

## CALL TO ACTION TO SAVE AFRICA'S FISHERIES

We, the participants of the Western Indian Ocean Regional workshop have identified the following critical actions for the High Level Panel for a Sustainable Ocean Economy and African Union to consider in order to end both illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing and harmful fisheries subsidies to save and ensure Africa's fisheries, and to consider presenting as recommendations/commitments to the 2020 UN Ocean Conference:

1. **Ratification and full implementation of the FAO Port State Measures Agreement (PSMA)** by all African Port States, reaffirming its important role in combatting IUU fishing, including building legal and institutional capacity and providing technical assistance for AU member Port states to enable effective implementation of port state measures and enforcement of other mechanisms to eliminate IUU fishing.
2. **Enhance Africa's surveillance and prosecutorial capacity.** A critical step to confronting and reducing IUU fishing in African waters is to substantially upgrade monitoring of foreign vessels at sea and in ports. This will require the development of an Africa-wide maritime security architecture, founded on information sharing, resulting in enhanced and sustainable contribution of the fisheries sector to the improved welfare of African citizens. Besides collaborative effects in traditional MCS, better information is needed to mobilize political will as well as guide the allocation of limited enforcement resources, including making use of technological advances such as satellites and drones to improve effectiveness in forms of crime and bring surveillance costs down.
3. **Maintain and publish a record of fishing vessels,** including their identification details (IMO number), registration details, ownership, authorizations, and any previous flags, names, beneficial owners and operators, for flagged vessels involved in fishing operations, through the Global Record of Fishing Vessels, Refrigerated Transport Vessels and Supply Vessels (Global Record).
4. **Expand and enhance accountability in fisheries access agreements.** The design of fisheries access agreements is where African countries may have the best opportunity to create an environment that is favourable for more sustainable and lawful fishing. However, most fisheries access agreements are guided by the immediate expansion of licence fees or resource rents, which, combined with lack of transparency. Such fisheries access agreements must be more transparent, including rigorous mechanisms for determining licence fees and resource rents as well as oversight.
5. **Support the Fisheries Transparency Initiative (FiTI).** Though a global initiative, several African countries are among the first to show commitment to implement the FiTI which attempts to bring together governments, representatives of the fishing industry, and civil society to publish and verify comprehensive data on the fisheries sector. This includes the terms of access agreements, details of payments by vessels and foreign investors, information on new investments and subsidies, as well as unprecedented levels of data on catches. It is hoped that FiTI can provide credible data that will feed into improved national discussions on fisheries management and access agreements.
6. **Enhance regional collaboration.** All actors, whether government, civil society, science or industry/private sector, should be consistent and coherent in actions to combat IUU fishing. This includes addressing non-uniformity or RFMO's regulations, improving coordination and data transparency among RFMOs, Flag States and Coastal and market States. Implement digital schemes for documenting catch data to promote global exchange of information and develop regional information sharing and coordination bodies.
7. **Phase out harmful fisheries subsidies.** Acknowledge the urgent need to reach an agreement on new disciplines on harmful fisheries subsidies at the World Trade Organization (WTO) that meets the SDG14.6 mandate by the 12th WTO Ministerial Conference in June 2020. Call for the prohibition of harmful subsidies to large-scale and distant water fishing fleets. In addition, subsidies should not be provided in the case of IUU fishing and overfished stocks. Special and differential treatment for developing countries, including provisions under the Law of the Sea, should be respected.

8. **Develop sustainable aquaculture and mariculture.** In the face of capture fisheries reaching Maximum Sustainable Yields (MSY), the future of food from the ocean will come from farmed systems. Africa must come together and speak with one voice to develop sustainable and climate resilient aquaculture and mariculture in a manner that minimises environmental and social impacts. There is a critical need to develop appropriate capacities and adaptive technologies to address regional needs for aquaculture and mariculture development (including human, infrastructural, and innovation in seed and feed technologies).
9. **Strengthen the blue-green economy nexus** through conservation of terrestrial and mangrove forest ecosystems including coastal wetlands by ensuring effective participation of local communities to support the fisheries ecosystems which form breeding and nursery grounds and are critical for shoreline protection.
10. Ecosystems contamination by plastics presents the most visible form of ecosystems degradation and pollution in the oceans of Africa. There is need, therefore, **to adopt a circular economy to ensure environmental protection** as well as the promotion of policies, laws and regulatory frameworks that control importation of plastic goods.
11. Develop the requisite policy, legal and institutional capacities and capabilities, supported by adequate human resource, to accelerate the efforts to **map the ocean and undertake appropriate marine spatial planning** to delineate protected areas (marine parks), fisheries zones, navigation routes, and tourism areas. In these processes there is need to recognize the role of local communities in the planning and utilization of ocean resources.
12. Climate change remains a threat to Africa through elevated oceanic temperatures, ocean acidification and sea level rise, and there is need to develop early warning systems and relevant models that can guide the future investments in the blue economy.
13. **Strengthen the Research and Policy nexus in ocean management.** Relevant research should be designed to meet management requirements. Investment in research and development for the blue economy sectors is key in unlocking these undervalued sectors in Africa.
14. **Develop a common understanding of transnational organized crime in fisheries.** All States be encouraged to formally support the 2018 International Declaration against Transnational Organized Crime in the Global Fishing Industry (the Copenhagen Declaration) as a step towards developing a common understanding and awareness of the problem of organized crime in fisheries and the political will to prioritize addressing it, towards achievement of the SDGs. States should also report annually on transnational organized crime in fisheries to the UN Commission for Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice (CCPCJ) to ensure widespread and continuous attention to the problem and participate in regular international knowledge-sharing forums, such as the international symposiums on fisheries crime, to share information on, and discuss challenges and opportunities arising from, cases of transnational organized fisheries crime worldwide.
15. Develop practical tools to strengthen law enforcement capacity to address organized crime in the fishing industry. States, acting jointly and individually should move towards developing a number of practical tools to strengthen their criminal law enforcement capacity to address the problem.