

Introduction

The practice of aquaculture in Africa has ancient origins yet, the introduction of more conventional fish farming systems is encumbered by an array of difficulties. It is recognised that these difficulties can be overcome given a redirection of approaches.

One of the traditional areas of development assistance in aquaculture has been training. This no doubt needs to continue. The Commonwealth Secretariat, for some time now, has consistently provided such opportunities for trainees from Commonwealth countries in Africa and Asia. However, other very essential aspects need to be included in development assistance if effective and sustained development is to materialise. With this in view, the consultation was organised with the following objectives:

To examine the technical, and socio-economic factors that inhibit the successful introduction of aquaculture to rural communities in Africa.

To identify ways and means of overcoming these problems at governmental and grassroot levels.

To identify technical needs, including training.

To heighten awareness amongst extensionists on the potentials of aquaculture development.

From the discussion of papers presented and the first hand experiences of participants, it became clear that the issue was a complex one requiring the concerted effort of governments and development assistance agencies. These discussions and ensuing conclusions were crystallized in the Resolution overleaf. Amongst the major problems identified were the following four categories, further amplified in the Resolution:

1. *Socio-economics*: an inadequate understanding of the target communities to which aquaculture was introduced.
2. *Poor Extension Services*: reflected in inadequately trained and insufficient numbers of extensionists, in addition to inefficient support services, including transportation and poor back-up research facilities.

3. *Fish nutrition*: the lack of simple and cheap nutritional systems for the improvement of pond productivity.
4. *Project Monitoring and evaluation*: inadequate or non-existent monitoring and evaluation of projects; necessary pre-requisites for project survival.

The enthusiasm and dedication of participants was encouraging, in the light of the obvious difficulties many aquaculture services are faced with. The Resolution adopted by participants pinpoints the most urgent areas in which assistance is required. It is the hope that these recommendations will contribute towards the realisation of village aquaculture development in Africa.