



# DECALOGUE

The International Year of  
Artisanal Fisheries and  
Aquaculture in Mexico

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TBTI  
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Small-Scale Fisheries are Too Big To Ignore



Supports the:



INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF  
ARTISANAL FISHERIES  
AND AQUACULTURE  
2022



The United Nations General Assembly declared 2022 as the International Year of Artisanal Fisheries and Aquaculture (IYAFA) with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) as the lead agency, with two objectives:

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Photography: D Ausín-Gómez.

Enhance global awareness and understanding of small-scale artisanal fisheries and aquaculture and foster action to support their contribution to sustainable development, specifically in relation to food security and nutrition, poverty eradication and use of natural resources.



Photography: RI Rojas-González.

Promote dialogue and collaboration between and among small-scale artisanal fishers, fish farmers, fish workers, governments and other key partners along the value chain, and further strengthen their capacity to enhance sustainability in fisheries and aquaculture and improve their social development and well-being.



## OUR PROPOSAL

The decalogue constitutes a baseline of lessons learned during IYAFA in Mexico and the calls for action for communities, public policy, academia, and civil society organizations. Its ten statements reflect the progress and challenges faced by the main protagonists, i.e., those people who constitute the fisheries and aquaculture value chains.

This decalogue results from a collaborative and dynamic work between the fisheries and aquaculture sector, academia, civil society, and government institutions. The statements reflect the current reality of the sector in Mexico, and contribute to the seven pillars of the IYAFA, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the 2030 Agenda and the Voluntary Guidelines for Achieving the Sustainability of Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication (SSF Guidelines).





# 1

## FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE ARE A CULTURAL MANIFESTATION OF IDENTITY AND ROOTS AND REPRESENT A PILLAR FOR FOOD SECURITY AND DECENT EMPLOYMENT

Artisanal fisheries and aquaculture should be revalued by recognizing their contribution to employment that promotes well-being, rootedness, and dignity (e.g., healthy food, lawful work, sense of belonging) for coastal communities. It is necessary to adopt a human rights-based approach to recognize their essential impact on food production and nutrition, job generation, foreign exchange earnings, and their contribution to cultural heritage, which sometimes constitute ancestral artisanal practices of great historical value.



Photography: JC Lapuente-Landero.



- IYFA pillar: Social sustainability; Economic sustainability; Food security and nutrition; Governance; Gender equality and equity.
- SSF Guidelines: Social development, employment and decent work; Gender equality; Value chains, post-harvest and trade.
- SDGs: No poverty (1); Zero hunger (2); Decent work and economic growth (8); Peace, justice and strong institutions (16).

# ACTIONS

01

Promote public policies that recognize and revindicate communities and organizations as well as their *culture* with its own characteristics and worthy ways of living that enrich the human experience, *well-being*, and *sense of belonging*.

02

The pandemic caused by COVID-19 made more evident the imperative need to improve the food quality of the Mexican population. For this reason, it is necessary to ensure the strategic contribution of the sector to the *nutrient-rich food* that benefits public health, *sovereignty and food security* of the country.

03

Guarantee and protect the *human rights* of all people who integrate the fisheries and aquaculture sector, ensuring decent working conditions in all their value chains.

04

*Recognize, organize, train, and professionalize* people participating in artisanal fisheries and aquaculture in areas related to labor, economic, and social improvements.

05

Modify the vision and execution of *incentives* for allocating credits and other financial resources for *good production practices*, responsible management, as well as labor, financial, and organizational improvements.



## 2

# PEOPLE WORKING IN THE FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE SECTOR ARE ENTITLED TO A SOCIAL PROTECTION SYSTEM

Ensuring the right to social protection is a significant debt owed by the Mexican State to all the people who participate in the artisanal fisheries and aquaculture value chains, given the great labor risk resulting from providing welfare to the society. The pandemic caused by COVID-19 demonstrated the increase of social, health and economic vulnerabilities derived from fisheries and aquaculture work.

Photography: D. Cupido-Santamaría.



