



منظمة الأغذية  
والزراعة  
للأمم المتحدة

联合国  
粮食及  
农业组织

Food  
and  
Agriculture  
Organization  
of  
the  
United  
Nations

Organisation  
des  
Nations  
Unies  
pour  
l'alimentation  
et  
l'agriculture

Продовольственная и  
сельскохозяйственная  
организация  
Объединенных  
Наций

Organización  
de las  
Naciones  
Unidas  
para la  
Agricultura  
y la  
Alimentación

## COMMITTEE FOR INLAND FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE OF AFRICA

### Fifteenth Session

Lusaka, Zambia, 9 – 11 December 2008

### STRENGTHENING CIFAA WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF REGIONAL COOPERATION INITIATIVES

#### SUMMARY

The present paper aims at starting discussions and identifying potential areas of cooperation and coordination between the Committee for Inland Fisheries and Aquaculture of Africa (CIFAA) and existing regional mechanisms and programmes in the region. The first part of the document highlights the real gains and potentials of inland fisheries and aquaculture in Africa while stressing the need for improvement. The second part argues for regional cooperation as a way ahead for CIFAA. A list of potential regional partners and programmes to liaise with is provided in the third part as well as possible challenges. The Session is invited to comment on the analysis made and provide guidance on the way forward for CIFAA.

## **INTRODUCTION**

1. Inland fisheries play a crucial role in food security and poverty reduction in Africa. Aquaculture now appears to be perched on the threshold of gaining real and sustainable importance in terms of fish supply and economic contribution. There is, however, still significant room for further enhancement and development of the fisheries and aquaculture sector. CIFAA could play a critical role in addressing a number of relevant issues relating to inland fisheries management and aquaculture promotion which remain to be resolved but this requires coordinated regional efforts.

## **INLAND FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE IN AFRICA: STATUS<sup>1</sup> AND CHALLENGES**

2. African fishery and aquatic resources, including the natural environments that support them, provide a wide range of important direct social and economic benefits. Some 11 million Africans depend on the fisheries sector in one way or another for their livelihoods with an estimated 34 million dependent family members. Fish contributes up to 50 percent of animal protein in the diet of many African countries. An increasing part of the production is traded internationally.

3. The production from inland fisheries continues to grow at a steady pace in Africa and contribute to the national economy of many African countries. The added value produced by the inland fisheries further contributes substantially to the creation of national wealth. Thus inland fisheries play a crucial role in food security and poverty reduction.

4. Aquaculture has a proven potential to generate a wide range of benefits. Furthermore, aquaculture now appears to be perched on the threshold of gaining real and sustainable importance in terms of fish supply and economic contribution.

5. The current situation, as described above, can be improved even more, since there is still significant room for further enhancement and development of the fisheries and aquaculture sector in Africa. Well-managed and more supported inland capture fisheries and aquaculture could make more substantive contributions to GDP than is currently the case.

6. On the other side, there are a number of negative elements which cannot be ignored and which constitute serious constraints and obstacles to the enhancement and development of fisheries and aquaculture in Africa. Worse, they can lead to their serious deterioration. In particular, the unsustainable levels of exploitation of fish resources and the destruction of aquatic ecosystems which are brought about by, among others, the failure of sector governance systems and illegal fishing, inhibit the capacity of the fisheries sector to respond to the pressures of a growing population and of an increasing demand for fish.

7. In the case of capture fisheries, the challenge is to safeguard current benefits whilst identifying how to develop these further in the future.

8. A key requirement is to implement a reform process in the governance of capture fisheries (particularly institutions and instruments). One important element will be to ensure the sustainability of the fish resource base, taking an ecosystem-wide perspective. Another crucial element is that the institutional framework provides the incentives for the sustainable development of the net wealth available from the rational exploitation of fish resources.

---

<sup>1</sup> Documents CIFAA/XV/2008/5, CIFAA/XV/2008/6 and CIFAA/XV/2008/7 provide more detailed information. They must be taken into account in reviewing this paper.

9. Within the framework of effective institutional arrangements and management systems, revenue enhancement (through improved marketing, better post harvest practices, more trade and so on) and cost-effective exploitation systems can help to increase the sustainable benefits.

10. An important part of improved governance and sustainability is that appropriate information be delivered to management authorities in a timely and useable manner. Although there is widespread recognition throughout Africa of the importance of effective fish information systems, much remains to be done in the design and implementation of such systems.

11. Developing aquaculture in Africa has proved to be a difficult challenge. Past experience provides a number of lessons. First, it is important to address the full range of issues that must be resolved if sustainable aquaculture is to be developed (environmental, economic, social etc). Second, more emphasis has to be placed on aquaculture as a business, providing attractive investment opportunities in order to generate the anticipated livelihoods and economic growth benefits. Much of the early effort to develop African aquaculture targeted integrated subsistence fish farming. Whilst these low-input family systems remain important to many rural dwellers, in order to make a significant impact on national fish supply, poverty alleviation or economic growth, the challenge now is to develop successful aqua-businesses alongside these systems.

