

Minutes of the meeting of the Fisheries development advisers

18 and 19 September 2008, Zaandam, the Netherlands

Introduction:

Fish is back on the menu, be it still more fast food rather than haute cuisine. Fish is a healthy and cheap source of protein, providing employment and income to millions of people. After a period of decreasing attention, fisheries are getting worldwide more and more attention, be it with a different agenda than before. But how important is fish for developing countries? Should Africans fish for Africans? And can international fish trade be sustainable? Is there coherence in European and African policy on fisheries management? What are the issues related to food security, biodiversity and ecosystems? Most important for this moment is how can we improve the profile of the fisheries sector, the transparency and coherence and the capacity of developing countries to comply with international agreements rules and regulations in the fisheries sector.

Summary of statements made:

- Over the past few decades fisheries development has not wielded much international attention when compared to agriculture development. The landscape of fisheries development is rapidly changing and there is an urgent need to pay more attention to the fisheries sector to secure the ecological resource rent as this sector is of decisive economic importance for developing countries, crucial for achieving food security and income..
- Donor alignment is key feature. Meeting and discussing issues face to face in addition to virtual networking are seen as important drivers for coordination.
- The meeting offers ample space for interaction , sharing meta information and provide a learning platform for the participants
- The annual meeting of donors is a proper sign that we think of ourselves as a coherent group of committed people.
- There was a general disappointment that the EU was not present. Furthermore it was regretted that countries like Spain, France, Iceland, Italy and Finland did not or were not able to attend.
- The meeting offers an opportunity to hear a good voice on African development and to give feedback from an African perspective.

On the profile of fisheries

Fisheries on the Trade agenda

Trade as the driving factor of African fisheries: policy implications by Pierre Failler (CEMARE, University of Portsmouth, United Kingdom)

Judging from Failler's research there is an ongoing growth of international fish trade, especially in developing states. The percentage of fish caught in the developing states has risen in favor of developed and transitory states. At this moment the revenues of fish as a trade commodity in developing countries have surpassed all the agricultural products combined. Therefore it is time that fish is incorporated in the international trade discourse.

The negative effects of the increasing export of fish are apparent: growing pressure on fisheries systems, rise of illegal fishing, decline of indigenous fish species on the local markets in developing countries. Therefore trade should also be included in the discourse on fisheries resource management and food security.

Trade is the main motivation for people to catch fish. As a consequence of the higher prices offered in the international markets, less fish is brought to the domestic markets of developing nations.. Internal subsidies favoring export contribute to the problem.

Together with the declining purchasing power of Africans this can be seen as a cause for the decline in protein intake in Africa. Therefore there is an urgent need for a shift in management from the management of fisheries resources to the management of the trade forces with respect to those resources. Fishing, trade and food security should be on the same agenda.

Discussion and comments

- In the following discussion it became apparent that currently there is no plan of action regarding the growing importance of fish in international trade. Trade is not included in the discourse on fisheries resource management. There is disagreement between DG fish and DG Trade on a favorable policy but it is argued that in fact they apply the same policy altogether. Therefore fishing, trade and food security should be on the same agenda.
- Trade is the main motive for fishing. For fish security, we are looking at the ecological functions of the fish and their value when it is caught.
- It is important to include fisheries in both Development and Trade sectors. The EC trade commission should also have fisheries on its agenda. In (national) development planning fish is not yet important, that should change.
- The CFFA is missing the equity discussion. Where is the fairness of trade? According to Failler there is no equity in West Africa as there are a few that control all the fisheries.
- Comments were made on value adding in the fish industry as it is not always possible to add value on fish. Some fish loses its value from the moment it has been caught.
- Trade tariffs discourage local value adding.

- There is a lot of fish leaving Africa. Only low value fish goes inland there are some not-level field playing aspects to it. But Ghana for instance, can never feed their own folks solely with the production of fish from its *OWN* waters.
- By catch, discards and post harvest losses are high while fishmeal production facilities are scarce.
- From the donor side there is a decline in support for traditional aid. Therefore now is the time to bring fisheries development into a synergized policy development both in the North and developing countries. Development goals should be supported through mutually supportive policies.

On the need for Coherence and Transparency

a) Partnerships in fisheries management

Policy Coherence for Development (PCD) related to fisheries, trade and food security by Joella van Rijn (Directorate General International cooperation, the Netherlands)

Van Rijn advocates a better policy synergy, consistency and convergence. She notices a decline in support for traditional aid. Therefore now is the time to bring fisheries development into a synergized policy development. Mutually supportive policies are needed to support development goals.

