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Reducing poverty and hunger through fisheries and aquaculture in Africa

WorldFish is working with partners in over ten countries around Africa to improve fisheries and aquaculture and to enhance their contribution to poverty reduction and food security. Approximately 400 million Africans rely on fish as a key source of nutrition, and over ten million households directly derive income from fish production, processing or trade. These benefits are at risk as natural fisheries are stagnating and aquaculture has been slow to develop. Yet, the demand for fish is growing fast all over Africa and is creating vast opportunities for economic investments and more secure rural and urban livelihoods. The potential for growth is very high in the aquaculture sector but also in increasing the value of wild fisheries.

To help seize these opportunities, WorldFish is working closely with regional partners in support of the AU-NEPAD Fisheries and Aquaculture Action Plan. Our partnership with the Forum for Agriculture Research in Africa (FARA) and their sub-regional organizations, in particular ASARECA, has created new momentum for knowledge-based fisheries and aquaculture development in the region. Building the capacity of these African research organizations and strengthening their links with policy and investment planning are major outcomes of our research-for-development work in Africa. Our international science partnerships and ability to foster exchanges and lesson learning between Africa and other developing regions add significant value to this work.

WorldFish's programs in Africa and globally are organized to meet two broad 'development challenges':

1. EXPANDING SUSTAINABLE AQUACULTURE

Aquaculture offers a number of opportunities for reducing poverty and hunger ranging from affordable technologies for small-holder farmers to commercial production for domestic, regional and international markets. Currently, the main areas of work for WorldFish are:

- Expanding integrated agriculture-aquaculture (IAA) technologies in sub-Saharan Africa to disseminate proven benefits among small-holder farmers;

- Developing improved strains from local species of tilapia and catfish together with protocols for their management and dissemination for use by small to medium aquaculture enterprises;
- Assessments of environmental and socio-economic risks of expanding aquaculture systems, including cage culture, and identification of risk management measures and capacity needs;
- Strengthening institutional and human capacity for aquaculture research, technology dissemination and policy development;

Countries with current aquaculture programs: Cameroon, DR Congo, Egypt, Ghana, Malawi, Zambia.

2. ENSURING PRODUCTIVE AND RESILIENT SMALL SCALE FISHERIES

Small-scale fisheries (SSF) provide the bulk of fish and fish-related livelihoods opportunity in Africa. To safeguard a future for SSF is therefore a first priority for regional food security and poverty reduction. New approaches are needed to strengthen institutions and governance for fisheries, building on better knowledge of natural and socio-economic drivers affecting SSF in inland and coastal environments. Current WorldFish work in this sector includes:

- Developing management and governance tools for lake fisheries under decentralized government;
- Improving valuation of small-scale fisheries in key river basins;

- Developing business-based options for reducing vulnerability to HIV/AIDS and other diseases in fishing communities and among fish traders;
- Identifying opportunities to safeguard and enhance SSF's impact on nutrition security among key vulnerability groups;
- Assessing opportunities for strengthening adaptive capacity of SSF to climate change;

Countries with current small-scale fisheries programs: Cameroon, DR Congo, Ghana, Malawi, Mali, Mozambique, Senegal, Uganda, Zambia.

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