

THE FOURTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY AND BI-ANNUAL MEETING
OF
THE AFRICA PLATFORM FOR REGIONAL INSTITUTIONS IN
FISHERIES, AQUACULTURE AND AQUATIC SYSTEMS (APRIFAAS)

18 - 20 April 2020; Marrakech, MOROCCO

I. INTRODUCTION

The African Union Inter-African Bureau of Animal Resources (AU-IBAR) and African Union Development Agency AUDA-NEPAD in collaboration with ATLAFCO organized, in Marrakech, Morocco, from 18-20 April 2020, the Fourth General Assembly and Bi-Annual Consultative Meeting of Africa Platform on Regional Institutions in Fisheries, Aquaculture and Aquatic Systems (APRIFAAS), to exchange information, review previous decisions and recommendations and align work plans within the framework of the African Fisheries Reform Mechanisms (AFRM) and its enhanced implementation and coordination.

The theme of the Fourth General Assembly and Bi-Annual Meeting of APRIFAAS was “**Strategic Regional Cooperation and Partnerships for Development of Blue Economy in Africa**”. This theme is linked to the current efforts towards enhancing the harmonized implementation of Africa Blue Economy Strategy (ABES) by AU Member States (AU MS) and Regional Economic Communities (RECs).

OPENING SESSION

The meeting was presided over during the opening session by the representatives from the Government of the Kingdom of Morocco, the Ministry of Agriculture, Maritime Fisheries, Rural Development, Water and Forests; the Government of Cote d’Ivoire, Mr. Kouadio N’gandi Jean-Serge, Ministry of Animal Resources and Fisheries (MIRAH); Mr. Cheikh Tidjane N’dongo, Acting Head of Food Security Unit, AUDA-NEPAD, Mr. Mr. Abdelouahed Benabbou Executive Secretary of COMFAHAT/ATLAFCO; and Mr. Obinna Anozie on behalf of the Director of AU-IBAR.

COMFAHAT/ATLAFCO set out the Objectives, Principles, Processes and Functions of African Platform for Regional Institutions in Fisheries, Aquaculture and Aquatic Systems (APRIFAAS).

II. PARTICIPANTS

The participants of the meetings were mainly representatives from regional fisheries institutions, regional economic communities, international development partners, experts, and other key stakeholders as observers. The list of participants is attached in the annex.

III. WORKSHOP EXECUTION METHODOLOGY

The workshop was an interactive and brainstorming exercise among Institutions, Partners, and experts in Fisheries and Aquaculture and was conducted through presentations, deliberations, and discussions.

Take over and assumption of office of the new Bureau

The new governing Bureau members elected at the 3rd GA Meeting officially assumed their office. The Bureau composed of:

No.	POSITIONS	INSTITUTION
1	Chair	Ministerial Conference on Fisheries Cooperation Among African States Bordering the Atlantic (ATLAFCO/COMHAFAT)
2	1st Vice Chair	Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD)
3	2 nd Vice Chair	Regional Fisheries Commission for the Gulf of Guinea (COREP)
4	Rapporteur	Fisheries Committee for the West Central Gulf of Guinea (FCWC)
5	2nd Rapporteur	Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA)

IV. TECHNICAL SESSIONS

The first part of the technical discussions was kicked off by APRIFAAS FCWC Rapporteur (Abena Asante) who presented the Recommendations and Outcomes of the Third General Assembly and Bi-Annual Virtual Meeting report. This session was followed by a briefing on Outcomes of Abidjan AFRM Meeting. The briefing highlighted the Proceedings and Outcomes of the Abidjan workshop that provided information on the AU-IBAR engagement, operationalization and Inaugural Meetings of the Revised AFRM Working Groups; and Inaugural Meetings of the Revised AFRM Think Tank Executive Committee. The highlights were on the thematic areas deliberated as: Policy, Governance, and Institutions; Fish Trade and Enterprise Development; Small-scale Fisheries Development and, Sustainable Aquaculture Development. The outcomes of the deliberations informed the preparation of policy briefs for further refinement and consideration by the Advisory Council for effective roll-out and implementation by AU MS. ATLAFCO (Mohammed Sadiki) presented a follow up on the recommendations from 3rd General Assembly Meeting of APRIFAAS, highlighting the Implementation Strategy for 2022-2023 action plan by 3rd General Assembly. Other issues reported on were: the progress of implementation of the recommendations of the previous General Assembly meetings; Operationalization of APRIFAAS Web platform/ Community of Practice; Strategies to strengthen APRIFAAS in cognizance of regional projects and programs; Capacity building programmes/activities on tools and data sharing concepts for evidence based generation; governance of information and communication strategy and archiving Systems; and, Strengthening REC to REC and REC to RFB Coordination.

