World Aquaculture 2026 Tanzania and AFRAQ

FAO Session

Aquaculture at a turning point: Governing Sustainable Growth to Secure the Future

Date & Location: Thursday, December 3, 2026. (WAS Venue)-Dar es Salaam, Tanzania
Target audience: Governments, producers, private-sector representatives, researchers, spatial planners, development partners, investors, industry representatives and other aquaculture stakeholders.

Session Organizers: FAO

Time: 3 hours (9-10.20 am and 11-12.40 pm)

Background

Aquaculture has significant potential to strengthen food security, livelihoods and economic development, particularly in Africa where demand for aquatic foods continues to grow rapidly in urban and peri-urban centers. Realizing this potential requires more than increased production and investment. It requires coordinated action across governance, spatial planning and aquatic animal health—three areas that determine whether expansion can be environmentally responsible, socially equitable and economically viable.

. This FAO Special Session will convene key stakeholders to identify gaps and opportunities on current governance structures, and examine how better spatial planning and siting practices and robust biosecurity measures can collectively support sustainable aquaculture growth across the globe. Drawing on global experience, the session will highlight practical pathways for countries to accelerate sustainable aquaculture growth while safeguarding ecosystems, livelihoods and public trust.

The session will be organized around three interconnected themes:

1. Biosecurity: Growing Aquaculture Without Growing Disease Risks

Aquatic animal health and biosecurity are essential for protecting production, investments and livelihoods as aquaculture expands. A panel of speakers representing different perspectives will discuss practical experiences and challenges related to disease prevention, surveillance, early warning systems, safe movement of aquatic animals and farm-level biosecurity. The panel will explore a central question: **Can Africa grow aquaculture without growing disease risk?**

The session will conclude with a reflection on priorities for Africa's Aquaculture Development Agenda, identifying areas where greater coordination can help translate aquaculture ambitions into sustainable, resilient and inclusive growth.

2. Spatial Planning and Sustainability: Developing Aquaculture in the Right Places

Spatial planning is increasingly recognized for its contribution to the sustainable expansion of aquaculture production to meet growing global demand for aquatic foods while minimizing environmental impacts, reducing user conflicts, strengthening resilience to climate change, and achieving equitable socio-economic development. As a key component of spatial planning, effective siting of new and existing farms is supported by ever more data, tools, and approaches.

However, it can be difficult to determine which spatial planning tools and approaches are fit for purpose, considering different environments, industry maturity, skillsets and capacity. To support governments, development agencies, planners, and practitioners to effectively implement spatial planning principles into aquaculture, FAO, in collaboration with The Nature Conservancy, developed the *Aquaculture Siting Guide: Spatial planning guidance for optimizing sustainable aquaculture in freshwater and marine ecosystems'* (the Guide). This session will explore the Guide through an interactive discussion where participants will be able to take a close look into the seven-phase spatial planning framework the Guide presents. In addition, this session will explore what support governments, development agencies, planners, and practitioners need to effectively implement spatial planning principles into aquaculture.

3. Governance: Creating an Enabling Environment for Aquaculture Growth, Including in Growing Cities

Rapid urbanization is reshaping food systems across the continent, raising important questions about how aquaculture can respond to growing urban demand. Can urban and peri-urban aquaculture help shorten supply chains and improve access to affordable fish? Should cities continue to rely primarily on rural production systems, or should aquaculture become an integral component of urban development strategies? More fundamentally: are cities ready for aquaculture? Experiences from various countries will illustrate how governance, policies, institutions, investment and partnerships have been supporting aquaculture development in urban and peri-urban centers. Examples will include lessons from Lesotho, the development of public governance around an emerging private sector, and the opportunities and challenges associated with urban and peri-urban aquaculture.

A major consultation component will examine whether existing governance systems are equipped to support responsible urban and peri-urban aquaculture. Drawing on perspectives from governments, producers, researchers, development partners and urban planners, the discussion will explore governance needs, policy implications, investment requirements and the readiness of cities to support this growing segment of the sector.

Expected Outputs

- A consolidated set of stakeholder recommendations on urban and peri-urban aquaculture governance
- Agreed priority actions for governance, spatial planning and biosecurity;
- Key message for Africa's Aquaculture Development Agenda
- Identified areas for follow-up partnerships and technical cooperation.

FAO SPECIAL SESSION

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09:00-12:40 | FAO session | Provisional agenda

Time	Duration	Session / Topic	Format and Strategic Detail	Lead
09:00-09:10	10 min	**Opening remarks**	Dr Nazael Madalla - **Director of Aquaculture** at the Ministry of Livestock and Fisheries (United Republic of Tanzania	FAO/ Session Chair
09:10-09:55	45 min	**Biosecurity Panel** *Can Africa Grow Aquaculture Without Growing Disease Risk?*	Scene-setting (5 min); Panelist 1: Safe movement of aquatic animals and disease risk management (8 min). Panelist 2: Farm-level biosecurity and disease prevention (8 min). Panelist 3: Surveillance, early warning and preparedness (8min). Panel exchange and audience Q&A (10 min); moderator synthesis (5 min).	FAO Biosecurity Lead / Moderator + three panelists TBC
09:55-10:40	45 min	**Spatial Planning for aquaculture development**	Introduction to FAO's Aquaculture Siting Guide (10 minutes) In-depth discussion on contents and usability of the Guide (30 minutes) Summary discussion and next steps (5 minutes)	FAO Team + Partners
	10 min	**Refreshment and Transition Break**	Coffee, networking and panel set-up.	-
11:00-12:30	90 min	**Urban and Peri-Urban Aquaculture SPECIAL CONSULTATION FORUM** on Urban Aquaculture Governance Frameworks. *Aquaculture Is Coming to Town: Are Our Cities Ready?*	Presentation of key findings of the Global Assessment (10 min), followed by clarifying questions and discussion (10 min) to frame the consultation.	Rhodes University/ Dr Cliff Jones
			Structured stakeholder roundtable consultation on urban and peri-urban aquaculture and proposed Urban Aquaculture Governance frameworks/guidelines. Suggested flow: framing and objectives and questions (10 min); facilitated roundtables on governance, policy, investment, biosecurity, land and water use, and city readiness (30 min); plenary reporting and prioritization (20 min); agreement on key messages and next steps (10 min).	FAO Dr Ana Menezes
12:30-12:40	10 min	**Closing Reflections**	Summary of key messages and priority actions for stronger coordination and sustainable aquaculture development in Africa.	Session Chairs