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Critical Issues to Draft National and Regional Policy Framework for Supply Chain of Feeds and Seeds in Africa

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Abstract

To feed the growing populations of Africa, there will need to be massive amounts of expansion, intensification in aquaculture sector to enable the necessary rise in food production for poverty alleviation and food security for most African countries that depend on fish as a dietary protein source. There is an increasing demand for aquatic seeds and feeds, due to expanding of aquaculture in Africa. Most of aquatic seeds and broodstock used in aquaculture in Africa are from the wild and/or of poor genetic characteristics. This requires devolving genetic improvement programme of major cultured species. The key constraints in aquaculture sector in Africa are: 1) Fish feed is expensive: thus, extensive small fish farmers cannot afford to buy or import commercial feed. 2) Fish feed quality not guaranteed: thus success in production is not guaranteed. 3) Low availability of commercial fish feed in Africa: A few specialised fish feed companies exist in selected countries, but price is high and transportation cost is high. 4) Fish feed ingredients are limited: Fishmeal and oil are becoming expensive ingredients due to its limited production. Alternatives, such as plant materials or by-products from agriculture production exist. 5) Fish seed from Non-certified sources: Available fish seed is not always from certified hatcheries. 6) Insufficient supply of Fish Seed and Scattered hatcheries is not sufficient to cover increasing demand. Hatcheries are not available in all potential fish farming regions and longer transports will lead to stress for fingerlings and higher mortality rates. 7) Know-how: Little knowledge of farm management and basic competences like selection of the right production site and only a few experiences exist in commercial fish feed production. 8) No regional development plans: aquaculture is perceived as a singular activity and not integrated, effluent waters from ponds can be used for irrigation, farm manure can be used for pond fertilisation. 9) Insufficient extension services: In most African countries, aquaculture extension services have been set up, but the number of trained extension officers is very limited. Extension services are not available in all parts of Africa, by governmental research stations must be set up around hatcheries.

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