



AFRICAN UNION
**INTERAFRICAN BUREAU
FOR ANIMAL RESOURCES**



COMMUNIQUE

INCEPTION WORKSHOP CONSERVING AQUATIC BIODIVERSITY IN AFRICA BLUE ECONOMY



**8-10 DECEMBER 2021
NAIVASHA, KENYA**

I. INTRODUCTION

1. An Inception Workshop to launch the Project on ‘Conserving Aquatic Biodiversity in African Blue Economy’ as well as to create awareness amongst the potential beneficiaries and stakeholders of the project for collaboration, synergy and lesson learning was convened from 8-10 December 2021 in Naivasha, Kenya, and organized by the African Union-Interafrican Bureau for Animal Resources (AU-IBAR) with support from the Swedish Government through Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA).
2. The overall objective of the inception workshop was to create awareness on the project, solicit stakeholders’ views, and provide opportunity to the stakeholders and beneficiaries to review the project objectives, activities, and implementation mechanisms. Other objectives were to inform the stakeholders about potential threats from the environment, climate change and commercial issues likely to affect the conservation of aquatic biodiversity and the importance of conserving biodiversity and generating recommendations for effective project management, governance and coordination.
3. The workshop was attended by over **60** participants including representatives from 4 Regional Economic Communities, RECs, (COMESA (Common Market for Eastern and Southern African), IGAD (InterGovernmental Authority for Development), UMA (Arab Maghreb Union) and EAC (East African Community); 22 African Union U Member States (AU MS) those that were physically present (Kenya, Gabon, Eswatini, Chad, Niger, Senegal, Djibouti, Tunisia, Somali, Mali, Malawi, Uganda, Ethiopia, Benin, Cote D’Ivoire, Mauritania, South Sudan, Nigeria, Burkina Faso, Tanzania, Togo, Central Africa Republic); Specialized Regional Institutions: (LVFO (Lake Victoria Fisheries Organization), FCWC (Fisheries Committee For West Central Gulf of Guinean), and LCBC (Lake Chad Basin Commission), UNEP (Abidjan Convention), Non-State Actors (NSA) Platforms, AWFISHNET (African Women Fish Processors and Traders Network), EARFISH (Eastern African Regional NSA Platform); African Union Centre of Excellence on inland fisheries and climate change, NaFIRRI (National Fisheries Resources Research Institute); NGOs in Blue Economy, Environmental and Biodiversity conservation, WIMAFRICA (African Women in Maritime), AFMESI) African Marine Environment Sustainability Initiative (AFMESI), Private sector representative from Mali as well as AU-IBAR and AUDA-NEPAD staff members; experts including representatives from the University of Sierra Leone, University of Ibadan, the Bureau of Environmental analysis (BEA) International; representative of the Media. Online participation included AU member states, the Swedish Agency for Marine and Water management (SWAM); the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA); the International Oceanographic Commission (IOC); The University of Cape Coast, Ghana; the FAO Project ‘Canary Current Large Marine Ecosystems (CCLME)’; the Benguela Current Commission (BCC); Blue Governance Unit of the University of Portsmouth, UK; the Ministerial Conference on fisheries cooperation among African States bordering the Atlantic Ocean (COMHAFAT); the representative of Youth and member of the Policy Research network for Fisheries and Aquaculture in Africa (PRNFAA).