The second part of the Technical Session focused on Coordination of Africa’s Blue Economy Development Mechanisms. Naji Laamrich from ATLAFCO provided a presentation with an Overview of Blue Economy Development in Africa. He demonstrated that the Blue Economy in Africa was aligned and directly linked to United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs), specifically SDG 14, that promotes the “sustainable use of oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development” and in Agenda 2063, the African Union focused on making the use of ocean resources a priority in the new frontier of its blue economy. He added that however, most African countries are still lagging in taking the initial steps of identifying and prioritizing blue economy sectors and understanding the risk to sea and ocean health. Many have not developed integrated Blue Economy.

This presentation was followed by Dr. Patrick Karani’s presentation on Africa’s Blue Economy Strategy and the Governance Coordination Mechanisms. This presentation highlighted details on supporting adequate awareness creation, building capacity, and sharing best practices on application of the Blue Economy concept. This was acknowledged as necessary to supporting the setting up of Blue governance mechanisms from continental to regional and national levels aligned to African Blue Economy Strategy (ABES) and to ensure effective and efficient planning and coordination at continental, regional and national levels; and, mobilizing required

resources for the implementation of the Blue Economy Strategy. Other presentations on Blue Economy were provided by Ecofish (Dr. Sunil Sweenarain), Nile Basin (Martin Mutua), AfDB (virtual), Union of Arab Maghreb (UMA) (Ms. Faouzia Chakiri), FAO/ECOWAS (Mr. Papa Gora Ndiaye).

The third part of the Technical Session involved presentations from ECOWAS, Union of Magreb (UMA), Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) (Ms. Flora Wora), Sub-regionla Fisheries Commission (CSRP) (Abdou Khadir Diakhate), FAO (Sidibe Aboubacar), and ATLAFCO (Naji Laamarich). The speakers deliberated on institutional elaborations on Blue Economy Perspectives with focus on Status of Implementation, Challenges, Way Forward on Development of Blue Economy. Further elaboration included Overview of status and progress of implementation of programmes activities of Member Institutions with focus on Blue Economy Development, Highlights on Areas of Support, and Interventions by Partners.

The concluding session of the plenaries dwelt on General Discussions and Recommendations on Priority Intervention Areas to Fast-Track and Enhance Regional and Continental Coordination in the Development of Fisheries and Aquaculture within the framework of ABES. **The adoption of the revised Follow up Actions from 3rd General Assembly Meeting of APRIFAAS.**

The Action Plan was presented by Najih Laamrich. Papa Gora Ndiaye (ECOWAS) moved for the adoption of the plan and was firstly seconded by Dr. Yusuf Mummo (COMESA) and secondly by Dr. Abduahed Benabbou (ATLAFCO)

V. OUTCOMES OF THE MEETING

Members of APRIFAAS discussed and developed the Action Plan for 2022- 2023. The plan is placed in Annex 1.

- Referring to Rule 3 of Procedures for the (APRIFAAS), the 4 core functions of the Platform are used as key results areas to guide the planning process:
- Coordinate and facilitate systematic exchange of information between regional fisheries, aquaculture and aquatic institutions, henceforth referred as ‘stakeholders’ across the continent;
- Improve dialogue between stakeholders, coordinate and facilitate the elaboration of harmonized work programme;
- Strengthen the capacity of the African continent to speak with one voice on fisheries and aquaculture matters in regional, continental and international fora and in dialogue processes with partners; and,
- Monitor and coordinate evaluation and implementation of the harmonized work programme.

Members of APRIFAAS discussed and adopted the Marrakech déclaration,

APRIFAAS members solemnly committed to support the process and adopt strategies for enhanced synergies and coordination between African Union, regional institutions, RECs and RFBs as well as for the implementation of Fisheries and Aquaculture-related activities to enhance complementarities avoid duplication of efforts for the optimum benefits of the member states was m. The declaration is placed in the Annex 2.

