

**THINK TANK MEETING FOR VALIDATION OF CRITERIA AND INDICATORS FOR
ALIGNMENT OF NATIONAL AND REGIONAL FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE
POLICIES TO THE POLICY FRAMEWORK AND REFORM STRATEGY FOR FISHERIES
AND AQUACULTURE IN AFRICA**

9-11 July 2015, Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire



Abidjan, Cote D'Ivoire, July 09, 2015- "The importance of fisheries and aquaculture in Cote d'Ivoire triggered the formulation of Strategic Plan for the Development of Livestock, Fisheries and Aquaculture and prioritised as one of the Presidential initiatives to transform Cote d'Ivoire into an emerging country by the year 2020", says the Hon. Minister of Animal Resources, Fisheries and Aquaculture of Cote D'Ivoire, His Excellency Kobenan Kouassi Adjoumani.



The African Union Inter-African Bureau for Animal Resources (AU-IBAR), in collaboration with the NEPAD Planning and Coordinating Agency (NPCA) and Department of Agriculture and Rural Economy of the African Union Commission (DREA-AUC) and with support from the European Union, organized an expert consultative meeting to validate the criteria and indicators as tracking tools for alignment of national and regional policies to the Policy Framework and reform Strategy for Fisheries and Aquaculture in Africa (PFRS) from 9-11 July 2015 in Abidjan, Cote D'Ivoire.

The PFRS was endorsed by the Summit of African Heads of States and Governments held in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea in June 2014 as a blue print to facilitate the Africa's fisheries and aquaculture development. This Summit was preceded by the Second Conference of Ministers of Fisheries and Aquaculture (CAMFA II) held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia in 2014. The Ministers recommended, among others, that African Union Member States (AU MS), Regional Economic Communities (RECs)

endeavour to align their fisheries and aquaculture policies to the Pan African PFRS. The African Ministers also urged development partners to align their initiatives and interventions in the fisheries sector to the PFRS.



In his opening remarks, The Hon. Minister of Animal Resources, Fisheries and Aquaculture of Cote D'Ivoire, His Excellency Kobenan Kouassi Adjoumani stressed the importance of fisheries and aquaculture in Cote d'Ivoire. This was illustrated by the formulation of a Strategic Plan for the Development of Livestock, Fisheries and Aquaculture as one of the Presidential initiatives to transform Cote d'Ivoire into a middle income country by the year 2020. His Excellency the Hon. Minister acknowledged the importance of formulating criteria and indicators to facilitate domestication of the policy framework and reform strategy by African Union Member States (AU MS) and regional institutions to ensure coherence in the management of the sector, specifically for transboundary issues. He commended the high participation of AU MS which illustrates the commitment of African Union member states to AU led continental initiatives.

In his remarks, Mr. Jonathan Nyarko Ocran, Policy Officer of the Department of Rural Economy and Agriculture of the African Union Commission (AUC-DREA) on behalf of the Director of AUC-DREA emphasised the importance of fisheries and aquaculture in Africa for food security and economic development. He re-assured the commitment of AU in supporting the development of the sector as already evident through various AU initiatives such as Conference of African Ministers of Fisheries and Aquaculture (CAMFA) I, II and the overall Africa's Development Agenda 2063.

Dr Hamady Diop, Program Manager Fisheries and Aquaculture of NEPAD Agency on behalf of the Chief Executive Officer of NEPAD emphasised the critical role played by his Agency, AU-IBAR and AUC-DREA in elevating issues of fisheries and aquaculture in the political agenda of the African Union. He made specific reference to the CAMFA which was primarily established to serve as a policy organ of the African Union for addressing key issues affecting fisheries and aquaculture on the continent. Dr Diop underscored the importance of inter-agency collaboration between NEPAD Agency, AU-IBAR and AUC-DREA in ensuring that policy implementation and governance reforms are achieved and the provision of high quality technical support to member states and RECs.

The Head of EU Delegation in Cote D'Ivoire, Mr Patrick Houfen strongly recommended the protection of fisheries resources as majority of African populace rely on fish as a source of food, animal protein and livelihood. He urged the continent to increase efforts in addressing key challenges such as coordination, information management, inter African trade, eco-labelling, illegal, unregulated and unreported fishing and stock depletion. The alignment and harmonization of policies will serve as a strategy to stimulate growth in the sector provided effective mechanisms for monitoring and evaluation are in place to foster progress and enhance performance in the sector.

Dr. Komla Bossou of ECOWAS gave remarks on behalf of the President of ECOWAS. He conveyed appreciation to African Union for promoting fisheries and aquaculture in Africa and recognized that ensuring coherence in the sector and development management remains an important hallmark in implementing national and regional fisheries policies. He emphasised that indicators are important in implementing national policies and ensuring long term benefits. He expressed gratitude for the timely opportunity in that the outcomes of this Think Tank meeting shall inform the formulation of the ECOWAS Agricultural Programme (ECOWAP) currently underway.

Dr. Simplicie Nouala, Chief Animal Production Officer, on behalf of the Director AU-IBAR noted the historical significance of the fisheries and aquaculture sector in Africa which heralded the formulation of the Pan African policy framework. He reminded the participants that the formulation of the PFRS was initiated during the Think Tank meeting held in Abidjan in 2010 by the African Union with the active support of the Hon. Minister of Animal Resources, Fisheries and Aquaculture of Cote D'Ivoire.

The meeting was attended by 130 participants comprising mainly of Directors of Fisheries and Aquaculture from AU MS, representatives of Regional Economic Communities/Agencies, Regional Fisheries Bodies, Water Basin Commissions, Non State Actors, Private sector, Women's and Youth Groups, Development Partners, including EU, Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nation (FAO), The regional marine and coastal conservation program (PRCM), African Development Bank (AfDB), World Wide fund for Nature (WWF), members of Working Group of the African Fisheries Reform Mechanism (AFRM) and individual experts.

The main outcomes of the meeting were:

- (i) Validation of the criteria and indicators as tracking tools for alignment of national and regional fisheries and aquaculture instruments to PFRS.
- (ii) Agreement with stakeholders on the mechanism for implementation of the PFRS at national and regional levels.
- (iii) Validation of the terms of reference and the criteria for membership of the Executive Committee and the Advisory Council of the African Fisheries Reform Mechanism.
- (iv) Validation of Rules of procedure of the African Platform for Regional Institutions of Fisheries, Aquaculture and Aquatic Systems (APRIFAAS)