AFRICAN UNION
INTERAFRICAN BUREAU FOR ANIMAL RESOURCES

TRAINING WORKSHOP ON STRENGTHENING CAPACITY FOR OCEAN GOVERNANCE AND NEGOTIATING FAIR AND SUSTAINABLE FISHERIES ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS IN AFRICA

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28 - 30, June, 2022

University of Cape Coast,

Cape Coast, Ghana

Welcome Address

BY

The DIRECTOR OF AU-IBAR

The Pro-Vice Chancellor, University of Cape Coast; Prof. Rosemond Boohene

The Representative of the CEO of AUDA-NEPAD;

Representatives of Member States of African Union;

Provost- College of Agriculture and Natural Sciences (CANS);

Dean – School of Biological Sciences (SBS);

HoD – Department of Fisheries and Aquatic Sciences (DFAS);

Director- Centre for Coastal Management (CCM);

***Resource Persons*;**

***Distinguished participants*, *ladies and gentlemen*;**

With gratitude and privilege I am delighted to speak to all of you this morning on behalf of the Acting Director of AU-IBAR, Dr. Nick Nwankpa to pleasantly and most sincerely welcome you to this workshop on **Strengthening Capacity for Ocean Governance and Negotiating Fair and Sustainable Fisheries Access Arrangements in Africa** taking place in Cape Coast- the historic and beautiful city of Ghana. This event is organized by AU-IBAR and AU-AUDA NEPAD in partnership with the Department of Fisheries and Aquatic Science of the University of Cape Coast under the Phase 2 of the Fisheries Governance Project funded by the European Union.

I wish to express my profound gratitude for the extra-ordinary gesture of the Vice Chancellor, University of Cape Coast in facilitating and honouring our invitation to host this workshop. This is indeed a clear manifestation of dedication as one of the African Union Centers of Excellence in Fisheries and Aquaculture. This display of benevolence is greatly appreciated and recognized by the relevant authorities of the African Union.

Ladies and Gentlemen;

In a bid to effectively reap the benefits of the exploitation of fisheries and aquaculture resources in Africa, the African Union developed a Policy Framework and Strategy for Reform of Fisheries and Aquaculture (PFRS), which was adopted by the African Heads of States and Governments in 2014. The PFRS identified Open Access in Capture Fisheries, Inadequate Foreign Access Arrangements and Ineffective Foreign Access Arrangements as part of the enormous challenges of the fisheries and aquaculture sector

in Africa. These deficiencies are limiting the capability of most governments to ensure the sustainability and profitability of the sector so that it can contribute to the wellbeing and economic development of the continent. The situation is compounded by the lack of involvement of the communities in the negotiation process in many instances. Over-exploitation of fish resources take place in Africa on a grand scale, verified by a constant fall in yearly catch records in many countries. Foreign fishing vessels ply African coastal waters, often under foreign access agreements, and frequently they fail to observe requisite conditions.

This workshop is dedicated to strengthening the capacity on ocean governance and for negotiating fisheries partnership agreements between African countries and external investors in exchange for financial (and other social) compensation mainly for exploitation of their fisheries.

Ladies and Gentlemen;

Well managed oceans are crucial to achieve sustainable development and a critical component of the Africa Integrated Maritime Strategy (AIMS) that contribute to the Agenda 2063 of the African Union. The potential and opportunities of African fisheries for improving the livelihoods of our citizens are great but the sustainable exploitations of these resources are under threat. Poorly negotiated access arrangements do not only result in poor financial compensation to AU countries but also has the added disadvantage of causing stock depletion.

We recognized that the national institutions of fisheries management in the various AU Member States have the primary responsibility for negotiating these agreements. The training is an ongoing process which

started in 2012 and it is our desire to use the process to effectively participate in the newly established Global Partnership for Oceans and to establish a core of 'fisheries access agreements negotiators' as trainers for other stakeholders in this important sector.

Before I conclude, I would also like to appreciate the impressive role of the European Union for the dedicated support to initiatives of the African Union in general but particularly to the African Union initiatives in the fisheries and aquaculture sector as well as identifying with the AU aspirations for attainment of food security, poverty eradication economic growth of the African continent.

Finally, I look forward to very impactful sessions over the next three days as we chart the way needed to accelerate progress. I wish to seize this opportunity to intimate my very reliable resource persons, who were carefully sourced from relevant sections of the industry by the DFAS, to come up with practicable strategies. To the participants, you are all urged to avail yourselves to this unique opportunity by exchanging ideas with colleagues from other countries and the resource persons to make this forum a very interactive session, so that at the end of the workshop everyone will go into the field with confidence despite the challenges.

While wishing you fruitful sessions I thank you all for honoring our invitation. Once again you are all welcome. I thank you all for the attention and God Bless You All.