CONTRIBUTION 10.9

National Report on the Status of Fisheries and Aquaculture in HAITI

INTRODUCTION

The Republic of Haiti occupies the western third of the island of Hispaniola while the remaining two thirds, to the east, is the Dominican Republic (David et al, 2021). Haiti has four large islands – Turtle Island, Cow Island, Gonâve Island, and the Cayemites as well as a number of small islands (Figure 1). Its 27, 750 km^2 supports a population of 11.5 million people (World Bank, 2022).

Figure 1. Map of Haiti
Source, Traveling Haiti https://www.travelinghaiti.com/map-of-haiti/

Haiti's coastline is ~1,500 km and its continental shelf has an area of ~5,000 km^2; there is nearly 20, 000 hectares of natural and artificial water bodies (FAO, 2017). The overall narrowness of the continental shelf is believed to be one of reasons for Haiti's limited coastal demersal fisheries. Ocean pelagic resources contribute to the majority of the Haiti's capture fisheries, which is exclusively artisanal.

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MARINE FISHERIES

Artisanal marine fisheries account for more than 82% of total fish production and the introduction of motorized boats and fish aggregating devices (FADs) for fishing offshore led to an increase in fisheries landings (UNCTAD, 2022). The fisheries sector plays an important role in the economy of the country. At the end of 2018, fishing accounted for 13.6 % of gross domestic product (GDP) and provided more than half of the quantities of fish consumed locally. Species targeted include: pelagics such as the Dolphinfish (family *Coryphaenidae)* and Blue marlin (*Makaira nigricans*); and demersals such as Nassau grouper (*Epinephelus striatus*), Common grunt (*Haemulon plumierii*), Snapper (*Lutjanus synagris*), Redband parrotfish (*Sparisoma aurofrenatum*), Longspine squirrelfish (*Holocentrus rufus*) and Bigeye mojarra (*Eucinostomus havana*).

Consumption, export and production

Fish consumption at the beginning of the decade has increased from 3.8 kg to 4.2kg/capita/year, and by 2015 was only 5.8 kg/per capita/year; making Haiti one of the lowest consumers in the Caribbean. (Badio, 2018; FAO, 2017). This increase in consumption has been attributed to the increase in imports of fishery products. Over the period 2015-2018, between 16,000 and 21,000 tons of fish had to be imported, while national fish production for local consumption (15-16,000 tons) covered only 38 to 43.5% of the Haitian population's demand for seafood (Table 1). It should be also noted that Haiti exports between 820 and 860 tons of seafood each year (Table 1), of which an average of 160 tons were lobsters. In 2018 total fish production was estimated at 17, 373 MT, mostly from marine fisheries (14, 288 MT) with 1,814 MT from inland fisheries and 1,270 MT from aquaculture (Figure 2).

TABLE I **Summary of Fisheries Profile in Haiti**			
Current			
Number of people engaged		more than 50,000	
Number of fishing boats		1,200	
Fisheries production	Total	16,000	MT / year
	Of Aquaculture	6,400	MT / year
Import of **Fisheries products**	Quantity	19000 - 21,000	MT / year
	Value	42,000,000	USD / kg
	Average price	2.00	USD / kg
Export of **Fisheries products**	Quantity	860	MT / year
	Value	1,290,000	USD
	Average price	15.00	USD/kg
Population		10,000,000	Habitants
Fish consumption per capita		4.2	Kg/per capita /year
Development Target in 10 years			
Production	Total	50,000	MT / year
	Fishery	30,000	MT / year
	Aquaculture	20,000	MT / year
Export		10,000	MT/ year
Fish consumption per capita		5	Kg/capita-year
Employment		120,000	people

Source: Fisheries and Aquaculture Division (DPAQ) / Ministry of Agriculture Natural Resources and Rural Development (MARNDR), 2018

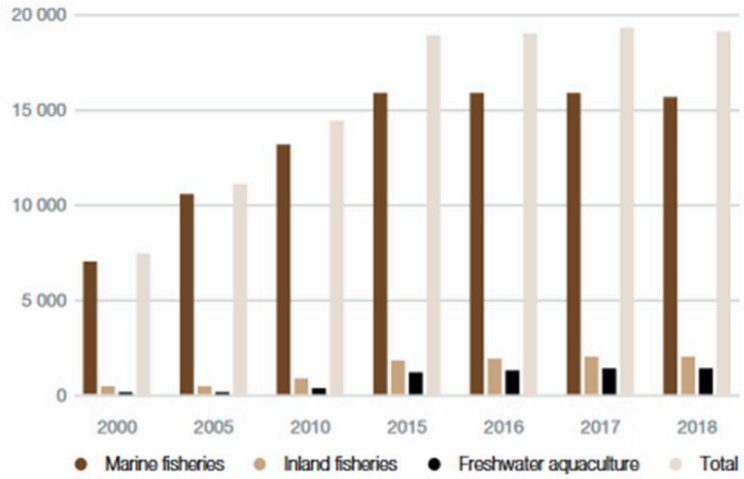

Figure 2. Fish production for Haiti between 200-2018. Source: FAO, 2020; UNCTAD, 2022

Haiti has an open access fishery. In spite of the clear evidence of serious deteriorating conditions of the fisheries resources, the number of fishers has been rising phenomenally, due to the high poverty and unemployment conditions in the country, and lack of resources to control fishing effort and enforce fisheries regulations. According to the Haitian authorities, the number of fishers, mainly small-scale and artisanal, is estimated to be more than 50,000 (Table 1). Directorate of Fisheries and Aquaculture (DPAQ) estimates that sixty percent (60%) of these are full-time, while the rest are part-time.

