**FAO Inputs to the UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights and Environment's upcoming report on Global Food Systems and Human Rights**

**1. Please provide examples of ways in which the environmental impacts of the global food system are having adverse impacts on human rights. Adversely affected rights could include, among others, the rights to life, health, water and sanitation, food, culture, livelihoods, non-discrimination, a safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment, and Indigenous peoples’ rights.**

The right to adequate food is a universal human right that is realized when all people have physical and economic access at all times to adequate food or the means for its procurement, without discrimination of any kind. Guaranteeing fair access to resources, rural employment and income are key to overcoming hunger and food insecurity. Ensuring food security requires action in multiple dimensions, including: improving the governance of food systems; inclusive and responsible investments in agriculture and rural areas, in health and education; empowering small producers; and strengthening social protection mechanisms for risk reduction.[[1]](#footnote-1) Today more than 30 countries explicitly recognize the right to adequate food in their constitutions.[[2]](#footnote-2) Among the global tools that FAO uses to ful­l its mandate, there are the *Right to Food Guidelines*, a voluntary policy instrument that guide Member Countries on how to transform the achievement of the right to food through national policies, legislations and programmes on food security and nutrition into a concrete goal.[[3]](#footnote-3)

Food quality and safety are important aspects of the right to food. To protect the health of consumers and ensure fair practices in the food trade, FAO and the World Health Organization established the [Codex Alimentarius Commission](http://www.fao.org/fao-who-codexalimentarius/en/) in 1962. The Codex Alimentarius, or food code, offers a framework for states to use in establishing national food control legislation and systems to protect the rights of consumers to safe and fairly marketed foods.

In extreme emergencies, including during natural disasters (drought, floods, heat wave and etc.) the state's obligation may require it to distribute food. It is in situations of crisis such as civil conflict or natural disasters that the right to food is most likely to be violated. Violations include denial of access to humanitarian food aid or the deliberate starvation of civilians through the intentional destruction of food or the tools of agriculture -- equipment, crops, livestock and water supplies. A state's failure to call for adequate and timely international assistance during an emergency may also be a violation of the obligation to fulfil the right to food. Violations of the right to adequate food include any form of discrimination in ensuring access to food, or to the means of acquiring it, on the grounds of race, sex, language, age, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status. In addition, a number of international instruments, including the [Rome Declaration on World Food Security](http://www.fao.org/3/w3613e/w3613e00.htm), proclaim that food should not be used to exact political or economic pressure, whether in the form of food embargoes or other measures that endanger access to food in other countries.

[Scarcity of natural resources can also breed conflict](http://www.fao.org/3/i5591e/i5591e.pdf) with the struggle for control over or access to natural resources evolving into violence. These conflicts, in turn, destroy productive capacities and damage the environment, making it difficult for people to sustain their livelihoods and achieve food security.

Capture fisheries is the backbone of many coastal/riparian communities and contributes to the local economies, employment and food security. It is estimated that globally over 39 million people work in capture fisheries. At the same time the trade in fishery products is one of the most dynamic sectors as 38 percent of the global fish production enters in international trade. The fisheries sector however continues to display alarming fatality rates and generally poor working and living conditions, including severe violations to human and labour rights that are extremely interlinked with decisions on fisheries management and on the status and health of fisheries resources/aquatic resources. Evidence also exists that the working and living conditions of crew on board fishing vessels involved in illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing are of particular concern[[4]](#footnote-4). Another example of ways in which the environmental impacts of the global fisheries food system are having adverse impacts on human right relates to ocean grabbing**.** Small-scale fishers and fishing communities in both the Global South and the Global North are increasingly threatened by powerful forces that are dramatically reshaping existing access rights regimes and production models in fisheries. This process is leading not only to the dwindling of control by small-scale fishers over these resources, but also in many cases to their ecological destruction and very disappearance.[[5]](#footnote-5)

Small-scale fishers depend directly on biological resources and a healthy marine environment for their livelihood. However, habitats and fish populations are being affected by factors far beyond the control of these fishers, including oceans pollution and climate change. These may constitute one of the most serious threat to sustaining small-scale fisheries, particularly in tropical zones as the temperature of the seas rise, along with its acidification, and fish populations move away from warmer waters.[[6]](#footnote-6)

**2. How has climate change affected the global food system?**

The impacts of climate change on the global food systems is already a reality for many food producers and consumers, posing substantial challenges to the achievement of SDG targets. These impacts are expected to increase, be widespread, complex, geographically and temporally variable, and profoundly influenced by socioeconomic conditions. The impacts of climate change, including slow onset shifts and extreme weather events, result in significant loss and damage for the agricultural sectors and those who rely on them. Slow onset climatic events evolve gradually from sustained and incremental shifts in the climate system, such as changes in rainfall and temperature, desertification and ocean acidification, whereas extreme weather events have a rapid onset, such as floods, heat waves, storms and pests and diseases outbreaks. The climate change impacts on the global food systems will include agricultural yields and earnings, food quality, food prices, reliability of delivery and notably food safety and food security. Small-scale farmers and food producers in low- and middle-income countries, where millions of people depend on agriculture will be more vulnerable to these impacts due to their capacity to invest in adaptive practices and technologies.

