REPUBLIC OF BOTSWANA

TALKING POINTS

FOR

FOR HONOURABLE MOLEBATSI S. MOLEBATSI
ASSISTANT MINISTER OF AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT AND FOOD SECURITY

ON THE OCCASION OF THE

35TH SESSION OF FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANISATIONS' COMMITTEE OF FISHRIES (COFI35)

5 - 9 SEPTEMBER, 2022
ROME, ITALY

- Thank you Mr. Chair.
- Director General of the Food and Agriculture Organisation, His Excellency Dr. Qu Dongyu.
- Distinguished Ministers and Vice Minister's in charge of Fisheries and Aquaculture.
- Ladies and Gentlemen.

1. I take this opportunity to thank and commend the FAO for the work undertaken to prepare for COFI35.

2. Your hard work is evident in the various reports on important issues such as the SOFIA Report; Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fisheries; the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs); the implications of climate change and of great importance for Botswana - small-scale and artisanal fisheries. I take this opportunity to thank and applaud your dedication.

3. I must say that I am very happy to be here today. Botswana recently took the decision to become a member of the COFI. Our motivation being the rapid growth of the fisheries and particularly aquaculture sector.

4. This growth has had a positive correlation to the improvement of important indicators such as women and youth empowerment, employment and nutrition. Therefore, Botswana wants to ensure that the fisheries and aquaculture sectors continue to grow and become sustainable.

5. We have developed national strategies namely the: i) Botswana National Aquaculture Strategy, which aims to lay out the framework for development of the aquaculture industry in Botswana and the ii) Botswana Aquatic Animal Health Strategy which addresses aquatic animal diseases and bio-security issues. These policies are in-line with regional strategic policy direction in the Southern African Development Community (SADC).

6. It is fact that Botswana's fisheries and aquaculture sector is small. The sector is at infancy, with a total annual production of 500 tons per annum, against an approximate national demand of 5000tons per annum. What is also fact, is that the sector is important to the rural communities, women and youth of Botswana. We therefore, have an obligation to develop the sector.

7. In this regard, Botswana's aim is to develop the aquaculture sector into competitive and sustainable Small and Medium-size Enterprises (SME) that have developed value chains.

8. I am pleased to share that we are in the process of developing an aquaculture policy through support from FAO Technical Cooperation Programme. I thank the FAO for this support.

9. I am acutely aware that we still have work to do to address the gaps in our legislative framework - which is an integral facet to the development of fisheries and aquaculture. Other domestic challenges are limitations in: resource allocation, technical capacities, limited feed production, the quality of fingerlings as well as lack of genetically improved indigenous species.

10. To address these challenges we need partnerships, we need friends to work with, exchange ideas with and seek wise counsel from. This is part of the reason why I am here today – to find lasting solutions to bolster the sustainable growth of the fisheries and aquaculture sector in Botswana. Our primary objective is to support the sustainability of Botswana's rural, artisanal and subsistence fish farming communities.

11. **Ladies and Gentlemen,** yesterday, I listened attentively to our deliberations. What I do know is that we face similar challenges and hold the same aspirations.

12. As Botswana, we still have work to do. I am acutely aware that there are gaps in our legislative framework - which is integral to the development of fisheries and aquaculture. Other domestic issues are limitations in: i) resources, ii) technical capacities, iii) limited feed production, iv) the quality of fingerlings, v) technology transfer, vi) science based solutions, as well as, vii) lack of genetically improved indigenous species.

13. We have made strides and have demarcated certain areas in Botswana for fish farming. This is only a drop in the ocean of the solutions we must find. Other areas that we are looking to use to further develop fisheries and aquaculture - especially small-scale and artisanal fisheries are: research, training, and capacity building.

14. We also aim to garner support for key players such as Non-Governmental Organisations (NGO's), and marginalised groups (women, youth, and people living with disabilities). These groups need to have information on key fisheries and aquaculture impactors such as climate change issues and exchange of best practices. Our approaches are limitless and can involve the use of south- south and triangular cooperation as a solution.

15. In view of the foregoing, Botswana is open to cooperation with the FAO, FAO Members and other partners to achieve sustainable management of fisheries resources and the SDGs.

I thank you for your attention.