

Make Maximum benefit out of Marine Assets

Written by Kesete Ghebrehewiet



Eritrea's pristine coastal areas harbor a wide range of marine resources that consists of many species of fish, coral reefs, and a large number of sea animals among others. According to reports from the Ministry of Marine Resources, around 1,000 species of fish have been recorded in Eritrea's part of Red Sea. The Symposium of the Ministry of Marine Resources that was held along with the symposium of Southern Red Sea Region Administration enabled the participants to become acquainted with coastal resources through a lengthy travel along the coastal lines.

Conducting such a symposium in an area characterized with abundant marine resources has partially represented the overall resources of Eritrea's Red Sea through just a glimpse. Besides, the participation of fishermen from Northern Red Sea and Southern Red Sea Regions created a good discussion atmosphere, particularly as regards fishing activities. And also, undertakings of marine resources development, National Fisheries Company, salt production, Human Resources development and monitoring marine resources and services were also discussed in the symposium.

Annually around 80,000 tones of fish can be harvested in Eritrea's coastal areas and of which the 50,000 tone are anchovies and sardines. In a view point of harnessing such resources effectively, a number of fisheries institutions have been set up since the wake of independence. Beylul Fishing Company, ERIFISH—fish processing plant, Eritrean Marine Products companies in Asmara and Assab, REFCO--Refrigeration Company, Eritrea Diving Center, Harena Boats Factory, and ice factories have been playing significant role in optimizing fisheries activities. All these fisheries institutions have been functioning under the National Fisheries Company which was established in 2004. Since 2005, however, the National Fisheries Company was split into two enterprises that have been engaged in fishing, and in processing and distributing fish products.

Established in 1995 in Massawa, ERIFISH has been processing and exporting fresh and frozen fish products that meet worldwide standards. Eritrean Marine products Companies of Asmara and Assab branch that were established in 1995 and 1998 respectively have also been processing and distributing fresh fish to local markets and for export. Fish processing and depot plants in Gelalo, Tio, and Edi have been playing essential role in collecting fish harvested through artisanal fishing practices.

Though artisanal fishing activities has been practiced to date, a great deal of fish production has been harvested through industrial fishing. As highlighted in the symposium the National Fisheries Company plans to increase fish export level, expand fish distribution to local markets, and conduct marketing studies and implement varied fisheries infrastructure program.

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