Some of the risks experienced at the food production side includes the following:

* An increasing number of weather extreme events harms crops and reduces yields. More extreme temperatures, combined with decreasing rainfall, can prevent crops from growing at all.
* More favourable temperature and humidity conditions for transboundary pest migration combined with extensive use of pesticides and herbicides are reducing the capacity to tackle invasive pests and weeds, making them more resistant to climate conditions and anthropogenic pests control measures.
* Heat waves directly threaten livestock’s vulnerability to disease, thereby reducing fertility and meat and milk production.
* Fisheries and aquaculture are already under multiple stresses, including overfishing, habitat loss, water pollution and oceans acidification.

Climate change affects also every other step of the food value chain, such as storage, processing, transportation, and distribution, exacerbating post-harvest losses and food availability to final consumers. Climate change, therefore, poses a fundamental threat to the global food systems by impacting all dimensions of food security, such as accessibility, availability, utilization and stability.

After decades of decline, from 2014, the number of undernourished and food insecure people has risen driven by conflict, economic slowdowns and extreme weather events[[7]](#footnote-7). The COVID-19 pandemic has introduced new vulnerabilities for food security and agri-food systems around the world. When weather shocks coincide with major economic slowdowns and other transboundary threats such as conflict, public health and agricultural pest and disease outbreaks, the risks to food systems, food availability and access are amplified.

The past two decades have witnessed not only the highest global temperatures on record, but also the greatest number of disasters[[8]](#footnote-8). The economic loss associated with all disasters (climatological, hydrological, biological and geophysical combined) has averaged roughly USD 170 billion per year over the past decade. More intense and frequent extreme weather events threaten the agriculture sectors in every region of the world, but the capacity to recover from impacts varies according to levels of preparedness. In low and lower-middle-income countries, climate-related disasters are responsible for 26 percent of the damage and loss absorbed by agriculture and drought is responsible for 83 percent of damage and losses absorbed by agriculture. Climate change impacts in the fisheries and aquaculture sector are described in detail in Annex 1.

**3. To protect a wide range of human rights, what are the specific obligations of States and responsibilities of businesses in terms of preventing, reducing, or eliminating environmental impacts caused by the unsustainable production or consumption of food? How can we shift to food systems that restore and regenerate nature rather than degrading ecosystems, while providing healthy  diets for a global population that will exceed nine billion by 2050?**

To feed a projected 10 billion people in 2050, we must pivot towards nutrition-conscious, sustainable agricultural and consumption practices; design and enact pro-poor growth policies; and support the livelihoods of small-scale and family farmers. Their resilience to shocks and stresses must be strengthened, their role in meeting the demand for healthier diets recognized and encouraged. Legal frameworks should be established that ensure smallholder access to productive resources.[[9]](#footnote-9)

Balancing the different dimensions of sustainability is at the heart of FAO’s Common Vision for Food and Agriculture[[10]](#footnote-10). Working with partners, FAO has developed sustainable approaches in areas such as [agroecology](http://www.fao.org/agroecology/home/en/), [agroforestry](http://www.fao.org/forestry/agroforestry/en/), biotechnology, and [climate-smart and conservation agriculture](http://www.fao.org/climate-smart-agriculture/en/), [sustainable and circular bioeconomy](http://www.fao.org/in-action/sustainable-and-circular-bioeconomy/en) that bring together traditional knowledge, modern technology and innovation.

Agriculture has a major role to play in responding to climate change. FAO is now supporting countries to both adapt to and mitigate the effects of climate change through research-based programmes and projects, with a focus on adapting smallholder production and making the livelihoods of rural populations more resilient. The Koronivia Joint Work on Agriculture provides a model for turning awareness into a roadmap. [Benefitting from FAO’s technical support](http://www.fao.org/climate-change/our-work/what-we-do/koronivia/en/), Koronivia examines ways to adapt agricultural sectors, better manage livestock, soil, water and manure, and address the socio-economic and food security dimensions of climate change in agriculture.

