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FOR ANIMAL RESOURCES**



ADVOCACY PAPER

FISH TRADE FLOWS IN AFRICA:

Value and Socio-economic Consequences of Fish Importation and Exportation into and out of Africa

AUGUST, 2018

Summary

Africa is a continent that is endowed with plentiful fisheries resources, from river to sea. Regionally, Eastern Africa produces $\approx 74\%$ of its seafood with countries such as Madagascar running a US\$180 million/year fisheries economy. In the southern Africa region, Namibia and South Africa remain the major producers with Namibia's fish export economy valued at US\$ 787.0 million/year (12.4% of the total exports) while South Africa lands 674,117 Mt out of which 163,759 Mt valued at US\$ 327.6 Million is exported. In the central Africa region, the total production is ≈ 1.29 Million Mt with Cameroon being the largest producer at 779,407 Mt. In the West African region, the giant Nigeria still produces most the landed catch, at 1.03 Million Mt of fish out fish with Cote d'ivoire being the largest importer at 268,533 Mt of fish valued at US\$ 671.3 Million. In terms of international trade, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Cabo Verde, the Gambia, Guinea, Guinea Bissau and Liberia are net exporters. In summary, the Middle East and North Africa region produces 4.86 Million Mt of fish and fishery products followed by Sub-Saharan Africa at 7.42 Million Mt and South Africa at 5.79 Million Mt of fish and fishery products (2017 statistics). However, in terms of both export and import trade, the West Africa region has the highest level of trade, with 1.29 Million Mt traded outside the national boundaries followed by North Africa (0.96 Million Mt) while the Southern Africa and Eastern traded 0.22 Million Mt each. The Eastern Africa region has the lowest fish imports, followed by Central Africa, Southern Africa and West Africa while the Northern Africa countries imported the highest amount of seafood at 1.58 Million Mt valued at US\$ 2.38 Billion (2017).

The key impacts of the exportation and importation of fish and fish products into the African continent can be outline as: -

- Significant role in the social and nutritional roles in Africa contributing to food and nutrition security especially for coastal population with 9.1 million Mt consumed annually equating to 10.1 kg per capita;
- The sector is a major contributor to the national economies, e.g. \$24 billion (1.3% of GDP) to the economy in 2011 (World Bank, 2011).
- Sector provides employment to over 12 million people (58% in the fishing and 42% in the processing sector); with $\approx 59\%$ of the processing work done by women. Employment multiplier effects are also remarkable in the sector (1.04 - 3.15 jobs for every fisher job) illustrating the potential for further job creation through value chain development;
- However, despite the growth of Africa's global share of fish trade, many fisher-folk still live in poverty, while social ills and health problems are disturbingly prevalent in their communities, questioning the role of fish trade as dependable source of revenue or an effective tool for the achievement of rapid and sustainable economic growth and development for majority of the member states;

- Further fish exports from across Africa have enhanced the dynamics of social polarization and exclusion, especially in the upstream sections of the fish value chains, with potentially important food security implications in coastal communities where purchasing power is extremely weak;
- Growth of export-oriented fish industries has to a large extent, accentuated growth of dual-structured fisheries value chain, with the prime catch fisheries targeted at export market often leaving low value trash-fish for the local markets;
- Focus on developing export fisheries leaves the small-scale fisheries sectors largely ignored, with diversion of huge budgets from the domestic fisheries and market segments to the export-oriented segment serving the EU market and Asian markets;
- The export market focus has resulted in selective upgrading and segregation of the export-oriented segment of the chain accentuating social cleavages, with wider gaps between the relatively empowered semi-industrial and industrial sectors, and the relatively disempowered small-scale fisheries sector;
- Diversion of supplies from the domestic market chains to the export chain, with serious food security implications especially nutritional status of the poor fisher communities due to increased prices associated with declining domestic supplies;
- Implications of the export market for unprocessed fish products with regards to limited downstream and upstream benefits has serious implications for employment; numerous jobs are lost especially for the less skilled labour within the industry;
- In fisheries targeted on harvesting of exportable species of fish species, there is a likelihood of severe competition between the different sub-sectors of fishers targeting the same species, with potential for localized depletions especially for reef fisheries, impacting on employment, income and hence on food security;
- Large imports of fish lower the price of fish in the local markets of the importing countries with adverse impact on their earnings and consequently their food security status, as well as available savings for re-investment by local fishers. However, large fish imports can also provide numerous jobs in the fish processing and distribution activities in the importing countries raising the employment and incomes of many fish workers, particularly women, and thus enhance food security as observed in the fisheries such as Seychelles,

Background

Fish and fish products are globally important resources in terms of quantity traded and per capita consumption. Fish trade plays a major role in the industry through creation

of employment, food supply and income generation at the village, national, regional and global levels. It is also a huge contributor to economic growth and development in several African countries through foreign exchange. Furthermore, the global demand for fish and fish products, and seafood on the wider scale is a key driver of the exploitation patterns for the resources especially in developing countries hence impacting on sustainable exploitation and rational utilization of the fisheries.

