

FISHERIES DEPARTMENT

MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE, ANIMAL INDUSTRY AND FISHERIES

SENSITISATION WORKSHOP FOR FISHERMEN AND FISH TRADERS

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BRIEF ON THE FISHERIES SECTOR IN UGANDA

BY

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1. INTRODUCTION:

The Fisheries Sector in Uganda provides a vital source of food, employment, recreation, trade and socio-economic well-being for the people of this country and for the global community. The Fisheries Department was, therefore, legally established with a view to ensuring effective conservation, development and management of this natural but renewable aquatic resources for the optimum benefit of both the present and future generations. The policy of the Department recognises the interests of all those concerned with fisheries.

2. THE INDUSTRY:

(a) ITS IMPORTANCE:

The important contribution of the fisheries to food supplies, employment and social welfare to this country has all along been recognised, and this was documented by Graham and Worthington 1928. Being common property resources although renewable, the fisheries has to be developed, managed, harvested and utilised in an organised manner for sustainability at the optimum level.

ISSUES: How can the importance of fisheries be enhanced through community participation ?

(b) FISHERIES RESOURCE BASE:

- Natural Water Bodies: Lakes, Rivers, Wetlands, etc.
- Man-made Water Bodies: Dams, Valley Tanks, Fish Ponds.
- Aquatic Biodiversity and their Linkages through food (Primary and Secondary Producers, etc.).

Note: These cover 43,800 square kilometers or 18% of the total surface area of Uganda.

ISSUE: How can we ensure the health and enhance the productive capacity of the resource base ?

(c) FISHERY RESOURCES:

- Commercial Species of Fish (23 of them)
- Other Species of Fish (90 of them)

- Introduced Species (Carp, some tilapia, bass, crayfish)
- Species of Fish for Fish Farming (Carp, Nile Tilapia)
- Currently Unexploited Fishery Resources

ISSUE: How can we obtain maximum sustainable fish production in the water bodies and increase fishable resources ?

(d) FISHING FACTORS:

- Fishing Villages and Fish Landings (1,250)
- Fishermen (75,000)
- Fish Traders and those in Auxilary Activities (500,000)
- Fishing Canoes (16,700)
- Fishing Gears (Gill nets, Long Lines, etc.)

ISSUE: Improve the quality of fishing gear and methods and eliminate fishing malpractices.

(e) FISH PRODUCTION (YIELD) AND VALUE:

- Total Catch by Water Bodies and Species (220,000 tons)
- Total Fish Production from Fish Farming
- Ex-Canoe Value at Fish Landing Centres (500/=kg)
- Value-Added Fish Products (Export/Local Markets)

ISSUES: Increase fish yields and its contribution to food supplies and ensure sustainability, reduce post-harvest losses.

(f) MARKETING OF FISH AND VALUE ADDED FISH PRODUCTS:

(Handling, Processing, Preservation, Storage, Distribution and Marketing)

- Fresh Products and their Marketing
- Smoked Products and their Marketing
- Industrial Factory Products and their Marketing

- Other Products and their Marketing

- Frying
- Sundrying
- Salting and Sundrying
- Fermentation and Sundrying

ISSUE: Value adding, quality products, total utilisation, competitiveness in local export markets.

(g) THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK:

- The Fisheries Act, 1964
 - Licensing
 - Minimum Legal Size
 - Destructive Gears
 - Movements of Fish
 - Authorised Officers

ISSUES: Need for revision to reflect community participation in enforcement of fisheries regulations.

3. ROLE OF THE FISHERIES DEPARTMENT:

(a) STRATEGIC VISION:

That the Fisheries Sector shall continue to enhance the well-being of the communities which depend on it by ensuring sustainable contribution of the fisheries at optimum level to food security, to employment and to the national economy through effective management. Effective management implies an informed participation at all levels of the process.

ISSUES: Define the vision of other stake holders.

(b) MANDATE:

To obtain optimum sustainable economic yield from the natural water bodies for the socio-economic benefits of society and taking into account the integrity of the aquatic environment and biodiversity.

Note: Appropriate policy, legal and institutional framework has since 1930 been adopted by Government to achieve the stated mandate. These were modified in 1951, improved in 1961, updated in 1964 and amended from time to time since then with a major amendment in 1967. The latest amendment was early 1996.

ISSUE: What should be the mandate of other stakeholders ?

