



## STATEMENT BY DIRECTOR OF AU-IBAR

### CONSULTATIVE MEETING ON COMESA DRAFT REGIONAL BLUE ECONOMY STRATEGY

26-27 April 2022

You Excellency the Representative of the Secretary General of COMESA: H.E Amb. Dr. Kipyego Cheluget, Assistant Secretary General, Assistant Secretary General for Programs

Representatives of Member States of COMESA

Representative of Director of the Blue Economy Division at AUC, Dr Linda Etta

Representatives of RECs and other regional institutions

Consultant, Dr. Hashali Hamukuaya

Experts

Distinguished ladies and gentlemen

I bring you warm greetings from the Director of AU-IBAR, Dr. Nick Nwankpa, who requests me to convey his sincere apology to His Excellency the Secretary General of COMESA for his unavoidable absence. The AU-IBAR Director notes with pleasure and delight the progress being made in the realisation of a crucial goal of the African Union development framework, Agenda 2063. Delegates would recall that blue economy development in Africa at Member States and Regional Economic Community Levels, is a key goal for achieving the aspiration for **'A Prosperous Africa, based on Inclusive Growth and Sustainable Development'**.

Before proceeding further, I also wish to recognize, acknowledge and express appreciation, on behalf of the AU-IBAR Director, to all the delegates and experts for graciously accepting the invitation by AU-IBAR and the Secretariat of

COMESA to participate in this very important consultative meeting in spite of your tight schedules.

Your Excellency, Distinguished delegates

I seek your indulgency to give a brief overview of the African Union institution I represent here today. The African Union InterAfrican Bureau for Animal Resources (AU-IBAR) is a Specialized Technical Office of the African Union Commission that has the continental mandate for coordinating the development of livestock, fisheries, aquaculture and wildlife for the well-being and prosperity of the citizens of this great continent of ours. One of the core functions of AU-IBAR, as enshrined in its current 2018-2023 Strategic plan is to strengthen policy formulation and harmonization in Africa. Accordingly, the institution has spearheaded the formulation of key continental frameworks, including the Livestock Development Strategy in Africa (LiDESA), the Policy Framework and Reform Strategy for Fisheries and Aquaculture in Africa (PFRS) and more recently the African Blue Economy Strategy (ABES). These continental frameworks are officially endorsed by the African Union Executive Council followed by recommendations to support their implementation or rolling out in the continent. AU-IBAR, among other intuitions is entrusted with the responsibility of supporting AU Member States and RECS in the implementation of these continental frameworks.

Your Excellency, Distinguished delegates

The Blue Economy has been identified as a potential game changer for Africa's sustainable socio-economic development. The African Union Ministers at the 3<sup>rd</sup> session of the Specialized Technical Committee in October 2019 recognized this potential and therefore charged the African Union to support awareness enhancing, capacity building on blue economy concept as well as the formulation of blue economy strategies at national and regional levels of the continent. Consequently, AU-IBAR, with support from the Kingdom of Norway, embarked on the process of actualizing the recommendations of the Hon. Ministers. Awareness enhancing workshops were conducted by AU-IBAR at regional and continental levels on blue economy concepts and marine spanning as a tool for sustainable blue economy development.

Your Excellency, Distinguished delegates

In partnership with the Kingdom of Norway, AU-IBAR is also supporting the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) to develop their blue economy strategies consistent with the aspirations of the RECs as well as aligned with the African Blue Economy Strategy. Deservedly so, I am pleased to note that COMESA is one of the first beneficiary institutions of this support. The support by AU-IBAR has entailed providing technical assistance to COMESA for the formulation of the regional strategy. In this respect, one of the key authors of the African Blue Economy Strategy, Dr, Hashali Hamukuaya, was hired to undertake the assignment.

Your Excellency, Distinguished Delegates

The consultative process is an important part of AU-IBAR functions. The process provides opportunity for stakeholders to have inputs, bring in their perspectives into the issues at hand and to own the final product. I therefore urge stakeholders critically review the document and make the necessary inputs for the common good.

In concluding, on behalf of the Director of AU-IBAR, I wish to express my profound gratitude to H.E. the Secretary General for the collaboration with AU-IBAR in animal resources development and the dedicated team at COMESA that have supported the AU-IBAR team for the preparation of this workshop. I wish to thank Dr. Mamo for the excellent coordination; the Kingdom of Norway for their support. I also thank the consultant, Dr. Hashali for expeditiously working hard to produce the draft document to be reviewed in this workshop. I also would like to recognize the participation of Dr. Sloans Chimatiro who is well known on this continent within the realm of fisheries and aquaculture.

I thank you all and wish you fruitful deliberations