Over the last few decades, Africa's share of the global fish trade has substantially increased, an indication of the sector's growing level of market-openness and integration into the international trade. The exports of fish and fish products from the continent are valued at US\$ 11,036,031,000 (8.5 % of global fish exports), against an import value of US\$ 4,796,867,000; \approx 3.7 % of global fish imports. However, in terms of volumes, Africa is a net importer (since 2010) and the disparities in value are attributed to the export of highly priced pelagic species, crustaceans and ornamental fish vis-a-vis the import of cheap bycatch and aquaculture products to cushion the fish demand, reflecting the lower unit value of imports. The sector employs over 12.3 million people as full-time fishers or full-time and part-time processors, accounting for 2.1% of Africa's population. In overall, women account for \approx 27.3% of the total workforce in fisheries and aquaculture, mainly in the fishing processing and aquaculture sectors.

Today, domestic and intra-regional fish trade is an important and well developed pillar of the economies of many AU-MS. However, a greater % of this trade lies within the informal sector hampering the fast development of this important sector, with poor infrastructure and insufficient support especially on policy issues; market-related measures related to certification processes, private standards for environmental and social purposes; multi-lateral trade negotiations on fishery subsidies in the World Trade Organization (WTO) and increased traceability requirements among others. Consequently, the continent has been relegated to export of high quality seafood leaving the AU-MS with limited choices but to depend on fishery "discards" from licensed DWFN vessels under Fisheries Access Agreements. The situation has been aggravated by the recent flooding of local markets with cheaper (often of very low-quality) fish and fish products imports to supplement their food and protein requirements. In some cases, these import have serious impacts on demand and supply dynamics in local markets, and may thus deter any efforts to develop quality fish and fishery products through the local capture fisheries as well as aquaculture enterprises. The imports also negatively impact the sustainability of local fisheries further putting the livelihoods of the small-scale fisher folks at risk.

The disposition of catch after capture is of interest both for economic flow assessment as well as for food security planning. For example, over 70% of the Indian Ocean tuna is caught off the waters of Eastern Africa. However, most of the landings reported by Distant Water Fishing Nations (DWFNs) exploiting these waters on FAA/FPAs licenses (ODI and porCausa, 2016). The national fish landings are severely under-estimated due to under-reporting, especially in the informal trade ((Defaux V and Hjort, 2012; Hara,

2017a & b; Hara *et. al.*, 2017; Meke, 2017; Ongango, 2017a & b;). In addition, the DWFNs catches are rarely verified at the local ports thus complicating the data reporting mechanisms. Consequently, there is a need to strengthen the data reporting mechanisms in order to develop a responsible and equitable fish trade and marketing and significantly harness the benefits of Africa's fisheries and aquaculture endowments.

Problem Statement

Despite Africa's growing share of the global fish trade, and the growing level of market-openness and integration into the international trade, the AU Member states are faced numerous constraints in achieving a "Responsible and Equitable Fish Trade and Marketing", in an effort to accrue the economic and associated benefits of the international fish trade flows. Consequently, the continent has not succeeded in significantly harnessing the benefits of its fisheries and aquaculture endowments through accelerated trade and marketing. Briefly, many the challenges facing the AU MS in fully benefiting from the economic and associated benefits of the international fish trade flows include:

- Lack of good mechanisms for collection of data and information on the quantities and value of its fish and fishery products importation/exportation;
- Poor understanding of the associated impacts of the fish trade flows on local fish production and trade, and on the consumption pattern and food security
- Insufficient data and information on the consequences and influence of imported fish and fishery products on Inter- and Intra-regional trade in fish and fishery products in the continent.
- Growth of a vibrant informal trade across the continent, evidenced by established fish trade flow corridors with huge losses in terms of revenues to the government, and little plough back of the proceeds from this trade into development of the local fisheries.
- The global issues of illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing which have huge impacts on the continents fisheries sector, with increasing unauthorized shipment or transfer, non-compliance with fish import and export licensing and WTO conditions where the states have weak monitoring, control and surveillance systems.
- Lack of data and information on the factors and dynamics encouraging fish importation and exportation into and out of the continent
- Lack of/incoherent policies on the fish trade, harmonization of regional and national policies, enforcement of signed treaties, and good infrastructure to motivate the formal fish trade sector.
- Lack of National and regional trade policies, legislations, agreements, conventions, tailored specifically for fish trade and AU-MS rely on agriculture or natural resource-based or other sector trade policies.

