

# THE PAN-AFRICAN FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE POLICY FRAMEWORK AND REFORM STRATEGY: GENDER AND YOUTH IN FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE

HARNESSING EQUITABLE CONTRIBUTION  
OF ALL PEOPLE TO FISHERIES AND  
AQUACULTURE DEVELOPMENT







## Executive Summary



Although gender has been on the international development agenda for a long time, many inequalities remain and the role of women in fisheries and aquaculture is often not documented and hence undervalued.



While consideration of age is important in gender analysis, youth also needs specific attention in its own right. Youth are very often hit by unemployment and limited access to resources and services. Therefore, policy makers should improve the availability of gender and age disaggregated socio-economic data, including data on youth employment in fisheries and aquaculture, and ensure that meaningful analyses is shared to inform policy development planning and design processes, including in the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP).



Governments should make available funds for institutional capacity building, especially with regard to women and youth organisations, and for longer-term tranformatory change processes.



Governments should support effective participation of women and youth in decision making processes (with regard to trade, fisheries management, aquaculture development and investment planning).



National Governments and Regional Economic Communities (RECs) should adopt a value chain approach to take broader trade issues, climate change impact and the financial performance of the sector into account, in order to define support required for improving women and youth labour productivity, working conditions and unpaid work by women.



Governments should strengthen inter-sectoral approaches and partnerships to meet the needs of youth and women and close the gender gap (access to services and resources, decision making power for how services and resources are used, pay and opportunity legislation).



Policymakers should address sexual and gender-based violence and vulnerability factors affecting women and youth by changing perceptions as well as social and cultural norms and offering adequate social protection.

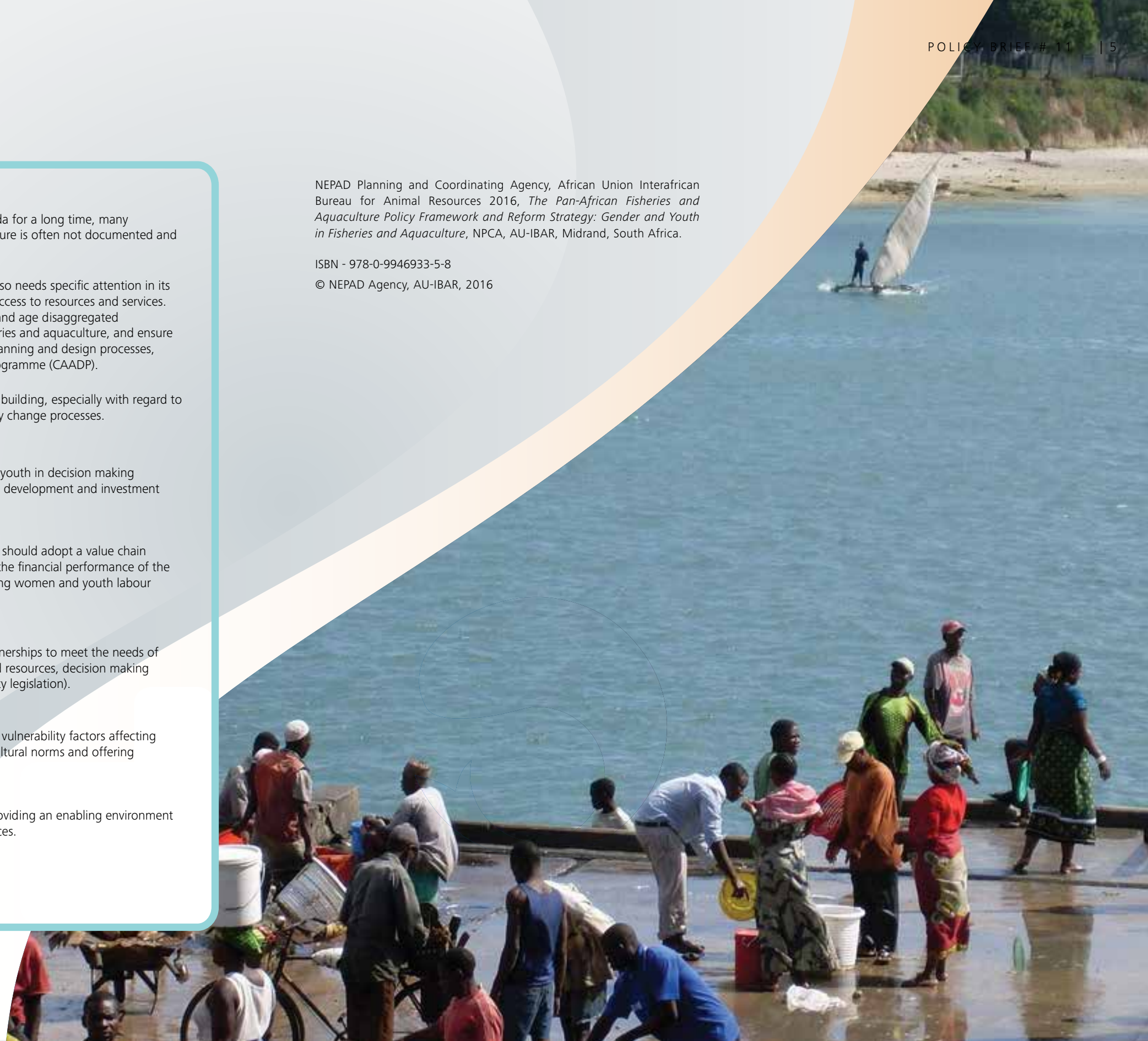


Global efforts should be directed at eliminating child labour and providing an enabling environment for youth employment and youth friendly financial and health services.