Good governance, enabling frameworks, and stewardship incentives are needed to facilitate mainstreaming of biodiversity. As part of its commitment to agricultural biodiversity and the interaction between biodiversity and agriculture, [FAO contributes](http://www.fao.org/biodiversity/en/) through its policies, programmes and activities to the conservation and use of biodiversity for food and agriculture.

In relation to fish consumption, the 2021 Committee on Fisheries (COFI) Declaration for sustainable fisheries and aquaculture represents a good instrument for States to achieve responsible fisheries. This declaration has been adopted by FAO member countries during the 2021[[11]](#footnote-11).

**4.** **Please provide specific examples of constitutional provisions, legislation, institutions, regulations, standards, jurisprudence, policies and programmes that apply a rights-based approach to ensuring healthy and sustainably produced food. Please include, inter alia, any instruments that refer directly to the right to a healthy environment.**

At regional level FAO supports country and regional efforts to eradicate hunger and poverty and to transition to sustainable food systems incorporating a human rights-based approach (HRBA). Since 2005, FAO has supported the country-led “Hunger Free Latin America and the Caribbean Initiative” (HFLAC 2025) which aims to eradicate hunger by 2025. In particular, FAO has engaged with parliamentarians to work on the adoption of legal frameworks[[12]](#footnote-12): by way of example of the collaboration with the Parliamentary Fronts against Hunger the following legislation has been developed at regional level by the Latin American Parliament (Parlatino):

* Framework law on the right to food, food security and food sovereignty, 2012
* Framework law for Latin America on the regulation of the publicity and promotion of foods and non-alcoholic drinks aimed at children and adolescents, 2012
* Framework law on school meals, 2013
* Declaration on family farming, 2014
* Model law on family farming, 2016
* Model law on Small Scale Fishing and Fisheries, 2017
* Model Law on Climate Change and Food Security, 2021
* Draft framework law for the reduction of food loss and waste, 2016
* Draft Framework law on Community Water and Hygiene Systems, 2020

At national level, FAO has supported the development of legal frameworks regarding food sovereignty, security and nutrition (FSSN), food loss and waste, school feeding and the connection to children right to education, family farming, food labelling, consumers’ right to information in Argentina, Colombia, Chile, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Paraguay, and others.

FAO has also supported the role of parliamentarians in allocating resources to implement policies and programs. This collaboration with Parliamentarians has been expanded and adapted to the particular needs and priorities in other regions like Africa and Near East, collaborating with the Pan-African Parliament, the ECOWAS Parliament and ASSECA which are working on FSSN challenges and their linkages with their regional contexts, including climate change, promoting gender equality and access to land, protection of natural resources, youth employment and inclusion, or water scarcity.

Since 2015, the FAO Food and Nutrition Security Impact, Resilience, Sustainability and Transformation (FIRST) Programme has been supporting over 25 countries in the development of legislation, coordination bodies, strategies, policies and programmes towards ensuring healthy and sustainably-produced food. Some specific achievements are: The development of a National Food Sovereignty, Food Security and Nutritional Education Plan which aims to strengthen Cuba’s resilience adapting more sustainable practices and increasing affordability of a diversified diet for all and the stability of the supply of and the access to adequate food for all; the Fijian Strategic Development Plan, and the Chadian Agro-sylvo-pastoralist Orientation Law.

The Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication (SSF Guidelines) are based on universal human rights norms. The guiding principles of the SSF Guidelines include non-discrimination, gender equality and equity, consultation and participation, rule of law, transparency, accountability and respect of cultures, among others. Their objectives include food security and nutrition; equitable development and poverty eradication and economic, social and environmental sustainability. These objectives are to be achieved through the promotion of a human rights based approach. FAO has been supporting countries in establishing responsible fisheries governance frameworks.Given the vital contribution of women in smallscale fisheries, gender equity and equality considerations need to be taken into account to ensure sustainable resource management and allow women to play an active role as responsible resource stewards.[[13]](#footnote-13)

**5. If your State is one of the 156 UN Member States that recognizes the right to a safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment, has this right contributed to preventing, reducing, or eliminating environmental impacts caused by the unstainable production or consumption of food? If so, how? If not, why not?**

* Not applicable

**6. Please provide specific examples of good practices in preventing, reducing, or eliminating environmental impacts caused by the unstainable production or consumption of food. These examples may occur at the international, regional, national, sub-national, or local level. Examples may involve monitoring food quality; guaranteeing procedural rights (e.g. public access to food information, public participation in decision-making about the environmental impacts of producing or consuming food, access to remedies); new technologies; legislation, regulations, standards, jurisprudence and policies that address the environmental impacts of the food system; and initiatives to achieve healthy and sustainably produced food (e.g. halting land conversion for agriculture, reducing greenhouse gas emissions, reducing air and water pollution, supporting agroecology, agroforestry, organic farming and closed-loop aquaculture, increasing efficiencies, promoting healthy and sustainable diets such as plant-based, and avoiding food waste). Where possible, please provide evidence related to the implementation, enforcement, and effectiveness of the good practices.**

