

## **Livelihoods opportunities and needs**

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Global poverty is considered one of the major causes of food insecurity, and poverty eradication. It is seen as essential in improving access to food. Poverty is widespread among coastal communities and over 25% of the population in small-scale fishing communities in Asia live on less than US\$1 per day.

Coastal resources have declined and wild fish which used to be plentiful and cheap has become less available and less affordable. Fishers are turning into short-term lucrative but destructive practices such as blast fishing and use of cyanide in live reef fisheries.

Coastal resources may be declining but the international trade in fisheries and aquatic products is increasing from US\$15 B in 1980 to US\$56 B in 2001. Twenty percent (20%) in terms of value of these exports are produced in Asia.

With global capture fisheries production peaking, there is a shift in emphasis from fishing to aquaculture and mariculture, and the growth in the international trade in aquatic products; and these are believed to offer the potential to contribute towards the poverty reduction and food security through the creation of jobs and alternative sources of food. In South and Southeast Asia has 10.4 million people working as full time or part-time; 8.6 million in marine and 1.7 million in inland fisheries.

Coastal populations are highly involved in fisheries through direct or indirect mechanism. Although the seafood trade itself may not be 'pro-poor' it is undeniable that the coastal poor derive economic benefit from the trade through direct involvement or through multiplier effects (service sectors to the trade). Although these populations often have diverse livelihood mechanisms, they often rely on some keystone resources which are vulnerable to sudden changes in climate/physical factors and also trade/prices. Small scale fisheries in coastal areas are in decline due to increasing pressures on the fisheries. Mariculture does offer opportunities for diversifying coastal livelihoods.

Examples of pro-poor mariculture activities were presented showing how poor people in coastal areas can improve their livelihoods (through reduced vulnerability, increased income generation, improved marketing, collective action, diversified resource strands).

Risks to mariculture development will include environmental degradation, over exploitation of key resources (particularly low value/trash fish fisheries), intensification and consolidation and barriers to trade.

Future actions of mariculture development in support of livelihoods will focus on:

- Pro-poor mariculture policies at national and local levels are required, which would support or enable the subject areas below.
- Livelihood diversification (skills development, high entry costs, integration with other resource users, ability of people to change, environmental integrity, access to seed and broodstock, feeds, access to credit, access to technology).

- Pro-poor international trade offers some opportunities for linking coastal communities into world markets. Need to build capacities as well as the relevant market chains, will require access to finance by the communities.
- Use of livelihoods approaches when addressing mariculture development to ensure more holistic approach (i.e. not focussing on technology transfer only)
- Identifying appropriate entry points to coastal development. – through appropriate dialogue with coastal people to identify where opportunities lie and the issues that surround these.
- Use of integrated coastal management approaches that enable more effective balancing of resource use, environmental protection and decision making at local levels.