COMMUNIQUE

STAKEHOLDERS’ CONSULTATIVE WORKSHOP ON FORMULATION OF AFRICAN BLUE ECONOMY STRATEGY

30 - 31 AUGUST 2019 AU-IBAR, NAIROBI, KENYA
Introduction

The Stakeholders’ Consultative Workshop on Formulation of African Blue Economy Strategy was held from 30-31 August 2019, at the offices of the African Union Inter-African Bureau for Animal Resources (AU-IBAR), in Nairobi Kenya. The meeting was organized by AU-IBAR in collaboration with the Government of Kenya. Funding support for the event was generously provided by the European Union (EU) and the African Union member states.

Objective of the Workshop

The overall objective of the workshop was to critically review and improve a Draft Blue Economy Strategy for Africa developed by a team of consultants at the request of AU-IBAR.

Delegates

Workshop participants were drawn from a diverse and representative set of stakeholders. The African Union was represented by the Chief of Staff, Bureau of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission as well as the Director, Department of Rural Economy and Agriculture of the African Union Commission (DREA-AUC). Also represented was the African Union Development Agency-NEPAD (AUDA-NEPAD). Other key stakeholders present were: African Union Member States; Regional Economic Communities (RECs); Regional Fisheries Bodies (RFBs), other Specialized Regional Institutions and AU-IBAR staff. Experts and representatives from key blue economy sectors (fisheries, aquaculture, shipping, transportation, energy, mining, and tourism) were also present. Also well represented were other interest groups active in the African Blue Economy, namely: the private sector, environment and conservation NGOs, Non-State actor organizations and groups (including women’s groups) and other Civil Society Organizations (CSOs). A significant number of African policy and governance specialists, journalists, academics, researchers and independent consultants also participated. The European Union, Norway and other development partners (including United Nation Economic Commission for Africa) also sent representatives. The consultation was led by the six selected consultants, with each expert providing a report on a selected Blue Economy thematic area. In all, the workshop was attended by 125 delegates drawn from across the African continent.

Facilitators and rapporteurs

The opening session was facilitated by Dr. Baboucarr Jaw, Chief Animal Health Officer at AU-IBAR. The technical session was facilitated by Mr. Kennedy Oroko, Planner at AU-IBAR and Dr. Mohamed Seisay, Senior Fisheries Officer at AU-IBAR. Meeting Rapporteurs were Mr. Isaac Nyameke (GAFNET, Ghana) and Dr. Paubert Mahatante (SANSAFA, Madagascar).

Opening session

Opening remarks were given by the Director of AU-IBAR, Prof. Ahmed El-Sawahly. Speaking on behalf of AU-IBAR, he warmly welcomed the delegates and placed the meeting in its proper context. In particular, he reminded delegates that the meeting was building on the momentum generated for the Sustainable Blue Economy concept by the 2018 Nairobi Global Conference on a Sustainable Blue Economy, that conference highlighting the need for African and other States to more comprehensively harness and utilize the resources of their oceans, seas, rivers and lakes to meet the needs of their peoples. He also briefly reviewed the specific process preceding the meeting, including the road-map intended to provide African Ministers with a Draft Blue Economy Strategy document for their review by end-October 2019. He thanked the Kenyan government
for their support in hosting the workshop and expressed his appreciation of the support provided for the process by the African Union. In particular, he thanked His Excellency Ambassador Abdoulaye Diop, the Chief of Staff, Bureau of the Chairperson, African Union Commission for taking time out from his busy schedule to grace the meeting with his presence. Also, on behalf of the African Union, Dr Sawalhy thanked the European Union for the financial support that had ensured completion of the Draft Blue Economy strategy document that the meeting had been convened to analyse.

Dr. Godfrey Bahiigwa, Director of the Department of Rural Economy and Agriculture (DREA) of the African Union Commission, also welcomed the delegates to the workshop. He did so on behalf of Her Excellency the Commissioner for Rural Economy and Agriculture, Ambassador Josefa Sacko who was unable to be present as she was attending the 7th Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD 7) in Japan. That meeting, incidentally, included an African Blue Economy side-event. Dr. Bahiigwa praised the governments of Kenya and the Seychelles for the commitment and leadership they have shown in promoting the Blue Economy concept in the African context, recalling the leadership role that Seychelles had played in developing the current road-map for designing and implementing Blue Economy Growth across the continent.