*Focus on fisheries:* In fishery-dependent communities, sustainable natural resource management, which can lead to negative environmental impacts, can be hindered due to a high incidence of poverty, lack of alternative livelihoods and different sources of vulnerabilities, including frequent climate change impacts, high informality, and a lack of decent working conditions. Similarly, fishery-dependent communities are affected by social and economic gender gaps, increased health risks due to exposure to extreme temperatures and accidents, lack of pension systems and participation in contributory social security schemes, and exposure to crime. These factors are now compounded with the adverse socio-economic effects of the pandemic and can increase unsustainable management of resources. The limited access to safety nets or affordable insurance mechanisms that fishers often experience also threatens their livelihoods and may force them to migrate outside the fisheries sector and/or engage in harmful coping mechanisms such as unsustainable and illegal fisheries practices, jeopardizing the long-term sustainability and profitability of the sector, and the recovery of fishers and fish-workers after the COVID-19 impacts. Unemployment benefits and other social protection schemes for small-scale fisheries, are innovative tools to simultaneously support poverty reduction and ensure compliance with natural resource management strategies. For instance, Brazil and Paraguay have unemployment benefits during closing seasons to protect the livelihoods of fishers during closed fishing seasons providing both promotion of sustainable fisheries and livelihoods.

Reducing fish loss and waste:Solutions to food loss and food waste (FLW)rely on a combination of the right policy, application of appropriate technology, skills and knowledge, services and infrastructure, regulatory environment, social and gender equity, good linkages to and knowledge of markets. These topics cut across all stages of the value chain. For example, marketing skills and knowledge are applicable to producers, processors, and retailers. Solutions to FLW will provide economic benefits, have a positive impact on food and nutrition security, improve natural resource use efficiency, and reduce environmental impacts and waste streams. Solutions however will require action by either the public and/or private sectors. Actors in the value chain will require an incentive to change, such as cost effectiveness or increased profit, a secured environment for business where there is sustained support towards promoting effective loss reduction and enforcement of the rules to deter irresponsible practices. Policy makers and the public sector require solutions to be not only economically beneficial but also to generate benefits for society.[[14]](#footnote-14)

**7. Please identify specific challenges that your Government, business, or organization has faced in attempting to employ a rights-based approach to address the environmental impacts of food systems and the consequences of these problems for human rights.**

FAO is the United Nations specialized agency in food and agriculture, with a comprehensive mandate from its Members to work globally on all aspects of food and agriculture (including fisheries, forestry and natural resources’ management), food security and nutrition across the humanitarian-development continuum. FAO’s vision and the three Global Goals of Members are: 1. Eradication of hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition; 2. Elimination of poverty and the driving forward of economic and social progress for all; and 3. Sustainable management and utilization of natural resources, including land, water, air, climate and genetic resources for the benefit of present and future generations. The work of FAO has various human rights dimensions with a nexus to the environment, including the right to adequate food, gender equality, decent work, and indigenous peoples’ rights, as well as procedural rights related to participation, non-discrimination and accountability. The Organization seeks to mainstream these rights in its multifaceted normative, analytical and operational activities, including in its policy and legislative support to Member States.

*Environmental and social safeguards/standards in programming:* FAO adopted a human rights-based approach (HRBA) in [its system of environmental and social standards/safeguards](http://www.fao.org/environmental-social-standards/en/) that seeks to ensure that all programming phases are based on the human rights standards contained in, and the principles derived from, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international human rights instruments, with the aim of developing the capacities of right-holders to claim their rights and duty-bearers to fulfil their obligations.[[15]](#footnote-15) FAO will design projects and programmes to support the realization of indigenous peoples´ rights as per the UN Declaration of Indigenous Peoples Rights,[[16]](#footnote-16) ILO Convention 169[[17]](#footnote-17) and the FAO Policy on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples,[[18]](#footnote-18) to ensure that their resilience, indigenous food systems, and safety nets are not deteriorated. FAO will refrain from supporting activities that may contribute to violations of a State’s human rights obligations. FAO has adopted the PANTHER[[19]](#footnote-19) principles when applying a human rights-based approach in the development of strategies related to food and nutrition security. These principles are participation, accountability, non-discrimination, transparency, human dignity, empowerment and rule of law.[[20]](#footnote-20) Meaningful engagement with stakeholders, including access to timely and relevant information and grievance redress, are key aspects of a human rights-based approach to programming by FAO. Among some of the major barriers to the effective mainstreaming HRBA in FAO’s programming are the following: (i) lacking technical knowledge and expertise among staff; (ii) lacking clarity in processes and procedures related to HRBA mainstreaming; (iii) insufficient awareness and communication; (iv) weak capacity for implementation and enforcement, (v) lack of HRBA mainstreaming into FAO’s Country Programming Frameworks (CPFs) and the ongoing UNSDCF processes; and (vi) need to learn from successes and failures and effective knowledge management.