(c) POLICY OBJECTIVES:

The present Government policy objectives for the sector are to:

(i) increase production of fish towards the optimum yields for domestic consumption and export consistent with the long-term sustainability of the fishery resources,

(ii) develop medium and long-term resource management plans for the sector (involving the increase in fish production, elimination of post-harvest losses and fishing malpractices, development of value added fish products and enhancement of the productive capacities of the water bodies,

(iii) integrate fishing activities into the farming system through the promotion of aquaculture (fish farming), and setting up community based fish fry production centres;

(iv) privatise assets and operations of public bodies engaged in direct fishing, fish processing and marketing and in the supply of fishing gear;

(v) encourage the participation of the fisheries communities and the civic leaders in fisheries development and management; and

(vi) strengthen the Fisheries Department so that it can effectively implement its mandate involving policy formulation, monitoring and evaluation, inspection and supervision, regulation and control, and provision of professional and technical guidance all at national level.

(d) SHORT AND MEDIUM TERM FUNCTIONAL OBJECTIVES:

- To devise and improve fishing gear and methods that provide increasing yet sustainable yields.

- To reduce post-harvest losses and develop value added fish products.

- To enhance the productive capacity of the water bodies, and control water hyacinth.

- To eliminate fishing malpractices.

- To develop and strengthen the capacity of fisheries institutions and programmes including the creation of regional authorities to ensure sustainable development of the sector.

- To improve the welfare of the fisheries communities.

- To earn foreign exchange (hard currency).

ISSUE: Establish the objectives of the other stakeholders.

(e) FUNCTIONS:

- Extension service in fishing gear and methods and in the transfer of fisheries technologies and techniques in artisanal fisheries (lakes and rivers,) fish farming and post-harvest losses.

- Review, updating, management and enforcement of fisheries regulations.

- Control of water hyacinth.

- Establishment of Sub-Regional fisheries organisations.

- Collection of fisheries statistics and socio-economic information, their analysis and dissemination.

- Development planning and policy formulation.

- Establishment of community based fish fry production centres.

- Deliberate restoration and conservation of rare species of fish.

- Inspection and quality control of fishery products.

- Licensing of fishing vessels, fish traders and fish factories.

- Staff development and capacity building for more effective and sustainable management in the context of socio-economic development and the conservation of the ecosystem.

- Provision of professional and technical guidance and information.

ISSUE: What should be the functions of the fisheries communities in order to strengthen participatory approach ?

(f) DIVISIONS OF THE DEPARTMENT:

- Office of the Commissioner for Fisheries
 - Overall Coordination
 - Policy Issues
 - Manpower Development.
- Fish Production and Development Division
 - Artisanal Fisheries (Lakes and Rivers)
 - Fish Farming
 - Post-harvest Fisheries
 - Water Hyacinth Control Programme
 - Fisheries Statistics and Socio-economics
- Fisheries Regulation and Control Division
 - Licensing
 - Inspection
 - Enforcement of Fisheries Regulations
 - Quality Control and Assurance

(g) PROJECTS:

(i) Fisheries Master Plan Study:

To produce a Master Plan for fisheries development in Uganda clearly defining development strategies and specifying coherent action programme adopted to the needs and priorities that are identified during the study.

(ii) Lake Victoria Environmental Management Project:

This is a project with two components:

- Fisheries Management and Water Hyacinth Control
- Water Quality, Catchment Area and Wetlands

It is a five year project and aims at the rehabilitation of the ecosystem and strengthening institutional and management capacities in the three riparian stages for more effective and sustainable management of the ecosystem and fish production. It has a strong element of involving local communities in the management of fisheries on which they depend.

(iii) Water Hyacinth Control Project:

This involves the Emergency Action Plan for Uganda and the Regional Plan for Lake Victoria. It aims at reducing the current spread of the weed and controlling it at manageable level, that has no threat to the socio-economic infrastructure and the aquatic environment.

(iv) Fish Farming Extension in Project Districts Under Agriculture Extension Project (AEP):

(v) The EEC funded Lake Victoria Regional Fisheries Research Project which has a component on fisheries statistics. The Department participates in its Management Committee.

(vi) The establishment of Lake Victoria Fisheries Organisation.

(vii) Data Management and Fisheries Statistics Project under the Agriculture Sector Management Programme.

In addition, the following projects are being provided technical guidance and overseen by the Fisheries Department.

- (i) M/s Sino-Uganda Fisheries Joint Venture, Company Limited.
- (ii) M/s Kampala Ice Plant rented by M/s Refrigeration Services Limited.
- (iii) M/s Masese Fish Works rented by M/s NAFCO.
- (iv) NGOs e.g. ACORD, CICS, AVIS, CARE, Aquatics Unlimited which are involved in various fisheries related activities.