- IYafa pillar: Social sustainability; Food security and nutrition; Governance; Resilience.
- SSF Guidelines: Social development, employment and decent work.
- SDGs: No poverty (1); Zero hunger (2); Good health and well-being (3); Quality education (4); Gender equality (5); Clean water and sanitation (6); Affordable and clean energy (7); Decent work and economic growth (8); Reduced inequalities (10); Sustainable cities and communities (11); Peace, justice and strong institutions (16).



# ACTIONS

**01** Build participatory public policies for the *social welfare* of the fisheries and aquaculture sector.

**02** ·Ensure the prompt and permanent inclusion of producers in a system of *social protection* (social assistance, social security, and labor protection) that is *ad hoc* to the particularities of the sector. Social protection must consider the occupational risks they face throughout the value chain.

**03** Recognize and strengthen the local strategies and forms of *personal and community protection and care* that exist among people in the production sector. These people are generally not included in social security systems and cannot access and pay for adequate health services.

**04** Design new mechanisms to make *health and life insurance* available and financially accessible to fisheries and aquaculture workers and their organizations. Include systems to protect their families in the event of death from accidents at work.

**05** Create *mechanisms for safety and security* since the people participating in fisheries and aquaculture live in constant and growing uncertainty. It is essential to develop safety programs for high-risk activities such as diving. *Ensuring physical integrity* at sea and the production unit must be a matter of the State and a right that concerns all the society.



# 3

## IN FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE, PEOPLE ARE SO IMPORTANT THAT THEY CAN NOT REMAIN IGNORED AND INVISIBLE

In artisanal fisheries and aquaculture activities, vulnerable groups remain invisible or ignored. For the sake of the entire sector, women, youth, ethnic and gender minorities, elders and people with disabilities must be empowered and actively included in decision-making processes. All workers are essential and have a voice. We must listen and consider that each person and family need to fulfill their needs and should be able to contribute according to their experiences and abilities.



Photography: Comunidad y Biodiversidad A.C.



- IYFA pillar: Gender equality and equity; Social sustainability.
- SSF Guidelines: Governance of tenure in small-scale fisheries and resource management; Gender equality; Social development, employment and decent work.
- SDGs: Quality education (4); Gender equality (5); Decent work and economic growth (8); Reduced inequalities (10); Peace, justice and strong institutions (16).

# ACTIONS

01

Generate a national system of regional registers with *statistics and indicators* to make visible the participation of *women, youth, elders, people with disabilities, and other minorities in the sector*.

02

Make minorities *visible and empowered* through reforms or new public policies, cross-sectoral programs, and specific projects.

03

Promote *participation* mechanisms for citizens to contribute to planning and execution of fishing and aquaculture activities. Citizens are a little-recognized population groups in decision-making.

04

Create *collaboration and communication networks* to complement capacities and exchange initiatives, visions, and solutions to common challenges. During the COVID-19 pandemic, women and youth brought new perspectives and skills to the sector for the administration, use of technology, and diversification of activities.

05

Promote and legislate intersectoral programs promoting youth as *agents of change* in fisheries and aquaculture. We must consider the *intergenerational changes* in the planning processes for the continuity of this sector, the success of conservation actions, and to provide certainty to the new generations of the sector.





# 4

## IN MANAGEMENT POLICIES AND ACTIONS, PRIORITY MUST BE GIVEN TO STRENGTHENING THE SOCIAL FABRIC OF FISHING AND AQUACULTURE COMMUNITIES

Strengthening the social fabric in fishing and aquaculture communities must focus on reinforcing community ties, identity, and solidarity between members and their families. These social values underpin the conditions for individual and collective empowerment, as well as support the improvement of livelihoods and education for action.



Photography: Comunidad y Biodiversidad A.C.



- IYFA pillar: Environmental sustainability; Economic sustainability; Social sustainability; Governance.
- SSF Guidelines: Governance of tenure in small-scale fisheries and resource management; Social development, employment and decent work.
- SDG: Decent work and economic growth (8); Reduced inequalities (10); Life below water (14); Life on land (15); Peace, justice and strong institutions (16).