The SSF Guidelines which strive to achieve sustainable small-scale fisheries through a human rights-based approach is one instrument to support the implementation of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries. The guiding principles of the SSF Guidelines include non-discrimination, gender equality and equity, consultation and participation, rule of law, transparency, accountability and respect of cultures, among others.  The SSF Guidelines need to be understood and applied through promoting a HRBA and following internationally accepted human rights standards. Duty bearers and right holders have to work together. This requires strengthening political will. It also requires enabling small-scale fishers and fish workers to voice their concerns and needs. Efforts to implement the SSF Guidelines through a HRBA may need to address structural issues. Laws and policies need to be developed and reformed. Institutions, organizations and communities at both national and local levels need to be empowered.

Additional instruments include international legally binding framework such as the ILO Work in Fishing Convention (No. 188), FAO Port State Measures Agreement (PSMA) and the IMO Cape Town Agreement, which is expected to enter into force shortly. The number of States ratifying and implementing these internationally binding instruments is increasing. However, the challenge in order to become truly effective tools to improve fisheries safety and working conditions, it is important that the minimum standards and requirements from these international instruments are adopted as widely as possible. The challenge relates to the ratification and implementation of these internationally negotiated instruments. IMO, ILO and FAO jointly support the ratification and implementation of these international instruments, through for example, exchange of information on port State control for improving safety, working and living conditions and reducing IUU fishing, capacity building through regional technical seminars on safety, IUU fishing and decent work in Asia, South West Indian Ocean and West Africa, and the Joint ad Hoc FAO/ILO/IMO Working Group on IUU fishing and related matters (JWG). Assistance funds, technical and legal support and capacity building is available for States that ratify the international instruments promoted in this brochure, to support implementation and enforcement.

**8. Please specify ways in which additional protection is provided (or should be provided) for small-holders and populations who may be particularly vulnerable to unhealthy and unsustainably produced food (e.g. women, children, persons living in poverty, members of Indigenous peoples and traditional communities, older persons, persons with disabilities, ethnic, racial, religious or other minorities, migrants and displaced persons). How can these populations be empowered to produce and consume healthy and sustainably produced food?**

*Accountability to Affected Populations*: It is estimated that 60 percent of the world’s hungry – about half a billion people – live in countries affected by conflict. Accountability to Affected Populations (AAP)[[21]](#footnote-21) is applicable to all of FAO’s programmes, whether humanitarian or developmental. Accountability mechanisms, such as grievance mechanisms, aim to ensure that development and humanitarian actors are held to the principles they proclaim and that interventions do not result in inadvertent harm to people and the environment. They support a human rights-based approach that is transparent, inclusive and participative so that no one is left behind.

*Gender inequality and gender-based violence:* FAO recognizes that persisting inequalities between men and women are not only an unacceptable violation of human rights, but also a major obstacle to sustainable agriculture and rural development, and ultimately to achieve FAO’s mandate of food security and nutrition for all. Women and girls play a key role in the agriculture sector of most countries. Yet, discriminatory social norms and attitudes tend to limit their decision-making power and undermine their rights and access to key productive resources, services and opportunities, thus weakening rural women’s resilience and rendering them more vulnerable than their male counterparts to adverse project impacts. FAO work is anchored in its corporate Policy on Gender Equality[[22]](#footnote-22).

*Land tenure, displacement and resettlement:* FAO work in the nexus between land tenure and human rights is guided by the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security (VGGT) and good practices of VGGT.[[23]](#footnote-23)

*Social protection with a focus on small-scale fishing communities:* Social protection can support the production of sustainably sourced fish by supporting the acquisition of sustainable technology, such as bycatch reduction technologies, enabling compliance with closing seasons and natural resource management strategies, such as through unemployment benefits, and by enhancing access to markets to women in the post-harvest sector, who are often marginalized. Furthermore, social assistance can often support access to food and nutrition, as it increases family’s purchasing power and can provide small scale livelihood activities. Additionally, social protection can enhance the resilience of households in the fisheries sector, reduce their vulnerability, and potentially address the economic barriers to allow poor households to transition to more productive and sustainable livelihoods.

