

Pan-Africa Policy Research Network for Fisheries & Aquaculture Formulation of Policy Briefs on Integrating Women and Youth in Fisheries and Aquaculture Value Chains and Business Development: Consolidation of Lessons from the 3rd AWAFISHNET and 8th ANAF Sessions

**Concept Note for a Writers-shop to be held in Libreville, Gabon, from 13-16
November 2019**

Background

Gender inequalities limit fisheries and aquaculture productivity and sustainability and, in so doing, undermine development agendas of African Union. Consequently, the AU has prioritized gender issues. For example, the AU theme for the 2015 Summit was "*Empowering our women, Securing our Food and improving our Nutrition*"; and emphasised on the effective implementation and delivery of nutrition and food security policies, plans and programmes for results and impact. In addition, the AU theme of 2016 was the "***African Year of Human Rights, in particular, with focus on the Rights of Women***". In July 2006, the Summit of the African Union in Banjul, the Gambia, adopted the African Youth Charter (AYC). The Charter is a political and legal document which serves as the strategic framework that gives direction to youth empowerment and development at the continental, regional and national levels. All these were milestones in the recognition of the importance of aligning food, nutrition, empowerment as well as Human Rights with women and youth rights. Just as these themes had put food, nutrition, empowerment as well as human rights at the forefront of the AU Agenda, it is critical for food systems, such as fisheries and aquaculture, to be reflected in the policy and advocacy discourses concerning women and youth.

The value provided by the fisheries sector as a whole in 2011 was estimated at more than US\$24 billion, representing 1.26% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of all African countries, with aquaculture producing an estimated value of almost US\$3 billion per year (de Graaf & Garibaldi 2014)¹. Furthermore, the fisheries sector as a whole employed 12.3 million people as full-time fishers or full-time and part-time processors, accounting for 2.1% of Africa's population of between 15 and 64 years old. Of these employed, 7.5% were engaged in aquaculture; with women accounting for 4% of those employed in aquaculture.

According to the UN, in 2019, African has the youngest population with those under the age of 25 years accounting for 60%. In some countries, this percentage is much higher (Malawi = 62%, Burundi = 65%; Uganda = 67%, Angola = 66%, Niger = 69%). Therefore, Africa will account for most of the growth of the world's population over the coming decades. For example, of the additional 2.0 billion people who may be added to the global population

¹ de Graaf, G. and Garibaldi, L. 2014. The Value of African Fisheries. Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Circular No. 1093, Rome, Italy

between 2019 and 2050, 1.05 billion (52 per cent) could be added in countries of sub-Saharan Africa (United Nations 2019)².

The Policy framework and reform strategy has a policy objective on women and youth development which is to include knowledge-based gender and youth considerations in policies, laws and plans. Although gender has been on the development agenda internationally for a long time, many inequalities remain and the role of women and youth in fisheries and aquaculture is often not documented and hence undervalued.

A key recommendation of the 2nd meeting of STC-Agriculture, Rural Development, Water and Environment in 2015 was for AU to develop business incubation frameworks for fisheries and aquaculture as part of the framework. Accordingly within the framework of the implementation of the first phase of the fisheries governance project, AU-IBAR developed the following:

1. GUIDELINES FOR DEVELOPING VIABLE AQUACULTURE BUSINESS MODELS IN AFRICA - BEST PRACTICES AND GUIDELINES TO SUPPORT COMMERCIAL AQUACULTURE ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT IN AFRICA
2. GUIDELINES TO SUPPORT DEVELOPMENT OF VIABLE AQUACULTURE EXTENSION SERVICE MODELS IN AFRICA - PROVISION OF EXTENSION SERVICES TO SUPPORT COMMERCIAL AQUACULTURE ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT IN AFRICA

The implementation of these guidelines has commenced with the two awareness raising and training workshop involving members of Annual Aquaculture Network for Africa (ANAF) and Bureau members of the African Women Fish Processors and Traders Network (AWFishNet).