# ACTIONS

01

Strengthening the sense of *identity and solidarity as well as of community and family cohesion* is key to encourage cooperation, monitoring, and care of aquatic resources. It is necessary to make visible the benefits generated by a well-managed, responsible, and regulated fisheries and aquaculture, as well as the negative impacts of practices that deteriorate the marine ecosystems.

02

Promote *social innovation* as a mechanism for fishing and aquaculture communities to move towards sustainable use of their aquatic resources. This requires the transformation towards horizontal, circular, solidarity, and inclusive social organizations.

03

Strengthen fishing and aquaculture organizations by recognizing *community rules* and building capacity for *collective action and democratic processes*.

04

Encourage and legitimize *community-based management processes* led by people engaged in artisanal fisheries and aquaculture. Promote the constitution of *management committees* that include the greatest diversity of voices in the value chain. Decision-making must be participatory and informed, and led by a co-responsible generation.

05

Promote *conflict resolution mechanisms* in communities, providing administrative and legal support, and promoting networks for communities to exchange experiences, and *open dialogues* with other market actors, industrial fishing, and intensive aquaculture.



# 5

## IT IS NOT ENOUGH TO FISH OR CULTIVATE MORE, IT IS ALSO NECESSARY TO SELL THE PRODUCTS AT FAIR PRICES AND DISTRIBUTE THE BENEFITS FAIRLY

We must strengthen the mechanisms and commercial alliances that add value to artisanal fisheries and aquaculture products and ensure a more equitable distribution of profits. Additionally, we must diversify activities inside and outside the extraction phase to strengthen livelihoods, facilitate access to markets and sources of financing, and obtain fair and dignified payments for this work. We must rebuild and make the value chain processes more sustainable, seeking to reduce production costs and increase profits distribution for the people working in the early production steps.

Photography: Comunidad y Biodiversidad A.C.



- IYAFA Pillar: Economic sustainability; Food security and nutrition.
- SSF Guidelines: Social development, employment and decent work; Value chains, post-harvest and trade.
- SDGs: No poverty (1); Zero hunger (2); Decent work and economic growth (8); Industry, innovation and infrastructure (9); Responsible consumption and production (12); Life below water (14).



# ACTIONS

01

Encourage intersectoral collaborations for the *diversification of products, addition of value, and the prioritization of direct human consumption*. To this end, it is necessary to establish policies and strategies for markets and seafood producers that promote *financial education and fairer and safer marketing*.

02

Reinforce campaigns to *raise awareness among consumers and traders* about the need to support the care of aquatic resources and markets and value chains with *social responsibility* - e.g., markets with "kilometer zero" products. *Certifications* should be an option to engage markets to participate and share costs related management and information generation.

03

Strengthen *local, regional, and national markets* as well as facilitate access to international markets. All these while considering the adverse implications to communities of exporting their high-value products and the effects to domestic markets of importing seafood products.

04

Create *zero waste and circular economy programs* in fisheries and aquaculture value chains, as well as promote the use of post-harvest and post-production resources, and reuse and recycle materials.

05

Implement participatory public policies for *improving infrastructure and operations in rural areas*. This will allow a more efficient mobility and safety of products, as well as less expensive conservation, processing, and transportation processes- e.g., financing *cold storage facilities* to ensure the conservation of products and their quality.



# 6

## FISHING AND AQUACULTURE COMMUNITIES NEED TO BE MORE RESILIENT TO RISK

People in fishing and aquaculture communities are vulnerable to increasing sources of risk and their impacts. For this reason, immediate actions are needed to increase their ability to resist, adapt, and transform in the face of labor problems, market variations, extreme weather events, economic impacts, and changes in the availability of fishery resources or effects on aquaculture production units.



Photography: A. Ayer.



- IYafa pillar: Environmental sustainability; Social sustainability; Resilience.
- SSF Guidelines: Disaster risks and climate change.
- SDGs: No poverty (1); Decent work and economic growth (8); Reduced inequalities (10); Sustainable cities and communities (11); Climate action (13); Life below water (14).