*Indigenous peoples and Free Prior Informed Consent (FPIC):* Indigenous peoples have the right to be free from any kind of discrimination. Indigenous peoples possess collective human rights which are indispensable for their existence, well-being and development as peoples. The special relationships that indigenous peoples have with their lands, territories, resources and cultural heritage are integral to their physical, spiritual and cultural survival. The Free Prior Informed Consent, primarily for Indigenous Peoples, but not only, is a key approach to encourage protection. FPIC is a specific right that pertains to indigenous peoples and is recognized in the UNDRIP (2007). FAO requires that, before undertaking any project/programme activities affecting and/or involving indigenous peoples, a process of FPIC is followed and consent is given by the concerned indigenous community.[[24]](#footnote-24)

*Right to Food:* Since 2017, FAO Right to Food Team has developed work with a network of more than 50 consumer organizations at global, national and local level around the world towards improved legal frameworks and accountability mechanisms to realize the right to food. This includes work to strengthen the access of the most vulnerable populations to a healthy diet and the drive towards sustainable production, to eradicate hunger and malnutrition in all its forms (SDG2); strengthening knowledge, evidence and communication to secure sustainable, nutritious and safe food for all. The impact of consumer organizations to empower populations to produce and consume a healthy and sustainable diet is clear, with some of the highlights of the impact of consumer organizations to be seen in Latin America, for example, where consumer organizations have contributed to the adoption of more stringent food labelling, supported nutrition awareness among consumers and highlight the cost to the consumer of a healthy food basket based related to income; in Africa, where consumer organizations have contributed to consumer protection legislation, work with local producers to support sustainable production methods, work through schools to broaden nutrition standards and with nutrition councils to promote breast feeding, and work to raise awareness on Codex and food safety regulations; and in Asia Pacific where consumer organizations have contributed to the adoption of 'sugar tax', strived for fair pricing and better nutrition labelling, and contributed to regulations on food adulteration and chemical contamination, as well as worked on sustainable production and seeds.

In addition to its collaboration with consumer organizations, FAO works in support of the network of Parliamentary Fronts against Hunger (global), and network of Academics (Observatory on the Right to Adequate Food in Latin America and the Caribbean), to highlight and strengthen impact, build capacity and support the right to adequate food, including initiatives related to nutritional wellbeing, a healthy diet, nutritional guidelines and regulating publicity, in particular when directed at minors, school food policies, and development of legislation for the RtF, food security and nutrition (for more information on legislative and policy gains see question 4).

**9. How do you ensure that the rights of environmentalists work on food issues (environmental human rights defenders) are protected? What efforts has your Government, business, or organization made to create a safe and enabling environment for them to freely exercise their rights without fear of violence, intimidation, or reprisal?**

Although the protection of human rights defenders is not among the day to day activities of FAO, it pays attention to such issues in its sectoral areas of work. The Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security (VGGT), for example, contain provisions on human rights defenders (par. 4.8.).

**10. There is substantial evidence that the actions of high-income States (e.g. high levels of meat consumption, excessive calories, and food waste) are linked to adverse effects on food availability, food quality and ecosystem health in low- and middle-income States. What are ways in which high-income States should assist low-income States in reducing the environmental impacts of food systems while promoting healthy and sustainably produced food?**

Not applicable

**11. For businesses, what policies or practices are in place to ensure that activities, products, and services across the entire food system (production, processing, distribution, marketing, retail, food loss and waste) achieve healthy and sustainably produced food and meet human rights standards, especially those articulated in the Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights?**

The private sector is embedded throughout the food system and plays a critical role in achieving future sustainability and security in the global food supply chain. In the midst of the current international COVID-19 crisis, systemic economic and social inequalities across societies have been laid bare and exacerbated. In this context, private sector actors have a responsibility as well as an opportunity to support recovery and positively contribute to new systems grounded in respect for human rights. It is critical to take advantage of this international momentum to introduce a human rights-based approach (HRBA) to the existing food system. While a growing number of stakeholders are integrating environmental, social and governance (ESG) criteria into their investment activities, addressing risks to people as part of these efforts remains widely neglected. For the right to adequate food to be attained for all people everywhere, sustainable food systems are needed – equitable economic, environmental, cultural and social food environments that guarantee access to healthy diets. The private sector needs to be an active component of this change.