He informed the delegates that the AUC has mandated DREA to coordinate development of a Blue Economy growth agenda within the context of the Africa Union’s overall development framework, Agenda 2063. He thanked AU-IBAR for spearheading the formulation of the Blue Economy Strategy. He noted that the Blue Economy agenda cuts across many sectors and issues. He therefore expressed his appreciation that other AU agencies and development partners are collaborating with AU-IBAR in this process of formulating a Blue Economy Strategy for the continent. He identified some of the key challenges Africa faces as it seeks to develop a Blue Economy agenda, namely, the IUU threat, the challenge posed by climate change, the threats to unity generated by maritime border disputes, and the environmental threats caused by widespread pollution. These, he said, were all challenges that had to be overcome. He thanked the European Union for funding development of the Blue Economy strategy document and the Kenyan government for opening the workshop. He also thanked the delegates for attending the workshop.

The Chief of staff of the African Union Commission, Ambassador Abdoulaye Diop, gave opening remarks on behalf of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission H.E. Moussa Faki Mahamat. He noted that the AU has a clear vision for the continent as stated in the various Pan African instruments such as Policy Framework and the Reform Strategy for Fisheries and Aquaculture in Africa, the 2015 Integrated African Maritime Strategy, the Lomé Charter and Africa’s Blue Print and Master plan for transforming Africa into a global power house, Agenda 2063. He stressed that, the development of an African Blue Economy Strategy will provide guidance and serve as a reference point for AU Member States and regional organisations thereby ensuring coherent blue economy development at the national as well as regional level.

Ambassador Abdoulaye concluded his speech by congratulating the Kenyan government for successfully hosting a world-class and path-breaking 2018 Global Blue Economy Conference. He also urged the experts to make sure that they finalize the Blue Economy Strategy in readiness for the Ministerial meeting of the Specialized Technical Committee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Water and Environment, so that it may be considered and endorsed. He thanked the European Union for their support to the formulation of this Strategy.
On behalf of Prof. Micheni Ntiba, the Principal Secretary for fisheries in Kenya, Mr. Henry Kimutai, the Principal Secretary, State Department of Livestock welcomed the delegates to Kenya. He expressed his appreciation for AU-IBAR deciding to hold the workshop in Kenya. He reminded the delegates that Kenya hosted the first African Blue Economy event in August 2016 and this was a precursor to the 2018 Global Conference on Blue Economy that was held in Nairobi. He expressed confidence that, with the expertise and experience of the delegates as evident from their profiles, the Blue Economy document that would emerge from the workshop would meet the requirements of the African continent as well as international standards for sustainable development, inclusive growth and participation of youth and women. He wished the delegates an enjoyable stay in Kenya.

Presentation on Workshop Background and Objectives by AU-IBAR

To provide a solid orientation for workshop participants before they undertook a critical review of the Draft Strategy provided by the consultants, Dr. Mohamed Seisay (AU-IBAR) provided participants with an overview of the background, context and objectives of the workshop. He set out the key elements of the AU instruments that in combination, support Blue Economy Growth, namely, the Policy Framework and Reform Strategy for Fisheries and Aquaculture in Africa; the African Integrated Maritime Strategy and the Malabo Declaration. He then gave an overview of the critical vectors for blue economy growth. Dr. Seisay also pointed out that very often, Blue Economy Strategy development and implementation failed to pay adequate attention to key issues like: (1) sound governance and effective institutional collaboration and linkage; (2) job creation and participation of the youth; (3) gender aspects: (4) alternative livelihoods, enhanced social welfare and improvements in food security; (5) ensuring climate change responsiveness and resilience. The Draft Strategy sought to avoid these problems and had therefore prioritized these issues in addition to the attention normally paid to integrating the various component sectors of the Blue Economy such as mining and energy, transportation, tourism etc. Dr. Seisay also introduced the team of consultants who had drawn up the Draft Strategy, setting out their expertise. He explained the workplan followed by the consultants, including the field trips undertaken to selected representative countries, namely: Ghana, Kenya, Egypt, Morocco, Tanzania, Ethiopia, Mauritania, Togo, Djibouti and South Africa. These visits had provided a basis for identifying problem issues, lessons learnt and best practices to inform Development of the Draft Strategy.
Technical presentations

Presentation on project methodology and key elements of the Draft Strategy by the Lead Consultant
In the next presentation, Professor Pierre Failler, the Lead Consultant contextualized how Blue Economic growth develops and also set out some key issues for action as well as lessons learnt and best practices in the global context. He explained how effective implementation of an African Blue Economy strategy could lead to successful implementation of SDG 14. He observed that most of African countries have low GDP. This means that implementation of an African Blue Economy Strategy will be economically challenging. He emphasized that institutional collaboration is fundamental to successful achievement of Blue Economy Growth. Thus Africa’s proposed Blue Economy Strategy must ensure solid and coherent linkages with ongoing initiatives at the level of IGAD, the Western Indian Ocean and within the work programme of AUDA-NEPAD. He then gave an overview of the methodology and key elements of the Draft Strategy formulated by the team of consultants. He stated that for the Draft Strategy to be effective, all stakeholders would have to focus on ensuring that there is sound planning, investment and coordination.