# ACTIONS

01

Strengthen *adaptive capacity and encourage proactive responses* by communities to face adversities. These individuals, families and communities and social and economic values that create resilience, which allowed value networks to begin operating quickly after the COVID-19 pandemic.

02

Develop *regional assessments of vulnerability and local capacities* to climate change as a basis for designing resilience-enhancing actions (from community to sectoral to regional) for adaptation, prevention, and mitigation of impact for future climate change scenarios.

03

Manage *environmental insurance* for communities to strengthen planning processes and early warning systems that help them recover from natural disasters.

04

Promote access to *savings and investments* for individuals or families working in fisheries and aquaculture.



# 7

## SHARED RESPONSIBILITY IS AN ESSENTIAL ELEMENT FOR THE SUCCESSFUL GOVERNANCE OF SMALL-SCALE FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE

A strong and effective governance structure is required to support processes and plans for mitigation, adaptation, and management of fisheries and aquaculture. Governance should entail labor aspects, the health of resources and their ecosystems, and addressing illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing through strong institutions, intersectoral participation, actors involved in self-organization, access to information, and regulation of markets.



Photography: RI Rojas-González.



- IYafa pillar: Environmental sustainability; Social sustainability; Economic sustainability; Governance.
- SSF Guidelines: Governance of tenure in small-scale fisheries and resource management; Value chains, post-harvest and trade; Disaster risk and climate change.
- SDGs: Quality education (4); Gender equality (5); Decent work and economic growth (8); Climate action (13); Life below water (14); Peace, justice and strong institutions (16); Partnerships for the goals (17).

# ACTIONS

01

Promote *strong government institutions and updated and adaptive regulatory instruments* to increase the technical and legal certainty in the face of changing realities for aquaculture and fisheries production units.

02

Develop and implement participatory ordinance programs, management plans, and other instruments to strengthen *governance and participatory management*, including community-based monitoring systems.

03

Strengthen institutions and intersectoral collaboration to improve *registry, surveillance, inspection, and monitoring systems*, which will improve the generation of useful and reliable information for decision-making in the short, medium and long term.

04

*Apply sanctions effectively and transparently* to stop and discourage illegal fishing activities.

05

*Decentralize management systems and simplify procedures* for applying to use rights and other administrative processes related to artisanal fisheries and aquaculture. Eliminate the *de facto* open access to common goods and production systems, beyond their sustainable limits.



# 8

## ALL ACTORS AND INSTITUTIONS ARE VITAL FOR THE INTEGRATED MANAGEMENT OF FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE

The integrated management of the fisheries and aquaculture sector should be strengthened to recognize all institutions and social actors properly, including all those who participate in capture but also in pre- and post-harvest activities, such as processing, marketing, surveillance, monitoring, data generation and traditional citizen and scientific knowledge.



Photography: RI Rojas-González.



- IYAFA pillar: Environmental sustainability; Social sustainability; Governance.
- SSF Guidelines: Social development, employment and decent work; Value chains, post-harvest and trade.
- SDG: Clean water and sanitation (6); Decent work and economic growth (8); Reduced inequalities (10); Life below water (14); Peace, justice and strong institutions (16).

# ACTIONS

01

Create institutional and citizen networks in which all stakeholders in the sector participate and in which **effective collaborations** are in place for information generation and decision-making processes. This will reduce the power inequities and imbalances in value chains caused by the lack of compliance with rules and laws.

02

Foster the interface between society-research-policy through dialogues between actors and linkages between **traditional, local, and scientific knowledge** for decision-making and sustainable management. Promote the development of **transdisciplinary research and citizen science** within the National Network of Fisheries and Aquaculture Information and Research (RNIIPA).

03

Promote **environmental education** based on local knowledge and scientific observations and analysis.

04

Encourage processes for small aquaculture producers to **access water use**, conditioned to implementing responsible use agreements.



# 9

## FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE BENEFIT FROM TECHNOLOGICAL INNOVATION DESIGNED AND DECIDED IN AN INCLUSIVE MANNER

Fisheries and aquaculture face unpredictable and uncontrollable processes. To adapt successfully, people and organizations require innovation and the use of technical and technological tools designed through cooperation, self-organization and a sustainable vision.



