



POLICY BRIEF

CLIMATE JUSTICE FOR TANZANIA'S SMALL-SCALE FISHERIES COMMUNITIES



For a Just and Equitable Society

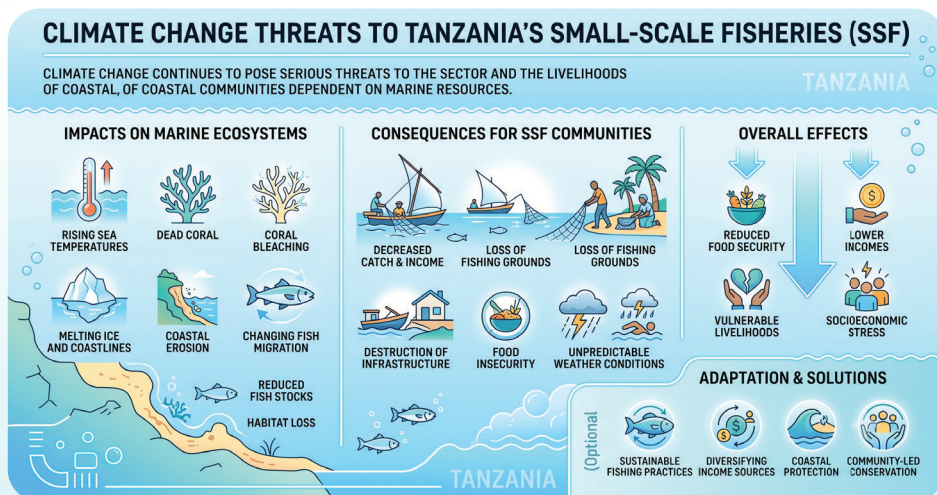


Climate Justice For Tanzania's Small-Scale Fisheries Communities

Introduction

Climate change continues to pose serious threats to Tanzania's small-scale fisheries (SSF) sector and the livelihoods of coastal communities that depend on marine resources for food security, income generation, and social wellbeing.

Rising sea temperatures, irregular rainfall patterns, coral bleaching, coastal erosion, and increasingly unpredictable weather conditions are already affecting marine ecosystems and fisheries productivity across Tanzania's coastal regions.



Fishing crews, fish processors, fish traders, and seaweed farmers remain among the most vulnerable groups to climate-related impacts due to limited adaptive capacity, inadequate infrastructure, weak institutional frameworks, and growing socio-economic pressures. Climate vulnerability within the SSF sector therefore reflects not only environmental change, but also broader governance, institutional, financing, and human rights challenges affecting resilience among coastal communities.

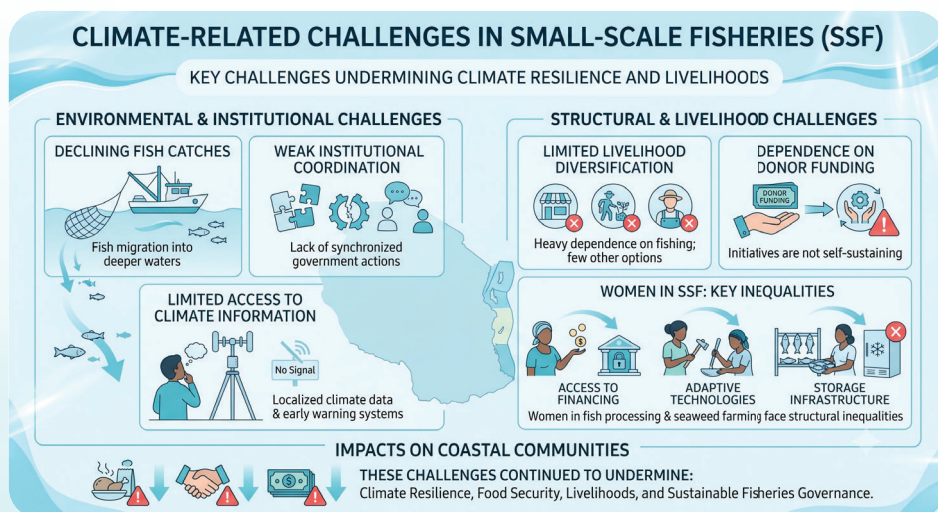
The following policy recommendations are proposed by LHRC. They are informed by the findings of the joint LHRC and CHRAGG research titled Report on Human Rights, Small-Scale Fisheries and Their Access to and Management of Marine Resources in Tanzania and are further informed by relevant national laws and policies, international frameworks, and available literature to identify priority actions for advancing climate justice and strengthening the climate resilience of SSF communities.

Summary of Key Issues

The study highlights growing climate-related challenges affecting small-scale fisheries communities, including declining fish catches linked to fish migration into deeper waters, weak institutional coordination, limited access to localized climate information and early warning systems, and inadequate climate-responsive adaptation measures.

