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Traditional ways of smoking fish in Plateau state, Nigeria: A public concern

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Artisanal and Small-Scale Fisheries (SSFs) play a crucial role as a source of livelihoods, food security and income for millions of people around the world in both developed and developing countries. They contribute about half of the global catch; supplying food for local, national and global markets. They are responsible for about ninety percent of fishing employment. They provide income, contribute to food security and nutrition, alleviate poverty, and often support a way of life strongly anchored in local culture and community. Small-scale fisheries can make significant contributions to national economies through the generation of foreign exchange derived from international trade. International trade in fish and fishery products has grown rapidly over the last twenty years. Export values have risen from US\$ 15 billion in 1980 to US\$ 56 billion in 2001. In the same period developing countries' share of total exports has risen from 40 percent to 50percent, with net receipts (i.e. deducting their imports from the total value of their exports) from fish trade by developing countries increasing from less than US\$ 4 billion to almost US\$ 18 billion. Small-scale fisheries are playing an increasingly important role in the fish exports of many developing countries. In spite of the important role that SSFs play in national and local economies the sector—as compared against other sectors of the world food economy—is poorly planned and regulated, inadequately funded, and marginalized and often neglected by all levels of government. SSFs around the globe are frequently overfished and overexploited as a result of not only weak governance, but, to name just a few issues, of poor management, perverse subsidies, corruption, unrestricted access, and destructive fishing practices.

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