Photography: E Ayala.



- IYafa Pillar: Governance; Resilience.
- SSF Guidelines: Value chains, post-harvest and trade; Gender equality; Disaster risk and climate change.
- SDGs: Gender equality (5); Affordable and clean energy (7); Industry, innovation and infrastructure (9); Climate action (13); Life below water (14); Partnerships for the goals (17).

# ACTIONS

01

Develop technologies that provide better working conditions for fisheries and aquaculture. Promote empowerment, diversification, and citizen participation processes, particularly in critical parts of the value chain, such as the **electronic market, administrative and financial management, and added value**.

02

Promote **digital literacy**, access to technology, and technological infrastructure in rural areas to reduce the digital divide, which limits access to information and prevents many from exploring opportunities derived from information technologies and networks.

03

Encourage the creation of interoperable tools and technological systems of **citizen science** that allow people in the sector to generate and provide their own reliable information for decision-making with greater transparency and certainty.

04

Recognize communities or social groups that implement **technological innovations** in aspects such as fishing gear, ghost gear removal, recovery of fisheries, and environmentally friendly aquaculture systems.

05

Use the **precautionary principle and ethical guidelines** in technologies to avoid harmful situations. For example, increases in the number of fishers or effort beyond sustainable limits, or catches through techniques that go beyond the carrying capacity of aquatic systems.



# 10

## TAKING CARE OF ECOSYSTEMS HEALTH HELPS CONSERVE FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE AND PROTECT THE PEOPLE WHO RELY ON THEM

Healthy aquatic ecosystems are the basis of artisanal fisheries and aquaculture. Protecting ecosystems and recovering ecological functions constitute priorities to maintain the provision of goods and services for people who rely on them both directly and indirectly. Safeguarding ecosystems requires strengthening local capacities, improvements in value chains, and reducing negative impacts from human activities in terrestrial environments, coasts and seas.

Photography: Comunidad y Biodiversidad A.C.



- IYFA pillar: Environmental sustainability, Economic sustainability.
- SSF Guidelines: Governance of tenure in small-scale fisheries and resource management; Social development, employment and decent work; Value chains, post-harvest and trade.
- SDG: Quality education (4); Decent work and economic growth (8); Climate action (13); Life below water (14).



# ACTIONS

01

Promote *co-responsibility* (academy, government, communities, civil society) for the *recovery of deteriorated ecosystems* and for *reducing pressure on overexploited fishing resources and water bodies*. Address and integrate the sources of impacts from the upper basin or other distant places into management policies.

02

Facilitate *fast and long-term financing* to encourage processes of implementation of sustainable practices within artisanal fisheries and aquaculture activities. We must build on the experience of successful efforts in the country.

03

Identify *economic alternatives* that consider the expectations and perceptions of fishing and aquaculture communities, for the *diversification of income* and for the sustainable use of *underutilized fish and aquaculture resources*. Examples of this are integrated multitrophic aquaculture, regenerative fishing, and restocking, where it is environmentally, socially and economically feasible.

04

Recognize the *multidimensional vocation* of aquatic ecosystems to avoid potential tensions and conflicts between conservation and artisanal fisheries and aquaculture, as well as with other productive activities such as recreational and industrial fisheries, intensive aquaculture, tourism, urban growth, and the energy industry.

05

Strengthen participatory and comprehensive management of *no take areas* (e.g., natural protected areas, fish refuges, and community-based reserves) to maintain nature contributions to fisheries and aquaculture.

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# The International Year of Artisanal Fisheries and Aquaculture

# MUST CONTINUE

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Photography: N Vite-García.

Beyond the celebrations and events held worldwide, IYafa represents the beginning of an irreversible process to unite and tackle complex challenges of artisanal fisheries and aquaculture and a major shift toward transdisciplinary solutions. This initiative calls for immediate and tangible decisions toward improving the conditions of artisanal fisheries and aquaculture and, consequently, of all the people who rely on them.



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## Sources of information

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