THE STATE OF WORLD FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE
2004
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FAO Fisheries Department
FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS
Rome, 2004
The State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture has changed its appearance – and we in the FAO Fisheries Department hope you agree that it is a change for the better. However, the way we present our view of the state of world fisheries and aquaculture remains almost unchanged. As in previous issues, the report begins by providing an overview of developments in world fisheries and aquaculture, followed by a review of issues confronting fishers and fish farmers, and a presentation of seven in-depth studies undertaken by FAO. The report concludes with some thoughts on the future of fisheries and aquaculture, from both short-term and longer-term perspectives.

Developments during the past two years confirm the trends already observed at the end of the 1990s: capture fisheries production is stagnating, aquaculture output is expanding and there are growing concerns with regard to the livelihoods of fishers and the sustainability of commercial catches and the aquatic ecosystems from which they are extracted. The State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture 2004 reports on several of these issues.

It is not only fishers and fish farmers who have these concerns; they are increasingly shared by civil society at large. Moreover, the importance of international trade in fish and fish products, combined with the trend for major fishing and trading companies to operate on a multinational basis, means that such issues are becoming global in nature – affecting a growing number of countries, be they large fish producers or large consumers of fish. It is heartening to note that governments and other stakeholders have begun to collaborate with their neighbours and partners in trade in an effort to find shared solutions.

Concrete examples of positive outcomes of this “globalization of concerns” are the establishment of new regional fishery management organizations and the strengthening of existing ones. It is probable that ongoing discussions among intergovernmental organizations on topics such as trade in endangered aquatic species, the use of subsidies in the fishing industry, and labour standards in fisheries will also result in agreements of overall benefit to world society.

Given the nature and tone of the international discussion on fishery issues and the developments observed during recent years, I believe that fishers and fish farmers, in collaboration with governments and other stakeholders, will overcome the obstacles they face currently and will succeed in ensuring sustainable fisheries and continued supplies of food fish at least at their present levels.

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Assistant Director-General
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c&f
cost and freight

CBD
Convention on Biological Diversity

CBA
Capture-based aquaculture

CCFFP
Codex Committee on Fish and Fishery Products

c.i.f
cost, insurance, freight

CITES
Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora

COFI
Committee on Fisheries

CoP
Conference of the Parties

CPUE
catch per unit of effort

DEA
data envelopment analysis

DNA
deoxyribonucleic acid

EPA
Environmental Protection Agency (United States)

EU
European Union

FDA
Food and Drug Administration (United States)

FDM
Food Demand Model (FAO)

FFA
Forum Fisheries Agency

FIGIS
Fisheries Global Information System (FAO)

GDP
Gross domestic product

GRT
Gross registered tonnage

GT
Gross tonnage

HACCP
Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (system)

HIV
human immunodeficiency virus
IATTC
Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission

ICCAT
International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas

IFPRI
International Food Policy Research Institute

ILO
International Labour Organization

IMO
International Maritime Organization

IUU
Illegal, unreported and unregulated (fishing)

JECFA
Codex Joint Expert Committee on Food Additives

LIFDC
low-income food-deficit country

LMIS
Lloyd's Maritime Information Services

LOA
Length overall

NAFO
Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization

NDP
National development plan

OECD
Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

PCB
polychlorinated biphenyl

PRSP
Poverty reduction strategy paper

RFB
Regional fishery body

RFMO
Regional fisheries management organization

SADC
Southern African Development Community

SIDS
Small island developing states

TAC
Total allowable catch

UN
United Nations

UNCED
United Nations Conference on Environment and Development

VPUE
Value per unit of effort

WTO
World Trade Organization