COMMUNIQUE

WORKSHOP ON STRENGTHENING REGIONAL COOPERATION IN MONITORING, CONTROL AND SURVEILLANCE TO COMBAT, DETER AND ELIMINATE ILLEGAL, UNREPORTED AND UNREGULATED FISHING IN WEST AFRICA

15-17 February 2016
Abuja, Nigeria
I. INTRODUCTION

1. A regional workshop on strengthening monitoring, control and surveillance (MCS) to deter, combat and eliminate illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing in West Africa was jointly organized by the African Union InterAfrican Bureau for Animal Resources (AU-IBAR), the NEPAD Planning and Coordinating Agency (NPCA) and Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) with support from the European Union, in Abuja, the Federal Republic of Nigeria, from 15-17 February, 2016.

2. The overall objective of the meeting was the identification of priority actions for strengthening MCS capacity at national and regional levels as well as options for establishing effective regional cooperation for MCS to effectively combat IUU. The specific objectives were: i. Identifying challenges and constraints for effective national and regional MCS, ii. Identify priority actions for national and regional plan of actions to deter, combat and illuminate IUU and iii. Develop a roadmap for the establishing/strengthening of a regional MCS Centre(s).

3. The meeting was attended by over 50 participants including Directors of Fisheries and MCS focal points in West African coastal states (Sierra Leone, Nigeria, Guinea, Liberia, Ghana, Guinea Bissau, Gambia, Senegal, Togo, Benin, Cote D’Ivoire), representatives from ECOWAS, SubRegional Fisheries Commission (SRFC), Fisheries Committee for West Central Gulf of Guinea (FCWC), Ministerial Conference for Countries Bordering the Atlantic Ocean (ATLAFCO), Monitoring for Environment and Security in Africa (MESA), Indian Ocean Commission (IOC), European Union, Non-state actors, experts and African Union staff.

4. The meeting was facilitated by Dr. Simplice Nouala, Chief Animal Production Officer, AU-IBAR.

5. The agenda of the meeting was unanimously adopted.

6. The opening ceremony marked by four statements from the representatives of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, ECOWAS, AU-IBAR and the European Union.

7. The opening ceremony was marked by four statements from the representatives of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, ECOWAS, AU-IBAR and the European Union.

8. Mrs. Louize Hill, Policy Officer (Fisheries Control Policy), representing the European Union, expressed appreciation to AU-IBAR and ECOWAS for invitation extended to the European Union to participate in the highly important meeting. IUU fishing wherever it occurs, she noted, is of serious concern to EU and that EU is ready to work with partners in the fight against this practice.
9. The Director of AU-IBAR, Professor Ahmed Sawalhy, welcomed the participants to the regional workshop and noted that level of participation signifies their commitment to fighting IUU fishing in the region. On behalf of the Chairperson of the Africa Union Commission, Dr. Nkosazana Clarice Dlamini Zuma and the Commissioner of Rural Economy and Agriculture of the African Union Commission, Mrs. Tumusiime Rhoda Peace, expressed gratitude to the Government and people of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and the opportunity for the institutional collaboration with ECOWAS in organizing this event in Abuja, Nigeria. He reminded the participants that one of the expected outcomes of this meeting is to strengthen the institutional capacity of MCS system for an effective fight against IUU fishing. He reiterated AU-IBAR’s commitment to combating IUU fishing and enumerated some of the activities AU-IBAR has carried out in respect of strengthening the capacity of MCS in various regions of the continent.

10. The Commissioner of Agriculture, Environmental and Water Resources, Dr. Lapodini Marc Atouga, representing the President of ECOWAS Commission, expressed gratitude for the joint organization of this workshop in the West African region. He acknowledged that the workshop came at a crucial time when the rampant activities of IUU are threatening the livelihoods of millions of citizens in this region and the fisheries resources. He informed the participants of the importance of the fisheries sector in food security, employment and revenue generation in the West Africa. He underscored the need of regional concerted effort in arresting this menace in West African waters.

11. The official opening of the workshop was performed by Dr. Emmanuel Damilola Emaiyeju, the Director of Agriculture of the Federal Government of Nigeria, on behalf of the Hon. Minister of Agriculture. He welcomed the participants to the meeting and expressed his sincere appreciation for the opportunity accorded Nigeria to host this important event on strengthening MCS to effectively combat IUU fishing. He expressed gratitude to African Union Commission (AUC) and the EU for the collaboration and contribution to the efforts in enhancing fisheries management in the West African region. He described the threats posed to fisheries management due mainly to poor management practices and ever increasing incidences of IUU fishing. He lamented over the sheer scale of fish importation into Nigeria and underscored the need for the country to be self-sufficient.

He outlined the strides taken by Nigerian Government in the fight against IUU, including the steps that have been taken to ratify the Port States measures and the revision of the country’s sea fisheries act, the promotion of inter-agency collaboration in the fight against IUU.

II. THE MEETING

Presentations: There were presentations on:

A. Background, objectives and setting the scene
i. Background and objectives of the meeting by Dr. Mohamed Seisay, Senior Fisheries Officer, AU-IBAR
ii. Keynote presentation on MCS issues in the West African Region- Setting the scene – by Dr. Aboubacar Sidibe – Project Officer- Fisheries resources management -AU-IBAR.

B. Presentation by Regional Institutions on their MCS initiatives in West Africa

i. Sub-Regional Fisheries Commissions (SRFC)- Mr. Babacar Ba – Head of MCS
ii. Fisheries Committee for West Central Africa- Mr. Dedi Seraphin – Secretary General
iii. The Ministerial Conference of Countries Bordering the Atlantic Ocean (ATLAFCO)- Naji Laarich
iv. Monitoring for Environment and Security in Africa (MESA)- Dr. George Wiafe, Coordinator

C. Lesson learnt - MCS Regional Cooperation and coordination for MCS

Experiences from the Indian Ocean region – Ms Jeromine Fanjanirina, MCS Expert, Smartfish programme, Indian Ocean Commission

D. Partner’s presentation
   European Union - MCS initiatives – Ms Louise Hill

E. Presentation – experiences in AU member states

Presentations on experiences of MCS, challenges were by selected member states in the region:

Nigeria, Senegal, Ghana, Core D’Ivoire, Sierra Leone, Liberia

F. Presentation on report of AU-IBAR-commissioned studies on status of MCS in West Africa- Mr. Makane Diouf NDIAYE, Consultant

III. OUTCOMES OF THE MEETING

a. Identification of priority actions and Draft plan of actions for combating IUU

The main outcome of the meeting was the identification of priority areas and plan of action for combating IUU with respect to the following thematic areas in matters of MCS:

- Strengthening Human and Technical Capacity of MCS systems in West Africa
- Sub-Regional and Regional Cooperation and Collaboration for MCS
➤ Issues of Legal, institutional and regulatory frameworks, sovereignty in matters of MCS
➤ Mechanism for sustainable financial for MCS
➤ Knowledge of the fishery resources and information sharing

Participants expressed gratitude to the Government and people of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, AU-IBAR, NEPAD, ECOWAS and EU for a well-organized and timely workshop and assured the African Union for their continued collaboration in the sustained effort to deter, combat and eliminate illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing West African region for sustainable development of the fisheries aquaculture sector for the overall benefits of the region.