

Title: **Assessing Micronutrient Deficiency As Part of Meeting Millennium Development Goals for Fish Growing Households in Vietnam and the Papua New Guinea**

Authors: Elkana Ngwenya, University of Tasmania (Australian Maritime College) (Australia)

Abstract: Studies on poverty have focused predominantly on low income and food poverty. Little or no attention has been given to the emerging problem of adequate calorie intake accompanied by low micronutrient levels, particularly in diets of rural households in transition and developing economies. Micronutrient deficiencies are related to child mortality, maternal health and the general combating of disease. The health benefits of consuming fish are well documented, but the nutrition status of fish growing households still remains questionable. In this paper a simple calculation of the micronutrient levels from foods consumed in Vietnam and Papua New Guinea is presented. Data from Living Standards Measurement Surveys (LSMS) are used. The computations from these data can be used to inform food security policy, health policy on calorie switching, and also provide an assessment of the contribution of aquaculture to rural livelihoods. The results suggest that nutrition profiles of rural households must include foods grown at home, food given as gifts and the traditional foods purchased by the household. A simulation experiment on the likely profile of calorie intake as a result of switching to traditional foods is also presented. The results of the study have implications to practitioners working on achieving the MDGs, or similar. Rural households can definitely benefit significantly from greater access to their land and sea resources and traditional food choices. Nongovernment organisation can also use the micronutrient audit as an indicator of effectiveness of their strategies to target MDG goal number 1.