Food and Agriculture Organization

Research Report

The Question of:
Minimizing the polluting effects of agriculture

Introduction

Today 77 billion kilograms of marine animals are fished in a year in order to satisfy the demand, which generates the issue of overfishing, in other words the decrease in marine wildlife.

The maintenance of fish population is achieved with different solutions by these practices, including fishing in a given period of time, thus giving an opportunity for fish to replenish themselves, and also different kind of equipment.

While the types of fishing in use today, such as long-lining and purse seining, are more about everything to the consumers and nothing to the environment. Moreover, they increase the risk of bycatch, which means other species are caught unintentionally, e.g. dolphins, marine turtles and seabirds.[3]

The Committee

The Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO) was established in 1945. In the early decades of the committee it faced issues concerning hunger and malnutrition. Since then the aims have been broadened by other goals, namely in ways of making agriculture, forestry and fisheries more productive, reducing rural poverty, enabling inclusive and efficient agricultural and food systems, and increasing the resilience of livelihoods to threats and crises.

The FAO has contributed to many achievements all around the world. The following are just a few examples of the work of the organisation:

- In 1963, the Codex Alimentarius was established in order to ensure given standards of food, to protect consumers and to promote fair trade.
- Between 1974 and 2002, the FAO worked on the eradication of river blindness in West Africa. A disease transmitted by infected flies has been eradicated by launching a programme, which provided eco-friendly insecticides with a large-scale treatment. This programme has saved millions of lives in Africa.
- In order to reduce the number of people in immediate need of food and nutrition in the region of Latin America and the Caribbean, the FAO made food more available by strengthening political commitment and promoting access to food and nutritional wellbeing.
- A deadly virus called rinderpest, which killed many cows and buffalos, was eradicated by a programme established by the FAO and the WHO in 1994.

Since the establishment of the FAO the organisation has supported many in need and promoted programmes that work towards a less polluted environment and towards a world where the essentials for a living can be provided for everyone.

The FAO follows the standard Rules of Procedure, which means it is *not* an ad-hoc committee.

Key Terms

Overfishing: catching too many fish in an area of the sea, so that there are not many fish left there.[1]
Longlining: a fishing technique, which uses a heavy and long fishing line with a great number of baited hooks.[1]
Purse seining: a fishing technique used to catch schools of fish close to the surface of the water. A circular fishing net is used, which deploys under the school and up around them, trapping a large quantity of fish inside.
Bycatch: Fish or other sea creatures that are caught unintentionally by people who are trying to catch other types of fish.[2]
Illegal fishing: catching fish in numbers high above internationally established limits.
Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ): An EEZ is a sea zone in which a state has special rights, as prescribed by the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.

General Overview

The economy of Small-Island Developing States in the Pacific Ocean almost completely relies on marine and coastal resources, which leads to high dependency on natural resources and on imports. For instance, in Papua New Guinea the economy is divided into two main sectors of which fishing and agriculture are one. The fishing industry in the Small-Island Developing States is around 10 per cent of the state's GDP, eg. Fiji, where fish products are approximately one-tenth of the country's export, in some SIDS it can increase to as high as 50 percent.[5]
Furthermore, oceans also have a major role in the global economy. Around three billion people rely on seas and oceans for their livelihood, including the SIDS as well.[6]
Despite these factors, human activities cause a detrimental effect on the environment, in terms of overexploitation and overfishing. Today used methods are designed to be able to harvest enormous amount of fish in a short period of time. The problem with these kinds of methods is that no opportunity is provided for the species to reproduce. The process is called overfishing, and leads to a decrease in the population of the species, which not only means the future extinction of these animals but also the lack of food for next generations in given states, where fish is the main part of the diet.
Some claim the solution should be the elimination of fish from the diet, but it is not only impossible to achieve that no one consumes fish, it would not be the best for people's health, since fish provides high amount of nutrition for the human body, for example certain vitamins, fatty acids, proteins and minerals.[7]
The establishment and the management of sustainable fisheries is a solution for overfishing Sustainable fishing is based on traditional fishing techniques used by indigenous people. For instance the Tagbanua people in the Philippines use hook-and-line methods and in areas such as coral reefs fishing is forbidden. Furthermore, Polynesian cultures employed hook-and-line, spearfishing and cast nets.[2] All of the above-mentioned techniques aimed to harvest the required species. Sustainable fishing also guarantees that while fish is provided for consumers, the marine wildlife is not that affected and will be maintained for the future.
It is also important to mention that since national territorial waters are just a small part of the ocean and the remaining part is international territory, which should be regulated by international agreements.

