

No paper  
available

Theme: Development  
Session: WeD4 - Policy and governance

Title: **Transformation of Artisanal Fisheries Governance in Sierra Leone: Managing Nostalgia for Relinquished Power, Unpreparedness to Assume Power and the Occupancy of the Perfect Stranger**

Author(s): Andrew Baio

Abstract: The paper outlines theoretical and empirical alternatives to mismatched management structures and uses institutional analysis to examine possible solutions to conflicts in fisheries resource governance arrangements in post-war Sierra Leone. The country was plunged in a bitter civil war (1991-2001) that culminated into a collapsed state. Over-centralisation of the state machinery is one factor deemed to have precipitated the conflict. Decentralisation of (resource) governance was thus a prerequisite for donor funded post conflict interventions. Decentralisation of fisheries resource governance is important in bringing decision-making closer to fishers thereby enhancing participation and incorporation of local knowledge on the characteristics of fisheries resources. Artisanal fisheries accounts for 56,000 of the 69,000 tons (> 80%) of total catch with potentials to reduce poverty. Co-management - a power sharing arrangement in partnership with governments, local fishers and other stakeholders to manage a fishery is the vogue in recognition of the active role of users in the construction of their social realities. This obliges appropriate transfer of power to non-conflicting decentralised structures, with basics such as, human/physical capital development, information, appropriate funding, inclusion of stakeholders and community participation/empowerment in place. Decentralisation of governance Act 2004 followed fast pace implementation schedules assuming that task requirements are well understood when the problems were undefined. Concomitantly, ignored government fisheries ministry (depository of fisheries information) openly dissatisfied with the arrangement involving relinquishing power; unprepared local fisher communities to assume power in terms of lack of basics; and finally, local councils comprising of politicians alien to know-how of fisheries and fisheries management now charged with artisanal fisheries management constitutes the incongruous setup.