

International Small-Scale Fisheries and Aquaculture

An Outreach and Research Program of the Department of Agricultural and Resource Economics and Connecticut Sea Grant

Marine, coastal and freshwater resources are under stress. Many of them have been drastically altered over the past 50 years, reducing their productivity, resilience and potential for the future. Fishing and the sale of fisheries products provide invaluable employment, livelihoods and cash income; support local economies; and generate foreign exchange. Fishing is the largest extractive use of wildlife in the world. Fisheries products are the world's most widely traded foods, with commerce dominated by the developing countries. Of the estimated 51 million fishers in the world, over 95 percent are small-scale fishers. At present, 95 percent of the world's fishers are from developing countries, producing 58 percent of the 98 million tons of annual marine fish catch. It is estimated that at least 50 million people in developing countries are directly involved in the harvesting and processing of fish and other aquatic products. Fisheries are also globally important sources of much needed high quality animal protein—the primary protein source for approximately one billion people worldwide, and an important part of the diet of many more.

In spite of the important role that fisheries play in the national and local economies of many developing countries, the small-scale fisheries sector—as compared against other sectors of the world food economy—is poorly planned and regulated, inadequately funded, and neglected by all levels of government. Small-scale fisheries around the globe are frequently overfished and overexploited as a result of not only weak governance, but of poor management, perverse subsidies, corruption, unrestricted access and destructive fishing practices. Therefore, reforming both the governance and the management of these critical natural resources is essential to stable and long-term economic development, continuation of the ecosystem goods and services provided by these natural resources, the conservation of biodiversity, and in some cases may be essential to overall peace and security.

The goal of this program is to develop new ideas and methods to alleviate poverty and hunger for residents of coastal communities in tropical developing countries and to conserve the natural resources upon which these people depend for their livelihood, food and income. The program is coordinated by Dr. Robert Pomeroy, Professor and CT Sea Grant extension fisheries specialist, located at the Avery Point campus of the University of Connecticut. Dr. Pomeroy is also a Principal Scientist with the WorldFish Center, a member of the Consultative Group for International Agriculture Research (CGIAR), located in Penang, Malaysia.

Dr. Pomeroy has been working on small-scale fisheries and aquaculture issues in developing countries for over 25 years. He has worked on research and development projects in over 50 countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America and the Caribbean. The long-term research and development program to achieve this goal is accomplished through donor support, scholarly publications, outreach and technical assistance. Work

and support has been undertaken with a number of different development agencies, including the World Bank, Asian Development Bank, UN Food and Agriculture Organization, U.S. Agency for International Development, U.S. Department of State, U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Association for Southeast Asian Nations, DANIDA, IDRC, and others.

Current outreach and research projects focus on:

- strengthening fisheries governance through use of co-management, adaptive management, marine tenure, integrated coastal management and ecosystem-based management approaches,
- reducing excess fishing capacity, controlling access and preventing illegal fishing,
- building political will at the national and local levels for capture fisheries reform,
- improving fisheries information for better decision-making, especially for the small-scale fishery sector,
- alleviating poverty in fishing households by diversifying livelihoods and through integrated livelihood approaches, and
- promoting fair and sustainable international seafood trade and market access.