Call for Reforms and Policy Development

The importance of fisheries in achieving increased growth within the rural fishing villages cannot be understated. The 1st declaration of the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) at the African Union (AU) Summit in Maputo, Mozambique, in 2003, and affirmed by 2010 Conference of African Ministers of Fisheries and Aquaculture (CAMFA) stated that:

"Agriculture is everyone's business: national independence depends on its development because it enables us to escape the scourge of food insecurity that undermines our sovereignty and fosters sedition; it is a driver of growth whose leverage is now acknowledged by economists and politicians; it is the sector offering the greatest potential for poverty and inequality reduction, as it provides sources of productivity from which the most disadvantaged people working in the sector should benefit."

However, despite the focus on stimulating the development of fisheries and agriculture as avenues for sustainable development in Africa, most of the AU-MS, and especially the countries of sub-Saharan Africa have remained largely under-developed despite the huge earnings derived from exports of fish and fishery products (IMF, 2018; Comtrade, 2018; Trademap, 2018). Moreover, the fish and fish product trade in Africa has received little attention especially at the cross-border and intra-regional level encouraging the growth of a sprawling informal trade within the continent, often with little/no data and documentation available for valuation and factoring into national and continental policies. Therefore, it is important to actively engage and enhance capacities, especially of the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) to support the AU-MS to better integrate the intra-regional and international fish trade into development and food security policy agendas. At the continental level, there is a need to guide the engagement processes for policy development and harmonization among the AU-MS. Furthermore, there is a need to define and standardize metrics for socio-economic indicators for monitoring of the fish and fish product trade impacts at the intra- and inter-regional levels. In overall, the development and implementation of coherent policies, standards and regulatory frameworks of at national and regional levels as well as the strengthening of the capacities of the informal fish trade sectors in an effort to 'formalize' it, is long overdue. Enhancing the competitiveness of small- and medium-scale fish and fish product trade which is the backbone of many coastal and riparian fishing communities is also important, with deliberate under-emphasis on export oriented trade and development. The fish quality inspection and veterinary services (especially for live fish and fishery products) have also remained largely under-prioritized with clear lack of regional guidelines and national policies. If unchecked, the intra-regional and international fish trade, and especially the export segment, may pose a serious threat on fish protein sufficiency and food security although fish imports, though mostly of low value bycatch, have gone a long way in alleviating the fish supply shortage especially for seafood dependent communities. However, in some rural fishing villages, low cost imports of mackerels and Chinese aquaculture tilapia may slow down the growth of the small scale-artisanal fisheries. Further, if not well managed, the fish export-import trade impacts on growth of small-scale fisheries, and future status of

food-security if overly dependent on the foreign imports. Supporting the effort of RECs to re-align their regional and national policies and trade regulations to the changing fish export-import trade in Africa is of urgency, in order for the socio-economic benefits of the intra-regional and international fish trade to flow to the AU-MS.

Advocated Reforms and Policy Developments

The fish and fish product trade, if left unchecked, overly becomes a major driver of fishery resource exploitation patterns and marketing structures, interfering with existing management strategies. Consequently, in order to ensure that the trade in fish and fish trade continues to play a major role in the industry through creation of employment, food supply and income generation at the village, national, regional and global levels, forming a pillar to sustainable resource use in the continent, and following recommendations of the survey on fish trade flows in Africa in 2017, supported by fish trade flow corridor analysis, this paper advocated for the following reforms and policy developments:-

