

FRESHWATER, FISH, AND THE FUTURE

*A cross-sectoral conference to sustain livelihoods, food security,
and aquatic ecosystems*



GLOBAL CONFERENCE ON INLAND FISHERIES

26–30 January 2015, FAO, Rome

www.inlandfisheries.org

About the Global Conference on Inland Fisheries

Inland fisheries around the world are facing serious challenges. Inland fisheries are a critical food resource, especially in much of the developing world, yet agricultural, water management, and investment policies often conflict with maintaining the long-term sustainability of inland fisheries. A lack of reliable data has hampered international monitoring and conservation programs.

In January 2015, a ground-breaking conference in Rome will for the first time address the challenges and opportunities for inland fisheries at cross-sectoral levels on a global scale. Never before have scientists, policy makers, and the international development community gathered together to discuss the food security, economic, and ecological issues associated with inland fisheries around the world. This global conference is a multi-sectoral call to raise the profile of inland fisheries and better incorporate them in agricultural, land use, and water resource planning through development of improved assessment frameworks and value estimation. The conference will include freshwater commercial, subsistence, aquaculture, and recreational fisheries, as well as the complex ecosystem services provided by inland aquatic systems.

Inland aquaculture provides more than 27 percent of the world's fish production.



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INTRODUCTION

The Global Conference on Inland Fisheries is sponsored by **Michigan State University** and the **Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)**; the conference will be held at FAO headquarters in Rome.



MICHIGAN STATE
UNIVERSITY



**Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations**

GOALS

More than 60 million people are employed in inland fisheries in developing countries.

The conference will:

- Communicate the value of inland fisheries to policy makers and the public;
- Review assessment and valuation strategies;
- Recommend policy commitments;
- Provide policy makers with the means to better integrate inland fisheries into development planning processes;
- Identify critical pathways in water resource allocation, climate change adaptation, food security and nutrition, and biodiversity conservation;
- Develop recommendations for measurable global targets; and
- Synthesize the conference contributions and deliberations into a guidance document on the future of inland fisheries.



The lack of data in small-scale inland fisheries mandates that new methods of biological assessment be developed.

Theme 1: Biological Assessment

What is the biological status of inland fisheries? Decisions about management of inland water resources and aquatic systems often do not include the impact on the production and ecological value of inland fisheries because data about these diffuse small-scale fisheries are generally inadequate or totally lacking.

The goal of this theme is to explore and develop new approaches to assess the production and status of inland fish stocks and their fisheries. Biological assessments of fisheries production, habitat availability, and biodiversity will need to include the use of remote sensing, household dynamics, consumption estimates, and GIS analyses, as well as fishery independent surveys and catch reports. The availability of improved estimates of the biological status will assist in managing inland fisheries and provide a basis for economic and social valuations and tradeoffs.



Inland fisheries account for 23 percent of the total catch in developing countries, and about 90 percent of this production is used for domestic human consumption.

Theme 2: Economic and Social Assessment

What are the economic and societal values of inland fisheries? Decisions about management of inland waters and fisheries production systems often do not include the economic and societal values of inland fisheries to society. In instances where there is some estimate of value of these fisheries, valuation has often ignored the important contribution of fish to nutrition, livelihoods, leisure, societal well-being, and the intrinsic value associated with religious and cultural uses of fisheries resources.

The goal of this theme is to explore and develop new approaches to provide monetary and non-monetary value to fisheries, including their importance to human health, personal well-being, and societal prosperity. Value assessments will need to include the use of monetary and non-monetary approaches such as shadow pricing, replacement value, willingness-to-pay, human nutrition and health, employment, and cultural use of fishes. The availability of improved estimates of the economic and social worth of inland fisheries will promote the role of inland fisheries in individual well-being and societal prosperity and stability. The increased understanding of the value of these fisheries will help provide a common metric for evaluating alternative uses of these resources and habitats.



