

**COMMITTEE FOR INLAND FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE OF AFRICA (CIFAA)**

***FAO-NEPAD Seminar of the Permanent Secretaries or Equivalent in the Ministries in charge of  
Inland Fisheries and Aquaculture in CIFAA Member States on the:***

**“Review of the Committee on Inland Fisheries and Aquaculture of Africa (CIFAA)”**

**The African Pride 15 on Orange Hotel**

**Cape Town, South Africa -26-27 March 2012**

**A Prospectus**

**1. Background**

At its Sixteenth Session, the Committee for Inland Fisheries and Aquaculture of Africa (CIFAA) has suggested that its role and performance as a Regional Fishery Body (RFB) be re-examined. The request stems from increasingly poor attendance of CIFAA meetings to such a point where quorum is sometimes not reached. For several reasons, attendance at sessions has been sporadic in nature, representation low and inconsistent, and characterized by high inactive members syndrome. These situations have adversely affected the performance of the Committee.

Thus, the Committee created an ad hoc Working Group to make recommendations on the future role of CIFAA. The Session further recommended that the Secretariat prepare background material on the issue to facilitate the task of the Working Group.

This initiative by CIFAA Member States to review its role and performance is in line with widespread awareness by the international community, and Regional Fishery Bodies (RFBs) themselves, of the need for strengthened RFBs in a climate of resource depletion, accelerated environmental deterioration and financial constraints. The initiative was also echoed by African stakeholders at different meetings of the NEPAD FAO Fish Programme (NFFP). For CIFAA, adaptation to current circumstances through strengthening and reform of its apparatus would be a positive step towards enhancing fisheries and aquaculture sustainability in its Member Countries.

This meeting is organized and entirely supported by the NEPAD-FAO Fish Programme (NFFP).

## 2. Background Material of the Meeting

In support of this initiative, FAO and NEPAD's Coordination and Planning Agency (NPCA) have undertaken the production of an "OPTIONS" paper that describes the possible structure and operating procedures available to CIFAA as an FAO Regional Fishery Body. The two institutions have also produced a "VISION" paper that describes how CIFAA could serve its Members. A "QUESTIONNAIRE", to be distributed to Members to elicit input and promote their participation in the review process, has also been produced.

The OPTIONS paper identified four options available to CIFAA in order to improve its long-term functioning and strengthen its role as the Continent-wide RFB:

- CIFAA could maintain its present status as a body under Article VI of the FAO Constitution but with an improved structure and improved "Rules of Procedure";
- CIFAA could be transformed or converted into a Regional Fishery Body under Article XIV of the FAO Constitution with a "0" growth budget scenario (compared to its present status);
- CIFAA could be converted into a Regional Fishery Body under Article XIV of the FAO Constitution with an independent budget provided by the Members;
- CIFAA could be replaced with an Independent Intergovernmental Organization with an independent budget.

A fifth option would be that CIFAA could be abolished.

The VISION paper identified four major areas where CIFAA could serve its Members:

- Technical matters concerning the management and development of aquaculture and inland fisheries;
- Administrative matters and capacity building;
- CIFAA's role in the African Multilateral Framework.

## 3. Participants and Venue

The meeting is organized for Permanent Secretaries or Equivalent within the Ministries in charge of Inland Fisheries and Aquaculture in CIFAA Member States.

The meeting will be held in the evenings of **26 and 27 of March, 2012**, and in parallel with the Sixth Session of the FAO COFI Sub-Committee on Aquaculture at:

***The African Pride 15 on Orange Hotel  
Corner Grey's Pass and Orange Street  
Cape Town, South Africa.***

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#### **4. Objective of the meeting**

The objectives of the meeting are for Permanent Secretaries (or Equivalent) to:

- Review issues, constraints and opportunities associated with the effective functioning of CIFAA as an FAO Regional Fishery Body;
- Discuss possible solutions to constraints to CIFAA effectiveness and review options within the FAO structure for improving this effectiveness;
- Identify key areas of emphasis for CIFAA; and
- Make any recommendations, as appropriate, on the future of CIFAA.

#### **5. Way forward**

The meeting of Permanent Secretaries within the Ministries in charge of Inland Fisheries and Aquaculture is one step in a process. A similar meeting was organized on 28 February 2012 in Rome for the “Africa Group” (Member Countries Representatives to FAO).

The deliberations and recommendations from the meeting will be forwarded to the CIFAA ad-hoc working group, the Sixth Session of the FAO COFI Sub-Committee on Aquaculture<sup>1</sup>, for information and inputs, and to the 30<sup>th</sup> Session of COFI to be held in Rome on 9-12 July, 2012 for information. They will also be presented to the Conference of African Ministers of Fisheries and Aquaculture (CAMFA) and, finally, to the 17<sup>th</sup> Session of CIFAA for decision.

The goal of this consultative and participatory approach is to associate as closely as possible CIFAA Member states in the reform process of their body by inviting as much input from them as possible.

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<sup>1</sup> As discussed above, this Session which will be held in Cape Town from 26-30 March 2012 in the same conference rooms as this meeting.

## 6. Contacts:

For further information, please contact:

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