II. OPENING SESSION

4. Mrs. Francisca Gonah representing the Ag. Director of AU-IBAR, Dr Nick Nwankpa, provided welcome remarks. She conveyed warm greetings from Her Excellency Ambassador Josefa Sacko, the Commissioner for Agriculture, Rural Development, Blue Economy and Sustainable Environment (DARBE) and her appreciation to the Government of Sweden for the support to Africa towards blue economy development and to the Government of Kenya for hosting AU-IBAR and the unrelenting collaboration in animal resources development. She also seized the opportunity to express gratitude to the Kingdom of Norway for their support in initiating the implementation of the African Blue Economy Strategy and the ongoing rolling out of the Strategy among AU member states and RECs. She further thanked the European Union for their support to AU-IBAR for the implementation of the Policy Framework and Reform Strategy for Fisheries and Aquaculture in Africa, particularly supporting AU-IBAR for the ongoing project on enhancing governance of the fisheries and aquaculture sector. She was enthusiastic that the workshop will go a long way in enhancing implementation of the activities of the project. She expressed profound gratitude for high level attendance despite challenges and wished participants fruitful deliberations.
5. Dr. Clement Adjorlolo on behalf of Dr Ibrahim Mayaki, the CEO of the AUDA-NEPAD made a welcome speech to the delegates extending warm greetings from the CEO. He acknowledged and commended the constant commitment of delegates to the improvement of the African Blue Economy. He provided a brief context to the AUDA-NEPAD and the reforms which are driven by the need to improve the implementation of the directives of the Heads of State and Government. Dr. Clement conveyed a sincere appreciation to AU-IBAR for playing a critical role of Coordinating the Blue Economy especially the Thematic Area 1 of the Africa Blue Economy Strategy on Fishery and Aquaculture. He re-affirmed that AUDA-NEPAD is fully committed to collaborating with all partners in this direction. He expressed appreciation to the delegate for being available despite busy schedules indicating the importance attached to the Project and wished them fruitful deliberations.
6. Mrs. Senait Regassa made a statement on behalf of Madam Ulla Andrén, Head of the Swedish Regional Development Cooperation for Sub-Saharan Africa. She expressed the pleasure of Sweden to partner with the AU-IBAR on Blue Economy development in Africa. She mentioned that Sweden is placing emphasis on Blue Economy because it provides livelihoods for millions of poor and vulnerable people globally and if harnessed well in Africa can be a sustainable source of economic growth. She took the opportunity to inform delegates that the Government of Sweden together with the Government of Kenya will host a high-level UN meeting in June 2022 to commemorate the fiftieth year's anniversary of the first United Nations Conference on the Human Environment – The 1972 Stockholm Conference. In concluding she reiterated Sweden's commitment to work with AU-IBAR, national governments and other stakeholders in the endeavour to bring about a vibrant and

sustainable Blue Economy sector in Africa. She congratulated all delegates for making the day's event a reality and wished them successful deliberations.

7. Hon. Lawrence Omuhaka, Chief Administration Secretary (Deputy Cabinet Secretary in charge of Agriculture, fisheries and blue economy) on behalf of the Government of Kenya, and representing Hon. Peter Munya, EGH Cabinet Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, Fisheries and Co-Operatives provided an opening statement to the delegates extending warm greetings from the Minister. He opined that Blue Economy resources have attracted great attention globally in the recent past and continues to be endorsed as “humanity’s last frontier for development” He urged delegates to take cognizant of the following key issues in their deliberations: (i). Addressing unavailability of critical information to help progress towards international targets for biodiversity conservation (ii). Coherent and integrated policy, legal and institutional capacities and capabilities, adequate human and financial resources as well evidence based research to assure sustainable development and management (iii). Realization that majority of African countries are sea blind and heavily relied on green economy to grow their Gross Domestic Products (GDPs) (iv). Sustainable Blue Economy requires multidisciplinary approach to achieve effectiveness and efficiency (v). Urgent coordinated actions including increased investment are needed to restore and sustain the health of Africa’s Blue Economy. He reconfirmed commitment to collaborate with partners, specifically the AU-IBAR towards the successful implementation of the Project. He expressed appreciation to delegates for being available and declared the Meeting Open.
8. The Ag. Director of AU-IBAR, Dr. Nick Nwankpa, joined the meeting from another meeting to make brief welcome and goodwill remarks appreciating the support by and collaboration of the Government of Sweden with AU-IBAR in strengthening institutional capacity for sustainably conserving aquatic biodiversity within the African blue economy. He expressed gratitude to the delegates for their honour bestowed upon AU-IBAR by accepting the invitation to participate in this very important project despite the threat of coronavirus pandemic. He expressed hope that the project, funded by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, would contribute to the conservation of biodiversity and ecosystems in the territorial waters and marine ecosystems in Africa for the benefits of Africa in supporting food security, livelihoods and income.
9. Official launching was climaxed by traditional dancing illustrating aspects of Kenyan tradition where the Ag. Director of AU-IBAR underscored the need for effective integration of women and youth in the conservation of aquatic biodiversity and environmental management.
10. Mrs. Hellen Moepi-Guebama, the Fisheries Officer at AU-IBAR gave a presentation highlighting the background, rationale and objectives of the workshop.

