

A well-deserved award

During a virtual ceremony in 2021, the FAO Director-General, presented the Margarita Lizarraga Medal, to Margaret Nakato

By **Margaret Nakato**,
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MARGARET NAKATO



During a virtual ceremony on the 19th of November 2021, the FAO Director-General, QU Dongyu presented the Margarita Lizarraga Medal, to Margaret Nakato of the Katosi Women Development Trust in Uganda, whom he praised for her work in organising women in fishing communities to work together, empowering them with knowledge and skills, access to training, technology and markets.

The award is bestowed to a person or organisation that has served with distinction in the application of the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries. Thanking the Director-General and FAO, Nakato said the award would inspire the women she works with, to continue to support food security and the eradication of poverty.

The text of the acceptance speech is reproduced below:

Dear Director-General and Distinguished Guests,

I stand here in honour and appreciation of the 166 FAO Council for awarding me the Margarita Lizarraga Medal in recognition of my humble contribution to women in fisheries through Katosi Women Development Trust. It is, indeed, a great privilege to be added to the list of previous winners of this prestigious award.

Since 1996, my passion has been to place women in positions where they can contribute to decisions that directly affect their lives including decisions that shape the food systems. This amazing progress has been fuelled and accelerated by our willing partners who undertook the risk to invest in rural poor fisherfolks particularly the women.

Therefore, I cannot go without recognising the trust of our first partners: Ilse Schummer, through Friends of Uganda whose support put us on the global path to contribute to sustainable food systems. Another huge thank goes to the GIZ Responsible Fisheries Business Chains Projects under the Global Program Sustainable Fisheries and Aquaculture. They saw the need to scale up KWDT interventions in order to reach out to over 1,000 women

in fishing communities in Uganda. I am extraordinarily grateful and I appreciate all our partners whose cooperation has enabled us to deliver comprehensive development interventions including improvement of access to water, sanitation and hygiene, particularly in rural fisher communities who need these services the most.

I haven't found the right words to honour the rural and fisher women organised under Katosi Women Development Trust who have trusted me and my entire team at KWDT to follow them on their journeys of self-development. I appreciate them!

I would like to immensely thank my colleagues organised under the World Forum of Fish Harvesters and Fish Workers, (WFF) and the International Planning Committee on Food Sovereignty. Being part of a network of experts enabled me to endlessly pursue inclusive development anchored on a human rights based approach with specific human rights principles of equality, non-discrimination, empowerment, participation and attention to vulnerable groups as enshrined in the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the context of food security and poverty eradication.

I also thank FAO for the boundless collaboration with Civil Society Organization.

I use this opportunity to call for sustained cooperation in support of small-scale fisheries, particularly women who occupy more than 50 per cent of the post-harvest section of the fish value chain. The cooperation should offer options to small-scale fishing communities to reframe their strategies for attaining development, offer inclusive and diversified development approaches while promoting access to basic social services and advancing the protection of human rights; all key tenets of the SSF Guidelines. The long-term objective of the SSF Guidelines is to eradicate hunger and poverty. This award will inspire the women I work with, to continue to support food security and eradicate poverty in a sustainable environment. 🙏