The study further identifies limited livelihood diversification

opportunities, heavy dependence on donor-funded adaptation initiatives, and structural inequalities affecting women engaged in fish processing and seaweed farming, particularly regarding access to financing, adaptive technologies, and storage infrastructure. These challenges continue to undermine climate resilience, food security, livelihoods, and sustainable fisheries governance within coastal communities.



Why Climate Justice in Small-Scale Fisheries Matters

Climate resilience within Tanzania's small-scale fisheries sector is essential for protecting food security, coastal livelihoods, environmental sustainability, and vulnerable communities that depend on marine resources for survival.

Inclusive and effective adaptation

measures are critical for strengthening resilience, supporting sustainable blue economy development, and advancing climate justice and human rights. Without such measures, climate change risks further marginalizing vulnerable fisheries communities and deepening socio-economic inequalities.

Key Findings

i. Declining Fish Catches and Changing Marine Ecosystems

The study found that declining fish catches and migration of fish into deeper waters are increasingly affecting fishing activities and incomes among small-scale fishers. These environmental changes are increasing economic vulnerability among fishing households and reducing the sustainability of SSF livelihoods.

ii. Weak Institutional Coordination and Adaptation Systems

The study further found that weak institutional coordination, limited access to localized climate information and early warning systems, and inadequate climate-responsive adaptation measures continue to undermine effective climate resilience within the sector. Current climate adaptation responses remain fragmented and insufficient to adequately protect vulnerable coastal communities from growing climate-related risks.

iii. Disproportionate Climate Vulnerabilities Among Communities

The study revealed that women engaged in fish processing, fish trade and seaweed farming face disproportionate climate-related impacts due to unequal access to adaptive technologies, financing, and storage infrastructure. Also, limited participation in decision-making processes continues to deepen gender-based vulnerabilities within the sector.

iv. Dependence on Donor-Funded Adaptation Initiatives

The study additionally identified heavy dependence on donor-funded adaptation initiatives and limited livelihood diversification opportunities as key sustainability concerns affecting long-term climate resilience within SSF communities. This dependence raises concerns regarding the sustainability and long-term effectiveness of climate adaptation interventions within the sector.

Governance and Human Rights Implications

The findings reveal significant governance and adaptation gaps within Tanzania's small-scale fisheries sector, particularly regarding inclusive climate resilience, institutional accountability, and protection of vulnerable coastal communities.

These gaps threaten fundamental

human rights, including the rights to food, livelihood, health, information, participation, equality, and an adequate standard of living. They also raise broader climate justice concerns and emphasize Tanzania's obligation to adopt inclusive, participatory, and gender-responsive climate adaptation measures within the fisheries sector.

LHRC Policy Recommendations

i. Expanding Community-Based Climate Adaptation Systems

The Tanzania Meteorological Authority (TMA), in collaboration with Local Government Authorities, should strengthen community-based climate adaptation through localized climate information, early warning systems, and community awareness initiatives.

ii. Promote Gender-Responsive and Inclusive Adaptation Measures

The Ministry for Livestock and Fisheries, in collaboration with financial institutions and development partners, should expand access for women engaged in fish processing, fish trade, and seaweed farming to financing, adaptive technologies, storage infrastructure, and alternative livelihood opportunities.

iii. Strengthening Sustainable Climate Resilience Financing

The Ministry of Finance, in collaboration with the Vice President's Office and the Ministry for Livestock and Fisheries, should increase domestic investment in climate adaptation initiatives for the SSF sector to reduce dependence on donor-funded programmes.

iv. Improve Access to Climate-Responsive Fishing Equipment

The Ministry for Livestock and Fisheries should reform financing arrangements for climate-responsive fishing equipment, including motorized boats, by improving affordability, ensuring fair pricing, and providing accessible repayment mechanisms for SSF communities.



v. Mainstream Climate Justice and Human Rights in Fisheries Governance

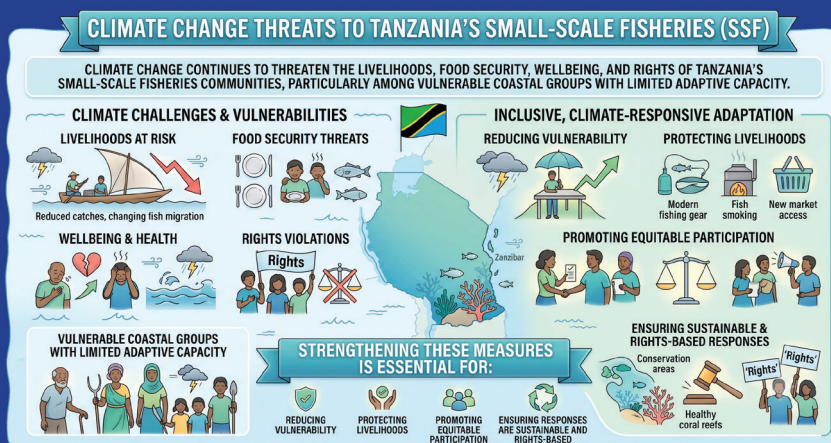
The Ministry for Livestock and Fisheries, in collaboration with the Vice President's Office and Local Government Authorities, should ensure climate adaptation planning is rights-based, inclusive, and promotes meaningful participation of SSF communities.