III. TECHNICAL SESSION

a. Setting the Scene;

The following presentations were delivered to set the scene for the Meeting:

- i. Mr. Kennedy Oroko, Planning Expert of AU-IBAR provided presentation on the Theory of Change for the Project
- ii. Dr. Mohamed Seisay made a presentation on Overview of the Aquatic Biodiversity Project, activities and implementation
- iii. Project Budget Expenditure by Ms. Catherine Oduor
- iv. Project Yearly Work plan by Mr. Kennedy Oroko,

b. Elaborating the Project

The following Presentations were made in this session;

- i. Highlighting the role RECs, Specialized Regional Institutions, AU Member states and other stakeholders in supporting project implementation by Mrs. Hellen Moepi-Guebama
- ii. Communication, visibility and knowledge management by Mrs. Patricia Lumba,
- iii. Monitoring, Evaluation, Logframe, Collection baseline information on indicators by Mr. Admore Chakadenga,

c. Working Group Sessions

Four Breakout Working Groups were formed in line with the four Strategic Objectives. Each group was tasked to review and discuss the outputs with a view to enriching the activities that would achieve the Strategic Objectives and outputs. The working groups were allocated tasks as follows:

- **Working Group 1-Strategic Objective 1:** Ratify and/or align relevant international/regional instruments related to blue economy themes (with specific reference to protecting and conserving biodiversity);
- **Working Group 2 Task -Strategic Objective 2:** Optimizing conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity while minimizing conflicts among blue economy sub-themes;
- **Working Group 3 Task- Strategic Objective 3:** Strengthening measures for mitigating the negative impacts of coastal and marine tourism, oil, gas, deep sea mining and climate change on aquatic biodiversity and environment; and,
- **Working Group 4 Task- Strategic Objective 4:** Strengthening gender inclusivity in aquatic biodiversity conservation and environmental management.

The working Groups analysed and provided recommendations on the current project framework, the outlined expected results and the activities. Their recommendations were presented at a plenary session for reviews and interventions and are included in this communique as Annex 1.

d. Information Sharing on Best Practices on Conserving Aquatic Biodiversity – Expert Presentations

The following Presentations were made in this session:

- i. A Swedish Framework for a Network of Marine Protected Areas - an inspiration towards international goals by Madam Katrin Eitrem Holmgren and Mme Jenney Hertzman Swedish Agency for Marine and Water Management;

- ii. Conservation for development in the Western Indian Ocean by Madam Katrin Eitrem Holmgren and Mme Jenney Hertzman Swedish Agency for Marine and Water Management;
- iii. African biodiversity conservation in the climate change context by Prof. Pierre Failler, Blue Economy Consultant, University of Portsmouth, UK;
- iv. Sustainable coastal and marine tourisms, mining, gas, oil exploration – mitigating the impacts of externalities by Dr. Patrick Karani, an Environmental and Climate Change Consultant; and,
- v. Implementation challenges of global biodiversity and environmental related instruments in Africa by Mr. Kwame Mfodwo, a Legal expert in Public Policy and Natural Resources.

e. Synergies and Other Initiatives on The Continent - Global, Continental and Regional Institutions

The following presentations were made in this session:

- i. Protecting Biodiversity and environment in the oceanic space – IOC perspectives by Dr. Mika Odido of IOC Coordinator in Africa;
- ii. Enhancing Blue Economy in the IGAD Member States for Biodiversity Conservations and Livelihood Diversification by Dr. Eshete Dejen, AG. Programme Manager IGAD;
- iii. Maximizing Africa’s Blue Economy Potential: Strengthening the Regional Seaweed Value Chain by Dr. Bernice Mclean, AUDA-NEPAD;
- iv. Man-made and environmental constraints to development of Africa blue economy by Dr Naji Laamrich from COMHAFAT / ATLAFCO;
- v. Mitigating impact of climate change in marine ecosystems in the Benguela Current Large marine Ecosystems by Mr Xolela Wellem, BCC Namibia;
- vi. FAO/CCLME Project: ongoing and planned activities on management of aquatic biodiversity and environmental sustainability by Dr. Aboubacar Sidibe CCLME Project, Senegal;
- vii. The role of women in conservation of aquatic biodiversity and ecosystems by Dr. Alberta Sagoe , University of Cape Coast, Ghana;
- viii. Managing the impacts of land-based pollution, shipping (and other at-sea activities) on marine biodiversity in West and Central Africa by Dr, Chiamaka Mogo, The Executive Secretary, AFMESI; and,
- ix. Mechanisms of Payments for Ecosystems Services by Prof. Andrew Baio, Marine Biology and Oceanography, University of Sierra Leone.

