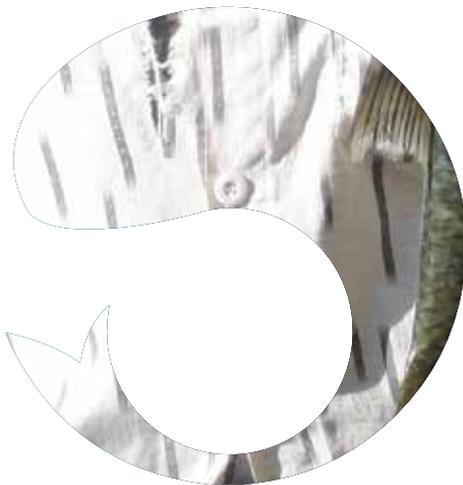


THE PAN-AFRICAN FISHERIES
AND AQUACULTURE POLICY FRAMEWORK
AND REFORM STRATEGY:
KEY POLICY MESSAGES

TRANSITION TO SUSTAINABILITY,
PROFITABILITY AND
EQUITABLE DISTRIBUTION





Executive Summary



Market-led and sustainable development strategies need to be put in place, to realize the full potential of the fisheries and aquaculture sector for wealth creation, social benefits and development of the African economy.



Creating awareness of the potential and importance of the sector - based on current and emerging trends, challenges and needs - as well as enhancing the capacity of governments and institutions are critical, in order to ensure sustainable development of the sector.



Enhancing conservation and sustainable use of fisheries resources require governance and institutional arrangements that ensure societal contribution generated by the sector have the greatest impacts at the most appropriate level.



Development of sustainable small-scale fisheries will increase the contribution of the sector towards poverty alleviation, food and nutrition security and socio-economic development of fishing communities.



Promoting responsible and equitable fish trade and marketing would significantly harness the benefits of Africa's fisheries and aquaculture endowments through accelerated trade and marketing outcomes.



Strengthening South-South (bilateral and regional) cooperation and coordinated mechanisms among Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and Regional Fishery Bodies (RFBs) will foster coherence of fisheries and aquaculture policies and development and their adoption and adaptation.



Africa should increase and consolidate the "African Voice" in the governance and management of high seas fisheries in order to substantially enhance the benefits accruing to the Member States associated with exploitation of high seas resources.

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Introduction: Challenges and Opportunities

The fishery sector of most states that are members of the African Union (AU) consists of capture fisheries and aquaculture. The sector generates a variety of benefits, including nutrition and food security, livelihoods, employment, exports and foreign currency and conservation and biodiversity value that are of global significance. However, several factors are putting risk on these benefits, and they include the following three:

Open Access Character of the Capture Fisheries:

The open access character of African fisheries has resulted in overexploitation and because of fairly high fish prices. This has led to overfishing, lower catches, changes in the community composition and structure of fished ecosystems, fishing down of the trophic levels of food webs, and increased incidences of Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing.

Governance:

The key challenge affecting fisheries management and aquaculture development in Africa is inadequate governance which has led to inadequate transparency and accountability, incoherent policies, limited structured participation of resource users and non-state actors in the formulation of policies and management of the resources.

Institutional Weaknesses:

In many Member States, the legal, policy and institutional frameworks are not crafted to suit the unique features of fisheries and aquaculture. This has resulted in mismatches of fisheries policies with national development goals.

However, opportunities do exist for the fisheries and aquaculture sector to contribute to the national, regional and continental development agenda. The following two are key:

Political Will:

Political will is evident in many countries to engage in and reform their fisheries and develop sustainable aquaculture. The AU has put in place a number of instruments to support fisheries and aquaculture management. These include the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP), New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) Action Plan for the Development of African Fisheries and Aquaculture and the Conference of African Ministers of Fisheries and Aquaculture (CAMFA). Donor support for sector development and the willingness of stakeholders and Community-Based Organisations (CBOs) to be involved in the sector is high. Institutional arrangements and management frameworks for cooperative management of shared ecosystems and resources exist continent-wide. In recent years, Member States have engaged themselves to strengthen the "African Voice" in international platforms.

High Demands for Fish Globally and Continent-wide:

World-wide the food sector is undergoing structural changes as a result of growing incomes, modifications of demographic structure, emerging new lifestyles, globalization, and liberalization of fish trade and emergence of new markets. In Africa, similar changes are happening leading to the long-term changes in the demand trends for food. In particular, demand for fish and fishery commodities remains positive. The UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) estimated that annual demand will increase by three percent, leading to major shortfalls in supplies from both fisheries and aquaculture by 2015. While the shortfalls will be filled by imports, this deficit provides an opportunity for improved management of fisheries as well as increased production from aquaculture.

The Theory of Change

The management focus prior to the first CAMFA emphasized more on biological productivity and setting targets for sustainable biological exploitation to the almost total negligence of economic, social, welfare and food and nutrition security considerations. This might have been as a result of pressure from more dominant actors in the public policy space, namely scientific establishments, financial institutions, foreign development partners and governments.

Although policies aimed at regulating fishing efforts are critical for maintaining production and supply of fish products, policy makers have put little focus on the role of fisheries in the national economic development, food and nutrition security and the need to place the optimisation of these benefits to the centre of national development planning. The obstacle to this has been the inherent complexity of the fisheries sector which has led to simplification of management options based on scientific knowledge that is narrow and often confined to silos of specialisations. Policies formulated for simple biological assemblage of species structure should differ from those prepared to suit the management of catching of multiple species fisheries, serving resource-poor producers as well as specialised regional and international markets.

The important issue is to recognize that African fisheries and aquaculture are very complex and that a one-size-fit-all set of policies and institutional mechanisms are inappropriate. Therefore, policy and governance mechanisms need to take into account the specific conditions of the country or communities to which they are applied.