12. There are a **number of regional mechanisms and programmes in the Region which have been dealing with these issues in recent years**. Improved cooperation between these existing mechanisms is needed for effective regional conservation and management measures. Strengthening CIFAA's role with regard regional cooperation is a possible way forward in this regard.

#### **CIFAA AND THE NECESSITY FOR REGIONAL COOPERATION: THE WAY AHEAD**

13. At its Fifty-Sixth Session in June 1971, the Council adopted Resolution 1/56 by which it authorized the Director-General to establish a Committee for Inland Fisheries of Africa under Article VI, paragraph 2 of the Constitution, as an advisory body.

14. The original mandate of the Committee was to promote the development of inland fisheries in Africa. At its Fourteenth Session held in Accra, Ghana, from 22 to 24 November 2006, the Committee for Inland Fisheries recommended to the Council that its name be changed in order to reflect more accurately its work and activities concerning both inland fisheries and aquaculture. The Council during its Thirty-third Session (Rome, 14-16 November 2007) agreed that the name of the Committee should henceforth be Committee for Inland Fisheries and Aquaculture in Africa (CIFAA). CIFAA's current mandate is to promote the development of inland fisheries and aquaculture in Africa.

15. A strong asset of CIFAA is its membership. CIFAA has currently 36 members, all from the Region. These are: Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Democratic Republic of Congo, Republic of Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Kenya, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mauritius, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Sudan, Swaziland, Tanzania, Togo, Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe.

16. CIFAA has regional cooperation enshrined in its terms of reference. The terms of reference describe CIFAA's mandated role primarily as promoting/coordinating a wide range of activities and subject areas, including national and regional research programmes, interchange of statistical, biological and environmental information, efforts on a national and regional basis to prevent damage to the aquatic environment, education and training.

17. Currently, **CIFAA's collaboration with regional groupings and networks dealing with fisheries and aquaculture in Africa is carried out on an ad hoc basis. This could be improved by putting in place mechanisms that could strengthen and formalize these relationships.**

18. Regional cooperation is an important means by which the developing countries can accelerate their economic and social development. There are several reasons why it has become a relevant notion and why it should be encouraged and supported. African countries are now trading more and more among themselves, which suggests that groups of countries should cooperate to better exploit their economic complementarities. Greater internal integration not only benefits the economies involved, but can complement the process of global trade liberalization.

19. The fishery and aquaculture sector offers opportunities for economic cooperation, and time has come for CIFAA Members to take "quick and decisive action" to seize these opportunities. CIFAA could play a critical role in addressing a number of relevant issues relating to inland fisheries management and aquaculture promotion which remain to be resolved and which require coordinated regional efforts.

20. There is a **strong need to explore new ways**. Building more on opportunities offered by the framework of regional cooperation initiatives is certainly one if not the most appropriate way to move ahead.

21. Expected outcomes of this approach will include: strengthening national and regional policy development, implementation and access to information; encouraging more effective participation and advocacy in international fora and the creation of globally recognized frameworks and tools; improving mobilization of resources and overall performance, increasing capacity to operate in multidisciplinary contexts; and boost effectiveness and efficiency savings; coordinating scientific research and contributing to the region's battle against illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing.

22. CIFAA will come with the entire experience and know-how of the FAO and is therefore a vital partner in the region.

#### **POSSIBLE PARTNERS AND POSSIBLE AREAS OF COOPERATION**

23. The paragraphs below list African organizations and programmes with a mandate and/or activities in fisheries and aquaculture with which CIFAA could coordinate and cooperate.

- a) *Regional Fisheries Bodies not established under the FAO Constitution, including the Sub-Regional Fisheries Commission (SRFC), the Regional Fisheries Committee for the Gulf of Guinea (COREP), the Fishery Committee of the West Central Gulf of Guinea (FCWC), the Lake Victoria Fisheries Organization (LVFO) and the Ministerial Conference on Fishing Resources Cooperation among African States Bordering the Atlantic Ocean (ATLAFCO)*: Despite specificities of their respective legal frameworks, the main objective of these bodies is essentially to harmonize the long-term policies of their member States in the preservation, conservation and exploitation of the fisheries and aquaculture resources for the benefit of the respective populations.
- b) *The African Union-New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD)*: NEPAD is designed to address the current challenges facing the African continent. Issues such as the escalating poverty levels, underdevelopment and the continued marginalization of Africa needed a new radical intervention, spearheaded by African leaders, to develop a new Vision that would guarantee Africa's Renewal. The African Union recognizes the importance of fisheries and aquaculture in meeting the NEPAD Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP). In order to catalyze action in support of this sector, NEPAD carried out extensive regional consultations in the areas of inland fisheries, coastal and marine fisheries, and aquaculture, with technical support from FAO and the WorldFish Centre. These consultations generated an Africa-wide AU/NEPAD Action Plan for the Development of African Fisheries and Aquaculture (<http://www.fishforall.org/ffa->

[summit/outcomes.asp](#)) that was finalized and adopted by the NEPAD Fish for All Summit in Abuja, Nigeria in August 2005.

