

## **ENGENDERING AFRICAN FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE DEVELOPMENT**

Stella Williams\*

AWARD Program Steering Committee. aquabola@hotmail.com

The African Women in Agricultural Research and Development (AWARD) is a program under the CG Gender & Diversity Program. It is housed by the CG ICRAF based in Nairobi, Kenya. The program is sponsored by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and the USAID. It took off in 2008 with the first set of 60 Fellows from different agricultural background including fisheries and aquaculture. As of 2010, there are a total of 180 fellows in the program and the outcome has been very positive in terms of engendering Africa's Fisheries and Aquaculture Development in the area of Science and Technology Development.

The program has also developed partnerships with a number of development organizations working in Africa's Fisheries and Aquaculture Development such as - AGRA, FARA, IFS, NEPAD and RUFORUM to name but a few of these partners. So far 11 African countries are involved in the program. However, there is a strong drive to involve more countries from the Francophone areas. The invitation extended to Francophone African countries to become part of the program will improve the Science and Technology aspects in those countries and would lead to a true engendering of Africa's aquatic natural resources.

The outcome will also lead to ensuring that Africa's female population has a voice in the future of fisheries and aquaculture development in the 21st century.