

CONTRIBUTION OF AQUACULTURE TO FOOD SECURITY GLOBALLY

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Fish considered as 'rich food for poor people' is an excellent source of affordable, high quality protein. More than 1 billion people get at least 20% and 3 billion people get 15% of their animal protein from fish. Aquaculture has been playing a significant role in global food production and is the fastest growing food producing sector, with an annual growth of over 8% in the last three decades. The sector has been contributing to food, nutritional and livelihood security and alleviation of poverty in developing countries. Aquaculture production accounts for nearly half of the food fish supply globally. The aquaculture contribution to per capita consumption of fish has increased from 14% in 1986 to 30% in 1996, to 47% in 2006. The contribution of fish to the total protein intake of people in poor households is relatively high.

Developing countries account for 90% of the aquaculture production providing livelihood directly and indirectly to millions of people in rural areas. The global trade in aquaculture products is becoming increasingly important. It is the main foreign exchange earning source for some developing countries, financing other food imports, and has significant impact on food security. Wealth generated by households and small enterprises through aquaculture is making a significant contribution to rural development. Studies have shown aquaculture is an ideal enterprise for the empowerment of rural women.

It is estimated that the world will need an additional 20-30 million tons of food fish by 2020 to meet the increasing demand. With capture fisheries having plateaued, aquaculture is expected to play a major role in bridging the gap between supply and demand.

This paper discusses the issues that need to be addressed to increase the contribution of aquaculture to food security.

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