FAO has developed or supported the development of products and tools that can be used by states to create a good business environment:

• Voluntary Guidelines to Support the Progressive Realization of the Right to Adequate Food in the Context of National Food Security (Right to Food Guidelines)

• Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security (Tenure Guidelines)

• Principles for Responsible Investment in Agriculture and Food Systems (RAI Principles)

• Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication (Small-scale Fisheries Guidelines)

• CFS Voluntary Guidelines on Food Systems and Nutrition (Food Systems and Nutrition Guidelines – Zero Draft)

• Code of Conduct for Food Loss and Waste Reduction, under development;

• OECD-FAO Guidance for Responsible Agricultural Supply Chains

• OECD-FAO Guidance for Responsible Agricultural Supply Chains and the Right to Food, under development.

Moreover, UN Global Compact participants in the food and agriculture sector are invited to take an additional, voluntary step to embrace a set of Food and Agriculture Business Principles (FAB Principles, tied to Principles 7, 8 & 9 of the UN Global Compact) and report annually on their progress.

Regarding the conduct of private sector actors, FAO has cooperated with OECD in the development of the OECD-FAO Guidance for responsible agricultural supply chains (2016).

FAO also supports the World Banana Forum (WBF). The WBF is a space where the main stakeholders of the global banana supply-chain work together to achieve consensus on best practices for sustainable production and trade. The WBF brings together retailers, importers, producers, exporters, consumer associations, governments, research institutions, trade unions, and civil society organizations.

Additional instruments and initiatives are needed to strengthen the role of the private sector in providing healthy and sustainably produced food while meeting human rights standards, and FAO is continuously working towards filling in the existing gaps.

The Fisheries sector is one of the most challenging and hazardous work to ensure decent work for all fishers. Social issues have become a major concern in the sector due to human and labour rights abuses found at different stages of the fish value chain, especially in fish harvesting, farming and processing stages. In addition, since the COVID-19 outbreak, fish value chains have been disrupted, causing negative impacts on supply, demand and logistics and adverse social and business consequences affecting in particular fish workers, small-scale fishers, fish farmers, fish companies, restaurants, among others. Therefore, employment, livelihoods and other social aspects in the sector have been affected by COVID-19.

The FAO Guidance on social responsibility along the fish value chain (under development) will promote decent work and the recognition of human and labour rights in the fisheries and aquaculture sector.[[25]](#footnote-25) The private sector should implement together the CFS-RAI Principles, the SSF Guidelines and the UN Guiding principles on business and human rights in relation to the SSF sector.[[26]](#footnote-26)

**Annex 1: Climate change impacts on fisheries and aquaculture sector**

Fisheries and aquaculture play a key role in provision of food security and livelihoods of millions of people for their social, economic and nutritional benefits. Climate change is expected to have different typologies of consequences, with influences not only on fish supply. The impacts can be particularly relevant for those countries more dependent on fisheries and aquaculture and which could be vulnerable because of the important contribution of these sectors to employment, supply, income and nutrition in those countries. Climate change is expected to have an effect on availability and circulation of goods from aquatic production, with the distribution of several species predicted to change as a result of changing conditions. These shifts in species may affect the accessibility to fish resources, in particular for small-scale fishers, the fishing techniques and practices applied and as a consequence the nutritional habits of local communities, as well as the practices of producers, exporters and consumers. The changes in distribution of fish resources can also put international fisheries agreements and governance under pressure. Trade and its patterns can also be impacted, having consequences for countries more dependent on trade in fish and fish products for tax revenues and foreign exchange earnings, and with a potential impact on their food security. Consumption can also be affected by these shifts either in a positive or negative way, by making available on domestic markets species more or less favoured by local consumers. The repercussions on consumption are expected to be more serious for communities dependent on fishing and aquaculture, which rely on fish for food and livelihoods and in particular for those living near climate-sensitive environments like low-lying coastal areas and water-stressed regions. The consequences could be exacerbated in cases of dependency on certain species impacted by climate change, for consumption or export, in particular in the absence of support through targeted policies on adaptation to climate variability and change. Climate change is expected to alter aquatic food prices, by affecting not only the availability of aquatic resources and the global supply, but also the cost of goods, infrastructure and services required in aquatic food production, processing and distribution activities. It has been estimated that the projected changes in temperature and precipitation on food production will contribute to an increase in global food prices by 2050. For example, the highest emission scenario studied in the fifth assessment report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has been estimated to increase crop prices by between two percent and 35 percent when compared to a no-climate change scenario in 2050. This could be applicable to fish prices as well, especially in the case of reduced availability in domestic markets or as a consequence of shocks caused by unexpected extreme events. Higher fish prices can weaken demand and consumption of these products, which could have a major impact on food security and malnutrition, particularly among the most vulnerable households. In the case of countries dependent on imports for their consumption, higher prices could reduce demand, in particular among less affluent consumers. Shifting species distributions may cause fishers and fish-workers to migrate in search of livelihood opportunities elsewhere, where existing tenure systems and rights will be challenged. Fish farmers have this opportunity to a lesser degree because they are less mobile.[[27]](#footnote-27)

