



## **African Fisheries and Aquaculture – experiences from the NEPAD-FAO Fish Programme**

The [side event](#) on African Fisheries and Aquaculture – experiences from the NEPAD-FAO Fish Programme (NFFP), and beyond, which took place during the 31<sup>st</sup> Session of the [FAO Committee on Fisheries](#), was attended by over a hundred participants and covered a broad range of topics. Dr. Sloans Chimatiro from the [NEPAD Agency](#) chaired the event, and in his remarks underscored the importance of the NFFP in helping the NEPAD Agency create a strong platform for coherence, complementary to the International Partnership for African Fisheries Governance and Trade (PAF) which was funded by the [UK Department for International Development \(DFID\)](#). He further reported that the side event would be delivered through presentations of panelists on the following:

- Outcomes of the AU's Joint Conference of Ministers of Agriculture, Rural Development, Fisheries and Aquaculture, 28 April - 2 May 2014, by Mohammed Seisay, Senior Fisheries Officer, the African Union – Inter-African Bureau for Animal Resources (AU-IBAR)
- NFFP outcomes and future perspectives by Gunilla Greig, NFFP Programme Coordinator
- Stop Illegal Fishing experience, a testimony by Hon. Peter A.G. Sinon, Minister of Natural Resources, Seychelles
- Results of The Value of African Fisheries study<sup>1</sup> by Luca Garibaldi, FAO Fisheries Statistician
- Applying the Ecosystem Approach (EAF) in the Lake Chad by Mamane Na-Andi Tahir, Fisheries and Aquaculture Officer, Lake Chad Basin Commission
- Enhancing Resilience to Climate Change and Disasters in Africa by Ms. Sandy Davies, NFDS/SIF.

Dr. Jia Jiansan, in the FAO welcome address, noted that important and successful steps had been taken towards increasing coherence between partners and initiatives in the fisheries and aquaculture sector in Africa. He was pleased to note that the NFFP and the PAF Programme had been implemented in tandem with coordination provided from the NEPAD Agency in Midrand, South Africa, and that the results achieved by these two programmes illustrate the crucial and innovative role of African and non-African international partnerships.

In the discussion following the six presentations, the activities undertaken in Lake Chad countries were commended, but concern raised about the security situation and the implications for the Programme and, of course, beyond. The AU-NEPAD Senior Liaison Officer to the Rome-based UN agencies drew the attention of participants to the importance of Lake Chad to the region, and that urgent measures are required to address both the continued shrinking of the lake and the security issues.

Representatives of two small-scale fishers' organizations (the West African Association for the Development of Artisanal Fisheries, WADAF, and the African Confederation of Artisanal Fisheries Professional Organizations, CAOPA) acknowledged the value of the post-harvest equipment and services provided in Lake Chad and Lake Volta riparian countries. A testimony was given by a female processor from CAOPA, on the income and health benefits her group has experienced in the year of operation with the FTT-Thiaroye (an innovative fish processing technique promoted within NFFP).

Participants commented on the promotion of market-led aquaculture development in the implementation of the Policy Framework and Reform Strategy for Fisheries and Aquaculture in Africa, underlining the importance that small pelagics – a very important source of protein for many households in Africa – should not be increasingly used as fish feed when developing the sector. They also stressed the need to promote participatory approaches involving non-state actors in decision-making when implementing the policy framework and reform strategy.

The Hon. Minister Sinon noted the successful collaboration among the Seychelles and six other countries with the FISH-i Africa initiative to combat illegal fishing, with the hope that their work could be extended to other regions.

The Chair emphasized that partnership and participation is key to this programme as well as the wider collaborative work of the African Union Commission and the NEPAD Agency with their partners – and contributions of professional organizations and involvement of both men and women is crucial. He noted that the NFFP endeavors to focus more on inland fisheries, including in generating information about the sector's importance and contributions, and the impacts that climate change is having on inland water bodies in particular. The Chair also noted that, for Lake Chad specifically, geo-political aspects are also severely affecting the livelihoods of fishing communities – and beyond. He concluded by highlighting that the wide range of

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<sup>1</sup> The study will be published as an FAO Fisheries Circular - [fao.org/fishery/publications/en](http://fao.org/fishery/publications/en)

collaborative efforts undertaken aims at providing best practices – such as the important work of the FISH-i Africa initiative – for replication in other regions.