Despite the place it occupies in the country's economy and the many actors it mobilizes, Haitian artisanal fishing remains unproductive compared to other island countries in the Caribbean region. It is dominated by wooden canoes and canoes driven by rowing or sailing. In spite of the introduction of motorized fiberglass boats in the 2000s, which exploit the pelagic resources aggregated by Fish Aggregating Devices (FADs) anchored a few kilometers offshore, only about 5% of fisherman can be classified as industrial fisherman (Schwartz, 2019).

In 2018, Haiti's DPAQ estimated that there were 26,000 fishing units, including 14,800 dugout canoes, 10,000 sailing boats, and 1,200 motorboats. The small range of action of most of these units explains why the fishing effort is mainly carried out in coastal waters, whose resources are estimated to be overexploited, as evidenced by the small size of the catches. Due in particular to the lack of conservation of resources and the weak financial capacity of the various actors in the sector, the marketing and, more generally, the organization of the distribution of fishery products constitute a second bottle neck throttling. In fact, as Macias et al., 2014 (p. 2) stated "*Post-harvest losses are very high and a significant part of the value of the resource rent is lost.*"

AQUACULTURE

Aquaculture in Haiti increased production in the early 2010's and by 2015 production was estimated to be between 1,000-2,600 MT (Badio, 2017; FAO 2017), with tilapia (*Oreochromis niloticus*) being the most important species, then the Pangasius catfish and the common carp (FAO, 2017). According to the 2018 estimates (Table 1), aquaculture production was 6,400 MT with 2,032 persons practicing aquaculture.

Outlook

Aquaculture is an important way of producing fish and other aquatic organisms to satisfy nutritional needs and growing demand for fish consumption, create employment, earn foreign exchange and diversify the economy base of the country. Capture fisheries will not be able to produce enough fish to meet growing demand because they are near or beyond their sustainable limits. Any significant expansion in fish supply will therefore have to come from aquaculture production. In addition to producing fish, shellfish and aquatic plants (e.g. sea moss) for direct human consumption, aquaculture can provide other products for a wide variety of purposes such as aquarium industry, health products and food additives.

Haiti should continue to build the foundation for the expansion of aquaculture production. There is good potential for aquaculture development in various zones in the country and climatic conditions are ideal. Through the nine (9) geographical areas in the country, more than 23,000 hectares of lands not suitable for agriculture are very favorable for the development of commercial fish farming. Five (5) of the senior technical staff of the fisheries department have specialized advance training in aquaculture. While the contribution of aquaculture is currently low this industry is yet to be sustainably exploited and presents a very promising opportunity, contributing to economic growth and development, improved livelihoods and well-being as well as improved food security and nutrition.

SUMMARY

Small-scale Fisheries contributes significantly to income, livelihoods and food security of millions, this is particularly true for Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and the coastal communities of Least Developed Countries (LDCs) (BMZ, 2021). Each year Haiti's demographic growth exacerbates problems related to food security. The role of fish and fish products in maintaining the nutritional balance of Haitians is essential (David et al., 2021).

The threats presented by Climate Change (e.g. warmer sea surface temperatures, ocean acidification, increased intensity and frequency of tropical cyclones, etc.) further compounds the challenges, limitations and vulnerabilities faced by fisheries across the CARICOM and CRFM Member States. A major challenge is making use of the opportunities within the fisheries and aquaculture sector such that there are meaningful improvements for the sustainable development of the sector in Haiti. There is a need for development that contributes to national food security and poverty reduction and pays attention environmental concerns.

There is significant room for improvement that can be envisaged to improve small-scale fisheries in Haiti: 1) optimize sustainable development; 2) develop low-input aquaculture; 3) and meet the

three major challenges that await the fisheries and aquaculture sectors in the coming years in Haiti - feed the population by ensuring a regular supply of animal protein, provide jobs in coastal areas and across the fisheries value chain, and reduce the country's fish imports and optimize exports of high commercial value species such as lobsters, sea cicadas and conch, in order to act on the balance of Haiti's trade balance, while respecting the management of the farm.

In order to realise benefits associated with the fisheries sector and capitalise on opportunities for growth and development within the sector, such as those related to the blue economy, much support is needed for improving the overall management, use and sustainability of fisheries and aquaculture.

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