

Climate Change and Small-Scale Fisheries: Social, Economic and Governance Interactions

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Abstract

Climate change will have a wide range of impacts on fisheries, other human uses of marine systems, and the coastal communities that depend on the ocean for their livelihoods. This presentation focuses on small-scale fisheries, providing a review of the current state of knowledge on social and economic impacts of climate change, and an exploration of the governance and policy directions needed to meet upcoming challenges. From a social perspective, the dominant focus would seem to be on the vulnerability to climate change of marine resource users, coastal households and communities, together with their adaptive capacity both to reduce those vulnerabilities and to then cope with change as it occurs. From an economic point of view, climate change impacts imply a set of benefits and costs, with associated “winners” and “losers” (whether neighbouring communities or competing economic sectors), all of which is likely to be compounded by interactions with other global change processes, notably economic globalization and large-scale technological change. Finally, a governance lens leads to consideration of policy measures and decision-making in the face of climate change: given the particular realities of small-scale fisheries, what institutional arrangements are needed, what policies need changing, and who will make the decisions? Addressing such considerations may require a re-designing of governance systems to make them more robust, adaptive and participatory, and better functioning on a multi-scale basis, across the spatial and temporal scales relevant to small-scale and community-centred fisheries.