

4. PROGRAMME ALTERNATIVES

A. 'NO PROGRAMME' ('DO NOTHING') OPTION

4.1 Without the implementation of TREFIP, management and conservation of the natural resources and fish stocks of Lake Tanganyika would rely on the continuation of the present medium of co-operation between the four riparian countries, the FAO-facilitated Lake Tanganyika CIFA-Sub-Committee. This body has proved successful in co-ordinating the FAO/FINNIDA LTR Project. However, its operations are intermittent (meetings only once every two years) and certainly not geared to engage the comprehensive and immediate management challenges presented by the lake and its fisheries. Moreover, the Sub-Committee is fully dependent on external (FAO) financing, which is not likely to continue indefinitely.

4.2 Recognising these weaknesses, the Sub-Committee at its 8th Meeting (Lusaka, May 1999) deliberated and adopted new Terms of Reference. These TORs stipulate that the Sub-Committee should, amongst other things, facilitate the creation of a permanent regional management body for the lake.

4.3 On a country level, the 'No Programme' option would imply continuation of present arrangements under which the respective national fisheries administrative and research agencies and their field personnel are responsible for management decision-making, including technical review and advice, monitoring, control, and surveillance (MCS), and enforcement. Based on experiences thus far, budgetary, technical and organisational deficiencies impose severe constraints on the ability of these agencies to fulfil their responsibilities either generally, i.e. on a country-wide basis, or specifically in connection with the remote fisheries of Lake Tanganyika.

4.4 The utilisation level of fishery resources is presently very high, and any uncontrolled increase of exploitation will render the ecosystem and fish production more susceptible to rapid environmental changes. This evolution would lead into increased ecological uncertainty which, in turn, would add to economic uncertainty for fishers.

4.5 National fisheries agencies remain ill-equipped to implement the measures identified in the FFMP (Reynolds, 1999) in order to counter this 'crisis-in-the-making.' These measures most especially include replacement of ecologically non-viable gear and fishing methods with alternative technology, and strengthening the capacity of the fisheries to provide food and livelihood for increasing human populations.

4.6 In the absence of TREFIP, a wide array of adverse trends is likely to ensue. These amount to the following.

- Growing exploitation rate on pelagic fish stocks due to increased demand for fish and limited control measures;
- Increased risk of destroying sparse populations of *Lates mariae*, *L. microlepis*, and *L. angustifrons*;
- Growth and recruitment overfishing of *Lates stappersii* and *Stolothrissa tanganyicae* due to industrial and advanced artisanal operations;
- Heavy damage inflicted on littoral-borne life stages of pelagic species due to uncontrolled beach seining and other destructive gear;
- Reduced unit catch and economic return;

- Loss of fish quality and quantity through the post-harvest handling stages (processing, transport, and marketing), including increased risk of disease due to poor hygiene and insufficient facilities; and
- Weakened nutritional and health status amongst children and urban fish consumers.

4.7 The 'Do Nothing' option is clearly not advisable given the heavy environmental and socio-economic costs it would entail, and the EIA Team sees no justification for it whatsoever.

B. 'WITH PROGRAMME' OPTION

4.8 TREFIP outputs, including establishment of CMZ's and LFCs, financial and technical support for gear improvements, upgrading of post-harvest techniques, infrastructure, and marketing facilities, all are aimed at supporting the sustainable development of the fisheries as a whole – traditional, artisanal, and industrial.

4.9 Recognising the socio-economic and institutional dimensions of such sustainability, Programme activities are intended also to serve wider community and managerial needs as well. Provision is thus made for installation or upgrading of essential facilities and services within fishing villages, and for fostering local participation in and identification with mechanisms of resource stewardship.

4.10 In regard to sustainable exploitation of pelagic resources, the effect of TREFIP will be to reverse the present uncontrolled increase in effort through measures to limit access to the fishery, and to reduce the use of destructive gear. The earnings of fishers will be conserved and the socio-economic value of the yield improved through enhancing the quality and supply of fish products to consumers.

4.11 The EIA Team wholly endorses these TREFIP purposes and sees the Programme as essential to the future health and well being of the lacustrine ecosystem and the human populations of some one million lakeshore dwellers and ten million Tanganyika basin inhabitants who depend directly and indirectly on its resources. The Team therefore strongly recommends that the Programme be implemented, with the proviso that measures should be taken to ameliorate certain potential adverse environmental impacts linked to some of the planned activities. These latter will be discussed in the following chapter.