f. General Discussion

Participants contributed in a general discussion in each of the technical session to generate recommendations for the meeting. The session on General Discussion was guided and structured in line with the theme of the workshop.

IV. OUTCOMES OF THE MEETING

The meeting among others came up with the following outcomes:

- i. Information was shared on the Project Activities in the following areas;
 - a. Project Activities and Implementation Mechanisms;
 - b. Project Budget;
 - c. Communication and Visibility;

- d. Monitoring and Evaluation framework and log-frame; and,
- e. Project Yearly Workplan.
- ii. Established buy-in and ownership by the participating key stakeholders (particularly AU member states, RECs, Specialized Regional Institutions, and NSAs, including the CSOs, private sector and NGOs) in the project implementation and execution through capacity deliverance and institutional support;
- iii. The meeting provided opportunity to share insight in best practices, experiences and lessons learnt from ongoing projects and synergies generated with other initiatives on Aquatic Biodiversity and Conservation as well as Blue Economy;
- iv. A detailed stakeholders inputs for follow-up implementation based on review of the strategies and activities as outlined in the project document and knowledge of the most up-to-date problem situation gained from feedback in initiatives at national, regional and international levels;
- v. Recommendations were developed on strategic analytical framework for project implementation; and,
- vi. The role of the stakeholders in the project was highlighted and awareness enhanced among them on issues and importance of Conserving Aquatic Biodiversity and Ecosystems in the context of Africa Blue Economy Strategy.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS

The meeting provided the following recommendations:

- i. Where funds are available AU-IBAR should support at least one Member State in each of the 8 RECs;
- ii. AU-IBAR should also endeavour to give priority to inland water bodies in implementing activities of the Project;
- iii. On gender related matters it was recommended that women and youth issues should be reflected across all the Result Areas of the project;
- iv. In supporting Member States to develop their BE Strategy there is the need for AU-IBAR to establish synergy with similar regional initiatives;
- v. In implementing Project activities AU-IBAR should work through RECs and Specialised Regional Institutions to the AU Member States;
- vi. Given the limited availability of funds AU-IBAR should adopt more strategic approach in implementing the activities of the project; and,
- vii. AU-BAR should enhance collaboration with NGOs in Aquatic Biodiversity, Conservation and Blue Economy in implementing the project.

VI. NEXT STEPS

Secretariat to develop the comprehensive meeting reports, collate meeting documents and share with participants.

Also, the Secretariat to maintain the momentum of the deliberations, information sharing and dissemination and with a possible follow-up meeting to take stock of work in progress and implementation of the project activities.

VII. WAY FORWARD

AU-IBAR will present the outcomes and recommendations of the inception meeting to SIDA through the Swedish Regional Development Cooperation for Sub-Saharan Africa, the Project Technical Committee and the Project Steering Committee meeting for their guidance and endorsement.

VIII. CONCLUSION

The meeting was formally closed by the representative of the Ag. Director of AU-IBAR, Mrs. Patricia Lumba. She expressed gratitude to delegates for accepting the invitation and taking interest in implementing the decisions of our Heads of State and Government and assured them that their inputs, guidance and recommendations would be taken into account. Mrs. Lumba expressed gratitude to the sister organization, AUDA-NEPAD, for their strong partnership and thanked AU-IBAR colleagues for their collective efforts in ensuring the success of the workshop and to the Swedish Government for funding the project 'Conserving Aquatic Biodiversity in African Blue Economy'. She wished participants journey mercies back to their various destinations.

IX. ADOPTION OF THE COMMUNIQUE

The communique was adopted by the meeting.

Done 10th December, 2021