

# FAO Regional Workshop on Development of an Aquatic Biosecurity Framework for Southern Africa

April 22 to 24, 2008, Lilongwe, Malawi

The recent incursion of a serious finfish disease, epizootic ulcerative syndrome or EUS, in the Chobe-Zambezi River, and now confirmed in Botswana, Namibia and Zambia, revealed biosecurity weaknesses in the southern African region. The Workshop on the Development of an Aquatic Biosecurity Framework for Southern Africa was convened by FAO as part of its continuing assistance to the region to understand the current situation, prepare a regional framework and identify capacity building needs to address aquatic biosecurity concerns which present potential risks to communities who are dependent on fisheries and aquaculture for food and livelihood.

This workshop, held from 22 to 24 April 2008 in Lilongwe, Malawi complements the ongoing FAO Technical Cooperation Programme TCP/RAF/3111 Emergency Assistance to Combat Epizootic Ulcerative Syndrome (EUS) in the Chobe-Zambezi River (participated by Angola, Botswana, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia Zambia, and Zimbabwe) which commenced in October 2007 until September 2009 and is part of the Aquatic Biosecurity Project under the D.1 Objective of the Programme Cooperation Agreement with Norway.

Prior to the regional workshop, a questionnaire survey was undertaken between January

and March 2008 to evaluate national capacities for managing aquatic biosecurity (i.e. capacity to manage risks associated with exotic or emerging pathogens of aquatic animals and invasive aquatic species). Nine countries (Angola, Botswana, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, Uganda, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe) participated in the survey which covered a number of areas with direct relevance to assessing aquatic biosecurity performance (see Box 1).

The outcomes of the survey were presented during the above regional workshop and attended by 18 representatives from the nine countries participating in the survey, including representatives from the World Animal Health Organisation or the Office international des epizooties (OIE) and FAO. The workshop identified a number of key regional capacity building activities and actions to address aquatic biosecurity gaps or lapses in the southern African region. Foremost is a request to FAO to develop a

follow-up project, possibly to be funded under FAO's Technical Cooperation Project modality, to assist in reviewing institutional and legal frameworks to enable countries to better address current aquatic biosecurity issues, especially aquatic animal health management, trans-boundary movement of live aquatics and maintaining aquatic biodiversity. Additional recommendations include the following: (i) countries in the region to work closely in collaboration with FAO and OIE and regional partners to collectively address matters pertaining to aquatic animal health and biosecurity; (ii) recognize the University of Zambia's School of Veterinary Medicine as a potential regional diagnostic centre and Uganda as a regional coordinating centre; (iii) development of a regional model/template on import risk assessment for introductions and transfers of live aquatic animals; and (iv) holding of a ministerial level meeting for southern African countries to raise the issue of aquatic animal biosecurity. This



*Dr Patrick Bastiensen (OIE), second from left, with regional participants from Zambia, Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania*

M. REANTASO, FAO



*Eighteen participants representing nine countries (Angola, Botswana, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe) participated in this regional workshop*

workshop also recommended that the FAO focal points on aquatic animal health participate in the OIE Regional Workshop on OIE standards, a lever for growth in the fisheries and aquaculture sector in Southern Africa”, held in Maputo, Mozambique from June 10 to 12, 2008.

More information can be obtained by writing to Dr Melba Reantaso by email at [Melba.Reantaso@fao.org](mailto:Melba.Reantaso@fao.org).

**Box 1.** Topics covered by the Aquatic Biosecurity Capacity and Performance Survey

- International affiliations
- Trade activity
- Border control
- Surveillance/monitoring
- Incident/emergency response
- Diagnostic capacity
- Research/training
- Expertise (knowledge base)
- Challenges



**Regional Workshop of TCP/RER/3206 “Assistance to Western Balkan Countries for Improving Compliance with International Standards for Aquatic Animal Health”**  
7-9 September, Zagreb, Croatia

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**High Level Meeting on Southern Africa Aquatic Biosecurity Strategy Development (back-to-back with a Training/Workshop) organised by FAO in collaboration with OIE and Namibia Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources**

13-14 October 2009 (meeting); 15-17 October 2009 (training/workshop), Namibia

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**FAO Expert Workshop on Improving Fish Farm Biosecurity through Prudent and Responsible Use of Antimicrobials and Chemotherapeutants**

23-27 November 2009 or 14-18 December 2009, Thailand

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