In conclusion, achieving sustainability in the fishing industry still requires a plenty of work, but it does not mean it is impossible.

Major Parties Involved

Sustainable Fisheries Partnership
Sustainable Fisheries Partnership is an organisation, whose aim is to achieve sustainable production of seafood by working with companies, and also to protect the ecosystem of the oceans and seas.

Committee on Fisheries (COFI)
The COFI is a subsidiary body of FAO and was established in 1965. The committee discusses problems of international fisheries and searches for solutions.

The Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA)
The FFA was established in order to support its members in managing their sustainable fishery resources. The members of the FFA are from the Pacific Islands.

Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission
"The Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC) is the central decision-making body for management of tuna fishing in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean."[4]
The members of the WCPFC are not only from the Pacific Islands.

Regional Fisheries Management Organisation
The RFMO is an international organisation, which supports the sustainable management of fisheries in certain regions. The WCPFC is part of the RFMO.

Timeline of Events

December 10th 1982- UN Convention on the Law of the Sea

1992-International Conference on Responsible Fishing

1995- FAO Conference adopted the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries

2013- FAO launched the Blue Growth Initiative

Previous attempts to solve the issue

As can be seen in the chapter Major Parties Involved, plenty of negotiations and organisations exist concerning the issue of sustainable fisheries. Furthermore, the FAO launched a project, called The Sustainable Management of Bycatch in Latin America and Caribbean Trawl Fisheries (REBYC-II LAC), which includes the followings; "*1) reduce food loss by improving the management and utilization of bycatch and minimizing discards and 2) support sustainable*

livelihoods by making shrimp and bottom trawl fisheries into sustainable and responsible fisheries".[8]
It is also necessary to mention the work of WWF in this issue. WWF cooperates with companies in order to ensure that people purchase the products of certified wild-caught fisheries, whose origin is known.

The Future

The future of sustainable fishing has many issues to solve, including the tracking down of illegal fishers, finding and the introduction of solutions, which helps the unmanaged fisheries and the establishments of new business plans, whose performance is more sustainable. Moreover, the issue of sustainable fisheries requires strong agreements internationally and the commitment of all countries, since the majority of oceans do not belong to any nation, in other words, the majority of oceans are international waters.

Important Decisions a Resolution Must Take

During the conference in November the delegates should debate about these fisheries in the following questions:

- How would fishing techniques and processes be controlled? How would it be ensured that the fisheries follow the prescribed requirements?
- How would the fishers train to use new sustainable methods? Who would be responsible for training fishers? Would it be done by an international organisation or by a given country's government? Would there be some kind of a support for converting to sustainable fishing, in terms of new equipment, training, etc.?
- How should the issue of illegal fishing be solved?

In conclusion, the issue of managing sustainable fisheries in the Pacific Ocean Small-Island Developing States requires cooperation and open-mindedness, therefore the presidency encourages all nations to be so.

Further Reading

https://www.nationalgeographic.org/encyclopedia/sustainable-fishing/

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Source[2]: www.nationalgeographic.org/encyclopedia/sustainable-fishing/
Source[3]: www.worldwildlife.org/threats/bycatch
Source[4]: www.ffa.int/wcpfc
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