Discussion and comments

- Food security in a development context is a Northern issue. It is quite remarkable that fisheries are not taken into account. There is an urgent need to include fisheries in poverty reduction strategy papers and to work towards food security.
- Not only development aid but also other sectors should be included in the government approach on fisheries.
- In most countries government attention and funding is subdivided according to sector or thematic field. Fisheries hardly gets any (explicit) attention despite its considerable contribution to national/ regional economy , employment , income generation and food security.
- Too many subsidies are harvesting subsidies.
- It would be nice to see which subsidies actually work and which ones induce overproduction.
- Despite the current growth of interest and funding, fisheries management remains a small field of expertise. Some countries are less involved in fisheries management; in Germany, for instance, fisheries play a minor role in development policy.
- Other countries are more focusing on multilateral channels instead of project based development. There are countries with interests in fisheries policy which are not present in this meeting.
- These are all arguments to identify fields of cooperation and working on synergizing interests of different stakeholders. Fisheries enterprises should be more involved than before as they are equally responsible for fisheries management

- It's not just fish on the menu; there are conservation, ecosystem and biodiversity approaches as well. This calls for a growing need to communicate and bundle knowledge.
- The incompatibilities with Project Coherence for Development are unknown

b) Transparency

Developing countries should decide what their role in fisheries management should be for the next 30 years. They have a responsibility for their own fisheries. At this moment the corporate world of fisheries in Africa is not transparent and trade is left to its own dynamics.

Trade barriers will continue to exist and the general pattern in trade is that it is not equal and especially in the case of regional trade rather obscure. Transparency in governance should be promoted. That way projects can work together in an effort to cohere policy and work towards free trade and better fisheries management.

Discussion

- It is essential to focus on trade but it seems like we adopt this strategy because fisheries management has been a failure. We forgot how valuable fisheries can be for national economies and food security and poverty reduction. Fisheries management should have the main focus.
- Developed countries should enhance transparency to show how they regulate.
- Transparency in governance should be promoted as well as coherence amongst projects. So we can identify the conflicting interests.
- We should not be too harsh on European partnerships. We should not underestimate their transparency. There are quite a few other fleets fishing in west African waters, legal and illegal. What do we know about agreements made?
- Emerging from the fisheries advisers' need for transparency and cooperation, there is a need for a lists of ongoing activities and an open forum on the internet.
- For a large organization such as the EU the availability of information on the internet is stalled by procedures. Sensitivities can be an issue in posting documents on the internet and there is a need for moderators to manage the data posted on websites.

On the capacity of developing countries and the strengthening of RFMO's

The question arises whether Africa has the capacity to properly manage its fisheries. Although the return of investment of training is positive, the effects of brain drain are obvious as well. Mr. Failler addresses the audience when he remarks that those skilled Africans are working for the same institutions that are present at the meeting, which makes these institutions part of the problem.

Research has been an exclusive Northern activity. The recruitment of higher educated Africans in research is non-existent. All the know-how on fisheries management has come from the North, which makes it highly unlikely that fisheries management will be sustainable. The process of training people outside of Africa is part of the problem;

students are likely to stay in the college country. We have to look at ways to motivate African students to go back to their countries of origin.

CAADP-Fisheries Action Plan: A NEPAD vision and framework for the restoration of fisheries growth and food security
by Sloans Chimatiro

While African fisheries are a part of the global market, it requires public sector and partner involvement because when left to market forces alone, pro-poor growth is unlikely. Furthermore, environmental externalities require regulation and intervention to maintain sustainability. But within African governing agencies it takes a lot of energy to relocate finances to fisheries. To bring the partners together coherence between African governing agencies has to happen at the country level.

- Regional organizations are prone to build walls around them. We need to open these walls. We have to begin the interface to start working on a common strategy on fisheries. We want to cohere fisheries management.
- The forces influencing fisheries development are largely coming from outside the sector.
- Most research is related to the fisheries agreements While the dynamics of the economics of fisheries in Africa is poorly understood. There is a clear need for socio economic research to clarify the underlying processes and the drivers as well as the measures to be taken to make the sector more sustainable.
- In this respect there is a clear need for training and capacity building May be even to establish a center of excellence for the fisheries sector.
- Q: What is the role of fisheries in the country convents? A: Most of the time fisheries are left out of the discussion. Fisheries may be up to a 6 % annual growth in revenues. Institutionally (with the ministers) this does not occur.
- Websites and information exchange will build partnerships which may contribute to the imbedding of fisheries in national policy strategies .

Developing states and global fisheries agreements & instruments
by Erik J. Molenaar (NILOS)

The presentation takes a look at the use of Regional Fisheries Management Organizations and Fish Stock Agreements. There are gaps in the assigned RFMO's, particularly in the Arctic Sea, Central Atlantic and the Northern Indian Ocean. The pitfalls of RFMO's lie in the fact that cooperation is bound by invitation only and that there has to be a full allocation of the historical catch. Furthermore there are only non-cooperative vessels in the area. An important country such as China does not take part in the fish stock agreements. Some countries claim that RFMO's are used as means to create monopolies on fisheries.

Another factor is that some states lack the capacity and provisions to implement RFMO's. Or there is a simply a lack of interest, especially with landlocked nations.

