COMMUNIQUE

A WRITERS’ WORKSHOP OF THE POLICY RESEARCH NETWORK FOR FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE IN AFRICA FOR THE FORMULATION OF POLICY BRIEFS ON INTEGRATING WOMEN AND YOUTH IN FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE VALUE CHAINS AND BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

13 - 16 NOVEMBER 2019 LIBREVILLE, GABON.
I. INTRODUCTION

1. The African Union- Inter-African Bureau for Animal Resources (AU-IBAR) in collaboration with the Pan-Africa Policy Research Network for Fisheries and Aquaculture organised a write-shop on the formulation of Policy Briefs on Integrating Women and Youth in Fisheries and Aquaculture Value Chains and Business Development. The write-shop primarily based on consolidating Lessons and best practices from 8th Session of the Aquaculture Network for Africa (ANAF) and the 3rd Bureau meeting of the African Women Fish Processors and Traders Network (AWFISHNET) held in Botswana in August 2019 and Cote D’Ivoire in September 2019 respectively.

2. The present meeting was organised in collaboration with the People and Government of Gabon in the Capital City, Libreville from the 13-16 November 2019.

3. The major objective of the writers-shop was aimed at reviewing the reports of the ANAF and AWFISHNET meetings; collate present information from experts’ presentations on experiences, lessons and best practices and then develop policy briefs on priority actions on enhancing the integration of women and youth in fisheries and aquaculture value chains and business development.

II. PARTICIPATION

The meeting was attended by 26 representatives from nine African Union Member States namely: Cameroun, Gabon, Ghana, Nigeria, Kenya, Malawi, Nigeria, South Africa, Uganda and Zambia; Regional institutions: Regional Fisheries Commission for the Gulf of Guinea/Commission Régionale des Pêches du Golfe de Guinée (COREP) and members of the Policy Research Network for fisheries and aquaculture in Africa, independent experts from private sector and Academic institutions, representatives of women groups (AWFISHNET). Also in attendance were staff members of AU-IBAR.

The selected rapporteurs for this meeting were Ms Hellen Moepi (South Africa) and Mrs. Guylene Nkoane (Gabon).

III. OPENING SESSION

Mr Georges MBA ASSEKO, Technical Advisor to the Minister of Agriculture, Livestock, Fisheries and Food in Gabon facilitated the opening session.

Remarks were received from the four institutions as follows:

a. Welcoming Remarks by the Director of AU-IBAR

On behalf of the Director, Dr Mohamed Seisay the Senior Fisheries Officer gave welcome statement and conveyed the gratitude of AU-IBAR Director to the people and government of Gabon for granting the African Union request to organize this meeting in Libreville, Gabon. He informed the meeting that this meeting is the culmination of the outcomes of the two important meetings (African Women Fish Processors and Traders Network- AWFISHNET and Aquaculture Network for Africa- ANAF) aimed at enhancing integration of women and youth in the fisheries and aquaculture value chain and business development. He informed the audience that the meeting was organized in collaboration with the Policy Research network for fisheries and aquaculture in Africa. The production of this policy briefs will be used to escalate the key issues that women and youth face in the sector as well as policy interventions by the
policy makers. He stated the meeting was in essence supporting the implementation of key African Union instruments, namely the Policy Framework and Reform Strategy for Fisheries and Aquaculture in Africa (PFRS) and the Agenda 2063 both of which identified enhancing the capacity of women in productive business as key objectives and aspirations of the continent.

He informed the this meeting was fully funded by the African Union Commission and thanked the AU MS for their support to the development of fisheries and aquaculture towards increased food security, livelihoods and wealth creation.

b. Official opening by the Honourable Minister of Agriculture, Livestock, Fisheries and Food in Gabon
Cabinet Secretary, M. Mesmin NDONG BIYO’O on behalf of the H.E Biendi MAGANGA MOUSSAVOU, the Honourable Minister of Agriculture, Livestock, Fisheries and Food in Gabon gave this official opening statement

M. Mesmin NDONG BIYO’O, in his opening statement welcomed all the participants and alluded that this workshop is timely for Gabon. He highlighted the interest of Gabon in this workshop as the country has an important coastline adjacent to Atlantic Ocean. He informed the participants that the Government of Gabon is committed to boosting fisheries and aquaculture sector in the country. The Hon. Cabinet acknowledged that the country faces many challenges in fish trade and fish processing and noted that the development of aquaculture is important to fill the gap of fish protein from capture marine and inland waters. The Hon. Cabinet Secretary underscored the point that women and youth are highly dynamic in the fisheries and aquaculture sector and it is important to strike their interests and provide opportunities for them. In concluding, he wished participants a good stay in Gabon and a very successful meeting.

