

## THE ROLE OF AQUATIC ANIMAL HEALTH PROGRAMMES IN PROMOTING FOOD SECURITY IN AFRICA

- **Eli Katunguka-Rwakishaya**  
Makerere University, Uganda

In Africa, nearly 10 million people depend on fishing, fish farming, fish processing and trading fish. Fishing produces 7.3 million tonnes of fish per year, more than 90 % caught by small scale fishermen. Fish provides the main source of protein for the majority of Africans and yet fish consumption per capita in sub-Saharan Africa is the lowest in the world. This may be associated with population growth, to over one billion, and increased demand from an expanding affluent urban population and rural communities. Fish also provides exports worth some US\$2.7 billion annually.

In recent years a decline in marine fisheries and a steady increase in aquaculture production have been noted. Despite its enormous potential, the sub-Saharan region remains a minor player in the field of aquaculture. There are encouraging signs in the continent from Nigeria, leading in catfish aquaculture production, tilapia and other fresh water fishes, black tiger shrimp in Madagascar, production of niche species such as abalone in South Africa, and tilapia production in Egypt, Uganda and Kenya. Most fisheries and aquaculture in Africa is based on its lakes, rivers and inland waters, hence the burden of OIE-listed diseases is not enormous. However the region has witnessed damaging outbreaks of epizootic ulcerative syndrome in the Zambezi river basin and Koi herpes-virus in South Africa.

The aquatic animal health programmes, including disease diagnosis, surveillance, notification and certification of aquatic animals and their products have given impetus to enhanced trade in aquatic commodities, leading to a dramatic increase in people employed in the fish production and processing sectors and to increased revenue to developing countries in Africa.

Keywords: Aquaculture – OIE – fish – Africa