- Develop/Strengthen data and information collation mechanisms on the fish and fish product trade at the local, national, regional and continental levels especially with regards to quantities and value of fish and fishery products importation/exportation; species involved and the product quality.
- Strengthening the use of ICT e.g. Fish Trade Information System (FTIS) within the fish trade corridors and the continent at large to manage the dynamics of both demand and supply and boosting new fish trading opportunities and market information.
- Development of sector specific policies and trade-based frameworks and facilitation rules for tariff and nontariff measures on the fish trade and reduce dependency on agriculture or natural resource-based or international trade policies which fail to address industry-specific aspects of the fish and fish products trade.
- Harmonization of the fish and fish product trade policies, at regional and national levels and enhance efforts to consolidate regionalism and economic cooperation, initially focusing on development of effective domestic tax collection capacity to avoid reliance on general trade taxes which has hampered trade tariff harmonization.
- Development/improvement of infrastructural support to tackle various challenges such limited transport facilities, border issues, excise duty, lack of information, etc.) which has weighed heavily on the fish trade flows, despite the dynamism and flexibility of fish trade flow corridors when it comes to meeting regional demand.
- On the wider policy approach, negotiating international trade rules to access domestic and international markets is critical in order to create and sustain an

enabling environment for fish trade through enabling environment responsive and pro- active policy process.

- Capacity building on inter and intra-regional trade as well as quality assurance and marketing to enhance access to prime markets especially for the highly priced fish and shellfish species such as tunas and crustaceans.
- Strengthen fisheries institutional framework with an objective to make fisheries sector more competitive (efficient, output oriented, free of corruption, reduce bureaucracy etc.) in the region with specific attention to women empowerment in the efforts to enhance food security.
- Creating and sustaining an enabling environment for fish trade through responsive and pro-active policy processes, strengthen the policy process and improve policy performance while ensuring policy coherence with micro-level 'trade realities', while ensuring maximum returns to the domestic economies and local fishing villages.
- Enforce the harmonized of trade and sanitary regulation and improve fish supply chains, addressing the missing links, especially with regard to storage facilities at border places of the regional fish trade flow corridors.
- Develop/strengthen the monitoring Control and Surveillance (MCS) especially with focus to fight against IUU fishing and the sprawling trade in the same.

Strategic Approach to the Reforms in the Fish Trade

Due to the nature of the fish and fish product trade flows in Africa, which has largely turned informal due to the little attention paid especially at the cross-border and intra-regional level, little/no data and documentation available for valuation and factoring into national and continental policies. Consequently, in order to overcome the numerous constraints hampering efforts to improve the fish trade and marketing sector in many of the AU-MS, and ensure the development of a "Responsible and Equitable Fish Trade and Marketing" to significantly, harness the benefits of Africa's' fisheries and aquaculture endowments, a regional approach on both policy framework development, infrastructure and push for accelerated trade and marketing is needed. This is because majority of the exploited resources straddle between many AU-MS, and further, lack of a regional approach would water down other efforts in ensuring Minimum Terms and Conditions of Access (MTC) for Fisheries Access Agreements, the regional and continental fight on IUU fishing and the push for policy harmonization among other areas.

Furthermore, there is more capacity available at the regional and continental levels where the pooling of resources under a strong regional framework rather than the individual country approach would yield better strategies. In addition, just like in other sectors such as the FAAs, cooperation under standardized conditions provide better avenues for sharing data among the cooperating states, focusing on the harmonization

and coordination of their respective fish trade regime benefiting both the states and regional blocs in the trade. The benefits to a regional approach are numerous, including enhance data and information sharing, ease of policy development and harmonization, costs sharing in infrastructure developments and MCS especially at the border stations and more effective management of the transboundary stocks. The regional approach would also greatly enhance the fight against IUU fishing by mobile foreign fishing fleets, improve the investment climate required for creation of joint ventures and direct foreign investments, thus stabilizing the fisheries for sustainable management approaches.

Strategic Pillars to the Reforms in the Fish Trade

The strategic pillars for the required reforms in the Fish and fish product trade in Africa are:

1. Development of Data and Information Systems

In the effort to ensure that the fish trade flows contribute substantially to the socio-economic development of the AU-MS, there is a need to strengthen/improve on data and information collection and collation mechanisms specific to this sector trade at the local, national, regional and continental levels especially with regards to quantities and value of fish and fishery products importation/exportation; species involved and the product quality. During the launch of the Policy Research Network for Fisheries and Aquaculture in Africa (PRNFAA) (Nairobi, Kenya; April, 2018) the Head of the Animal Production Unit of AU-IBAR, Dr Simplicie Nouala reiterated on the need to support and guide fisheries and aquaculture policy reforms on the continent; particularly to enable the sector transform and contribute to the CAADP goals as outlined in the Policy Framework and Reform Strategy for Fisheries and Aquaculture in Africa (PFRS).

