



AFRICAN UNION  
**INTERAFRICAN BUREAU  
FOR ANIMAL RESOURCES**



## **PROMOTE ROLE OF WOMEN IN SMALL-MEDIUM ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT IN FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE SECTOR**

### **MEETING OF BUREAU MEMBERS MEETING OF THE AFRICAN WOMEN FISH PROCESSORS AND TRADERS NETWORK (AWFISHNET)**

12 - 13 September Cote D'ivoire, Abidjan.

#### **CONCEPT NOTE**

##### ***Introduction and Background information***

Fishery and aquaculture products remain an important source of food, nutrition, income and livelihoods for hundreds of millions of people in Africa. Recent statistics reveal that women make up more than one-fourth (27 %) of the workforce in the African fisheries and aquaculture sector. The great majority of these women are employed in post-harvest (91.5 %) making significant contribution to food security, livelihoods and household incomes. However, although gender has been on the international development agenda for a long time, many inequalities remain and the role of women in fishery and aquaculture is often not given the attention it deserves. Women remain marginalized within sector, both in terms of their fishing-related activities and their role in decision-making processes.

The African Union has developed a Policy Framework and Reform Strategy for Fisheries and Aquaculture in Africa (PFRS) and identified policy arenas on strengthening role of women in fisheries and aquaculture. This is to guarantee and sustainably strengthen the contribution of artisanal fisheries to poverty alleviation, food and nutritional security and socio-economic benefits of fishing communities specifically the fisherwomen in Africa.

The African Women Fish Processors and Traders Network (AWFishNET) was established, facilitated by AU-IBAR, with the objective to contribute to improving the welfare, working conditions and income of women in the fisheries sector (and especially women in the post-harvest sector) within the member states of the African Union. Some of the key objectives of this network are as follows::

1. Sharing of best practices, experiences, technologies and learning;
2. Strengthen the role and participation of fish processor and trader enterprises owned by women as SME's in the fisheries sector with the objective of improving access to markets, as well as expansion of markets and marketing opportunities, and thereby fostering the equitable participation of women fish processor and trader enterprises in intra-regional African fish trade

Some of the key recommendations from the Tanzania meeting in 2016 were:

- a. Continue to encourage the formation of national women's networks where they do not exist and the focal persons/association should conduct mapping of women associations in fish processing and trade in their respective countries.
- b. Share, document and demonstrate best practices to strengthen women's knowledge and skills in fish processing, running fish processing and trade as an SME business.

- c. Annually organize the 'African Women's Fish Processors and Traders Conference and Trade Fair' as a platform to where women and experts give presentations on various aspects for experience and knowledge sharing as well as demonstrate their products and best-practices for purposes of capacity building, networking and opening up new market and business opportunities.
- d. Make the website more active.

A follow-up meeting of the Bureau was again of the Bureau members were held in Tanzania in 2018 in a bid to operationalize some of the recommendations of the 2016 Tanzania meeting.

The objective of the present meeting would be provide a platform for bureau members and selected experts for sharing and documentation of best practices in fish processing technology and identification of opportunities for enhancing women SMEs in the fisheries and aquaculture sector. Specifically, the objectives would be:

- a. To enhance status of the formation of National networks for women fish processors and traders Knowledge amongst AWFISHNET members on the best practices for fish processing technologies, trade and market development
- b. Exchange of information on lessons and best practices in fish processing technologies, trade and marketing
- c. Compile challenges and opportunities affecting SME development for women in fish processing and trade in Africa and develop a capacity empowerment program
- d. To develop an AWFISHNET's capacity empowerment program that responds to the needs of the members.

The main outcomes of the two-day meeting would be:

1. Knowledge enhanced amongst AWFISHNET members on the best practices for fish processing technologies, trade and market development
2. A compilation of challenges and opportunities affecting Women fish processor and trader SME's in Africa and first draft of an AWFISHNET program

### **Participants**

The participants to the meeting shall include AWFISHNET Bureau members, AWFISHNET conference organizing committee, selected experts, facilitators, and AU-IBAR staff.