

PRESS RELEASE FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Fish 4 Trade Awards - commending friendly fishing practices in Zambia

Thursday, 28 J 2015 -- There is definitely something fishy going on in Zambia today, at the Mulungushi Conference Center in Lusaka. The Fish 4 Trade event play host to a very special award ceremony recognising innovation in the industry. The Three best traders was Ms Kasezi Nyendwa from Kafue Women Fish Traders Association in Kafue, Mr Wilson Habukali from Chipepo Fisheries Association in Itezshi-teshi and Ms Agnes Chikonde from Kamimbi Women's Group in Siavonga. The event have seen key speeches from a government fisheries representative, an EU delegation and Indian Ocean Commission representatives.

"The ceremony is being held to recognise those who have been innovative and inspired others in the fisheries sector to increase opportunities for trade in fish and fish products. "Our programme focusses on better handling of fish for improved hygiene and quality, which leads to better prices and market options," said Chris Short, Trade Key Expert from the Indian Ocean Commission (IOC) SmartFish Programme, who also stated that the overall objective of the programme is to enhance the performance of value chains so that various stakeholders make gains that ultimately mean better business, and increased revenue and profits.

An award ceremony which celebrates innovation and inspiration

The Fish 4 Trade Awards, the first of its kind, will be presented to trade innovators and inspirers in selected countries, in this case Zambia. The awards celebrate product innovation, marketing and other value-addition successes. The awards are not just open to those people who have received direct or indirect support from IOC-SmartFish, but nominations for awards are open to others as well at a national level.

A panel of judges consisting of the private sector, the government and the EU people have evaluate potential candidates from the presentations. This is in symbolic recognition for the work undertaken. It is hoped that this event will go on to inspire others who are involved in the fisheries sector or who wish to join the sector.

Support to value chains in the region

The IOC SmartFish Programme provides small pilot level support at key stages of selected value chains in the region. There have been various successes throughout the SmartFish beneficiary countries as a result of this sort of support. These include Tanzania, Burundi, Uganda, Madagascar and Zambia to name a few.

The positive results are better returns and market opportunities to fishers, processors and traders, but also when others see the improvements, they are inspired to follow on from the examples and copy and even develop further the ideas that SmartFish is able to provide. The work generally targets community level producer groups, often women. Also a key benefit to this work is that losses after capture are reduced giving immediate increased quality and quality of fish available for consumption.

IOC-SmartFish Programme activities include providing tools and equipment (processing equipment such as drying racks, cooking stoves, smoking ovens as well as packaging equipment and materials for example), as well as targeted training that increases the capacity of the value chain actors. It also carries out small pilot level rehabilitation and upgrades to existing structures or spaces, such as handling and grading areas. For example, improving fish market areas for enhanced hygiene and presentation (including providing access to water for cleaning), and providing covered areas for packaging and final product storage before shipping. These rehabilitations and upgrades allow for the value chain performance to be integrated well with upstream (towards the fishing activities and downstream towards the final marketing activities) steps in the value chain process, and without which the value chain actors could not take full advantage of the new capacities and procedures being introduced by the programme.

Note to Editors

Trade Events - a sharing of ideas

Another activity that has linked this work with actual marketing has been SmartFish trade events, which allow various regional processors and traders to share ideas and importantly network to a larger potential market for their products. A number of groups and individuals in Tanzania have received support from SmartFish to promote and enhance the ability to produce and market 'Good Quality Fish'. Through enhancements and also trade events, successes have varied to simply inspiration and copying of ideas, to quite large orders for products that has led to growth in business and revenue.

About the IOC-SmartFish Programme

The Indian Ocean Commission (IOC) SmartFish Programme is based in the IOC offices in Mauritius and implements various activities that involve support to fish product value chains. It's the largest EU funded Fisheries Programme in Africa.

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