrative of women having invisible or solely supportive roles in fisheries crime requires interrogation. Empirical research on the topic is needed.
15. There is little publicly available information on the role of women in fisheries enforcement agencies and authorities. What information is available is not sex disaggregated making it difficult to evaluate women's access to jobs in the sector, recruitment policies and the role they bring to the sector. There is a need for further studies on this.
16. It appears, however, that their role in law enforcement is evolving, as women are also increasingly participating at all levels of the fisheries value chain.
17. There is evidence that women's interest in and respect for laws are known to arise when they are directly involved in monitoring and enforcement activities. Given the central role women play in many societies, this respect of the law can be transferred to the broader community. This in turn can lead to greater compliance, including by men. Women have thus been shown to have a positive deterrence effect on illegal fishing.
18. Leading from the above, there is evidence too that women's participation improves conflict resolution in fisheries management and that women are better negotiators and more level-headed in such handling conflict.
19. Traditionally, institutions responsible for fishing resources have worked with and for men, and policies/regulations have ignored the different impacts of policies and programmes on each of the respective gender categories.
20. The situation is slowly changing as new institutional settings for participatory management evolve.
21. Few states have drafted specific legislation or suggested specific actions to enhance the role of women in the maritime and fisheries sector. What law there is, is mostly soft law.
22. Moving forward in the legislative sphere towards efficiency:
 - a. It is imperative to capture accurate sex-disaggregated data and statistics to inform policies and overcome the effects of gender-blind policies.
 - b. Special efforts are needed at the policy level to ensure that women and men fishers have equal access to productive resources and services.
 - c. Adequate implementation mechanisms and budget allocation should be put in place to support these processes.
 - d. The enactment of domestic gender-responsive domestic laws should be encouraged in line with Article 4 of the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).
 - e. Regulations should target women in the fishing communities in the dissemination of fisheries laws
 - f. The role of women in the intelligence, surveillance, or information gathering aspects of fisheries law enforcement should be recognized and supported.

- g. Related, the close interaction of women with coastal ecosystems, rendering them potentially effective partners in law enforcement, should be recognized and better understood.
23. Female fisheries crime law enforcement officers experience gender-specific challenges but also bring unique advantageous qualities to their jobs. Further research is needed to better understand these.

In sum:

1. At the global level, more than 40 million people are employed as fishers, with an estimated 90% operating at the small-scale sector. Within the industry, women are typically found in harvesting, processing, marketing, trading. FAO for example estimates that women fill 90% of the jobs in fish processing, which includes activities such as canning and gutting. Women thus play a substantial role in the sector, making up nearly half of the overall fisheries sector workforce. They remain under-represented in management and leadership roles, but this is slowly changing. Gender disaggregated data is required for better understanding and analysis of the matter.
2. On the topic of gender and fisheries crime, including fisheries crime law enforcement, there is a chronic lack of reliable data. There is a lack of research and knowledge on women's involvement in fisheries crime as perpetrators and facilitators, as well as their role as victims. Social traditions may place women as less likely to be involved in fisheries crime, but this requires interrogation and dedicated research on the topic is needed. An accurate assessment of women's needs in the fisheries sector and fisheries law enforcement sector is also needed.
3. Traditionally, fisheries management institutions have worked with and for men, with little regard to the impacts of policies and programmes on a gendered level. Few states have dedicated laws or policies aimed at enhancing the role of women in fisheries; this is slowly changing as new institutional settings for participatory management evolve.
4. Addressing gender inequality in the fisheries sector, including fisheries law enforcement, requires, amongst others: high level commitment, dedicated resource allocation, updated legislation, specialized gendered programs in the sector, enhanced female law enforcement networking, targeted education, and awareness-raising including in communities, in a context of enhanced bilateral, regional and multilateral cooperation.

General discussion

Discussion themes included:

- Synergies between the increased attention to and promotion of terrestrial women wildlife rangers and the promotion of women in fisheries and maritime law enforcement.