Enhanced and accelerated developments in interinstitutional coordination and collaboration

The meeting also received reports of the following developments:

1. The establishment of institutional mechanism of cooperation between ATLAFCO and ECOWAS
2. The establishment of institutional mechanism of cooperation between CEBIVAHERA and ATLAFCO

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

A: For strengthening APRIFAAS and regional cooperation:

1. Regional policies should take into consideration provisions of the PFRS and the global instruments to ensure coherence and consistency;
2. Strengthen South-South (bilateral and regional) cooperation, and develop coordinated mechanisms among RECs, RFBs and LME-based commissions to ensure coherence of fisheries policies and aquaculture development and their adoption and adaptation;
3. At regional level there should be a functional mechanism for cooperation between the RECs and RFBs as fisheries are shared resources in nature;
4. Reinforce the role of RECs and RFBs and such other arrangements as positive forces in regional economic integration;
5. Create synergies and complementarities in the programmes at regional level;
6. Enhance role of RECs and RFBs and arrangements in creating integrated iterative systems of governance;
7. Develop financial budget for sustaining APRIFAAS activities;
8. Involve the Media observatory for sustainable fisheries governance in Africa (MOSFA), in APRIFAAS meetings, to ensure media coverage of its activities;
9. Develop a technical note to ease access and usage of APRIFAAS Web platform/ Community of Practice;
10. Present statutory documents of APRIFAAS in each general Assembly;
11. APRIFAAS meetings should be held over more days and as well include hybrid sessions on training and enhancing awareness of APRIFAAS Rules of Procedures, mandate, activities, functions to new participants will be governed by rules of procedures;

12. UMA requested for the consideration of APRIFAAS and AU-IBAR to initiate the establishment of sub-regional RFBs to take care of North Africa including: UMA Member States plus Egypt;
13. Nile Basin Initiative expressed the willingness to offer technical assistance for APRIFAAS members if required; this is to make the organization assume a more active role, beyond its observation status;

B: Implementation of the Africa Blue Economy (ABES):

1. Realignment of AU-MS Blue Economy Strategies and RECs Blue Economy Strategies to Africa Blue Economy Strategy (ABES) is important and should take cognizance of Fisheries, Aquaculture and Aquatic Systems as key to blue growth and transformation.
2. Provision of adequate financial and technical resources are needed to enhance governance coordination mechanisms and implementation of the blue economy activities at national and regional levels.
3. Enaction of policies at national and regional levels is important to promoting integration and mainstreaming of blue economy in planning and development actions with established linkages to blue economy, SDGs and fisheries.
4. Enhancement of institutional strengthening for blue transformation is necessary with partnership development for sustainable aquaculture expansion, transformational fisheries management and upgraded innovation in fisheries development chain.
5. Enhancement of partnerships, collaborations, networks to share information and data on blue economy, leverage resources and continuous contribution to Research and Development.
6. Enhancement of coordination mechanism is essential for effectiveness and efficiency in integrating economic sectors in Blue Economy building up on established fisheries, aquaculture and aquatic systems.

DATE AND VENUE OF THE NEXT GENERAL ASSEMBLY

The next fifth General Assembly and Bi-Annual meeting of the Africa Platform for Regional Institutions in Fisheries, Aquaculture and Aquatic Systems (APRIFAAS) will be held in

Morocco hosted by ATLAFCO/COMFAHAT and organized in collaboration with AU IBAR. The date is in last week of October 2022. *The venue (city) of the meeting to be determined.*

CLOSURE OF THE MEETING:

Ms Jaqueline Kazembe, the representative from the Zambezi Watercourse Commission and Dr Pedro Aynigono from the Economic Commission of animal and fishery resources in Chad (CEBEVIRHA) thanked the Moroccan government and all organizers for hosting the 4th General Assembly of APRIFAAS.

Mr Benabbou in his closing remarks stated that the meeting highly achieved the objectives set, considering the very high level of cooperation between ATLAFCO and AU-IBAR in organizing it. He expressed the ATLAFCO and the Bureau's willingness to further develop the cooperation and collaboration among organization's within the framework of APRIFAAS. The meeting closed at 12:30pm

VII. ANNEXES

1. Action Plan for 2022-2023
2. Project of Marrakech declaration
3. List of Participants
4. Agenda