Discussion and comments

- Flags of convenience are just as bad as Ports of convenience.
- Developing states might be too positive on the quality of their fisheries.
- The chairman mentions that Ghana and Mauritania are still not members of the UNFSA.

- there is an article in the UNFSA that says that developed countries have to assist developing countries into joining UNFSA.
- Africa is not happy to participate in International Agreements. First it costs money and resources and secondly sometimes people do not fully understand these agreements. These are complicated agreements and how can we make them understand?
- A. There is a fund that can be used for this problem. Moreover a proposal is made to start another fund that will specifically assist developing states in the enforcement.
- Q: How is the high seas enforcement with non-flag states?
- A: freedom of the high seas means that a ship has the flag state sovereignty except for issues such as piracy, endangered species etc.
- Nations should be able to say; “Why participate if we can not have access?” But therein also lies the Catch 22; to be able to participate you should fish first, but if you fish without being a participant you are going to be listed, and being listed means being banned from participation.
- Marine Capture Fisheries is a global problem; therefore you need a global instrument to tackle this problem. North Atlantic agreements will be bypassed through African ports of convenience.
- Q: Is there is a way to charter vessels rather than placing vessels in fisheries itself? A: The implementations of these agreements are very costly. There are only a few companies behind those flag states. A lot of the problems are caused by western companies.
- Most of the IUU fishing is done within the EEZ. Fishing without a license would result in listing on a European level. It is interesting to see how it is possible that these vessels disappear from that list. After the penalty has been served, the vessels should be removed from the list (ban).
- Another person suggests that the penalty should remain. Keeping them on the list means that the owners can be accounted for their actions.
- A: In the USA they are already saying that this would be highly unconstitutional. We have an obligation to try to include everybody in these agreements. The agreements should be fair, transparent and robust.
- If we don't set up proper regional management we will have a problem
- We should move to a point that member states can push non-members into agreement
- We should look at the place where illegal fish can enter ports. If we can include African countries into signing anti-illegal fish unloading agreements we make progress
- We have to work on capacity building for signing these agreements

On the profiles of fisheries agencies

The making of a regional fisheries body – A timeline of achievements and challenges by Michael Vakily (CSRP)

There are three periods to be distinguished in the Commission Sous-Régionale des Pêches (CSRP). In the first period that ran from 1985 to 2004 the organization was fairly unstructured, with two technical staff and not so many activities. Challenges of that time were that the organization was very donor driven, and that member-state contributions were not paid.

The second period, running from 2005 to 2008 saw the sudden non-strategic emergence of technical staff. The organization also moved to another building. It made the organization look like a solidly functioning organization but in fact it was a façade. An internal financial and institutional audit was made and this came out negative for CSRP. They had to reorganize and CSRP moved from an annex to an implementer of projects. Challenges remained; there was a demand on skills and competences not yet available; existing personnel had to be replaced, which takes time; financial reserves were not yet in place.

2009 and beyond will bring an organization with a flexible organigram, with few core positions and other staff recruited on a project basis. CSRP wants to reduce dependence on core funding and rely more on a project basis. CSRP hopes are that their new business plan will be accepted at the ministers' conference in November.

- Q: Are you going back to donor financing? A: Project personnel will be hired for a project. There will only be a few core staff.
- Q: Will you be able to come up with the demands of the individual donors? A: Because CSRP did not have the knowledge for some fisheries, they could not play a role. And if you do not have the competence you don't have the support.
- In my experience what was crucial within CSRP was who you were talking to. There was a constant bickering between country members about who got which project. This was counterproductive. As long as countries don't pay their dues to CSRP, nothing is going to change.
- In the region, the various countries have their specific ways to recruit personnel. The challenge for the fisheries is to get their share of levies.
- Q: If CSRP needs time to adapt to donors, will it not be still very dependent on donors? In the new setting the CSRP aims to provide services on a rather ad hoc basis. How about building on institutional strength in support of fisheries management in the region? A: it is a downward spiral. You need to have an ensured financial base to start. At the moment the staff is not there.
- There is a willingness to tackle IUU but there is no funding and knowledge yet.
- It seems that the CSRP will change its original mandate : regional coordination of fisheries management and will become a kind of donor driven consultancy firm.

Most prolific results of the meeting

- Fisheries policies should get a higher esteem, become more comprehensible, transparent and properly articulated and incorporated in national policies
- There is a need for a framework for co-management not only in fisheries management but also regarding trade
- We have to look at which fishing methods that are ecologically sustainable and to sector approaches that have proven their effectiveness.
- There is a need for straightforward definitions and indicators as well as rigorous monitoring programs.
- There is not enough socioeconomic research in Africa.
- It is recommended to include more participants from Africa and Europe, but also from Australia and New Zealand. Right now they are working in a vacuum.

It is proposed to have the next meeting for 2009 in Sweden