- c) ***The Aquaculture Network for Africa (ANAF)***: the 2005 Fish for All Summit identified the need to “establish a regional network of aquaculture policy practitioners, supported by other leading government planning sectors, to accelerate the development of aquaculture strategies and their integration into wider economic strategies at national level”. The ANAF will be responsible for coordinating and facilitating the following: (i) scientific and technical information exchange in aquaculture, (ii) regional and subregional collaborative aquaculture research, (iii) training of fish farmers and extension workers and (iv) technology transfer between countries. The main objectives are to maximize and optimize utilization of the scarce resources for aquaculture development in Africa and to foster sustainable aquaculture development in the region as a means to fight poverty, ensure food security, provide employment and ensure rural development.
- d) ***The Regional Economic Groupings (REGs)***: there are several REGs including Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (***COMESA***), Economic and Monetary Union of West Africa (***EMUWA***), Economic Community Of West African States (***ECOWAS***), Communauté Économique et Monétaire en Afrique Centrale (***CEMAC***), Southern African Development Community (***SADC***), etc. They all have the promotion of inland fisheries and aquaculture in their agenda. Some illustrations are that the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) launched a process to develop a regional fisheries and aquaculture strategy in line with NEPAD's Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) at a meeting in Nairobi, Kenya on 2-3 September 2008. The strategy aims at preparing a framework for developing the potential for sustained growth of the fish sector in the COMESA region. It will be used to guide COMESA in developing specific intervention programmes, implemented by member states in regional collaboration and with well defined roles for private sector and civil society agencies. UEMOA is engaged in a similar process aiming at harmonization of fisheries legislation and development of a common policy. A regional fisheries policy for ECOWACS, a component of the common agricultural policy is also under development. CEMAC has integrated the Committee for Fisheries of Gulf of Guinea (COREP) in its institutional framework.

24. Common regional problems require common solutions. There is a high degree of transferability of technologies and problem solving in the Region, provided that strong commitment to promote effective partnership with the above mentioned organizations and programmes is effective. This approach seeks to ensure coherence of policy advice provided by international organizations and, at the same time, to provide support and technical assistance in areas that have been identified as priority by the stakeholders. The following are some examples:

- ***Strengthening the capacity of government institutions and the social partners*** to improve the governance of the inland fisheries and aquaculture;
- ***Share and Coordinate Resources and Expertise***: by disseminating existing knowledge as well as sharing complementary resources these partnerships help build capacity, particularly in developing countries;
- ***Advocacy***;
- ***Harness Markets for Development***: intra-regional trade is critical, and is highlighted by NEPAD in its reference documents. It could conceivably be facilitated by CIFAA partnering with the private sector to support the development and expansion of sustainable markets, regionally and globally through producer networks;

- 
- *Development of regional standards* not only for food stuffs, but for production inputs and even technical assistance, monitoring tools (e.g., EIAs) etc.

25. Possible critical difficulties/constraints to be faced are:

- Lack of political will, ownership;
- Funding problems;
- Geopolitical situation / Institutional instability.

26. In addition, activities and actions called for in the framework of CIFAA may be expected to receive a strong support through the FAO Special Programme for Aquaculture Development in Africa (SPADA). SPADA's goal is to assist African countries to reduce poverty and increase food security by enhancing the supply of and access to fish through the sustainable development of aquaculture, while contributing to overall national and regional economic and rural development. At regional level, the programme is anticipated to work closely with the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) in implementing its Action Plan including assistance to the recently established Aquaculture Network for Africa (ANAF).

#### **SUGGESTED ACTION BY THE COMMISSION**

26. Current and future challenges of CIFAA point to the need for appropriate action in order to strengthen the Committee impact on the inland fisheries and aquaculture sectors in the region. The meeting is invited to consider whether improved regional cooperation is a possible way forward for CIFAA and to provide guidance to members and FAO Secretariat on how to further improve the Committee's efficiency and effectiveness through regional cooperation:

- a) Agree on a strategy for intraregional cooperation;
- b) List indicative regional activities to be undertaken to give effect to the priorities;
- c) Identify for each activity the regional partner institutions and fora to be contacted for improved cooperation and coordination;
- d) Identify what needs to be done from CIFAA's side (Members and Secretariat): short term, medium term and long term;
- e) Identify the need to revise CIFAA TORs in the light of the above.