

6th Global Symposium on Gender in Aquaculture and Fisheries (GAF6)

Special Symposium at the 11th Asian Fisheries and Aquaculture Forum, Bangkok, Thailand
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REPORT TO 11AFAF CLOSING PLENARY



GAF6 Report to 11AFAF Closing Plenary prepared by: Nikita Gopal, Katia Frangoudes, Angela Lentisco, Marieta Sumgagaysay, Susana Siar, Clara Park, Kyoko Kusakabe, Arlene Satapornvanit, Indah Susilowati, Hillary Egna and Holly Hapke

Presented at 11AFAF Closing Plenary by: Nikita Gopal

GAF6 was organized into

4 Special Sessions

- Small Scale Fisheries Guidelines
- Gender in Fish Value Chains
- Focus Thailand & Mekong Region
- Regional Updates

4 Regular Sessions

- Climate change and disaster preparedness
- Fisheries Resources, Aquaculture and Gender
- Fishing communities and well-being, including violence against women
- Thinking beyond the framework of gender and fisheries
- Gender and Food Safety

1 Panel

- The fish industry, gender and social development (which included a discussion with representatives of the seafood industry)

In all GAF6 had 68 presentations - 47 oral presentations, 19 oral summaries of posters and 2 posters.

Major highlights/ recommendations from the GAF6

- The FAO-VGSSF is the first international document recognizing gender equality and equity in small scale fisheries. The challenge is to remove the barriers and enhance and ensure full participation in SSF at all levels.

- Gender roles and men's and women's participation and benefits in the value chains would depend on the environmental and socio-cultural context as well as on the specific commodity and node of the value chain.
- Value chain analysis is very useful but needs to take into consideration women's full contribution including supporting/preparatory work which is perceived as an extension of "domestic work" and risks not being captured.
- Gender issues, perceived as social issues, have a large impact in economic terms, and therefore should be taken into consideration in any analysis.
- Data is important, including sex-disaggregated data, but there is plenty of room for improvement. Lack of appropriate data is also detrimental for resource management.
- FAO is trying to improve reporting by asking better questions, and also by finding ways to integrate project based data into national data, and also developing guidelines for statistics.
- Though climate change has adverse impacts, it also provides opportunities for shifting set gendered patterns.
- Women and men have differences with regards to risk and risk aversion, in particular with relation to droughts; and women appear more risk adverse than men.
- Women and men have different needs that need to be taken into account with regards to disaster risk reduction and adaptation to climate change.
- Disasters and climate change provide an opportunity for women's empowerment, by shifting views, and finding new areas of intervention.
- Community based interventions that are supported by local government units have transformative impact on women and their households.
- There are gender differentials in the levels of participation / involvement in aquaculture and related projects. Factors contributing to these differentials need to be considered in planning for intervention strategies that integrate gender at all stages of the project cycle.
- Aquaculture, despite the existing gender gap in the access to the resources, promises big potentials for promoting women's empowerment, building livelihoods, and enhancing resilience.
- Gender and human welfare issues must be addressed in technology development projects/ programmes.
- Regional updates from Asia, Africa, Norway, Caribbean and Costa Rica have shown there are similarities across regions on the position and roles that women play in the fisheries and aquaculture sector. Their contributions are often not recognized though they play significant silent roles.

Presentations from Thailand and the Mekong countries showed that

- Social media can be successfully exploited for better marketing strategies for women.
- In Cambodia, with fishing resources depleting and other income generating activities emerging, including migration and factory work, households try to diversify to maintain the livelihood that they identify with, and women tend to be used for such household strategies.
- Gender division of labour in rice-shrimp farming is very clear and women tend to be excluded from capacity building initiatives.
- In Laos, there is still a lack of women involved in higher levels of fisheries offices despite the existence of gender policy as there are no women available to be promoted.
- In Vietnam, undocumented work (unpaid, invisible, reproductive) or contribution of women in rice and rice-shrimp production is prevalent and reflective of other areas. Women's work

is considered subsistence and complementary but it is in fact time consuming and labor intense and actually very important.

- The women in the seafood and fishing industry also tend to be invisible though there are successful women entrepreneurs. Women are increasingly using social media to market their products but need greater policy support in implementation of international conventions.