



## PLEDGE TO IMPLEMENT THE SHANGHAI DECLARATION

7 September 2021

The Gender in Aquaculture and Fisheries Section of the Asian Fisheries Society – GAFS - is the only professional section of an international fisheries and aquaculture society focusing on gender. Our members have been studying gender in aquaculture over decades, from small scale farming of seaweed to industrial salmon farming, in locations from A for Australia to Z for Zanzibar. We were active in the 2010 Global Conference on Aquaculture, presenting and authoring the chapter on human capacity development and opportunities for women. Some of our members have also been part of the expert team drafting the Shanghai Declaration.

We welcome the Shanghai Declaration that starts to align the aquaculture sector with the Sustainable Development Goals and signals a more inclusive phase of development.

In the text of the Declaration, we are pleased to see progress since the previous Global Conferences on Aquaculture in expressing the need for equitable aquaculture development, and in greater accounting for women's opportunities and human justice issues. Getting women and others such as young women and men, and indigenous people included explicitly in the Shanghai Declaration has been a long process. In earlier decades, from the 1976 Kyoto Declaration to the 2010 Phuket Consensus, technical issues dominated how aquaculture development was framed, although in Phuket, the first reference to gender equality appeared.

In the Vision of the Shanghai Declaration, para. 13 makes specific reference to recognizing the importance of gender equality. In addition, 4 of the 10 of the strategic priorities are about people. But could we go even further? Commitments E, F, G and H on decent work and socially responsible enterprises, women, young women and men, and indigenous people (respectively) deserve greater visibility in the Declaration. The order in the current list of strategic priorities places these 4 priorities below the traditional set of biotechnology, economic and environment articles, implying a lesser importance.

The Shanghai Declaration starts to bring together elements of many SDGs. Our pledge focuses on SDG 5 (gender equality) and SDG 8 (decent work and economic growth) because SDG 14 (life below water) is silent on these.

Despite major improvements in the last three decades, GAFS considers that the knowledge base to guide social improvements in aquaculture is still inadequate to the needs. This applies at all scales of aquaculture from homestead to industrial, in all regions and all along the value chain. GAFS **pledges** to seek partnerships to focus on two areas in its future work: sex-disaggregated data and increasing the knowledge and know-how for gender-responsive aquaculture throughout the value chain.

Sex-disaggregated aquaculture data: Most of the elements of strategic priority F (*Ensure women's empowerment by enhancing women's full access to equal opportunities through gender-transformative policies*) rely on knowledge. A vital part of this knowledge is sex-disaggregated labour

data. Only a small number of countries, however, regularly supply sex-disaggregated labour data to FAO on the aquaculture primary production node of the value chain. How can more countries be encouraged to collect and report their data? In addition, a large share of aquaculture sector labour is missing because it is outside the production node and is not routinely counted. Many women (and men) who work in pre- and post-harvest work and trading are thus not counted and so plans, strategies and actions cannot accurately take them into account. We urge FAO to work with countries, UN agencies such as ILO and UN Women and researchers to find ways to overcome these data gaps.

Knowledge-base and know-how for gender-responsive aquaculture: Despite the weak statistics, many place-specific studies indicate a more complete picture. Many of these studies are presented at our GAFS conferences and webinars or undertaken by us, or posted in articles on our website (<https://www.genderaquafish.org/>). They show that women with many different skills work in many positions in aquaculture enterprises. Many are unpaid or underpaid. Women also contribute the greater share of the care and reproductive work in supporting the aquaculture workforce. And sometimes they take on the community and environmental work protecting their homes and livelihoods.

GAFS will be working with FAO, NACA and other partners to find ways to consolidate these scattered findings and help make a more compelling case for why statistics and research results matter and how both can be better captured to create a more complete assessment.

To be gender-responsive, the aquaculture sector must mainstream gender targets in all its labour policies and practices, and in toolkits, technical guidelines, standards, certification and accreditation schemes. Aquaculture practitioners need good technical instruments for gender-responsive planning, indicators of progress, training and communications. The Sub-Committee on Aquaculture of the FAO Committee on Fisheries should place include gender as a regular item on its agenda, engage experts in the long term and monitor and report on progress with mainstreaming gender.

Research is needed to document and analyse the causes of gender inequality and to develop transformative solutions. Research can shed light on what makes women lose (or retain) control over their aquaculture assets and jobs as the scale and intensity of aquaculture production grows.

We **pledge** to seek out partners to work with over the critical people-centred elements of the Shanghai Declaration, and to disseminate the Declaration to our thousands of followers on our social media and through our membership.

### **Looking to 2030**

By 2030, we envision that people and institutions engaged in aquaculture will know why and how social dimensions, including the gender dimension, matter and will embrace the need for sharing the benefits of this vibrant sector. GAFS cannot work alone on gender equality, on equity and all other human aspects. Change has to be systemic and so we look forward to hearing many gender pledges coming from other institutions committed to the Shanghai Declaration.

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