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Theme: Development

Session: TuD1 - Reconciling poverty reduction, wealth creation and the need to rebuild fisheries

Title: **Human rights and property rights: strategies for addressing both Millennium Development Goals and responsible fishing in small-scale fisheries in West and Central Africa**

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Abstract: In many low and middle income countries vulnerability and social exclusion of fisherfolk are major contributors to the 'uncertain environment' in which fisheries are to be rebuilt. Rights-based approaches are seen as essential to rebuilding fisheries by reducing the uncertainty in current fishery access and ownership regimes. This paper argues that reducing uncertainty in property rights and regulatory institutions is a necessary but insufficient condition for rebuilding fisheries. When fisherfolk face so many other uncertainties, including those resulting from a lack of basic human rights, they lack the incentives and capacity to claim and defend rights to fish stocks when these are granted through, for example, co-management arrangements. With the majority of the world's fish production, fisherfolk and fish consumers all originating from low and middle-income countries, there is a need for fishery governance to maintain or enhance the contribution that fisheries make to poverty reduction by addressing fisherfolks' human rights as well as regulating their rights of access to resources.

This paper also serves to introduce three contributions from the DFID/FAO Sustainable Fisheries Livelihoods Programme in West and Central Africa that indicate ways in which strengthening fisherfolk's livelihoods, human and property rights can improve fishery governance and help enhance fisheries' contribution to poverty reduction.