

THE 2ND GENERAL CONGRESS OF AQUACULTURE NETWORK FOR AFRICA (ANAF) 15 January, 2024 Naivasha, KENYA

REMARKS FROM EAST AFRICAN COMMUNITY

- The Representative of the Government of Kenya, Madam Lucy Obungu
- The Director AU-IBAR;
- The Representative of FAO;
- Representatives of other RECs;
- The Interim Chairperson of ANAF who is online;
- Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen;
- All protocols observed, good morning.

I am profoundly honored to give remarks from the East African Community on behalf of the Secretary General, **Hon. Dr. Peter Mathuki**. My name is Dr David Balikowa, the **Team Lead** for the Livestock Development Programme and the **Focal Point** for Fisheries and Aquaculture. On behalf of EAC, I take this opportunity to warmly welcome you all to Naivasha and thank the Government of Kenya for accepting to host the **2nd General Congress of ANAF** in this beautiful tourism **City of Naivasha**.

The East African Community abbreviated as **EAC** is a **Regional Economic Community** comprising of 8 members referred to as Partner States. These include the Republic of **Kenya** where we are now, the United Republic of **Tanzania** where the Head Quarters are located in the City of Arusha, the Republic **Uganda**, **Rwanda**, **Burundi**, and **South Sudan**, as well as the Democratic Republic of the **Congo**, and the Federal Republic of **Somalia**.

EAC is strategically located in the **Great Lakes region**, and hosts some of the major fresh water bodies in Africa. This enables EAC to produce significant quantities of fish and fishery products for the domestic, regional and international markets. **Aquaculture** is one of the most important economic activities contributing to poverty reduction, nutrition and food security, as well as economic development of the region.

Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen

The demand for animal source foods in East Africa and indeed the rest of Africa is growing fast as a result of the increasing human population, rapid

urbanization and the rising income levels. Fish continues to play an important role as a source of high-quality animal protein. Capture fisheries remains the main source of fish consumed in East Africa but the productivity of water bodies has greatly declined as a result of the rampant **illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU)** fishing.

The per capita consumption of fish in East Africa is still very low owing to the declining supply of fish. Aquaculture is gaining significance owing to its potential to bridge the gap between supply and demand for fish but a lot of effort is needed to address constraints in aquaculture value chains, particularly the supply of high-quality fish feed and genetics.

EAC is capitalizing on the abundant natural water resources to promote aquaculture. The **EAC Fisheries and Aquaculture Policy** places a lot of emphasis on aquaculture development with the objective of **promoting investment in sustainable commercial aquaculture and effective bio-security measures**.

I wish to appeal to all AU Member States to promote private sector investment in commercial aquaculture by creating enabling environments in form of policies, laws and regulations. **Non-State actors** should engage governments in the effort to eliminate bottlenecks in the fish value chains in order to enhance access to the input and output markets.

Promoting local fish consumption and eliminating bottlenecks in the value chains is essential for growth of the domestic fish markets. On the other hand, commitment of Member States to implement the regional common market protocols and the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) provide a great opportunity to enhance access to the regional and continental markets.

I wish to appeal to ANAF to play a key role in promoting commercial aquaculture and to engage governments to establish the necessary agribusiness environment. I am confident that the outcome of this 2nd General Congress of ANAF will greatly contribute to the promotion of aquaculture and the ongoing effort by Member States to achieve **Sustainable Development Goal number 2** which is to **End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture**.

I wish you fruitful deliberations and thank you for listening to me.