THE FIRST MEETING OF THE TASK FORCE ON AFRICAN ORNAMENTAL FISHERIES TO FORMULATE REGULATORY FRAMEWORK FOR THE EXPLOITATION OF TRADE IN ORNAMENTAL FISHERIES IN AFRICA

18-20 JULY 2018
KIGALI, RWANDA
I. INTRODUCTION

1 The First Meeting of the Taskforce on African Ornamental Fisheries to formulate regulatory framework for the exploitation and Trade in Ornamental Fisheries in Africa was organized by African Union Inter-African Bureau for Animal Resources (AU-IBAR). The meeting was held in collaboration with the government of the Republic of Rwanda and with support from the European Union (EU) within the provision of the Fisheries Governance Project (FISHGOV) being implemented by AU-IBAR and NEPAD Planning and Coordinating Agency (NPCA).

2 The meeting was held from the 18th to 20th July, 2018 at the Hotel Hilltop & Country Club, Kigali, Rwanda.

3 The overall objective of the meeting was to formulate regulatory framework including the monitoring mechanism for the exploitation and trade of ornamental fisheries in Africa;

The specific objectives were to:

i. Identify priority actions at national and sub-regional levels to improve the contribution of ornamental fisheries to the African Accelerated Agricultural Transformation goals.

ii. Identify and consolidate critical issues that would constitute the measures in regulatory framework and monitoring mechanism for exploitation and trade in ornamental fisheries.

II. PARTICIPATION

4. The meeting was attended by 25 participants representing the African Union Member States from the Republic of Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroun, Congo DRC, Egypt, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, Nigeria, Rwanda, Sao Tome & Principe, South Africa, Tunisia and Zambia; Academic and Research Institutions:- Kenya Marine & Fisheries Research Institute (KMFRI), Oceanographic Research Institute of South African Institute of Aquatic Research, National Institute of Oceanography and Fisheries (NIOF) in the Ministry of Scientific Research Egypt, Ethiopian Institute of Agricultural Research, Water Research Institute of Ghana; Non State Actors:- Association of Ornamental Fish Farmers & Exporters of Nigeria,
Afrique Avenir Cameroun; Tunisian Society For sustainable Fisheries (TSSF); **The Private Sector:** Kenya Tropical Sealife, Koben Schmidt International, Nigeria, Green Algae Highland Fish Farm; **Development Partners:** World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) and **Independent Experts.** Also in attendance were staff members from the AU-IBAR (AU-IBAR Fisheries Governance Technical Expert)

**III. OPENING SESSION**

5. Dr. Annie Lewa, the AU-IBAR Projects Officer, facilitated the opening session. Obinna Anozie, the AU-IBAR Policy Analyst-Fisheries & Aquaculture delivered the opening statement on behalf of the Director of AU-IBAR, Prof. Ahmed El-Sawahly. He welcomed the participants and expressed gratitude to the Government and People of Republic of Rwanda for the opportunity to host the event in the beautiful city of Kigali. The Director informed the meeting that the event was in tune with the provisions of the Policy Framework and Reform Strategy for Fisheries and Aquaculture in Africa, the principles and objectives currently implemented by the African Union–InterAfrican Bureau for Animal Resources (AU-IBAR) in collaboration with the NEPAD Programme Coordinating Agency (NPCA) with funding from the European Union within the provisions of the Fisheries Governance Project. He underscored the importance of ornamental fisheries in the contribution to the socio-economic development of the AU Member States. To this effect and in order to harness and enhance benefits from ornamental fisheries as well as for the sector to make significant contribution to the African union Agenda 2063, the AU-IBAR has been executing a number of activities as an integral effort to grow the local industry in the AU MS. The Director was optimistic that the first meeting of the Task Force will help consolidate the critical issues to be addressed in the regulatory framework for exploitation and trade in ornamental fisheries in Africa and monitoring mechanism.

6. The meeting was officially opened by the Director General of Animal Resources, Dr Rutagwenda Theogene on behalf of the Honourable Minister of Agriculture and Animal Resources, Rwanda. In his opening statement, the Director General said that Africa was endowed with rich fisheries resources including ornamental fisheries. He acknowledged the overall importance of the fisheries sector in Africa especially in providing essential food requirements and positive impact on health, employment and income generation. He concluded that the sector is threatened by overexploitation hence the action being taken here in Kigali by AU-IBAR through the Taskforce to develop regulatory measures is timely and indeed in the right direction.

**IV. THE MEETING**
The technical sessions were facilitated by Mr Obinna Anozie, Policy Analyst for Fisheries and Aquaculture of AU-IBAR and Edward Kimakwa of WWF.

