



## **OPENING REMARKS**

By

**The Director of AU-IBAR - Dr. Huyam Salih**

at the

### **THE THIRD MEETING OF THE SUSTAINABLE AQUACULTURE DEVELOPMENT WORKING GROUP OF THE AFRICAN FISHERIES REFORM MECHANISM FOR FORMULATION OF KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTS AND GENERATION OF SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS**

**16 - 18 of April, 2024: Naivasha, Kenya**

**PROJECT TITLE: ENHANCING SUSTAINABLE FISHERIES MANAGEMENT AND AQUACULTURE  
DEVELOPMENT IN AFRICA: A PROGRAMME FOR ACCELERATED REFORM OF THE SECTOR  
FISHERIES GOVERNANCE PROJECT PHASE 2 (FISHGOV 2)**

**His Excellency the Honourable Minister of The Ministry of Fisheries  
and Blue Economy of the Republic of Kenya, Ms Rebecca Muritu;**

**Rep of CEO of AUDA-NEPAD, Dr Bernice Mclean**

**The Directors of Fisheries and Aquaculture of African Union  
Member States and their representatives;**

**Representatives of Regional Economic Communities (ECOWAS);**

**Representatives of Development Partners (FAO and AFDB);**

**Representatives of Regional Fisheries Bodies and Regional  
Fisheries Management Organizations (LVFO);**

**Representative of the African Union Centres of Excellence in  
Fisheries and Aquaculture (AU-COEs) CLAR;**

**Non-State Actors in Fisheries and Aquaculture in Africa (NSAs)  
(ANAF);**

## **Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen;**

It is a great honour and privilege for me to deliver the opening remarks on behalf Dr. Huyam Salih, Director AU-IBAR. I wish to welcome you all to this important meeting that is aimed at enabling discussions on African fisheries and aquaculture development, with focus on the African Fisheries Reform Mechanism (AFRM) and Sustainable Aquaculture Development in particular.

## **Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen;**

In direct response to a call from the 1<sup>st</sup> Conference of African Ministers of Fisheries and Aquaculture (CAMFA 2010), the African Fisheries Reform Mechanism (AFRM) was developed in a consultative and very participatory manner as an AU-based coherent platform for a coordination mechanism to ensure coherence of fisheries policies and initiatives. The platform was also established to promote fisheries reforms and reinforce institutional arrangements in order to boost sustainable fisheries and aquaculture productions.

The structure of the AFRM provides a platform for interrelated Working Groups that provide technical support for important governance and policy issues in the fisheries and aquaculture sector. The Working Groups perform essential policy analytic functions to guide the think tank process and support the Think Tank Executive Committee as well as the Advisory Council of the AFRM in their coordination mechanism.

Under the first phase of the EU-funded Fisheries Governance Project (FishGov1) the AFRM was operationalized with seven Working Groups, whose terms of reference were defined in cooperation with a broad range of stakeholders. As a result of the success of FishGov1, the second phase, entitled “Enhancing sustainable fisheries management and aquaculture development in Africa: A programme for accelerated reform of the sector (FISHGOV2)” began in January 2021, also with EU support.

The transformation and restructuring of the AFRM is one of the FishGov2’s primary activities. In the light of this, the relevant AU Specialized Technical Committee (STC) recommended a new structure for the AFRM, necessitating the reconstitution of the AFRM Organs. Through a consultative think tank process, AFRM Working Groups were rationalized, while the functions and responsibilities of the Think Tank Executive Committee, the Advisory Council and the Sectoral Committee

on Fisheries and Aquaculture (SCFA) were reviewed and revised, and new membership criteria were proposed. The Members of the Sustainable Aquaculture Development Working Group of the AFRM are present here today to once again perform one their novel key functions.

**Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen;**

Among AU-IBAR's functions in the realm of animal resources development as well as livestock, fisheries and wildlife in Africa is the dissemination of information and knowledge to Member States, Regional Economic Communities and other relevant institutions and stakeholders.

The main aim of today's meeting, as outlined in the tentative agenda, is not far from this central function. Our primary concentration is to organize the Third Meeting of the Sustainable Aquaculture Development Working Group of The AFRM in line with the provision of FishGov2 Project for annual convening of each working group. This is with a view to synthesize identified issues for knowledge products for rational fisheries and aquaculture decisions and development.

This is largely due to the awareness that the application of knowledge for informed decision making in Africa's fisheries and aquaculture sector remains a governance concern. This concern is attributable in part to insufficient capacity and insufficient access to knowledge products, such as policy briefs, policy notes, information papers and advocacy papers that include policy messaging, lessons learned and best practices on major sector concerns. Therefore, we are encouraged to ensure that African Union Centres of Excellence are members of the working groups in order to significantly participate to the formulation and production of knowledge products. This is one of their essential tasks. Hence The Central Laboratory for Aquaculture Research (CLAR) is a member of the Sustainable Aquaculture Development Working Group.

I would also like to urge the Working Group to formulate SWOT Analysis and Workplans for reforming the African fisheries and aquaculture sector in a sustainable manner. I request the support and assistant of development and technical partners in order to effectively and efficiently implement this reform process.

My sincere wish is that this approach would prove to be extremely helpful to managers and other institutions, therefore resulting in significant improvements to fisheries and aquaculture on a global and regional scale.

Regarding this, the African Union eagerly anticipates the active engagement of all relevant parties in the promotion, execution, and adoption of the good governance principles explicitly expressed by the AFRM and the priority policy concerns recognised by its Organs.

The Non-State-Actor's contributions to fisheries development are widely acknowledged throughout the continent, and their participation in our activities is warmly welcomed. We are excited to collaborate with ANAF on the continent and value their contributions to the sector.

The establishment of the African Fisheries Reform Mechanism and the formulation of the Policy Framework and Reform Strategy (PFRS) provide the context and background for us to sustain and strengthen our collaboration and coordination for the benefit of the sector and the over 200 million Africans. It is our hope that this mutual relationship will continue to expand and flourish in this sector.

On that note I would like to express my profound gratitude for the presence of each and every one of you here today, and I wish you a successful meeting with valuable and fruitful outcomes in your deliberations.

Thank you very much for your attention.

God Bless