



Barriers to fisheries markets and trade in developing countries

By

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IIFET, Seattle, 16-20 July 2018

Introduction (1)

Food from the oceans reconstructed by the Sea Around Us Project (1):

- Small-scale fisheries produced an estimated 22 mio t of seafood for direct human consumption in 2010, up from 8 mio t/yr in the early 1950s and still globally increasing slightly – with approximately another 3.8 mio t/yr between 2000 and 2010 from subsistence fisheries;
- In comparison, industrial fisheries peaked in 1996 and declined between 2000 and 2010 alone from 87 mio t to 77 mio t.
- Add to that fish and invertebrates from rivers, lakes and reservoirs;

Introduction (2)

- Widespread IUU fishing by industrial fleets off West Africa, estimated at approx. 50% of total extractions (1, 2), undermines the viability of domestic small-scale fishing which provide primarily domestic and regional markets with affordable seafood.
- Globalisation affects women active in postharvest activities selectively (3)



(2) Belhabib, D., U.R. Sumaila, & D. Pauly, 2015. Feeding the poor: contribution of West African fisheries to employment and food security. *Ocean and Coastal Management*, 111: 72-81. doi:10.1016/j.ocecoaman.2015.04.010

(3) <https://www.mundusmaris.org/index.php/en/projects/beetween/2013-khadysarr-en>

West Africa as example

- In West Africa, like in other regions in Africa and other developing countries, the rural populations both in the inland and coastal fishing communities are dependent on livelihoods based on fisheries - with or without farming complements - as an economic enterprise.
- As global markets reach even into remote areas, demand for application of HACCP rules and /or requirements of established labels affect small-scale fishers and women mostly active in the postharvest sector, where the latter used to play pivotal roles, now jeopardised.



West Africa as example cont'd

- As rarefaction of resources from IUU fishing drives up costs, lack of affordable credit to women traders is a major barrier, because formal financial institutions do not cater for their needs, even though they have excellent track records of repayments.
- By way of example, we cite the women's group PARASE in the fishing village Hann, Senegal, that has set up four saving schemes to counter this constraint, for: school fees, social obligations, health issues and for emergencies. (3)



West Africa as example cont'd

- The women are also surprised that technical solutions for keeping ice on board pirogues for long trips have been found, while they get no help in the preservation of this essential input to meet quality requirements of up-market demand.
- Where small pelagics get processed through smoking and drying to meet demand of people with rather low purchasing power further away from the coast, adoption of much more energy efficient that also protect the health of workers often fails for lack of technical knowledge and capital.



Other Dimensions of Globalisation

- Cost-pressure that leads to forced labour, slavery and multiple human rights abuse against vulnerable people in dev. countries;
- Corruption and even international organised crime by unscrupulous industrial groups which put in question sustainable SSF and fair participation in local, regional and international trade of e.g. African SMEs
- Favoured by governments believing that the market will fix it, thus reducing public oversight.

Dimensions of Globalisation Cont.

- The incapacity of governments in the face of stiff lobby pressure to agree so far on cutting harmful subsidies of at least 15 bio. USD/year in the WTO (not counting investment in safety, management and research)
- 90% of these subsidies go to industrial fisheries, about 10% to SSF
- The rules are stacked against developing country trade participants in many instances.

Role of Sustainability Labels (1)

- Consumer concerns about unsustainable fisheries and trade have created willingness to spend more on guaranteed products – well established “Marine Stewardship Council” - blue label
- In Europe, e.g. several major supermarket chains source to high extent based on the blue label.



Role of Sustainability Labels (2)

- Independent research shows that some 30% of MSC labels in well-documented fisheries are not justified, thus deceiving consumers and handing unfair commercial advantage to non-compliant firms.(4)
- Major reason is structural conflict of interest: fisheries seeking certification pay the certifiers.



(4) Opitz, S., J. Hoffmann, M. Quaas, N. Matz-Lück, C. Binohlan & R. Froese, 2016. Assessment of MSC-certified fish stocks in the Northeast Atlantic. *Marine Policy*, 71:10-14. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.marpol.2016.05.003>

Role of Sustainability Labels (3)

- During the recent Brussels Seafood Fair (April 2018), experts on the MSC panel themselves raised the question, whether the entire resource-intensive and costly MSC certification process was not leading to a “rich man's club” of “easy fisheries” and systematically excluding economic actors from developing countries. (5)



What to learn?

- We want to address the underlying issues by rebuilding robust and healthy resource systems
- The adoption of maximum sustainable yield and participatory management including artisanal fishing communities should be emphasised (new methods allow to assess data-poor stocks (CMSY)).
- Other environmental protection strategies including expansion of marine protected areas with a sharing of benefits among all stakeholders.

Recommendations

- Phase out capacity enhancing subsidies.
- Deny fraudsters access to market to prevent them from realising ill-deserved gains.
- Step up capacity building for economic actors in SSF, especially women in postharvest activities and trade, including access to credit.
- Accelerate implementation of Voluntary Guidelines to Secure Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication.

Conclusion

Trade can produce large benefits to all parties involved, including those from developing countries, like Nigeria, on condition that:

- Overfishing be ended
- Harmful subsidies phased out
- SSF Guidelines be implemented with special attention to the needs of women in fisheries postharvest activities, incl. trade.
- Low impact SSF be prioritised with due attention to social roles to reap benefits fully.
- Invest in education, training and participatory institutions able to help sustain and share benefits widely.




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