vi. Safeguard Human Rights in Blue Carbon and Climate Initiatives

The Vice President's Office, in collaboration with the Ministry for Livestock and Fisheries, should ensure that blue carbon and other climate-related projects are implemented in a manner that safeguards the human rights, livelihoods, and tenure rights of SSF communities, including through meaningful participation and equitable benefit-sharing.

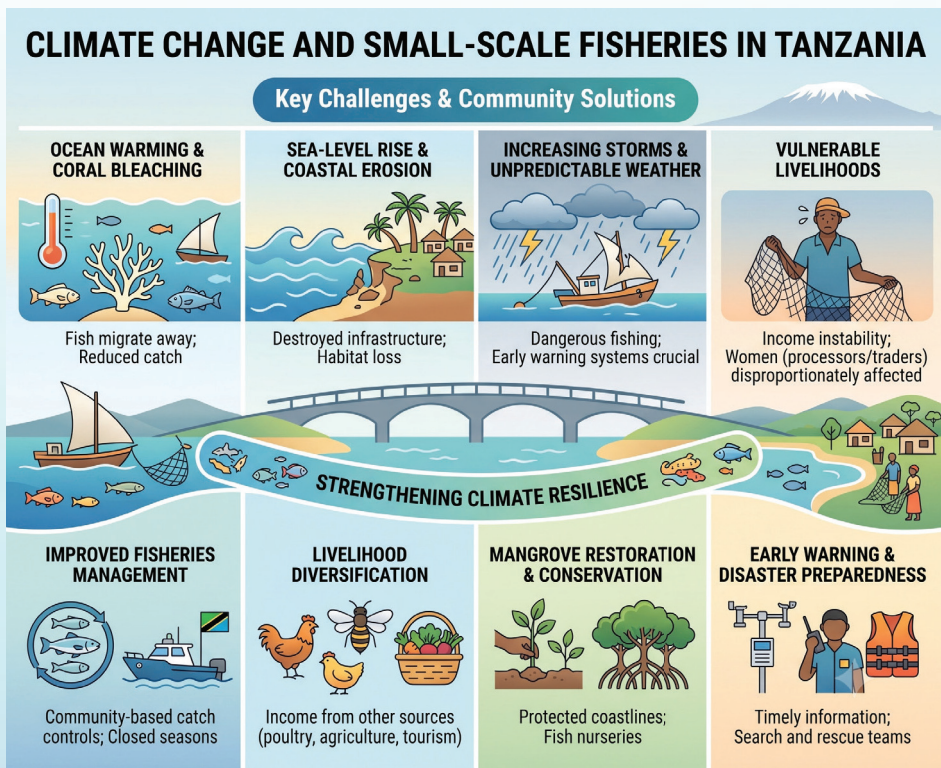
Conclusion

Climate change continues to threaten the livelihoods, food security, wellbeing, and rights of Tanzania's small-scale fisheries communities, particularly among vulnerable coastal groups with limited adaptive capacity. Strengthening inclusive and climate-responsive adaptation measures is therefore essential for reducing vulnerability, protecting livelihoods, promoting equitable participation, and ensuring that climate responses within the fisheries sector are both sustainable and rights-based.



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LEGAL AND HUMAN RIGHTS CENTRE - HEADQUARTERS

Justice Lugakingira House, Kijitonyama,
P. O. Box 75254, Dar es Salaam - Tanzania

Tel: +255 22 2773038/48 **Fax:** +255 22 2773037

Email: lhrc@humanrights.or.tz **Website:** www.humanrights.or.tz

ARUSHA OFFICE,

Olerian Street, Plot No. 116/5, Sakina kwa Iddi
P. O. Box 15243, Arusha, Tanzania

Phone: +255 27 2544187

Email: lhrcarusha@humanrights.or.tz

THE LEGAL AID CLINIC

Isere Street – Kinondoni,
P. O. Box 79633, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania

Phone/Fax: +255 22 27612015/6

Email: legalaid@humanrights.or.tz

DODOMA OFFICE

Plot No. Area D, P. O. Box 2289, Dodoma, Tanzania

Phone/Fax: +255 262350050 **Email:** lhrc@humanrights.or.tz



@humanrightstz



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