Therefore, the PRNFAA presents a strategic vehicle for the strengthening of data and information sharing at the regional and continental level, with support of the AU-IBAR and the NEPAD. Over several decades, the fisheries sector has often been neglected in national development policy and donor priorities, as policy makers often do not have access to data which reflect the importance of fisheries and aquaculture to development. Therefore, the strengthening the use of ICT e.g. expansion of the Fish Trade Information System (FTIS) within AU-MS and the fish trade corridors at large in order to manage the dynamics of both demand and supply and boosting of new fish trading opportunities and market information. Consequently, efforts should be made to establish a linked reporting mechanisms for the RFBs and RECs in order to collate the catch data from both the fisheries and trade sectors.

2. Policy Development

Over several decades, the fisheries sector has often been neglected in national development policy due to lack of data to weight the importance of fisheries and aquaculture in socio-economic development. The situation is more grade in the fish and

fish product trade sub-sector which has remained dependent on general trade policies and tariffs, especially for food, ignoring the perishability of the commodities, and the deterioration in quality and price along the value chain, stagnating the development of this important sector. Therefore, appropriate policies and regulation remain important, in managing the fish and fish product trade while ensuring that pro-poor and sustainable, with maximal returns to the fishing communities.

Therefore, the development of sector specific policies and trade-based frameworks and facilitation rules for tariff and nontariff measures on the fish trade is important in order to reduce dependency on agriculture or natural resource-based or international trade policies which fail to address industry-specific aspects of the fish and fish products trade. On this context, there is need for Pan-African organizations, and particularly the AU-IBAR to Harmonization of the fish and fish product trade policies, at regional and national levels and enhance efforts to consolidate regionalism and economic cooperation, initially focusing on development of effective domestic tax collection capacity to avoid reliance on general trade taxes which has hampered trade tariff harmonization. The fisheries institutional framework must be strengthened with an objective to make fisheries sector more competitive (efficient, output oriented, free of corruption, reduce bureaucracy etc.) in the region with specific attention to women empowerment in the efforts to enhance food security.

On the wider policy approach, negotiating international trade rules to access domestic and international markets is critical in order to create and sustain an enabling environment for fish trade through enabling environment responsive and pro-active policy process. Furthermore, there is a need to create and sustain an enabling environment for fish trade through responsive and pro-active policy processes, strengthen the policy process and improve policy performance while ensuring policy coherence with micro-level 'trade realities', to maximize returns to the domestic economies and local fishing villages. This also calls for enforcement of harmonized of trade and sanitary regulation and improve fish supply chains and addressing of the missing links, especially with regard to storage facilities at border places of the regional fish trade flow corridors.

3. Infrastructure Development

Fish and fish products are highly perishable, requiring timely harvesting and procurement practices, along with efficient transportation and advanced storage, processing, and packaging facilities for marketing, and post-harvest losses are estimated at >30 % of global catches, reaching highs of 50% during peak periods. In order to support the development of a strong fish trade sector among the AU-MS, and encourage the transformation of the flourishing informal fish and fish trade sector into a more formalized structure with clear monitoring corridors and trade flows, there is a need to develop and/or improve infrastructural support to tackle various challenges such limited transport facilities, border issues, excise duty, lack of information, etc.)

which has weighed heavily on the fish trade flows, despite the dynamism and flexibility of fish trade flow corridors when it comes to meeting regional demand.

In majority of the AU-MS, there is lack of capacity in terms of infrastructure for integrating and competing effectively in both regional and global markets. For fish and fishery products, specifically, cold chain infrastructure and market access are some of the most critical barriers to regional trade or international. Therefore, the development of economic infrastructure by investing in landings sites, roads, fishing ports, telecommunications, power/energy networks etc. is needed to link products to regional and global markets while ensuring the maintenance of quality. In the development of infrastructural support, emphasis should be placed on specific projects on post-harvest reduction through capacity building and equipment, quality infrastructure, and trade facilitation to improve the cold chain infrastructure, along with the safety and quality of the value added products, and increase market access to major fish importing countries such as the EU, US, Japan, and China especially for the priced fish species such as tuna and crustaceans.

In order to improve on the quality of the traded products, there is a need for establishment of improved testing laboratories to better supply chains, increase competitiveness in export markets; and adjustment assistance to help with any transition costs from the informal fish trades to formalized structures in the fish and fish product trade flows especially where there is likelihood of an initial decline in trade terms.

