



**MINISTRY OF MINING, BLUE ECONOMY AND MARITIME AFFAIRS
STATE DEPARTMENT FOR THE BLUE ECONOMY AND FISHERIES**

**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 April 2024

**Opening speech by the Principal Secretary, State Department for
Blue Economy and Fisheries**

Director AU-IBAR representative, Mrs. Hellen Guebama

Representative, AUDA-NEPAD, Dr Bernice Mclean

The Representative of the FAO, Dr Dismas Mbabazi

Chair of Sustainable Aquaculture Development Working Group

Distinguished experts and colleagues

All Protocols Observed

Distinguished Ladies and gentlemen

On behalf of the Cabinet Secretary, Ministry of Mining, Blue Economy and Maritime Affairs, I take this opportunity to welcome you all to the cool town of Naivasha, to attend 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. Let me also express the gratitude of the Kenyan Government to the Director of African Union Inter-African Bureau for Animal Resources (AU-IBAR) for choosing Kenya as the venue for this important meeting. It is always a great pleasure for the Government when Kenya is chosen as venue for important events such as this.

Africa has diverse fish resources with immense potential and opportunities for contributing significantly to the socio-economic growth of Africa and improving livelihoods of its citizens. In 2020, aquaculture production in Africa accounted for 2.57% of the World Aquaculture production. Nevertheless, the African aquaculture sector is maintaining double-digit average annual growth rates in the last two decades in response to increasing fish demand in the continent.

As such, African economies are focusing on the Blue Economy as an emerging frontier in line with the UN SDGs. Harnessing the potential of the blue economy, African nations can generate prosperity, foster sustainable trade, stimulate economic growth, and positively impact the livelihoods of their people (United Nations, 2019).

Distinguished ladies and gentlemen

Kenya has made remarkable progress in promoting aquaculture. Fish farming in Kenya has evolved from playing a minor role to becoming more integrated into the national fish food system.

The country's aquaculture potential encompasses 1.14 million hectares of suitable land area with a capacity to produce more than 11 million metric tons. Aquaculture can contribute to the reduction of food insecurity. Mainly, it is essential to improve and strengthen the contribution of small-holder aquaculture to poverty alleviation and socio-economic benefits of fish farmers and develop mechanisms to increase fish consumption within Africa.

Distinguished ladies and gentlemen

A key challenge in aquaculture development is the lack of coherent policy and coordination in the development of aquaculture resources in the AU countries. Overcoming these challenges and unlocking the potential of the aquaculture sub sector would require major reforms in the governance of the sector.

Therefore, Fisheries reforms and institutions strengthening are critical in improving the productivity of fisheries and aquaculture as well as enhancing the contribution of fish to sustainable food and nutritional security and economic growth in Africa.

Aquaculture development working group therefore will play a key role in ensuring policy briefs and knowledge products are developed for sustainable aquaculture development in Africa.

In conclusion, on behalf of the Kenya Government, I wish to thank the AU-IBAR in collaboration with the African Union Development Agency (AUDA-

NEPAD) for organizing this 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.

Last but not the least, i wish to express gratitude to all participants for their coming to Kenya and for their attendance in this meeting.

I now declare the meeting officially opened.

I wish you all fruitful deliberations and thank you for your kind attention.