



**OPENING REMARKS BY THE AG. DIRECTOR OF AU-IBAR**

**THIRD ANNUAL DIALOGUE WITH REGIONAL ECONOMIC COMMUNITIES ON**

**EMERGING ISSUES ON IMPLEMENTATION OF FISHERIES GOVERNANCE PROJECT**

**PHASE 2 (FISHGOV 2)**

**18-19 JULY, 2023**

**GABORONE, BOTSWANA**

- ✓ His Excellency, the Representative of the Government of Botswana
- ✓ The Executive Secretary of SADC, H.E. Mr Elias M. Magosi
- ✓ The Representative of the European Union
- ✓ Representatives of Regional Economic Communities
- ✓ Representative DARBE
- ✓ Representatives of AUDA-NEPAD
- ✓ Partners
- ✓ Colleagues at AU-IBAR

Good morning to you all

I wish to extend sincere appreciation and welcome you to this third dialogue and sensitization meeting with the regional economic communities on emerging issues on implementation of the Fisheries Governance project phase 2 (popularly known as FishGov 2). On behalf of Her Excellency, Ambassador Josefa Sacko., the Commissioner for Agriculture, Rural Development and Sustainable Environmental

and Blue Economy of the African Union Commission, I wish to convey the appreciation of AU-IBAR to the Government of Botswana and the SADC Secretariat for graciously accepting to host this Third Dialogue with RECs. I wish to thank the EU for the dedicated support to fisheries and aquaculture development in Fisheries. Special thanks to Mr. Eulade Mboneye, the EU Manager for this FishGov 2. No doubt, his contribution to steering and guiding the project on the path of success has been immense. After a very shaky start. Lastly but not the last, I thank you all, distinguished delegates from the various RECs and partners for your presence here this morning.

**As Delegates** may be aware, the FishGov2 project is mid-way through its implementation and this meeting is timely to share with you of the progress made in technical implementation of the project; also progress of implementation of the recommendations emanating from the previous technical coordination and steering committee meetings, emerging issues on all aspects of the Project. On this note I would like to thank the distinguished representatives of the RECs for your collaboration with AU-IBAR and AUDA-NEPAD in executing this project, with the support of our parent Directorate, the Directorate of Agriculture and Rural Development. Your participation and valuable inputs in various FishGov 2 events, have in no doubt, contributing to the present achievements; indeed, you are African Union building blocks. This regular dialogue meeting with you is crucial to sensitizing you on project activities, status and challenges and you solicit your perspectives. More importantly the project management would also receive updates on your activities in the fisheries, aquaculture and blue economy projects and programmes; for the purpose of generating synergies. Furthermore, be assured that, your recommendations in this meeting will be conveyed to the donor;

that is the European Union. This regular dialogue meeting with RECs ensures ownership and increased prospects for sustainability.

**Distinguished Delegates** may also be aware, the project donor, European Union, will soon commence with the mid-term evaluation of the project. This exercise would require almost all stakeholders to give perspectives on the project, relevance and issues impeding smooth implementation of the project as well as to propose practical recommendations.

Before concluding, it is my privilege to express how delightful we are to have a good representation of RECs at this meeting. This demonstrates your commitment and interest to African Union development agenda. I also take this opportunity to thank the European Union for their untiring support to continental fisheries and aquaculture development.

I would like to appreciate the good collaboration we are having with AUDA-NEPAD in implementation of this project. Lastly, my sincere appreciation goes to the Government of Botswana and SADC Secretariat for granting AU-IBAR this privilege to organize this here and prevailing ensuing conducive environment.

I thank you and wish you a successful dialogue.