IV. TECHNICAL SESSION
The technical session was facilitated by Mr Georges Mba-asseko, Vice Chair of Policy Research Network for Fisheries and Aquaculture in Africa and Mr Christian Okouyi. Mr. Christian Okouyi, Focal Point for Aquaculture and fisheries in Gabon and Dr. Mohamed Seisay, Senior Fisheries Officer, AU-IBAR

The following presentations were made to information the meeting:

a. Objectives of the meeting by Mr Georges Mba-asseko, Vice Chair of Policy Research Network For Fisheries and Aquaculture in Africa
b. Outcomes of the 8th ANAF Session by Ms Hellen Moepi
c. Outcomes of the 2nd AWFISHNET Bureau meeting by Dr. Pierre Meke
d. Integrating women and youth in aquaculture business in South Africa by Mr. Etienne Hinrichsen
e. Aquaculture and Youth Enterprise - Experience from Ibadan University by Prof. Eyiwinimi Falaye
f. Experience on integrating women and youth in catfish farming in Nigeria by Mr. Pawsso Emmanuel
g. AquaTrans and Youthful Fish Programme-Youth Experiences from LUANAR by Prof. Emmanuel Kaunda
h. AquaBusiness – Experience from Uganda by Ms. Lovin Kobusingye
i. Women Fish Processors and Traders – Experience from Central Africa by Mrs. Beyene Ateba
j. Experience from Export-oriented Fish Processing from Lagos, Nigeria by Mrs. Jerry Uwheraka
k. Trade Rules and Compliance, fish processing technology – Experience from East Africa Uganda by Mrs. Beth Wagude
I. Involvement of Women and Youth in Cross-border trade – Experiences from Kyosii – Gabon-Cameroon-Equatorial Guinea border by Mr. Christian Okouyi

m. Remoting Sensing and strategies for involving youth using Information Communication Technology (ICT)/ geographic information system (GIS) by Ms. Carole Ogandas

n. Youth Business Incubator – Experience from Malawi College of Fisheries by Dr. Yoyola Phiri

o. Environmental Management and Zoning for Cage Aquaculture: A Case for Lake Volta, Water Research Institute, Ghana by Dr. Ruby Asmah

V. GROUP WORK SESSIONS

Based on the presentations, the following selected Experts were tasked for identification of topics for development of policy briefs during working group sessions.

a. Prof Emmanuel Kaunda (LUANAR, Malawi)

b. Prof Eyiwunmi Falaye (Ibadan University, Nigeria)

c. Mr. Etienne Hinrichsen (Private sector, Aquaculture development, South Africa)

d. Mrs. Susan Imende (Director General, Ministry of Fisheries, Kenya)

The following thematic broad areas were identified by the expert group for extraction of policy briefs based on which three working groups were constituted according the thematic areas;

**Group 1**: Fisheries and Aquaculture Production/Entrepreneurship/Capacity Building

**Group 2**: GIS and Environmental Standards

**Group 3**: Fish Product Development/Export Promotion, Trade and Quality Control

VI. MEETING OUTCOMES

After two days of intense deliberations in the working session sessions, the three working groups developed the following draft seven policy briefs:

**Working group 1**

i. Enhance capacity building, training and skill acquisition of women and youth in fisheries and aquaculture ventures

ii. Develop funding structures and packages to support access to financial institutions for women and youth in fisheries and aquaculture ventures

iii. Strengthen capacity of women and youth in fisheries and aquaculture Small Medium Enterprises development

**Working group 2**

i. Essential use of GIS and ICT in fisheries and aquaculture business development for women and youth

**Working group 3**

i. Creating awareness and education opportunities for women and youth (gender mainstreaming) and capacity building in fisheries and aquaculture trade
ii. Trade enhancement, facilitation and information sharing among women and youth in the fisheries and aquaculture development

iii. Enhance integration of women and youth in the aquaculture and fisheries value chain

**Filed Visits:**
The Government of Gabon organized a visit for the participants to fish landing and making completing named ‘Centre d’Appui a la Peche Artisanale de Libreville (CAPAL)’ The objective of the visit was to identify lessons and best practices in marine capture fisheries value chains and the role of women and youth in the value. The participants also observed the application of quality assurance procedures within the market complex.

