

Hygiene and quality of fish product issues tackled by FAO SmartFish using innovative approaches

Post-harvest losses (PHL) of fish in the fisheries sector/value chain are a major threat to food security in Africa. Statistical data shows that post-harvest losses in artisanal fisheries in Africa are estimated to range from 30–40 per cent and sometimes even higher. Economic losses occur when spoilage of fish results in a decrease in value. Inadequate handling and processing methods can lead to nutritional loss. Such losses are unacceptable in a continent where food insecurity and poverty affects millions.

It is therefore imperative to undertake actions to reduce these losses. This will only be possible if fisher-folk, fish processors, traders, and consumers of fish products value the importance of hygiene and quality in the handling of fish.

In order to tackle this issue, the EU funded project SmartFish, managed by the Indian Ocean Commission, and co-implemented by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations has developed a multimedia awareness raising package that will be disseminated through the “Clean Fish, Better Life” campaign along 12 major landing sites around Lake Victoria.

The campaign will be launched on the 13th of July in Kisumu, Kenya. The main feature of the launch will be the broadcasting of a participatory video, on the importance of hygiene and quality in small scale fisheries; realised with the direct involvement of beneficiaries, and will be at the forefront of the campaign.

The event will also feature a concert from performing artist Nazizi, writer of the song *Usafi Ni Pesa (Hygiene Makes Money)*, which served as the sound track for the video.

In addition, the campaign will include cooking demonstrations from a fish recipe book produced by the project.