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## Introduction and Background

Although gender has been on the international development agenda for a long time, many inequalities remain and the role of women in fisheries and aquaculture is often not documented and hence undervalued.

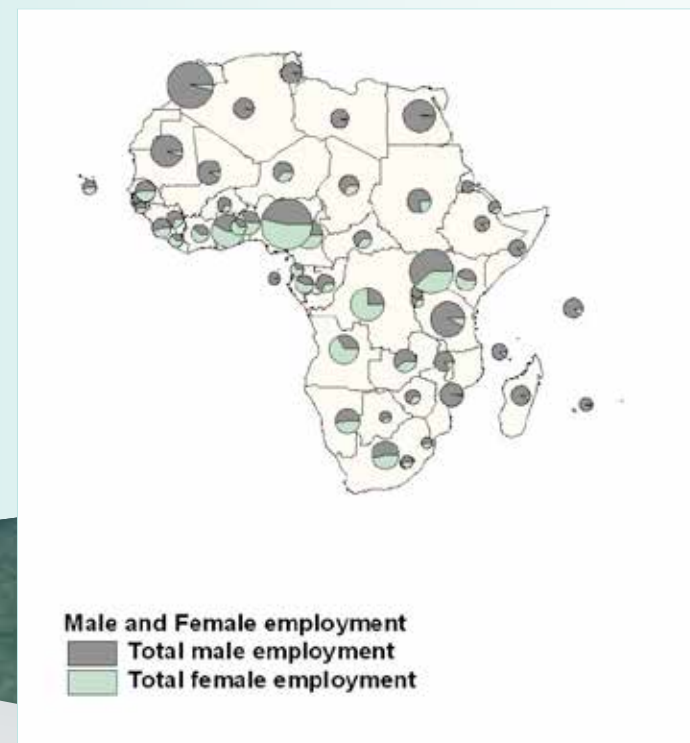
This has led to lost development opportunities and undermines the contribution of the sector to food and nutrition security, poverty eradication, equitable development and the sustainable use of resources. To make gender equality a long-term and bottom-up process, adequate funding is required.

While consideration of age is important in gender analysis, youth also needs specific attention as they are disproportionately affected by unemployment and limited access to resources and services. Young people represent the future and, hence, need to be fully empowered and educated in order to shape that future.

### GENDER

Gender equality and equity are fundamental human rights and at the heart of development. There is a direct link between economic growth, poverty alleviation and gender equality. Thus, if women access the job market, they will not only have a direct impact on their communities but on their nation as a whole.

Fishery and aquaculture production activities around the world provide direct employment and revenue to an estimated 155 million people of which half of them are women. Data for Africa indicates a total employment of 19.2 million people with 34% being women.



96% of female employment is in post-harvest activities. 3.1 % are employed as fisher and 0.7 % are employed in the aquaculture sector. Details by region show important differences and a much higher participation of women in West and Central African fisheries. The total contribution of fisheries and aquaculture to Agriculture Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is estimated at 9.2% (26.6 billion USD) of which an important share is generated by women. The sector contributes 1.39% to the GDP with 0.63% from fishing and 0.61% from processing, highlighting the importance of the post-harvest sector in which women are the major workforce.

### YOUTH

Africa is the 'youngest' continent, with approximately 60 percent of the African population being 35 or younger. The continent is likely to maintain this title as 75 percent of the population is expected to be twenty years or younger by 2020.

Youth account for 60% of all African unemployed. Statistics on youth employment in fishing and fish farming communities in Africa are generally not available and there is a limited number of youth employment initiatives targeting this sector.

## Problem Statement

### GENDER

Despite gender issues being high on the international development agenda for many years, gender inequalities continue to hamper sustainable development and economic growth. The reasons for this are manifold, and due to:

- A lack of data and analysis on women's contribution to fisheries, which has led to a lack of investments for improving their working conditions and harnessing their potential.
- Insufficient attention is given to the complex relationships between women and men in the fish value chain and power imbalance in access to and control over resources, services, assets and ability to influence decisions affecting their lives. Women tend to lack control over their labour and income, and their family responsibilities often prevent them from taking advantage of opportunities in the form of employment, training and participation. Moreover, women are often less educated and have weaker support systems.
- Institutional gender mainstreaming efforts are often insufficient due to a lack of recognition of gender focal points in the fisheries and aquaculture departments, if they at all exist, and limited monitoring of gender performance. Human and financial resources allocated to the often female dominated post-harvest sector tend to be limited, leading to less attention to women.
- Gender blind processes (budgeting, planning, policy development) and short-term funding mechanisms hinder sustainable transformatory change for enhancing empowerment in the post-harvest sector and women's equal participation in planning and managing of 'mainstream' fisheries activities. A value chain approach and gender dialogue would provide options for sustainable improvements.
- Despite of international and regional legal and policy frameworks, Sexual and Gender-based Violence (SGBV) continues to exist. GBV includes transactional sex, which refers to sexual exchange for gifts, money or security<sup>6</sup>.