Setting the Scene Session

8. A presentation on the background, rationale, and objectives of the workshop was delivered by Mr Obinna Anozie.
9. A presentation on the outcomes of the Think Tank Meeting on ornamental fisheries that was held in Abuja, Nigeria on the 31st of July – 1st of August 2017 was given by Chris Takondana Nyasa of Malawi.

Technical Presentations

10. The following technical presentations were made to inform the outcomes of the workshop:
   a. An issue paper on assessment of ornamental fisheries and the development of regulatory framework for exploitation and trade in ornamental fish species was presented by Dr. Mohamed Megahed;
   b. Experience sharing by some AU Member States with regards to the status, issues and challenges of ornamental fisheries in Africa was given by Nigeria, Sao Tome and Principe, Malawi and Tunisia. Gorret Mwangi of Kenya Tropical SeaLife from Kenya gave an experience of their business on marine ornamental fisheries;
   c. A presentation on ornamental fisheries as a rural livelihoods option for Africa was also given by Dr. Mohamed Megahed;
11. Presentations by experts on key areas to address challenges of ornamental fish trade in Africa were given also as follows:-
   a) Veterinary Services and Fish Health in Certification of Ornamental Fisheries by Dr Coulibaly Desire;
   b) Role of Research in the Sustainable Development and Management of Ornamental Fisheries by Dr Bernadine Everett;
   c) Data Management, Taxonomy and Protection of Endemic Ornamental Fish Species by Dr Mary Opiyo;
   d) Trade and Legal Issues: Relationship between Players within the Industry, Potential Benefits, Challenges and Prospects by Mr Christopher Ibuanokpe;
   e) Priority areas for research intervention for sustainable Development of African Ornamental fisheries trade by Dr Mohamed Megahed;
   f) Priority Actions to Enhance Indigenous Ornamental Fish Exploitation, Production and Trade by Mr Chibunna Ubawuike;
g) Business model for improving ornamental fisheries industry and trade in Africa was presented by Dr Mohamed Megahed.

**Working Group Sessions**

12. Two working group sessions (English and French) were held with the guidance of facilitators to deliberate on the present situation, problems/issues, opportunities, priority actions and ongoing initiatives on promoting sustainable ornamental fisheries in Africa.

13. A synthesized document consolidating the outcomes of the working group was presented by Dr Mohamed Megahed.

**V. MEETING OUTCOMES**

**The meeting had the following outcomes:**

i. Priority actions at national, sub-regional and continental levels to improve the contribution of ornamental fisheries to the African Accelerated Agricultural Transformation goals were identified.

ii. Ongoing activities, interventions and initiatives in some member states in relation to priority actions were identified.

iii. Critical issues that would constitute the measures in regulatory framework and monitoring mechanism for exploitation and trade in ornamental fisheries were identified and consolidated.

iv. A draft structure and content of an African Regulatory Framework for exploitation and trade of ornamental fisheries in Africa was developed.

**VI. Key recommendations**

In recognition of the contribution of ornamental fisheries to the socio-economic development of AU MS, it was noted that some AU MS are well advanced with the ornamental fisheries sector development, including research on captive breeding. Hence exchange of information and capacity building on Africa ornamental fisheries was found key to promoting sustainable management and development of the ornamental fisheries sub-sector. In line with this, the meeting came up with the following recommendations:

i. AU should consider and facilitate the introduction and observance of Africa Ornamental Fisheries Day to create awareness and raise the profile of the sub-sector.

ii. Regular exchange programmes and technology transfers should be undertaken amongst the MS.
iii. AU to establish and operationalize the Africa Aquaculture Centre of Excellence which should give priority to ornamental fisheries, and a Database on Ornamental Fisheries should also be developed.

The meeting was also informed of the upcoming International Blue Economy that would take place in Nairobi on the 26th – 28th of November 2018. Participants were encouraged to attend the conference and showcase their work on ornamental fisheries as integral component of the blue economy.

VII. **Next steps**

Moving forward, the meeting agreed on the next steps as follows;

i. The report of the meeting to be finalized by the consultant and shared with participants by the 27th of July 2018. Participants to provide feedback by the 3rd of August 2018.

ii. The final report/ framework to be subjected to AU internal procedures and shared with the MS for adoption and implementation.

VIII. **CLOSING OF THE MEETING (to be inserted)**

The participants through two of their representatives Ms. Estela Chichava Julião Maússe from Mozambique and Mr. Christopher Ibuonokpe (Nigeria) thanked the Government of Rwanda for their hospitality in hosting this important event and the enabling conducive atmosphere provided.

Closing statements were made by representatives of Dr. Annie Lewa on behalf of the Director of AU-IBAR. Dr Theogene Rutagwenda, Director General of Animal Resources officially closed the meeting on behalf of the Hon Minister of Agriculture and Animal Resources of Rwanda.