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Theme 3: Drivers and Synergies

What are the drivers and synergies with other resource sectors? Inland fisheries are one of many ecosystem services provided by freshwater systems. Many sectors outside of fisheries, such as power generation, transportation, agriculture, industrial/human water use, tourism, and recreation influence management and allocation decisions for freshwater systems and also affect the quality and magnitude of fish production. Management of sustainable freshwater systems requires making informed choices emphasizing those services that will provide sustainable benefits for humans while maintaining well-functioning ecological systems.

The goal of this theme is to explore the drivers influencing inland ecosystems and their impact on the services provided by freshwater systems. This theme will identify conflicts between the services that can be addressed to increase societal gain, such as food production and poverty alleviation while maintaining ecological integrity and allowing for the protection of aquatic biodiversity. If accounting for synergies in freshwater systems is made, development of aquatic habitat rehabilitation and protection programs, environmental flow regimes, or other management approaches can allow more sustainable production of ecosystem services across multiple sectors. These more ecologically and socially sustainable approaches, ultimately, will improve the health, well-being, and prosperity of fisheries-dependent communities.



Small freshwater fish provide micro-nutrients that help prevent stunting and rickets in rural children.



Theme 4: Policy and Governance

How do we ensure inland fisheries are fully integrated into decision frameworks? Though local-scale governance is largely responsible for management of production and harvest of fish from inland systems, fisheries and other freshwater resources beyond local jurisdictions are governed by large-scale decision-making structures and processes that may be inappropriate or inadequate to address these resources. Policy may not be informed by science developed to understand inland fisheries systems, or policy makers may have other important priorities. Development of new approaches that link inland fisheries science directly with the needs of policy indicators will assist strategic decision making, adaptive management, enhanced environmental justice, and enforceable regulations for more sustainable management of inland fisheries.

The goal of this theme is to understand the opportunities and constraints to cross-sectoral and cross-jurisdictional governance approaches and to develop methods to assure that governance decisions take into account the contribution inland fisheries make to food security, human well-being, and ecosystem productivity at the local, regional, national, and global levels.

OUTCOMES

The main output of the conference will be a published proceedings consisting of plenary papers, four overview papers produced by the individual thematic panels, a white paper synthesizing the discussions from all themes combined, and individual contributed papers that more specifically address a component of the themes. The book of symposium proceedings will be co-published by FAO and the American Fisheries Society.

*There are more than 500,000 dams
over 15 meters high worldwide.*

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CONFERENCE ARRANGEMENTS

Meeting Facility

The conference will be held at the headquarters of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. The FAO headquarters building is located in the heart of Rome across from the Circus Maximus and is accessible by public transportation. The venue offers a wide variety of auditoriums and meeting rooms, as well as on-site food services. Please see the website inlandfisheries.org for more information about FAO security requirements, public transportation, and other logistics.

