

STATEMENT

**By Mr. Cheikh Tidjane N'DONGO, Acting Head Food Security
Unit**

On Behalf of the Chief Executive Officer of AUDA-NEPAD

**On the Occasion of the
5th GENERAL ASSEMBLY AND BI-ANNUAL MEETING OF THE
AFRICA PLATFORM FOR REGIONAL INSTITUTIONS IN FISHERIES
AND AQUACULTURE AND AQUATIC SYSTEMS (APRIFAAS)**

27 October 2022

Marrakesh, Morocco

**Honorable Secrétaire exécutif de la Conférence ministérielle sur la
coopération en matière de pêche entre les États africains riverains de l'océan
Atlantique (COMHAFAT),**

**Représentant du Directeur par intérim du Bureau des ressources animales
de l'Union africaine (UA-BIRA),**

**Représentants des Communautés Economiques Régionales, des organismes
et institutions régionaux de pêche,**

Représentants des États membres,

**Distingués Membres de la Plateforme Africaine pour les Institutions
Régionales de la Pêche, de l'Aquaculture et des Systèmes Aquatiques
(APRIFAAS),**

Représentant des Centres d'Excellence de l'UA,

Experts et représentants des médias,

L'honneur m'échoit et le plaisir me revient de prendre la parole et de prononcer cette allocution au nom de Son Excellence, Mme. Nardos Bekele Thomas, **Secrétaire Exécutive de l'Agence de Développement de l'Union Africaine-NEPAD (AUDA-NEPAD)** qui n'a pu être présent parmi nous aujourd'hui.

Permettez-moi, dans un premier temps, d'exprimer notre profonde reconnaissance pour l'accueil chaleureux réservé par le Royaume du Maroc, ainsi que de la COMHAFAT. Le soutien exceptionnel apporté à l'organisation de cette réunion, et de l'excellente hospitalité dont nous jouissons dans cette ville historique de Rabat, inscrite sur la liste du Patrimoine mondiale de l'UNESCO, est grandement apprécié.

Aujourd'hui, nous réunissons pour engager les acteurs clés autour de la thématique « **Améliorer la collaboration institutionnelle pour une gestion efficace et durable des pêches régionales et le développement de l'aquaculture** ». Cette thématique, comme vous le savez, est liée aux efforts actuels visant à améliorer la mise en œuvre harmonisée de la pêche et de l'aquaculture dans le continent.

C'est dans ce cadre, que nous vous sommes reconnaissants de vous être rendus disponibles pour cette importante réunion, ce qui en soi montre à quel point cette thématique est primordiale pour vous et nous tenons donc à vous remercier pour votre présence. Cette mobilisation, nous permettra également de mieux sensibiliser nos décideurs, ainsi que le grand public pour faire progresser les secteurs de la pêche et de l'aquaculture en vue de la transformation sociale et économique de l'Afrique.

Distinguished Participants, Ladies, and Gentlemen,

The fisheries and aquaculture sector in the economy cannot be over-emphasized. **Today, Africa's blue economy sectors and components generate a value of USD 296 billion with 49 million jobs.**

Despite this value, most African nations are constrained by a lack of resources and capacities to realize this potential due to competing development priorities. As Africa continues to recover from the **disruptions caused by COVID-19** and the **Russia-Ukraine crisis** impacting the continent's economic and social fabric, it suffices to state that the sustainable and equitable development of the sector is a potent mechanism to Africa's current and future development thrust.

Moreover, the statistics show the benefits of fisheries and aquaculture and could be sustained by implementing existing continental and regional policy frameworks to address multifaceted challenges of declining quantities of captured fish due to increasing demand for fish, destructive fishing methods, and **Illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing (IUU)** driving fish capture beyond sustainable levels, and further straining the already weak capacity of our African institutions to manage their fisheries resources. Despite being one of the lesser polluters, the fish sector faces devastating environmental challenges, such as climate change and pollution.

Esteemed Participants, Ladies, and Gentlemen,

At the continental level, the AU, through the AU-IBAR and AUDA-NEPAD, is providing leadership for the development of the sector by establishing and implementing robust continental frameworks, including the **AU's Policy Framework and Reform Strategy for Fisheries and Aquaculture (PFRS)**. We must here note that the seven pillars of the PFRS provide alignment of the fisheries and aquaculture sector into **the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP)-Malabo Declaration** commitments.

The AU agenda on fisheries and aquaculture can be achieved with sustained and coordinated collaboration between AUDA-NEPAD and AU-IBAR and other key stakeholders and partners. This will continuously provide high-quality technical and relevant advice to our Member States to undertake policy and governance reforms effectively.

Recognizing the need for collaboration and partnerships to leverage each other's capacities, we have been working hard to create a conducive enabling environment and foster inclusive governance approaches.

In this regard, **establishing the APFRIFAAS** platform has served to increase coordination and improve opportunities for coordinated input into the AU policy and decision-making processes. This was evident through the successes of the **FishGov 1 project**, which facilitated the increased awareness of the importance of Fisheries and Aquaculture on the continent and catalyzed momentum toward improved governance frameworks.

The follow-up AU Programme for **“Enhancing sustainable fisheries management and aquaculture development in Africa – program for accelerated reform of the sector (FishGov-2)”** funded by the EU, provides an invaluable continuation of the achievement of the FishGov 1 project and aims to improve further food security, livelihoods and wealth creation in sustainable fisheries and aquaculture. It also

provides an opportunity for strengthening the institutional framework of APRIFAAS for information sharing in the various regions and sub-regions of the continent.

Esteemed Participants, Ladies, and Gentlemen,

Allow me to highlight that a continuous successful operation of the APRIFAAS platform will require coordinated, inclusive, transparent, and agile efforts. These efforts are responsive to dynamic and complex policy environments and often diverse stakeholder needs and aspirations, resilient to rapidly changing circumstances and can leverage meaningful partnerships to drive the sector forward.

AUDA-NEPAD recognizes the importance of **an effective APRIFAAS platform to facilitate the coordination and coherence in the governance of the fisheries and aquaculture sector at the regional level**. Moreover, it is critical to note that it is a shared vision of the AUDA-NEPAD and AU-IBAR to support the APRIFAAS platform to serve its function to minimize duplication and improve progress in African fisheries and aquaculture sectors.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Over the next two days, we hope to take stock of the activities of the APRIFAAS platform and review the progress of implementation of the recommendations of the last **Fourth General Assembly Meeting held in April 2022** and status of implementation of the plan of action. It will be important for us to go into the discussions to critically assess what has been accomplished to agree on how to strengthen and consolidate our regional collaboration and coordination in the fisheries and aquaculture sector.

I seize this opportunity to restate the shared vision and commitment of AUDA-NEPAD to accelerate progress toward achieving Africa's social and economic development in pursuit of the goals of **AU Agenda 2063: *The Africa We Want***.

I wish you fruitful deliberations

Thank you for your kind attention.