The CAMFA I which was held in 2010 in Banjul, The Gambia, recognized the potential of the African fisheries sector but also noted the complexity of the sector as well as myriads of problems afflicting to it. In this regard, CAMFA 1 recommended, inter alia, that the AU put in place a mechanism for broad-based participatory continental policy dialogue and fisheries management and support to Member States, to strengthen policy coherence in the national sector with regard to CAADP, in order to enhance the role of fish in food security, poverty alleviation and trade development, while developing fisheries management plans that integrate rights-based and other economically rational management approaches that foster wealth creation in fisheries.

To help guide Member States to consider, develop and implement policy and governance reforms that are inclusive and more balance, six guiding principles were recommended by the first CAMFA in 2010.

Increase Fisheries and Aquaculture Productivity

- The first principle highlights the need to increase yields of fisheries and aquaculture. Notwithstanding FAO's caution that 30% of stocks were overexploited, depleted or recovering, increase in quantities of fish catches may only be realized if requisite harvesting strategies are applied on the stocks that are allowed to recover. Policies should focus on supporting countries and communities to achieve higher returns on factors of production including labour and capital. However, this should take into account the trade-offs between reduced fishing efforts in short terms and long-term biomass gains. Growth is likely to be sustained in the aquaculture sub-sector, as long as regulatory frameworks are applied to guide sustainable production. Investments in scientific research and innovation are critical to generate knowledge and enhance its transfer to improve aquaculture production.

Improving Profitability of Fish Enterprises

- The second principle is to ensure that fisheries and aquaculture enterprises are profitable in order to provide incentive to producers to increase production. Quality of public investments should be improved in order to facilitate business sector investments and make fishing and fish farming and marketing more profitable. These policies should include strategies which accelerate diversification of fish and fisheries products into high value, knowledge-intensive products that create jobs and reduce poverty. Particular attention should be focused on small and medium enterprises by enhancing their entrepreneurial capacity as well as access to investment financing.

Enhancing sustainability

- The third principle is to ensure that fishing and fish farming activities do not compromise the capacity of the resources to produce more fish in the future. The Pan-African Fisheries Policy and Reform Strategy provides policy options and strategies which will enhance biodiversity conservation and ecological sustainability of the fisheries and aquaculture systems. It will assist countries to develop guidelines regarding issues that affect fisheries and aquaculture sustainability and provide benchmarks for tracking performance indicators which point to the improvements in environmental sustainability.

Wealth Generation

- The fourth principle emphasizes the need for reforms in the fisheries sector aimed at ensuring sustained social and economic benefits, but also to generate and sustain wealth from fisheries. The Pan-African Fisheries Policy Framework and Reform Strategy clearly demonstrates that well-managed fisheries can produce much higher profits. And because of the renewable nature of fisheries, such profits may be generated continuously. However, it is critical to know that the wealth generating potential of fisheries can only be realized if requisite governance and harvesting mechanisms are put in place. Critical to this process is the need for African countries to deal with open access to fisheries exploitation and put in place mechanisms to support vulnerable fishing communities by redistributing the wealth.



Social Welfare, Nutrition and Food Security

- The fifth principle recognizes that fisheries provide healthy, high nutritious value and affordable food to mostly poor communities. Therefore, linking the contribution of fish to CAADP Pillar III (food and nutrition security) and Millennium Development Goal (MDG) II (reduction of poverty), the Pan-African Fisheries Policy Framework & Reform Strategy is crafted in such a way that it supports these goals, while at the same time providing a balance for increasing sustainable yield and raising economic returns.

Regional Collaborative Management and Strengthening South-South Cooperation

- Fish don't know national borders and fishers follow the fish cross national boundaries; hence not one single country can manage their fisheries effectively without collaborating with their neighbours. Therefore, the sixth principle builds on the notion of regional economic and political integration by defining strategies for countries to agree on common regulatory instruments and cooperation for managing shared marine and inland fisheries. In addition, the integration of fish in cross-border trade policies requires targeting policy reforms that are backed by strong political will aimed at addressing barriers and enhancing the broader participation of citizens, especially women, in regional trade fish value chains.
- Fisheries is a global common good, with international value chains connected to fishing and processing operations in Africa. Therefore, African countries may not be able to sustainably manage their exploitation and trading of their fisheries resources without taking into account the regional and global demand and supply trends. The seventh principle of the Pan-African Fisheries Policy Framework and Reform Strategy provides the mechanism for African countries to collaborate among themselves, within the Regional Fisheries Bodies (RFBs). Furthermore, it urges for partnership between African countries and other countries out of Africa, in order to raise the participation of African countries in the process of formulating international fisheries strategies which have implications of African fisheries. This is known as the "African Voice".

Conclusion

The Pan-African Fisheries Policy Framework and Reform Strategy offers Africa the opportunity to transition its fisheries to productivity, sustainability and profitability with options for enhanced regional collaborative management of shared resources. The policy brief makes use of a number of approaches, including economic, ecosystems, social and welfare. But the main precondition for these approaches to translate into development outcomes is the need for countries to commit to reforming their fisheries sectors. Experience from on-going work over the past four years has shown that the key is to move fisheries to the centre of national development policy, especially through CAADP. However, reforms at the fishery levels have helped to build confidence of policy makers and fish-dependent communities by providing tangible evidence for change. Aquaculture production has made tremendous progress, with African countries emerging on the top ten countries with the fastest growing fish production sectors in the world. The Pan-African Fisheries Policy Framework and Reform Strategy will enable African governments to develop appropriate fisheries exploitation arrangements and aquaculture, with accompanied fiscal reforms that result in the sustainable generation of benefits at the community level as well as creating wealth throughout the value chain.

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