**VII. KEY RECOMMENDATIONS**

a. There is a need to engage youth on innovative ways to integrate fisheries and aquaculture within the Information Communication and Technology

b. AU-IBAR to continue to support women groups in business development

c. AU-IBAR to organize capacity building programmes for women and youth in line with the policy brief messages

**VIII. WAY FORWARD**

a. The proposed policy briefs needs to be finalised and beefed up with evidence based data within two weeks period

b. The rapporteurs of the three working groups and the chairperson will finalise the draft and share with other group members for final inputs

**IX. CLOSING OF THE MEETING**

Mr Emile Essema, Executive secretary of COREP appreciated the activities undertaken by AU-IBAR and its presence is felt in the region. As a regional fisheries institution, he assured the meeting that COREP the outcomes of the meeting will be implemented and disseminated to the respective the Government. He urged that Government officials should share the outcomes of this meeting with ministers, Directors so that particular issue are addressed. He noted that Women and youth issues are better address in the fisheries and aquaculture sector. He stated that today's Youth is vibrant and requires quick cash. There is therefore a need to assist them to understand the sector better. Mr Essema informed the participants that the headquarters of COREP are in Libreville. In conclusion, he thanked everyone who contributed to the write shop, excellent facilitation from Experts and AU-IBAR for supporting this meeting. He encouraged the participants to visit the artisanal fisheries market and looking forward to feedback and comments.

Dr Mohamed Seisay on behalf Director AU-IBAR thanked participants most profusely for the hard work the past three days. He stated that the objectives set have been fully achieved. He thanked the Government and People of Gabon for according the hospitality and expressed appreciation for the collaboration by the Policy Research network for fisheries and aquaculture in Africa. He assured the Government of Gabon that collaboration this magnanimity will be escalated to the high attention of senior authorities back in the office. He again reminded the participants that greater effort is being made within African to realize the full potential of women and women Africa development. He told the participants that what has been
achieved during the workshop was the end of AU-IBAR engagement with the participants and promised that communication would be maintained with the experts to finalize the draft policy briefs. He thanked all experts, colleagues and interpreters for their patience and contribution to the success of the meeting. He informed the participants that the field visit to the artisanal fish landing and marketing complex will further enrich the formulation of the policy briefs. The policy brief are 70% concluded and that this was a big success.

Mrs Beyene Ateba, the president of AWFISHNET mentioned that there are people that will come out of this meeting very happy and those are the women since for the past three days the discussions have about women and their effective integration in fisheries and aquaculture value chains. She stressed that women are at the development centre stage and they are gradually seeing the light at the end of the tunnel. She thanked AU-IBAR for the efforts because the impact is being realised. She thanked the government of Gabon, the AU-IBAR secretariat for exercising their patience. Women are much happier now, she noted.

Mrs Suzan Imende, the DG of Kenya Fisheries services, gave vote of thanks. She mentioned that one of the target groups for this meeting are women and youth, as a woman herself, she is appreciating that women are being targeted and supported on the continent and this is a big achievement. She acknowledged excellent support from the Government of Gabon for hospitality. She observed that during the recently concluded AUC Specialised Technical Committee, AU-IBAR presented a number of documents and those were accepted unconditionally meaning they are good quality documents. Women are aware that when we develop documents and they are present in the meeting, the implementation is immediate with fellow women. Participants have passion for the industry and women and youth have a role to ensure that fisheries and aquaculture is done in a sustainable manner. Through AU-IBAR fisheries and aquaculture unit we have been able to push documents and elevate the industry on the continent.

On behalf of People and Government of Gabon, Mr Christian Okouyi gave closing remarks. He alluded to the fact that fisheries and aquaculture sector is key sector for the economies of the Gabon, food security and economic development. This is made possible by the available fisheries and aquaculture resources and also by the Gabon focus on including women and youth in the development. He however noted that some challenges continue to impede the development of the sector. Thus he noted that value chain of the sector needs to be developed. He observed that the meetings of AWFISHNET and ANAF elaborated on the key issues that are affecting women and youth which were being addressed in the present. He expressed delight that the problems were identified and appreciated contribution from all participants in ensuring that the objectives of this meeting are met. He thanked AU-IBAR for addressing some of the challenges that the sector is facing. In closing he wished everybody safe stay and safe trip back home. He officially closed the meeting.