Current global trends with regard to trade globalisation and climate change are likely to put increased pressure on resources and exacerbate the existing gender inequality. Increasing influence of international regulations (hygiene and labour) will have significant local impacts, especially on post-harvest processing activities. At the same time, there are developments bringing opportunities, for instance, new Information and Communication Technologies (ICT), innovative institutional arrangements on resource access rights and the rising importance of aquaculture. However, because of the power imbalances referred to above, women and youth often find it difficult to seize and benefit from such opportunities.

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- A lack of data and indicators with regard to youth issues to accurately measure and assess their impacts on youth development.
- Policies that overlook youth as change agents and decision makers at community level.
- Fishing communities with limited access to financial services, capital and investment opportunities, disproportionately affect youth.
- Labour constraints and weak health service systems negatively impact young people living or affected by HIV/AIDS. Youth aged 15 to 24 accounted for 40% of all new HIV infections among adults in 2009 and HIV/AIDS remains widely diffused in fishing communities in many countries.
- Child labour in fisheries and aquaculture is related to poverty. The issue is gaining attention but still needs to be addressed more consistently.

## Policy Recommendations

Women make up over one third of Africa's workforce in fisheries and aquaculture and their contribution to Agriculture GDP of post-harvest and capture activities provides a strong case for including a gender perspective. Gender mainstreaming is an important strategy for closing the existing gender gap by focusing on long-term and bottom-up approaches.

Africa's youth are the continent's future and need to be fully engaged. In fishing and fish farming communities – as elsewhere in the world – youth need to be given appropriate support, education and skills to be able to engage in decent employment and pursue sustainable livelihood options.

African fisheries and aquaculture policy should apply a gender lens and youth perspective. Key policy recommendations for this work include:

- Gender and youth should be mainstreamed into policy, laws and development plans, based on evidence. Thus, the collection and analysis of disaggregated gender data is required for informed policy design, planning and implementation. A gender and youth focus should also be applied in the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP), especially with regard to investment planning and tracking of progress toward gender-specific objectives.
- Long-term commitment of funding for transformatory change processes should be made, including institutional capacity development for gender mainstreaming at the local, national and regional levels. This requires gender balanced staffing, covering different disciplines and subsectors (fishing, fish farming and post harvest), and the integration of gender performance and outcome indicators.
- Effective participation of women and youth in decision-making processes (in trade, fisheries management, aquaculture development and investment planning) should be ensured at local, national and regional levels.
- A value chain approach should be adopted when analysing the sector by considering trade issues, climate change impacts and the financial performance of the sector in order to define support mechanisms required to improve productivity and working conditions for women and youth.
- Inter-sectoral approaches and partnerships should be promoted, focusing on formal and non-formal education (literacy, accounting, soft and technical skills and general life skills) and improving access to finance and health services.
- GBV prevention needs to be addressed at all levels. New models of masculinity and femininity and thus more equal relationships have to be promoted to fight gender inequality in the sector. Policy formulation and implementation, responsive to underlying causes, are needed.

- Child labour should be eliminated and a conducive and enabling environment created for decent youth employment including access to financial services and youth-friendly health services.

## Conclusion or implications

The policy implications are manifold and actions should be implemented at various levels by stakeholders such as Ministries, CAMFA, NEPAD, Regional Fisheries and Economic Organisations and Lake and Basin organisations, NGOs, CSOs, Fisherfolk, Fish processors, consumers, etc. Forming cross-sectoral stakeholder platforms for policy dialogue, lobbying and information exchange and promoting working codes of practice (SSF- CCRF, child labour, SGBV) at national level should contribute and create an enabling environment for implementation. A long-term and participatory bottom-up approach is required to achieve gender equality and close the gender gap.

### Endnotes

1. World Bank/FAO/WorldFish Center. 2010. The Hidden Harvests - the global contribution of capture fisheries. Conference edition, June 2010. 111p.
2. de Graaf and Garibaldi, 2013
3. The 2011 survey (de Graaf and Garibaldi , 2013) estimates that the overall contribution of fishing and processing to GDP are respectively 0.63% and 0.61%
4. AU defines youth the Group between 15 and 35 years old; UN defines youth the Group between 15 to 24 years old.
5. Youth Division of the African Union Commission <http://www.africa-youth.org/>
6. Chiambeng G.Y & Holvoet, K., 2011 – Vulnerability of Small-Scale Marine Fishing Communities to HIV/AIDS in Cameroon. Universtiy of Greenwich
7. WHO, 2012

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