

Govt launches sustainable fisheries policy

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Government has made sustainable management of natural resources an underpinning pillar of the country's endangered fisheries sector.

The pursuit for sustainability follows the launch of the National Fisheries and Aquaculture Policy in Mangochi last week.

Analysts described the 2016 policy, approved by Cabinet in June, as environmental-friendly. The unveiling of the policy represents a major policy shift towards promotion of sustainable production of fish for nutritional security, income generation and employment.

It distinguishes fisheries as a critical sector in the country's quest for food, nutrition and economic security.

According to statistics from government, the sector employs nearly 170 000 people.

Out of every 100 workers, 35 are fishers, 45 fish processors and traders, five in aquaculture and 15 involved in ancillary activities.

Women account for slightly over nine percent of the beneficiaries.

However, the sector has been hit hard by dwindling of water levels, siltation and drying of



PHOTOGRAPH: NATION

It also strives to formalise fish exports, raising the haul from 500 tonnes a year to 3 000.

Government forecasts a revamp in fish consumption which has declined from 14 kilograms per person to 3.8.

Implementation of the policy, according to fisheries director Alexander Bulirani, would demand K16.5 billion in the period of five years.

World Fish analyst Dr Sloans Chimatiro welcomed the policy as a milestone in the quest to manage its fish sustainably.

He assured government of World Fish's increased support in the implementation of the policy.

"Currently we have a project on Africa Fish Trade. We are trying to research, establish and document fish trades in Africa to come up with an informed perspectives regarding fish trade."

"We want to help nations understand where markets of fish are and how they can develop systems of benefiting from fish proceeds," he said.

Chimatiro said that all the fish exports from Malawi are informal, a situation compounded by rigorous export restrictions in the country.

"Why would a fisher from Mangochi have to go to Lilongwe just to process a fish exportation license?" he asked. ■

Fishing sector has been hit hard by climate change

and sustainability in the implementation of fisheries activities in the country, he said.

For the next five years, government envisages increasing fish production from 90 000 tonnes to 110 000 per year and halving the loss of catches.

the sector, it was important that sustainable utilisation of the fisheries resources and development of aquaculture required proper policy guidance," he said at the launch.

The policy seeks to improve efficiency, effectiveness

waterways as well as drought. According to Minister of Agriculture, Irrigation and Water Development George Chaponda, the policy will help lessen harsh impacts of climate change on the endangered sector.

"Given the importance of