

Inland fisheries the key to future food security

By Malaka Rodrigo

As over-fishing continues to deplete the world's stocks of marine fish, fish-consuming countries will be compelled to turn to aqua culture, or inland fisheries, to ensure future food security.

Professor Sena de Silva made this point at the 17th session of the Sri Lanka Association for Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (SAFAR). The two-day session featured some 30 scientific papers presented under the banner, "Aquatic Resources in a Changing World: Present Trends and Future Strategies." The session was held recently at the NARA auditorium.

Marine fish such as tuna will all but disappear if unsustainable fishing continued over the next decade, Prof. de Silva said. It would therefore be wise to start looking at improving inland fisheries, he added.

The fact that the Indian Ocean borders some of the world's most populous nations means the ocean's fish resources are highly threatened, said special speaker Dr. Rudolf Hermes of the Bay of Bengal Large Marine Reserve project. These countries not only extract food resources through intensive fishing but also release tons of pollutants that threaten fish stocks and the sea's ecosystem.