4. Capacity Building

Majority of the AU-MS and many other least developed countries (LDCs) that often lack capacity in terms of information, policies, procedures, institutions, and infrastructure for integrating and competing effectively in global markets. For fish and fishery products, specifically, cold chain infrastructure and market access are some of the most critical barriers to international or regional trade. Consequently, majority of the AU-MS are in dire need of capacity building in numerous areas, and especially on the role and importance of inter and intra-regional trade in the socio-economic development of the fishing villages and national economies. Furthermore, capacity in critical areas such as quality assurance and marketing to enhance access to prime markets especially for the highly priced fish and shellfish species such as tunas and crustaceans, and formulation of trade policies, participation in trade negotiations, and implementation of agreements to strengthening economic sectors are key areas calling for enhanced capacity building.

Other areas in need of capacity building including the development and/or strengthening of monitoring Control and Surveillance (MCS) especially with focus to fight against IUU fishing and the sprawling trade in the same, post-harvest techniques such as utilization of ice including solar powered ice making, construction of improved landing sites designed to reduce post-harvest losses through cold chain infrastructure, value chain analysis, improved national sanitary, trade policy, and regulatory

frameworks, e-customs and e-trade projects; adoption of regional common external tariffs and rules of origin (RoO) and development of a regional payment systems. Therefore is also a need to focus on efforts targeted specifically at enhancing food security such as protecting and restoring the health, productivity, and resilience of marine ecosystems, promoting sustainable fisheries and aquaculture, adoption of different management approaches to human activities that impact the productivity of marine ecosystems and the safety of fish, promoting of the roles of small-scale fisheries and aquaculture in global food security, encouraging innovations in seafood production including cage culture and sea ranching, and the mainstreaming of fish and fish products in global, regional, and national measures on food security. There is also a need to focus on the wider stakeholder-pool in addition to fishers, including traders and dealers, input suppliers for both goods and services, and the wider Blue Economy, especially on the impacts of the fish and fish trade flows on resource use patterns, local economies and national and regional development, while pushing for an enabling legal (as guided by UNCLOS, 1982 and other international, regional and national fisheries instruments) and institutional framework for inclusiveness, transparency and collaborative approach to increasing knowledge and understanding of the fisheries resources and the fish and fish product trade flows in Africa.

5. Promotion of Institutional Collaboration and Inclusiveness

The efforts to develop a "healthy" fish and fishery trade within the national boundaries of the AU-MS and, regionally among the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) blocs can only bear fruit under an be inclusive, collaborative and transparent environment taking lessons learned from the FAAs/FPAs especially on the straddling and migratory stocks. Consequently, the potential implication and impacts of the process of strengthening the intra- and inter-regional fish trade in Africa on the local fisheries, national economies and regional organizations including the RFBs, RFMOs, RECs and other stakeholders must be assessed in depth. Since majority of the players in the fish and fish products trade are the private sector, caution must be exercised by governments not to make decisions on behalf of the private sector, endeavoring to include all relevant actors and professional bodies in the development of the policies and strategic plans.

Globally, many trade negotiations often fail due to lack of trust. Consequently, the push for a healthy fish trade sector for the AU-MS must be transparent in order to strengthen the bargaining position of coastal States, for obtaining

adequate reporting on fish stocks given that most DWFNs export a bigger chunk of the catch, and proper valuation of the fish resources. All cases, significant sector specific support for the fish and fish products markets must be organized, to ensure that the sector gets a healthy allocation from the national treasury resources. Consequently, the Ministry of finance, the National treasury, Ministry of Commerce and Industry as well as Revenue Authorities among other national institutions, cannot be left in the policy development and institutional frameworks. The promotion of institutional collaboration is critical to improving the fish and fish product trade flows and benefits

to AU-MS, at the national, regional and continental level. Consequently, involvement of RECs, RFMOs, RFBs with clear policy guide from pan African organizations including AU-IBAR and NEPAD among others is important to push the concerned states to address problems and deliver outcomes that cannot be achieved at the country level. Synergies can be realized by combining effort and expertise to produce results e.g. RECs providing the necessary political and financial support, and the RFMOs and others, the technical inputs, which requires a high level of trust and extensive dialogue between the institutions.

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Note: This Advocacy paper is a synthesis of the Consultancy Report on the “Impact of international fish trade flows in Africa” as well as a series of reports on Africa Fish Trade Flow Corridors and the Trade policies related to Fish Trade in Africa presented at the *ThinkTank Meeting on Intra-Regional Fish Trade in Africa, 2nd -4th August, 2017. Abuja, Nigeria*

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