Abstract Submittal and Registration

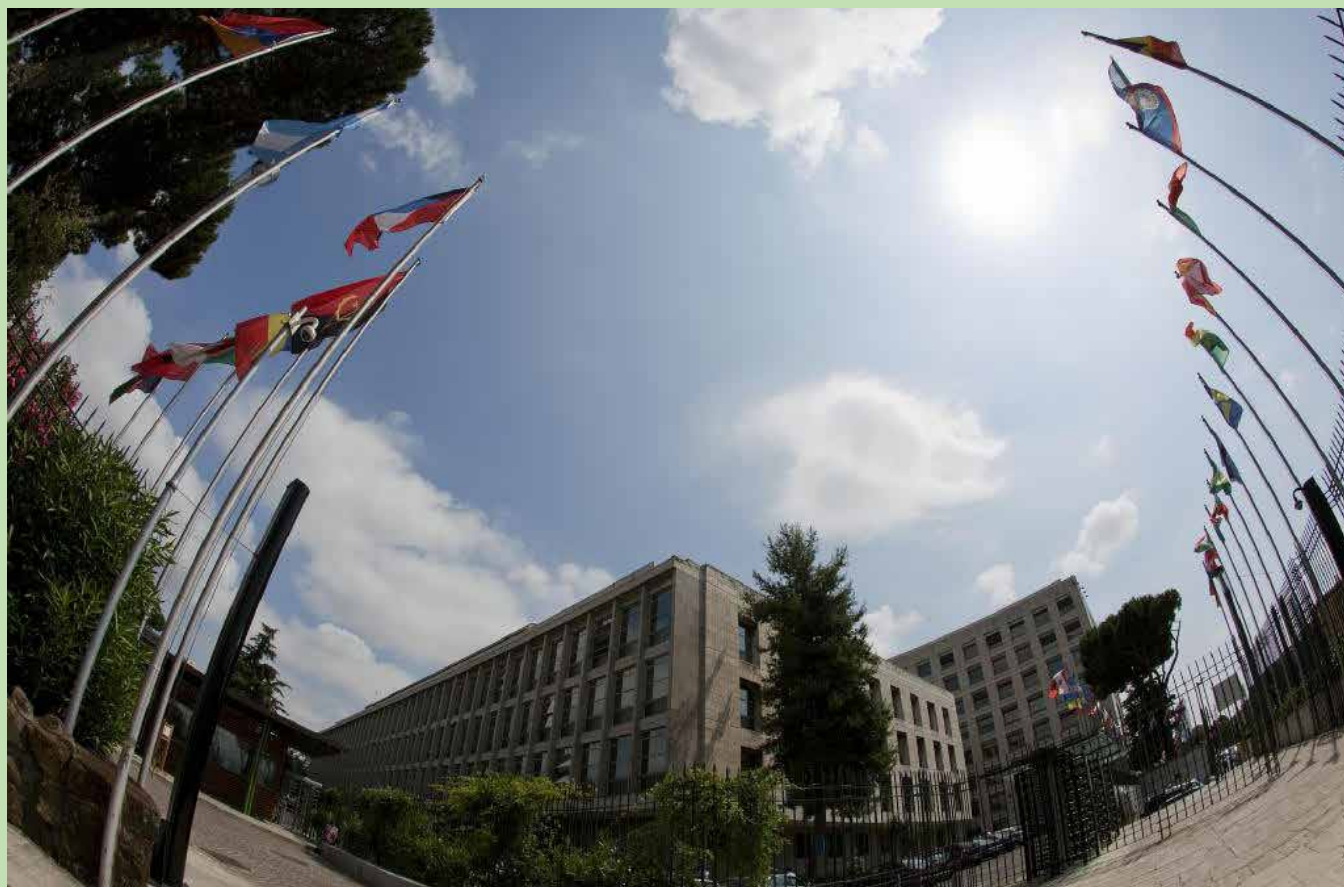
Abstracts are being accepted in each of the four themes until 10 August 2014. Please submit your abstract using the form on the website inlandfisheries.org. Please note that due to FAO security requirements, all attendees must be pre-registered in order to attend the conference. Travel support is available for presenters from developing countries and students. See the conference website for the application form and eligibility requirements.

Lodging

See the website inlandfisheries.org for a list of hotels near FAO, most offering discounted rates for UN FAO meeting attendees.

Displays

Limited space for a small number of tabletop-size displays will be available for non-commercial organizations. Please see the conference website for instructions on how to apply for display space. All displays must be approved in advance by FAO.



Support Opportunities

The Global Conference on Inland Fisheries is being generously supported by Michigan State University and FAO, but further support is welcome to help ensure the achievement of the conference goals. For example, travel support for more than 30 percent of attendees likely will be needed in order to guarantee adequate representation from developing nations. Additional support will make it easier to recruit experts who can contribute valuable knowledge and opinions, regardless of their institutions' often limited travel budgets. In order to facilitate such support, Michigan State University is administering a special fund to receive grants and donations for the Global Conference on Inland Fisheries. Additionally, sponsors for an off-site networking event are welcome.

Women make up almost half of the global fisheries workforce.

Recognition

The Global Conference on Inland Fisheries will be a high-visibility international event resulting in widely distributed policy recommendations and results. Long-lasting implications for inland fisheries management and research, water management and use, food security and nutrition, and international development efforts worldwide are expected.

All support will be recognized on the conference website and in social media, the onsite program book, and resulting publications.

Contact Bill Taylor at MSU at taylorw@anr.msu.edu for information about how to contribute financially to this event.

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Fishing at sunset on the Mekong.

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