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## Socioeconomics of fisheries and aquaculture: The price paradox in Kenya's fisheries sector

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**F** isheries and aquaculture sector contributes to Kenya's Gross National product (about 5%) through export earnings, employment, food security and livelihoods. The sector cannot be under-estimated in accelerating economic growth; poverty alleviation, employment generation and increased self-reliance. The paradox in fish farming is that there is no standard pricing for most fish products, as the case of beef and pork. Fish is sold in tins, pieces or in kilograms depending on the species. Cost of fingerlings varies from hatchery to hatchery, because there is no policy on fish pricing. These leads to economic and post-harvest losses as fish farmers struggle to sell their products. Poverty has been a persistent problem in fishing communities because there has been free and open access to inland water bodies and fishing is a last resort occupation for most youth and women. Excessive fishing and encroachment by water hyacinth especially on Lake Victoria has caused lower catches, affecting income of fishermen. These factors inhibit sustained development of artisanal fisheries and rural fish farmers. To mitigate these, the Government has been implementing since 2009 the Economic stimulus program, in adopting a more rational approach to management and development of fish farming. However, most of its gains have largely failed to affect the resource-poor small scale fishermen who represent the majority among the fishing community. Socioeconomic constraints arise from low education, economic status and low incomes from fish farming due to unpredictable prices. The socioeconomic factors affecting aquaculture development in Kenya are complex and exert increasing pressures on sustainable aquaculture development.

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