

**REPORT**

# Committee on Agriculture, Lands and Natural Resources

## The Fishing Industry in Zambia: Opportunities and Challenge





## **I. Adequacy of the policy and legal framework governing the fishing industry in Zambia;**

Fisheries legislation in Zambia has had a comparatively slow evolution as it does not conform to current changes in policy and traditions of the local communities. Legislation is old and inappropriate to current thinking for the management and development of fisheries, as it has not changed from the colonial era.

Zambia has a drafted National Fisheries Policy which is yet to be implemented. The Policy which aims to provide an overall national vision for the development of the fisheries sector had a ten-year implementation time frame from 2010- 2020. Given that the policy is still in draft format and yet this is the final year of implementation is evident that the policy framework governing the fishing industry in Zambia is inadequate. The lack of a National Fisheries Policy entails that the industry lacks a national guide to give substance to the national fisheries vision. The lack of a National Fisheries Policy also entails that there is lack of procedures that prescribe the institutional arrangements for the management of the fisheries sector and identifies relevant stakeholder institutions that will support implementation to address current concerns.

The Legal framework governing fisheries in Zambia is the Fisheries Act (2011). The Act repealed and replaced the 1974 Act in order to conform with present day fishery management principles and practices. The legal framework governing fisheries in Zambia is adequate as the Act promotes the sustainable development of fisheries and a precautionary approach in fisheries management, conservation, utilisation and development. The Act also establishes the Fisheries and Aquaculture Development Fund, fisheries management areas and fisheries management committees as well as provides for the regulation of commercial fishing and aquaculture.

In as much as the legal framework governing fisheries in Zambia is adequate, the sector, financial resource allocation to the sector has been very low to the extent that implementation of plans and programmes has become difficult. This can be attributed to lack of a comprehensive National Fisheries Policy. Therefore, a clear and comprehensive National Fisheries Policy is an essential pre- requisite to effectively address the sector concerns.

## **II. Measures put in place for strengthening and monitoring the liberalisation of markets in the fisheries sub-sector;**

Market facilitation operations are still undeveloped in Zambia due to orientation of production to domestic demand. In fact, the domestic fish market is still a sellers' market and therefore requires little additional effort. Since health and safety requirements for

exports to regional and other fish markets are not restrictive, anyone with cold storage, packaging and transportation facilities can export. Nationally, valuable markets are found in Central, Copper Belt, Eastern and Lusaka provinces, as these have huge, dense populations.

Exports in limited quantities are usually carried out by individuals for target markets. Regional export markets are mostly for consumption, while international markets trade in ornamental species. Regional destination markets include Botswana, Democratic Republic of Congo, Republic of South Africa and Zimbabwe. At international level, and specific to live fish for ornamental purposes, the common destinations are Belgium, Canada, Denmark, UK, Germany, Russia, Sweden and the United States of America.

The Seventh National Development Plan (7NDP) however, acknowledges that fisheries offer great potential for diversification, gainful employment and poverty reduction. Within the first pillar of the 7NDP which aims to enhance economic diversification and job creation, measures have been put in place to strengthen and monitor the liberalisation of markets within the fisheries sector which include; increased investment in fish farming technologies; sustainable management of capture fisheries; aquaculture development and strengthening fisheries training and research.

### **III. The level of participation of indigenous Zambian fish farmers in the fisheries sub-sector;**

Fish production is an important occupation in rural Zambia, with about 25 000 artisanal fishers and 30 000 others active in fish processing and trading, all estimated to derive their livelihood directly from fishing. The fishing industry in Zambia is categorized as Artisanal or Industrial. These sectors either directly or indirectly offer employment at various levels, improving the local economy, especially in rural areas. Estimates are that a total of 300 000 people benefit from fishing or ancillary activities. Among artisanal fishers, it is common to find fishing fleets that are owned by absentee landlords who purchase the fishing equipment and boats and then engage workers to do the fishing. There are only 64 industrial fishers operating on the major lakes: Kariba (36) and Tanganyika (28).

### **IV. The level of facilitation of private sector involvement in fisheries development;**

Over the past few years, Zambia's aquaculture sector has attracted major aquaculture companies particularly in the Copperbelt, Lusaka and Southern provinces, who have invested heavily in large scale cage-based fish farming facilities. The small-scale farmers are family based and labour extensive, carrying out extensive culture and producing between 1-2 tonnes per year.

Other than the private sector involvement, a number of donors have been active in assisting development in the fisheries sector. These include the Japanese Cooperation Agency (JICA), the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the Norwegian Agency for Development (NORAD), the Swedish Development Agency (SIDA), the Finnish Development Agency (FINNIDA), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), SNV and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO).