Presentation by the Thematic Areas experts:
The experts then made presentations on their thematic areas paying particular attention to context, the outlook for 2030, anticipated challenges as well as objectives, goals and targets. By thematic area, presentations were made as follows:
1. Dr. Hashali Hamukuaya - thematic area: fisheries, aquaculture, conservation and sustainable aquatic ecosystems.
2. Mr. Serigne Thiam Diop - thematic area: shipping/transportation, trade, ports, maritime security, safety and enforcement.
3. Dr. Patrick Karani - thematic area: coastal and maritime tourism, climate change, resilience, environment, infrastructure.
4. Dr. Asmerom Gilau - thematic area: sustainable energy, mineral resources and innovative industries.
5. Prof. Pierre Failler, on behalf of Mr. Hachim El Ayoubi - thematic area: polices, institutional and governance, employment, job creation and poverty eradication, innovative financing.

Discussion of Presentations by Thematic Area

In response to the presentations, stakeholder discussion then focused on the following issues and themes:
1. The importance of coordination and collaboration between and across the various thematic areas.
2. Ensuring that the strategy protects local fish markets and fish production.
3. The need for synergies between AU Strategies, including the proposed Blue Economy Strategy and the related strategies of other institutions.
4. Financial costs of Strategy implementation, issues of mobilizing resources to finance the costs of the blue economy as well as proposals for conducting assessment of existing Blue Economy investments and their sources.
6. The place of small-scale fisheries (SSF) within the Strategy at the stages of both formulation and implementation.
7. Delegates urged that social and economic inclusiveness requires that issues of human rights and justice should be addressed by the Strategy.
Critical Review of the Draft Strategy via Working Groups

Five working groups were then constituted to review the Draft Strategy. The groups systematically analysed the Draft Strategy by thematic area, analyzing and revising the objectives, goals and targets set out for each thematic area.

Outcomes of the workshop

1. The objectives, goals and targets for each of the thematic areas were improved.
2. The thematic areas were refined and more closely aligned with the relevant AU instruments as well as key global best practices.
3. The workshop generated a wide range of useful opportunities for stakeholders from across all the sectors to share experiences and lessons learnt, thereby providing a solid framework of networks and partnerships that can be built on to take the Blue Economy Strategy forward.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were made:

1. The final Strategy needs to be consistent with Agenda 2063 and coherent with all AU instruments and related strategies, including in particular, the AfCFTA (Africa Free Trade Area), AIMS (African Integrated Maritime Strategy) 2050 and PIDA (Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa), DIT-AUC (Department of Trade and Industry, AU Commission).
2. With regard to time horizon, it was suggested that the strategy should focus on a longer horizon so as to be consistent with Agenda 2063.
3. The Strategy needs to address Blue Economy issues across the marine, inland and fresh water sectors in an integrated way.
4. For ease of presentation, it was recommended that the Strategy needs to incorporate for each thematic area, a section on the rationale for Blue Economy development for that particular thematic area, focusing on core issues and the interventions required to address those issues.
5. Consistent with key AU Strategies, and in particular, Agenda 2063, proposed Blue Economy Strategy should pay particular attention to interventions that would support youth empowerment across the continent.

Closing Ceremony

A vote of thanks was given by Prof. Senia Nhamo. She thanked AU-IBAR on behalf of the delegates for organizing the workshop. She also thanked the administrative staff at AU-IBAR and the interpreters for their excellent work.

The closing statement was given by the Director of DREA, Dr. Godfrey Bahiigwa. The Director expressed appreciation to AU-IBAR for the great effort put into the organization of the meeting. He thanked the consultants for providing the draft reports and the participants for the striking expertise, professionalism, diligence and attention to detail that they had shown during the workshop. He urged the consultants to ensure that the comments and inputs of the delegates were adequately reflected in the final draft reports. On behalf of the DREA Commissioner, Ambassador Josefa Sacko, the DREA Director thanked the delegates again, wished them a safe trip and closed the meeting.
Next steps

The Lead Consultant was charged to develop a concise version of the work undertaken comprising no more than 10 pages. This report would be presented to the 2019 October ministerial meeting of the Specialized Technical Committee of Agriculture, Rural Development, Water and Environment.