

## An overview of “Making the case for gender-inclusive fisheries governance, policies and climate adaptation”

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Women fisher folk in Limbe in Cameroon. © Ayodele Oloko

Gender equality has been a key consideration for policy-makers and natural resource managers in assessing climate risk and developing effective adaptation strategies (Oloko et al. 2024). However, the interests and concerns of women in relation to climate-related planning and fisheries policies are often neglected. This underrepresentation of women, particularly those from developing countries, poses a risk of overlooking opportunities to support vulnerable fishing communities. Additionally, it inadvertently increases the vulnerability of marginalised women fisherfolk.

Making the case for gender-inclusive fisheries govern, policies and climate adaptation (recently published in the journal *Discover Oceans*) reviews 122 refereed publications on the empowerment of local fishing communities, gender participation in fisheries governance, development, and the

need to consider gender dimensions in climate adaptation programmes worldwide. It highlights the socioeconomic impacts of climate change on livelihoods, and discusses potential adaptation measures.

Women have consistently been at the forefront of environmental movements, driven by the aforementioned factors (Harper et al. 2023; Rice et al. 2024). The development of progressive, alternative governance structures capable of addressing climate change equitably, particularly at local and urban levels, is being exemplified through global solidarity and gender-based partnerships (Alber et al. 2017). These approaches and frameworks encompass a variety of community-based initiatives, such as collaborative enterprises, community land ownership structures, and numerous other collective endeavors focused on livelihood

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sustainability (Fakoya et al. 2022). These initiatives unite individuals to foster community resilience in response to climate change vulnerability (Klein 2014). In addition, recent initiatives within fisheries, such as the 2015 FAO Voluntary Guidelines for Small-scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Alleviation and other international fisheries policies, have made explicit commitments to enhance women's participation in governance.

This brings up the need to recognise the important link between Sustainable Development Goal 5: Gender Equality and SDG 14: Life Below Water, which specifically pertains to fisheries (Gustavsson 2020). Recent scholarly attention has focused on various forms of gender discrimination, particularly in relation to blue justice and blue economy narratives, including the gender dimensions of human rights associated with small-scale fisheries (Kleiber et al. 2017). These include procedural, recognitional, and distributional injustice, as well as the marginalised status of women in ocean governance (Mangubhai et al. 2023).

The findings support the adoption of frameworks and policies that provide alternative metrics for women's empowerment, inclusion in fisheries governance, and climate adaptation strategies. The study also offers recommendations for governments, non-governmental organisations, and development agencies responsible for fisheries governance and climate adaptation initiatives.

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