



Fisheries

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Fish is everything!

Photo Story: A displaced father of nine recounts how fish is the sole sources of livelihood and food. Page 4

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Key facts

Coastline

Somalia has over 3300km of coastline on to the longest in continental Africa.

Consumption

Somalia's fish consumption per capita is 3.3kg one of the lowest compared to the rest of Africa continent (9.1 kg per capita).

Exports

Before 1991, Somalia's annual fish exports were valued at approx. US\$ 15million.



Fish for Food Security and Better Health

Since the start of the Somali civil war and the consequent collapse of the state in 1991, the country's 3,330 km (2,000 miles) of coastline — the longest in continental Africa — remains one of the most untapped resources. Domestic fresh fish consumption is limited to coastal areas mainly due to poor infrastructure, restricting access to fish, lack of familiarity with fish, seasonality of its supply and a predominant meat-eating tradition among the Somali communities. That is partly why Somalia has one of the lowest per capita fish consumption rates in the world.

While traditional tastes and lack of consumer education programs to promote fish consumption have confined the market to certain coastal areas, meat shortages, experienced particularly during the recurring droughts, have diverted some demand towards fish, especially among low income groups and internally displaced people (IDPs). Somalia's fisheries sector also lacks key equipment such as jetties and fishing boats among others. Lack of research, training opportunities for fishing communities, absence of a regulatory framework for the industry and limitations in the cold chain also compound the problem.

Sustainability in Fisheries

FAO's mission is to facilitate and secure the long-term sustainable development and utilization of the Somalia's fisheries and aquaculture. FAO is aware of the fundamental social and economic role played by these two sectors in:

- 1) Meeting global and national sustainable food security;
- 2) Providing self and paid employment for fishing and aquaculture related communities as a means of alleviating poverty in these fishing communities and stemming rural/urban drift

Contributing to national and international trade. Underpinning these basic social and economic objectives is the requirement for fisheries and aquaculture to be responsibly managed. This requires preventing overfishing, promoting sustainable aquaculture, co-ordination and delivery of effective research and extension services and empowerment of



communities, especially women. FAO is currently implementing two fisheries projects funded by the Spanish government and the World Bank, mainly targeting coastal communities in northeastern Somalia (Puntland).

FAO is currently supporting Somali institutions in fisheries and aquaculture management and development. Activities include promotion of fish eating, best practices in handling and processing techniques, proper use of ice, fish silage, construction and maintenance of insulated fish boxes.

FAO also conducts training in design and implementation of small-scale fisheries, pilot consumer education schemes and improvement of the cold chain management. All these policies and strategies aim at sustainable and responsible development of fisheries and aquaculture in inland and marine waters of Somalia.

FAO encourages online knowledge exchanges between fishing communities and dissemination of information on legal and policy frameworks, codes and guidelines. In the long term, FAO plans to support a small-scale fishing vessel licensing system, safety-at-sea schemes and provision of technical support for the review of Somalia's current fisheries legislation.

Boosting Somali fisheries 2013-15

Through a three-year strategy, the Food Security Cluster seeks **US \$125 million** to provide life-saving assistance and longer-term support to help food-insecure populations meet their immediate food needs, improve their livelihoods and build resilience to future shocks.

Under its livelihood support initiative, FAO seeks to

- provide inputs and training on input use and production techniques, and set up producer organizations;
- support value chains for agricultural products; set up cash-for-work schemes to rehabilitate and construct productive infrastructure and market facilities;
- improve management of natural resource conservation; increase market opportunities to improve rural incomes and develop or strengthen linkages with the private sector; support rural producer organizations and fisher associations; establish and enhance market information systems; and

FAO's promotes fish eating across Somalia



In 2011, FAO launched communication campaign across Somalia in an attempt to tackle the Somali diet culture, which excludes fish. While fish consumption and trade remains limited to certain coastal areas, the shortage of meat, experienced particularly during recurring drought, has diverted some demand towards fish, especially among low-income groups like internally displaced people (IDP).

FAO's communications campaign, informed by a baseline survey, involved a multi-pronged approach combining drama, television, and radio messaging, fish-cooking shows, outdoor activities like road shows and school guest speeches. Because the problem is largely cultural, this campaign is a long-term initiative, covering a period of three years at the

end of which we hope to will help improve the food security situation.

The three-phase campaign, involves introduction to nutritional benefits of fish, preparation and preservation techniques target household head, decision makers and school children. Launched in Bossaso, Puntland in 2011, it expanded to the Somali capital in 2012. With sufficient funding, FAO hopes to maintain this momentum with an objective of playing a role in easing Somalia's vicious food crisis.

The economic roles of Somalia's fisheries sector

Somalia's fishery industry holds great socio-economic potential. The inshore stocks are lightly exploited, and the artisanal sector is comparatively less developed than other production systems of the country, such as agronomy and livestock husbandry.

At the moment, the importance of the fishery sector within the overall economy is quite small. Exports of fishery products account for around 3% of total exports. Fishery's share in GDP is about 2%. On average, fish provides less than one gram of protein per caput per day.

In the pre-war era, especially in 1989, exports of fishery products earned US\$ 15 million per annum. However, the civil war arrested the steady growth of this trade.

