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2.5 Lake Malawi Fisheries, Malawi

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Importance The small-scale fisheries sector provides a source of employment to over 150,000 fishers, fish processors and traders along Lake Malawi. It is also a source of biodiversity, cash income and foreign income to the country through tourism and exports respectively. Nutritional fish provides more than 40% animal protein to all Malawians, and in some areas fish is a source of cheap protein food security for poor rural households. Fishing has also potential as a

safety net when land-based economic activities fail in some of these areas.

Challenges The key challenge is open-access mentality and governance system. This has resulted in over capacity, excess effort and destructive fishing methods. Other main challenges include climate variability and change, environmental issues like destruction of aquatic vegetation in inshore areas that are important for fishing breeding, destruction of catchment areas due to poor farming activities conflicts among fishers, especially the small-scale against the large-scale trawling in southern Lake Malawi, poor governance, and inadequate funding for law enforcement.

Opportunities Opportunities include potential for good and possible co-governance, which could introduce limited entry options, reduced effort, self-governance and government support for law

enforcement. Genuine decentralized fisheries management systems could also introduce TURF systems that would provide increased local benefits and also improved and sustainable management. The revised legislation gives opportunity for developing policies that promote co-management and decentralization of management to District level. Regional free trade agreements provide opportunity for value addition and improved benefits from cross-border trade.

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Information Source(s):

Experience from working and researching the fishery

Local Knowledge of the fishery

Publications by authors on the fishery

FAO documents