First Steering Committee meeting endorses Fisheries Governance Project

March 2014 - March 2015 marked the first year of operation of the Fisheries Governance Project “Strengthening Institutional Capacity to Enhance Governance of the Fisheries Sector in Africa”. This initiative is a collaborative project aimed at enhancing the contribution of fisheries resources to food security and economic growth in Africa by improving institutional and policy environment for sustainable management and utilization of fisheries resources in Africa.

Members of the Fisheries Governance Project Steering Committee met on February 25, 2015 at the AU-IBAR premises, in Nairobi, Kenya with the following objectives: (i) Review and validate the Terms of Reference of the Steering Committee; (ii) Review and endorse the inception report; (iii) Provide guidance and advice on the project implementation strategy based on the recommendation of the inception reports; (iv) Validate the project M&E Framework and Communication strategy; and (v) Provide guidance for the formulation of the project exit strategy.

The meeting was chaired by the Commissioner of AUC-DREA, Her Excellency Mrs. Rhoda Peace Tumusiime. Other participants included representatives from the technical and implementing partners (NEPAD, CARDNO), the European Commission, Member States, Regional Economic Communities (RECs), RFBs, Private Organizations, Civil Society Organizations and Regional Fisheries Bodies.

The project team reported on the numerous achievements that included: continental inauguration of the project which provided scope for adjustment of activities; wide continental consultations with relevant key stakeholders; setting in motion the establishment of Regional Monitoring, Control and Surveillance (MCS) to develop a more effective and proactive fight against illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing in Africa’s marine territorial waters; concluding arrangements for formalized partnership arrangement between the Fisheries Commission of Gulf of Guinea in Central Region of Africa (COREP) and the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) as a model for anchorages between African Regional Fisheries Bodies (RFBs) and Regional Economic Communities (RECs); Constitution of seven African Fisheries Reform Mechanism (AFRM) Working Groups and operationalization of five of them; establishing common positions to enhance coherent African voice in international forums as in the 31st Session of the FAO’s COFI, the 1st Africa Tuna Fisheries Conference.

Additionally, the Steering Committee approved the Terms of Reference of the Steering Committee, endorsed the project’s first year technical (inception and progress) reports, financial report, M&E Framework and Communication and Visibility Strategy.
The Committee tentatively decided to hold the Second Steering Committee Meeting in July, 2015, to monitor the project’s progress and discuss ways to facilitate and fast-track its implementation. The Chair commended the achievements of the project team and emphasized the importance of the project noting that it was the first of its kind for AU-IBAR as well as for the continent as a whole. The Chair described the project as special and rare and encouraged the active participation of all the stakeholders to achieve the Fisheries Governance project’s ultimate goal. In her closing remarks, the Chair gave the project team the go-ahead to implement the project’s workplan as presented.

Figure 1: GROUP PHOTOGRAPH OF DELEGATES AT THE FIRST STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING OF THE FISHGOV PROJECT