Post-war, high quality fish and lobsters are being exported to the neighboring Arabian Gulf States, which is a good sign of recovery. Dried shark meat and dry shark fin exports have recovered fully and bring in high prices, generating income for the artisanal fishery sector. However, adverse natural conditions include lack of anchorages or adequate seaports for large commercial fishing vessels, and the rocky nature of most of the continental shelf, which is also too narrow for trawling. Further constraints include the absence of adequate physical and institutional infrastructure, inadequate landing facilities, ice plants and chill stores, and workshops for engine or boat repairs to serve the traditional fishery communities.

Shortage of fishing gear and lack of trained manpower has contributed a lack of development, and to very slow growth in the fishery industry.

However, a major constraints impeding planned development of the fishery sector is the lack of Monitoring, Control and Surveillance (MCS) of the marine resources and marketing infrastructure.

Development

While major capital investments are required to re-develop the entire fishery industry, including processing and marketing aspects, there is a primary need for assisting the fishery communities to regain their means of livelihood, and strengthen their capacity to earn income and to generate employment. However, without adequate MCS of Somali EEZ marine resources, there can be

not controlled development of the fishery sector.

Demand

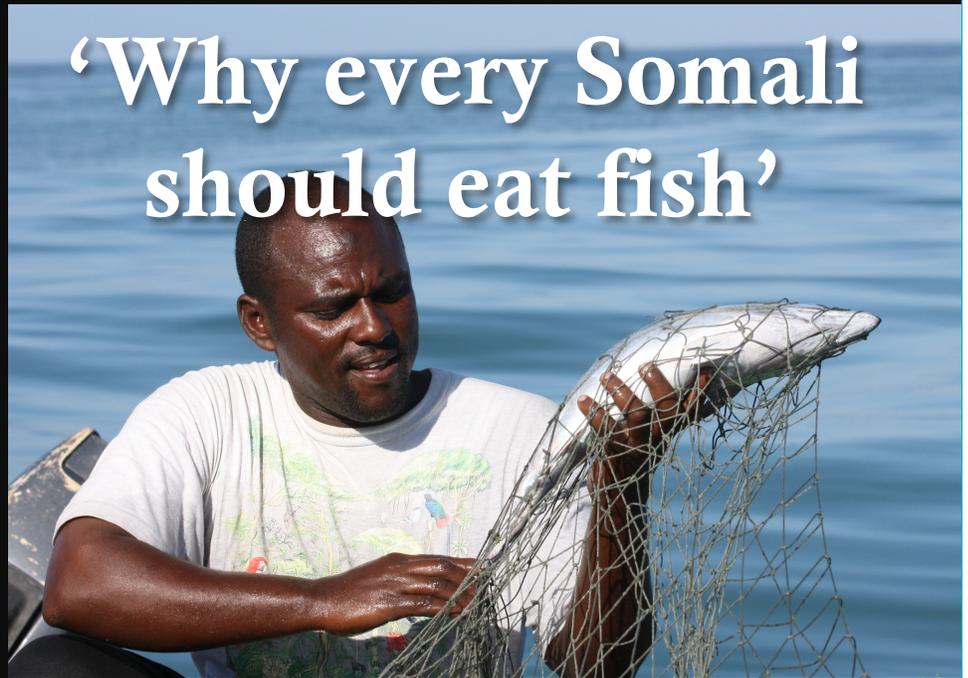
There is a great scope for a possible growth in per caput consumption of fish in Somalia in the near future, especially in bigger cities, towns and inland communities if the fishery sector is developed adequately with advanced marketing infrastructure (as in 1998, when per caput fish consumption peaked at 3.3 kg/year). Also, fish demand in the country seems very high most of the time, especially in inland regions, while in urban areas, especially in the capital Mogadishu, demand always exceeds supply, since fish consumption is estimated at over 9 t per day.

Therefore, as a direct consequence, canned fish products have been imported, mainly from Taiwan Province of China and Japan, with local production from the Las Korey canning factory. Until the spare part and gear supply problems for the artisanal sector are solved, it seems likely that fish supply will always be inadequate for local market demand, as well as for exports. The lack of an effective industrial sector supplying national consumer markets also constrains supply.

Funding

Very little aid has gone to the fishery sector since the onset of the civil war of 1991, except for a few emergency supplies of fishing gear, in limited quantities, by a few international organizations, including FAO, Care International and COPI (an Italian NGO). The fishing sector has received very little attention from the international community and aid agencies, while, in contrast, the livestock and crop husbandry sectors have received more attention and more aid. However, UNDP is currently (as of 2004) providing support to a number of small-scale pilot fishery development programmes (in the central and southern parts of Somalia), with the aim of poverty reduction, development of the artisanal fishery sector and accelerating recovery from the destruction of the civil wars. It is hoped that this may have a mirror effect for other bilateral, regional and international assistance agencies.





‘Why every Somali should eat fish’

Mohamed Liban, Fisherman Bossaso, Puntland:

“For my family of ten, providing food has never been easier since we fled war in Merca, southern Somalia. For 9 years, we have been displaced and settled here in Bossaso, in a camp located near the shores of the Indian Ocean. Fending for my family is simple. Everyday, I head out to the sea, capture between 30 to 40 fish, especially the tuna species. I sale the majority of it and spare some for my family. We have never gone hungry. If every Somali ate fish, there would be less hunger in this country.”