During the Eighth Annual Aquaculture Network for Africa (ANAF) that was organised by the African Union Inter-African Bureau for Animal Resources (AU-IBAR) in collaboration with the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Secretariat, Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO) and the People and Government of Botswana, from the 13th to 16th August 2019 in Gaborone, Botswana, a number of recommendations were made. These included:

- a. AU-IBAR, RECs and RFBs should identify Best Practices in Gender-focussed aquaculture projects and share the lessons with AU member states in order to accelerate adoption of innovations.
- b. AU-IBAR was urged to use examples as concrete case studies or models for other countries to follow and for gaining political will in the sector.
- c. AU-IBAR should develop methodologies which MS can use to integrate gender in the CAADP fisheries and aquaculture process.
- d. AU-IBAR should develop Gender Indicators and monitoring plan and consolidate into the PFRS M&E frameworks.
- a. The Pan-African Policy Research Network for Fisheries and Aquaculture (PRNFAA) was urged to make available findings of research on gender and youth to policy makers.

² United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2019). World Population Prospects 2019: Highlights (ST/ESA/SER.A/423).

In addition, a follow-up meeting of the Bureau members of the African Women Fish Processors and Traders Network (AWFishNet) will be held in Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire from 12 to 13th September 2019. The aim of the meeting will be to provide a platform for bureau members and selected experts to share and document Best Practices in fish processing technology, as well as identify opportunities for enhancing women SMEs in the fisheries and aquaculture sector. It is for the outcomes of the 8th ANAF and the 2rd AWFishNet Sessions that African Union Inter-African Bureau for Animal Resources (AU-IBAR) jointly with the Pan-African Policy Research Network for Fisheries & Aquaculture wish to organize a writers-shop in order to consolidate experiences and Best Practices on women and youth in fisheries and aquaculture.

The workshop came up with the following set of recommendations:

- a. To explore possibilities of assisting them to transform into SMEs
- b. To diversify fish processing technologies that are cost effective and avail them to the women fish processors and traders. This will also help in improving revenues derived from the sale as well reducing the impact of climate change.
- c. Since the national network for women processors and traders is large, the necessary infrastructure communication channels (road transportation, ICT) remain a challenge. There is a need to assist women in the countries to share all the knowledge they have received on various platforms.
- d. The Bureau appreciated efforts by AU-IBAR in building their capacities in different aspects of their businesses and Network, and expressed request in continuous training in technology advancement in order to be able to transit from traditional to modern processing facilities
- e. The meeting recognised the importance of women fish processors and traders participating in relevant decision making platforms. The meeting urged AWFISHNET Bureau and members to develop an appropriate advocacy mechanism to influence decision making process.

Objectives of the writers-shop

- to consolidate information on Best Practices from the 8th ANAF and the 3rd AWFishNet Sessions into policy briefs that will contribute to the Policy Framework & Reform Strategy (PFRS) and African fisheries and aquaculture knowledge on women and youth;

- to consolidate the general knowledge about women's and youth's role in fisheries and aquaculture value chains into information pieces that will contribute to the African Fisheries and Aquaculture Report (2020);
- to devise a mechanism for disseminating the Best Practices to African Member States through the African Fisheries Reform Mechanism; and
- to identify key research issues and questions to be integrated into the Pan-African Policy Research Network Plan of Action.

Expected outcomes

- A consolidated report of Best Practices in the role of women and youth in fisheries and aquaculture value chains,
- A comprehensive list of policy briefs on role of women and youth in fisheries and aquaculture value chains,
- A comprehensive Dissemination and Outreach Strategy aimed at increasing the visibility of the role of women and youth in fisheries and aquaculture value chains,
- Information pieces and new policy research areas for 2020, and
- Enhanced information-sharing among practitioners of gender issues in fisheries and aquaculture in Africa.

Approach to the writers-shop

Participants, mainly comprising of about 20 people (including representatives of women and youth), some of your bureau members of both Pan-African Policy research Network and AWFishNet, as well as invited gender practitioners (sound and writers), will be expected to prepare short papers and presentations highlighting experiences and best practices from on-going women and youth fisheries and aquaculture initiatives. The presentations will also provide key policy issues that need to be taken into account by MS, gender development practitioners, fish farmers, fish traders, policy makers and fisheries and aquaculture management institutions. Presentations will also focus on key breakthroughs with regards to women and youth empowerment methodologies that need to be scaled up by African Union Member States, as well as those working on issues of women and youth empowerment.

Venue and dates

The writers-shop will be held Libreville, Gabon during the fourth quarter of 2019.