**V. The strategies and mechanisms put in place for the prevention and control of pests and diseases, if any, affecting the fisheries sub-sector;**

Although Zambia has never had a serious disease outbreak in aquaculture, it is clear that the country's current status regarding fisheries health management practices is not well prepared to handle any possible outbreak. Moreover, the country's regulatory body lacks fish diseases diagnostic facilities and expertise. In Zambia, aquaculture health practices are not clearly defined, the emphasis has been on the application of biosecurity measures that seeks to prevent disease outbreaks, although they are poorly reported. However, different levels of production ranging from extensive to intensive are likely to have different capacity to apply health management practices.

Generally, small-scale aquaculture producers in Zambia do not have well-established health management practices for their fish. The common practices observed include water quality management, farm and culture facility disinfection, observing reasonable stocking densities and caring for culture facilities surrounding to avoid any possible vectors of diseases. Disinfection of the farm and culture facilities is usually the main health management practice employed to prevent the outbreak of fish diseases. The aim is to destroy potential pathogens, and this is achieved by applying certain chemicals for a specified period of time. The application of chemicals is often followed by drying period. However, specific information regarding the application of these practices is still unclear.

Contrary to small-scale producers, most of the large-scale producers in Zambia observed some level of well-established biosecurity measures for their aquaculture production. For example, a survey done by the Journal of Aquaculture Research & Development of some major large-scale aquaculture producers in the country revealed that a few of them were applying common measures such as foot and wheel bath facilities, aquaculture farm fencing, quarantine facilities, water filtering and disinfection practices. Some of the large-scale producers, mainly private investors simultaneously operate hatchery facilities while others operate hatcheries as separate systems. The survey equally revealed that some major hatchery operators in Southern, Lusaka, Northern and Central provinces had better basic biosecurity measures such as foot and wheel bath, disinfection of hatchery facilities

and equipment, treatment of water sources, and restricting entry of foreign organisms and substances in culture facilities. For some of the producers, such as Yalelo Limited in Siavonga district of Southern province and Kafue fisheries in Lusaka province, have well prepared foot and wheel bath facilities installed at the entrance of farm premises for disinfection purposes. This prevents the entrance of potential pathogens into the fish farm from other sources.

## **VI. The adequacy of the market information systems in the fisheries value chain;**

The fisheries subsector value chain has helped the sector to respond to the ever-increasing demand for fish, along with imports that have increased markedly. However, the market information systems in the fisheries value chain are inadequate as there haven't been systems put in place to gather, analyze and disseminate information about prices and other information relevant to the fisheries sector. It is therefore imperative that the Ministry of Livestock and Fisheries through the Department of Fisheries to come up with information systems that will be easily accessible to the general public

## **VII. Any other challenges facing the fisheries sub-sector; and**

There are multiple factors that impede the growth of the fisheries subsector which include the following:

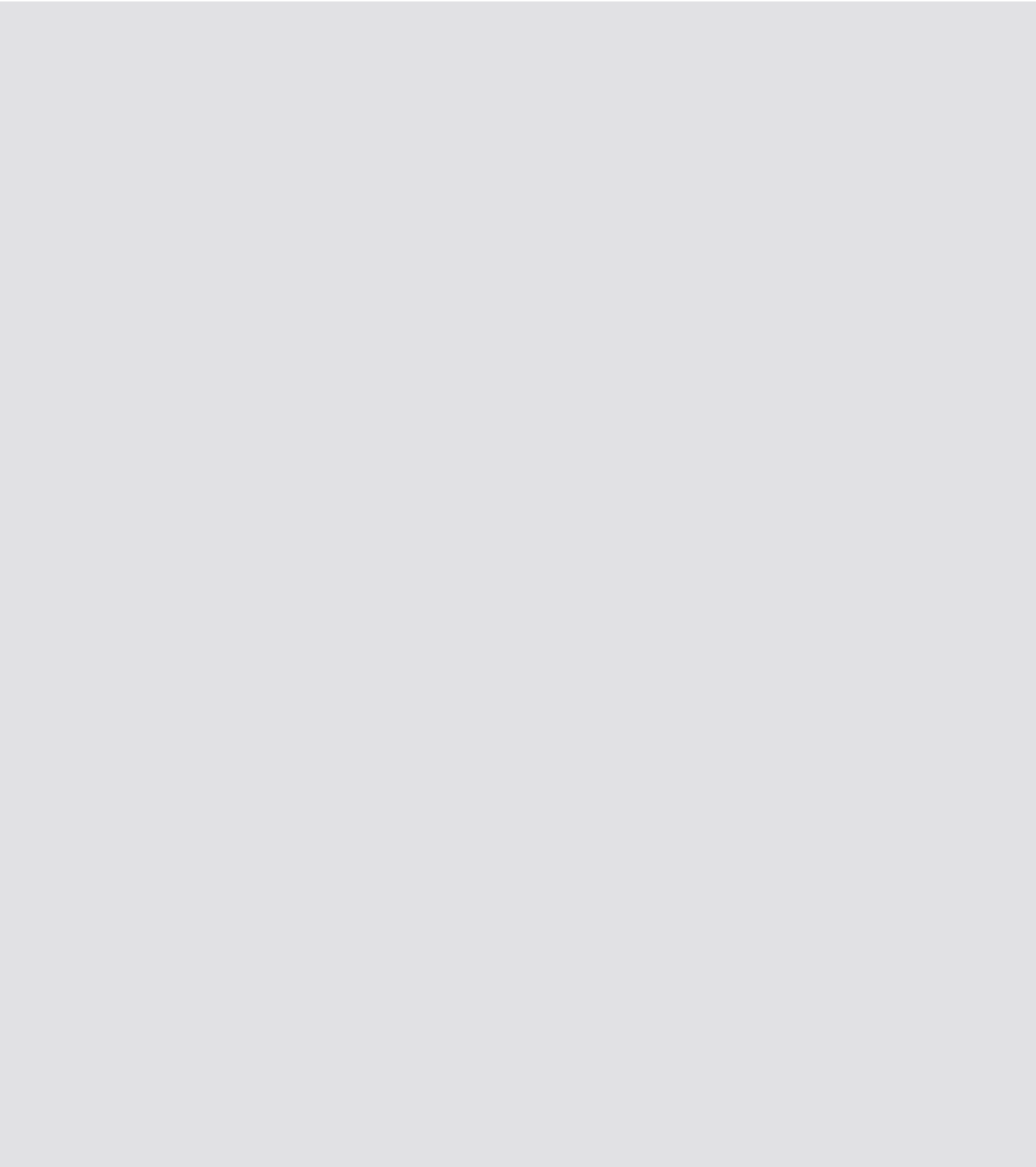
- There is inadequate funding for, and re-investment in, the sector despite the sector's ability to generate its own resources. This is due to poor and uncoordinated systems of collection and utilization of revenue from fishing levies and licences.
- There has been unlimited entry into fisheries. While fishing in a particular fishery is regulated by way of licensing, the number of licences issued is not limited. This has led to reduction in catch per unit effort for preferred fish species, which in turn has led to a decline in efficiency in capture fisheries, which is a major cause of declining incomes among small-scale fishers.
- Dissemination of information on production techniques and processing technologies to small-scale fish farmers and fishers has been of limited effectiveness. This has been due to poor evaluation of target groups and inadequate extension coverage.
- There is limited development in aquaculture owing to inadequate investment. With declining incomes in capture fisheries resulting from the depletion of stocks of preferred fish species and sizes, opportunities for growth in the sector will come from increased and coordinated investment in aquaculture.

- Non-availability of reliable sector information (statistics) severely limits the scope of interventions in the regulation and development of the sector. Information is insufficient on parameters such as statistics on fish production levels, number of stocked and un-stocked ponds, pond yield, fish stocks, levels of exploitation and market data.

## **VIII. Make recommendations on the way forward**

In order to improve the fisheries subsector in Zambia, PMRC recommends the following;

- There is need to establish an efficient and effective system of collection and utilization of revenue from fish and fishing gear levies, fishing licences and other related fees.
- Government should consider developing stakeholder partnerships towards sustainable and efficiently managed exploitation of fish and other valuable aquatic resources in natural water bodies. This would ensure efficient and effective regulation of fishing activities in proportion or relation to existing stocks of fish resources in all fishery areas.
- There is need for the identification and implementation of fishery development strategies through enhancements (stocking and re-stocking) of both indigenous and suitable exotic species.
- There is need for the development of aquaculture through intensified promotion of available aquaculture opportunities. While aquaculture offers opportunities for increased incomes and food among low-income earners, its exploitation has remained minimal. This is largely attributed to inadequate sensitization. Further, as a result of inadequate promotion of the country's aquaculture opportunities, there has been little commercial investment in the subsector.
- There is need for regular generation and provision of demand-driven information in both capture and culture fisheries. In effect, research to generate information should be demand driven as opposed to the current open-ended approach to information generation. Experience has shown that information usually required by stakeholders includes but is not limited to fish production, number of fishers and fishing boats in particular fisheries, number and type of fishing gear, number of stocked and unstocked fish ponds, average pond yield, fish stocks, and levels of exploitation.



**Unlocking Zambia's Potential**  
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