In 2017, Cyclone Ockhi killed more than 350 people in the Indian southern states of Kerala and Tamil Nadu. Although material losses caused by other cyclones in the territory were worse, the number of deaths caused by Cyclone Ockhi was particularly high. This made it clear that the country’s disaster response and preparedness had to be assessed. The International Collective in Support of Fish Workers (ICSF) organized a series of workshops with the affected communities to conduct a participatory study of the situation and to prepare suggestions aimed at improving the assessment of this tragic event. One of the recommendations suggested paying special attention to vulnerable people, specifically women and children, along with isolated communities. The study revealed that the lack of decision-making power among these vulnerable groups of people made them more directly and indirectly vulnerable to these kinds of disasters. In addition, the widows of fishers faced additional challenges in just trying to survive because so many of them had little to no working experience in spite of being better educated. The study suggested that future disaster risk management measures should include employment training for women to enable them to sustain themselves independently in the event of a new hypothetical disaster.[[28]](#footnote-28)

1. <http://www.fao.org/right-to-food> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. <http://www.fao.org/3/ca6142en/CA6142EN.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. <http://www.fao.org/right-to-food/guidelines/en/> [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. <http://www.fao.org/3/cb0627en/cb0627en.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. <https://worldfishers.org/2014/08/21/new-report-ocean-grabbing/> [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. <https://www.ipcc.ch/srocc/>; <http://www.fao.org/3/cb0678en/CB0678EN.pdf>; <http://www.fao.org/voluntary-guidelines-small-scale-fisheries/guidelines/human-rights/en/>; <http://www.fao.org/3/i6933e/i6933e.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. <http://www.fao.org/publications/sofi/2020/en/> [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. <http://www.fao.org/3/cb3673en/cb3673en.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. <http://www.fao.org/3/ca5299en/ca5299en.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. <http://www.fao.org/3/i3940e/i3940e.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. <http://www.fao.org/3/ne472en/ne472en.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. <http://www.fao.org/in-action/right-to-food-global/regional-level/ialcsh/en/> [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. <http://www.fao.org/voluntary-guidelines-small-scale-fisheries/en/>, <http://www.fao.org/social-protection/thematic-priorities/agriculture-natural-resources/fisheries-and-aquaculture/en/>, <http://www.fao.org/3/i7419e/i7419e.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. <http://www.fao.org/flw-in-fish-value-chains/solutions/en/> [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. See USNDG, [the Human Rights Based Approach to Development Cooperation: Towards a Common Understanding Among UN Agencies](https://hrbaportal.org/the-human-rights-based-approach-to-development-cooperation-towards-a-common-understanding-among-un-agencies) (the Common Understanding). Also see Office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights (OHCHR), [Frequently Asked Questions on A Human-Rights-Based Approach to Development Cooperation](https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Publications/FAQen.pdf), HR/PUB/06/8, 2006. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. https://www.un.org/development/desa/indigenouspeoples/declaration-on-the-rights-of-indigenous-peoples.html [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. <https://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:12100:0::NO::P12100_ILO_CODE:C169> [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. <http://www.fao.org/3/i1857e/i1857e00.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. Acronym for participation, accountability, non-discrimination, transparency, human dignity, empowerment, rule of law. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. See Human Rights – a Strategy for the Fight Against Hunger: <http://www.fao.org/3/a-ap560e.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. [Accountability to affected populations](http://www.fao.org/emergencies/fao-in-action/accountability-to-affected-populations/en/) (AAP) is a people-centered approach, sensitive to the dignity of all human beings, the varying needs of different segments within a community, and the importance of ensuring that women, men, girls and boys can equally access and benefit from assistance. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. <http://www.fao.org/3/i3205e/i3205e.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security (VGGT) (2012): <http://www.fao.org/3/a-i2801e.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. For more information on the six-step procedure to facilitate the FPIC process see FAO’s “[Free Prior](http://www.fao.org/3/a-i6190e.pdf)

[And Informed Consent. An indigenous peoples’ right and a good practice for local communities. Manual for Practitioners](http://www.fao.org/3/a-i6190e.pdf)”. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. <http://www.fao.org/3/nb389en/nb389en.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. <http://www.fao.org/3/cb0927en/CB0927EN.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. <http://www.fao.org/3/i9705en/I9705EN.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. [www.fao.org/3/ca2904en/CA2904EN.pdf](http://www.fao.org/3/ca2904en/CA2904EN.pdf) [↑](#footnote-ref-28)