



Tropentag, October 11-13, 2006, Bonn

“Prosperity and Poverty in a Globalised World—
Challenges for Agricultural Research”

Methodology for Economic Valuation of Food Security and Vulnerability to Poverty for Inland Fisheries in Africa

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Abstract

Fish play an increasingly important role in national and local economies of many developing countries. Africa's rivers, wetlands and lakes are especially important for poor rural households for whom they provide employment and income opportunities in areas where other economic alternatives are scarce or inexistent. They also provide nutritional safety-nets in these regions with limited roads and access to market.

However, policy makers and regional decision makers tend to underrate fisheries, in particular inland small-scale fisheries. Often preference is given to large-scale irrigation projects, in an attempt to increase agricultural productivity, or to electricity-generating dam projects, without necessarily recognising and integrating the role played by small-scale fisheries for local economic development and food security.

This study contributes to an economic assessment of the food safety value of inland fisheries. The objectives are (1) to develop an adapted portfolio of methodologies for inland fisheries valuation, and (2) to conduct an in-depth socio-economic study in the Lake Chad Basin, more precisely, in Cameroon and Nigeria. The paper presents a methodology that captures the following:

Using the Vulnerability as Expected Poverty concept, the susceptibility of fishery dependent households to micro and macro shocks will be assessed. The computation of a vulnerability scale is expected to clarify the relationships between fishery-related activities and poverty as well as between socio-political determinants and poverty.

The methodology will be applied in the context of an empirical study carried out in collaboration with the WorldFish Centre, in five African countries: Cameroon, Nigeria, Niger, Malawi and Zambia.

Keywords: Inland fisheries, non-market valuation, Sub-Saharan Africa, vulnerability