

Opening remarks at the 2nd General Congress of Aquaculture Network for Africa

(ANAF) 15 January 2024, Naivasha, KENYA

(by interim chair B Semoli attending virtually)

Good morning distinguished delegates. Let me recognize members of at high table, I recognize

The Director of AU-IBAR Dr Huyam Salih, Director AU-IBAR

Representative of the FAO, Dr. Dismas Mbabazi

East African Community (EAC) Representative Dr. David Balikowa,

The Representative of the Government of Kenya Madam Betsy Njagi, Permanent Secretary of State
Department of Fisheries and the Blue Economy

All delegates and observers from ANAF Member States

Let me start by congratulating AU-IBAR and partners for organizing 2nd General Congress of Aquaculture Network for Africa, this is following the inaugural congress that was held in April 2023. This is an important milestone and strategic initiative that will ensure a sustainable growth for the aquaculture sector in on the continent. Aquaculture development has been identified by FAO and AU as crucial for meeting the growing demand for aquatic products due to increasing population globally. The majority of ANAF Members States have prioritized the aquaculture sector as a key component of the Oceans Economy now commonly referred as the Blue Economy. We recognize the potential for aquaculture that can contribute meaningfully towards food and nutrition sector, job creation, economic development, livelihoods and rural development.

According to the FAO fisheries and aquaculture have been crucial in the fight against hunger and poverty, with approximately 600 million people worldwide depending on the sector for their livelihoods, and providing 3.3 billion people with almost 20% of their average per capita intake of animal protein. Aaquaculture continues

to show faster growth compared to other major food production sectors and this sector is very important going forward if we are to meet the ever-increasing demand for fish products.

We strongly believe in partnerships and networks so that we can leverage from each other's strength as we are all aware that we have limited human and financial resources. Aquaculture is an important economic, social and environmental activity. Through this Network we will be better positioned to meet our aspirations for sustainable aquaculture growth and at the same time safe guarding the natural aquatic resources.

In conclusion chairperson in our drive towards advancing the Blue Transformation and 2030 Agenda we see this initiative as of strategic importance, therefore, as the interim Chair of ANAF I hereby make a plea to all Member State to participate and support for the operationalization of the Network. I wish you all the best with your deliberations and the programme looks exciting indeed.

Thank you!!