



CONCEPT NOTE

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

16-17 September 2021

Introduction:

The African Platform for Regional Institutions in Fisheries, Aquaculture and Aquatic Systems (APRIFAAS) Platform was established in 2015 to strengthen coordination and collaboration in Africa. APRIFAAS was established under the auspices of the African Fisheries Reform Mechanism (AFRM). The Policy Framework and Reform Strategy for Fisheries and Aquaculture in Africa (PFRS) proposes collaboration and better coordination between regional and sub-regional organizations involved in sustainable fisheries management and aquaculture development. Enhancing coordination and institutional collaboration is, therefore, a priority for AU-IBAR. The creation of APRIFAAS was in response to the PFRS and the need to strengthen coordination and collaboration of institutions with a mandate in fisheries and aquaculture development and management in Africa.

The continent has several regional fisheries organizations and water basin commissions, constituted mainly to enhance regional cooperation in the management and development of fisheries and aquaculture for the benefit of the member states. The establishment of these regional institutions has proved to be valuable in the management of the sector. However, the successes are without challenges, paramount of which include overlap of activities, duplication, principally due to lack of information sharing and harmonization of workplans or programmes between these institutions. Into the bargain, there are emerging LME-based regional bodies that are promoting ecosystem-based fisheries management. These include, for example, the Benguela Current Commission. Also, regional seas conventions (e.g. ABC, NBC) have significant stakes in integrating environmental and biodiversity in fisheries management. The Regional Economic Communities (RECs) also play an active role in regional fisheries and aquaculture development towards regional integration.

The core functions of the Platform are to (i) coordinate and facilitate the systematic exchange of information between regional fisheries, aquaculture and aquatic institutions across the continent; (ii) improve dialogue between stakeholders; coordinate and facilitate the elaboration of harmonized work programme; (iii) strengthen the capacity of the African continent to speak with one voice on fisheries and aquaculture matters in regional, continental and international fora and dialogue processes with partners; and (iv) monitor and coordinate evaluation and implementation of the harmonized work programme.

Since the creation of APRIFAAS, AU-IBAR, through the EU funded fisheries governance project (FishGov 1), has conducted the inaugural meeting in 2015, which adopted the TORs and Rules of Procedure and established the Bureau for APRIFAAS and supported General Assembly meetings 2016 in Dakar, Senegal and 2017 in Accra, Ghana. The APRIFAAS members also participated in the 2016 AU-IBAR organized joint planning meeting for synergy development with the regional institutions. The meetings have contributed to enhancing coordination and cooperation in regional fisheries management and aquaculture development in various regions of the continent and AU-IBAR interventions in the sector.

Rationale:

Structurally, APRIFAAS has a Bureau evenly constituted by regional institutions from the five regions of the continent. Consistent with the rules of procedures, the mandates of the current bureau members have expired in 2018, and there is a need to elect new Bureau members during the next general assembly meeting.

APRIFAAS Bureau presently comprises of:

- i. Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) as chair
- ii. Southern African Development Community (SADC) as 1st Vice-Chair
- iii. Lake Victoria Fisheries Organization (LVFO) as 2nd Vice-Chair
- iv. Commission Economique du Bétail, de la Viande et des Ressources Halieutiques (CEBEVIRHA) as Rapporteur
- v. The Community of Sahel-Saharan States (CENSAD) was appointed as the Vice-Rapporteur to the APRIFAAS Bureau

One of the Dakar General assembly meeting recommendations was to establish a platform for information sharing, work plans, lessons and best practices to enhance coordination amongst the regional institutions. In this regard, AU-IBAR facilitated the development of a web platform for information sharing. The representatives of the Regionals institutions present in the APRIFAAS second general assembly 2017 meeting in Accra were collated. The Web platform was completed and profiles of the regional institutions were captured in the system. There is, however, a need to operationalize the web platform for information sharing among the members.

During the validation workshop of the institutional framework for MCS in the East Africa, southern Africa and Indian Ocean region, the participants recommended the utilization of the web platform of APRIFAAS for information sharing on lessons learnt and best practices. Enhanced regional collaboration would

promote and strengthen capacity for regional cooperation in negotiating fisheries access agreements, joint actions on Monitoring, Control and surveillances, minimum terms of conditions and access etc. There is renewed interest in applying the institutional framework of APRIFAAS for information sharing in the various regions and sub-regions of the continent.

It is crucial to hold the third APRIFAAS General meeting to take stock of the activities of the platform. Challenges, lessons, the progress of implementing the recommendations of the last two general meetings, including the operationalization of the web platform by members and development of a mechanism for further strengthening and consolidating regional collaboration and coordination in the fisheries and aquaculture within the framework of AFRM and APRIFAAS.

With support from the World Bank in 2019, AU-IBAR conducted stakeholders' consultation on the revision of the Africa Fisheries Reform Mechanism (AFRM) architecture to align with the nomenclature of the AUC and strengthen stakeholder participation in the policy formulation and implementation process. Through EU funded FishGov 2 project, AU-IBAR, in collaboration with AUDA-NEPAD, is currently operationalizing the revised AFRM. It is important to ensure that APRIFAAS effectively participates and contributes to the issues being raised during the generation of evidence as well as discussions during the think tank stakeholder's consultation.

The AU-IBAR and AUDA-NEPAD are implementing a second phase of the Fisheries Governance project (FishGov 2) on "Enhancing sustainable fisheries management and aquaculture development in Africa: A programme for accelerated reform of the sector" since the beginning of this year. The project intends to improve capacities and systems for regional collaboration and integration regarding shared fisheries and aquaculture resources management and to enhance linkages through facilitating coordination among regional organizations and regular exchange of information between the AFRIPAAS members.

Against this background, AU-IBAR and AUDA-NEPAD are organizing a third general assembly of APRIFAAS and bi-annual consultative meetings to exchange information, review and align work plans within the framework of AFRM for synergistic implementation and enhanced coordination.

Objectives:

The overall objective of this workshop is to organize the Third General Assembly and conduct bi-annual consultative meetings to exchange information, review and align work plans within the framework of AFRM for synergistic implementation and enhanced coordination in the fisheries and aquaculture sector.

Specifically, the meeting would

- i. Serve as a platform for sharing work plans and activities
- ii. Develop synergies in ongoing initiatives
- iii. Review implementation status of APRIFAAS 2016-2018 workplan
- iv. Report on the progress of implementation of the recommendations of the last two general meetings

- v. Review and update the membership and operationalization of APRIFAAS Web platform/
Community of Practice
- vi. Elect new bureau members