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l'agriculture

Organización  
de las  
Naciones  
Unidas  
para la  
Agricultura  
y la  
Alimentación

## COMMITTEE FOR INLAND FISHERIES OF AFRICA

### Eleventh Session

Abuja, Nigeria, 24-27 October 2000

### PROSPECTUS: INLAND AQUATIC RESOURCES MANAGEMENT AND STRUCTURAL ADJUSTMENT POLICIES

## BACKGROUND

1. Millions of Africa's people depend on the fish produced in lakes, rivers, wetlands, dams and ponds. These sources of fish are essential to the livelihoods of millions of people. Although statistics are not available, it is assumed that fish from inland waters are often a most important source of animal protein for those vulnerable segments of society who cannot afford other types of meat.
2. Sustainable development and management of these inland fisheries is critical as fish supplies have difficulties keeping pace with fast growing demand attributable to swelling populations which also put more and more pressure on all natural resources.
3. The provision of management advice in inland capture fisheries and aquaculture has been difficult because of the dispersed and frequently remote nature of inland waters. At the national level, this has required dedicated and informed staff scattered over wide areas who, in turn, have required a variety of government investments.
4. Government intervention in the inland fisheries sector has taken many forms including extension and outreach, monitoring and surveillance, quality control and regulation as well as the provision of incentives including subsidies to both inland capture fisheries and aquaculture subsectors. In many instances, public sector interventions have not been cost-effective. Large scale funding for the sector

has usually been obtained from foreign sources. These interventions have also often employed a top-down approach where the ultimate beneficiaries have had little voice in management strategies.

5. With an ever-changing global economy demanding tighter control of governmental and non-governmental finances, countries have been forced to re-assess what support is feasible and what form this should take. These have often been painful transformations which have necessitated several adjustments.
6. Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) have been defined as “the implementation of comprehensive adjustments in macro- and micro-policies, both to respond to various shocks and to rectify inappropriate policies that have hampered economic performance, the fundamental objective of which is to restore sustainable economic growth”<sup>1</sup>. They have been intended to improve financial resource allocations, increase economic efficiency and expand economic growth potential through the adjustment of structures and processes which entail policy and institutional reforms involving macro-economic, micro-economic and institutional interventions. The SAPs have focused on the balance of payments and public finance, price stability (low inflation) and restoring market conditions.
7. Key elements of SAPs have been reduction, decentralization and privatization. Reduction of government budgets has caused retrenchment of government personnel and a reduction of financial allocations for such activities as monitoring/surveillance and extension/outreach. Decentralization has often led to a “consolidated” approach to government support in the field whereby specialists in fisheries and aquaculture are no longer available at the grassroots’ level. However, decentralization has prepared the ground for devolution to local government and for improved community participation. Privatization has been forced by such measures which means that some public sector infrastructure and services can no longer be maintained and must be passed to the private sector or abandoned if non-profitable.
8. The implementation of SAPs has had an effect going beyond the shrinking of government staff and services. It is thought that adjustments have greatly increased the vulnerability of poorer communities and those that would be most reliant on efficient public support to buffer them against adversity; amongst those who are considered most at risk are artisanal fishing communities and fish farmers. As the livelihoods of these individuals become more tenuous, there is a tendency to worry less and less about good environmental stewardship as adverse economic pressures come to bear. For example, in order to survive, the tendency to use inappropriate fishing gear would increase.
9. SAPs have affected the livelihoods of the region’s fishers and fish farmers. SAPs were implemented to respond to trends and these have now created shocks and stresses at the household level with which communities must cope whilst governments must enhance the overall capabilities of their administration to safeguard and put to productive use the region’s fisheries.

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<sup>1</sup> World Bank, 1990. “Making Adjustment Work for the Poor, a framework for Policy Reform in Africa”, A World Bank Study, Washington D.C

10. However, as noted above, policy adjustments have also had positive effects. As the public sector shrinks and reduces its presence, more emphasis is being placed on alternative structures to replace or complement government. This has led to increasing stakeholder involvement in decision-making and management, including a strong advocacy for co-management (shared responsibilities between government and stakeholders at community level) of fisheries.
11. After nearly two decades of adjustments, there is growing concern from some developmentalists that SAPs may aggravate poverty, especially in rural areas. Programmes have been modified through time to take account of some of these social dimensions. Efforts to reduce negative social impact have included attempts at improving social services, increasing credit availability, mobilizing savings and facilitating more self-employment. Although non-economic factors are now incorporated in SAPs, it remains unclear if the approach has been effective and whether the inclusion of social issues has been done in such a way as to have a positive effect on poverty alleviation.

## OBJECTIVES

12. The objectives of the seminar are to:

- assess the *effects* of SAPs on processes and structures of the inland fisheries sector (including capture fisheries and aquaculture);
- suggest methods for involvement for stakeholders of the sector in the identification of possible *solutions/strategies*; and
- make practical *recommendations* to address inland fisheries management in the framework of SAPs.

## ORGANIZATION

13. The seminar will begin with a panel discussion on SAPs and inland aquatic resource management. Panellists will make presentations on general adjustment policies and specifically how these impact on inland fisheries and aquaculture. These will be followed by a group discussion.
14. Discussion groups will be formed to deal with inland fisheries and aquaculture separately. The Terms of Reference for these groups are as follows:
  - i. consider what would be the indicators for positive/negative impact of SAPs on the sustainability of livelihoods and on processes and structures (PIP) also known as Transformation of Structures and Processes (TSP);
  - ii. using these indicators, suggest five important positive effects of SAPs on policies, institutions and processes for inland fisheries management;
  - iii. similarly, suggest five important negative effects of SAPs on policies, institutions and processes for inland fisheries management;

- iv. for each effect, visualize key stakeholders and linkages, and the facilitatory process by which the most vulnerable could enter into the co-management with institutions;
  - v. propose activities that could facilitate partners to lessen negative impact or reinforce positive impact, including those which could assist government to identify and where necessary improve the institutions, structures and processes needed to cope with the effects of SAPs;
  - vi. within this context, prepare five recommendations for improving aquatic fisheries management within those areas affected by SAPs; and
  - vii. based on the recommendations, select specific topics where further information is required and outline the means of obtaining this information.
15. A final plenary session will discuss and agree upon seminar recommendations and develop practical plans follow-up activities based on the recommendations.

## **OUTPUTS**

- 16. An outline statement as to how SAPs affect inland fisheries development and management.
- 17. A list of 10 recommendations, 5 for inland artisanal fisheries and 5 for aquaculture, which indicate measures that can be taken to mitigate adverse effects of SAPs with available means and those that would require additional assistance.
- 18. Practical activities which could be undertaken by the member countries with the assistance of the Secretariat, and projects.