

The NEPAD Agency has said it is committed to working with the COMESA Secretariat and the regional fisheries' bodies in order to strengthen the linkages between these two organizations. Speaking during the official opening of the COMESA Post Compact Fisheries Investment Plan Sensitization Workshop in Nairobi, Kenya, on 18 October 2012, NEPAD Agency Senior Fisheries Advisor, Dr Sloans Chimatiro said that through the NEPAD-COMESA partnership a number of objectives will be achieved.

He said one of the objectives was to enable the countries in the region to know the economic value of their fisheries resources; while the other was to determine the potential contribution of the fisheries to the national agricultural sectors and economic development.

"It is important to make fisheries relevant to the national development agenda, especially agricultural development, and hence the CAADP. There is need to build the capacity of national fisheries' experts who will be able to undertake economic analysis of the fisheries resources in their countries; and also assist countries in the region to undertake policy and governance reforms which are necessary to launch the sector onto the path to sustainable exploitation and wealth creation," he said.

"The next steps for this partnership will require coherent efforts by COMESA's Ministers of Fisheries and Agriculture to ensure that fisheries are well accounted for in the agriculture development efforts," Dr Chimatiro added. In a speech read for him by Mr Shamseldin Salim of the COMESA Secretariat, Secretary-General, Mr Sindiso Ngwenya said his organization is in the process of designing the COMESA Regional CAADP Compact and the Regional Policy and Investment Framework which will add value to the National Investment Plans, particularly in areas where one country cannot invest alone.

Mr Ngwenya said that trans-boundary issues call for close collaboration of the Member States if tangible outcomes of interventions are to be realized.

"Among these we have the development and implementation of sanitary and phytosanitary measures, trade barriers and joint disease control programmes," he said. "CAADP implementation is also being considered under the COMESA-EACSADC Tripartite Framework

and this will enable access to the Grand FTA covering 26 countries and more than half of the GDP of the continent.”

Mr Ngwenya underscored the fact that successful implementation of the overarching framework for agriculture and fisheries development in Africa, require strong country ownership and leadership of agriculture policy formulation, planning and implementation.

“There is, therefore, need to build strategic partnerships amongst the national, regional and international stakeholders. Once such ideals are fully embraced, the CAADP framework will assume its rightful role of adding value to existing national and regional efforts,” Mr Ngwenya said.

“And there is need for all the players in the COMESA region to embrace public-private partnerships if the fisheries industry in the region is to help reduce poverty,” said Dr Daniel Mungai, Senior Assistant Director of Fisheries in the Ministry of Fisheries Development.

“The private sector should be embraced because it plays a very important role in the development of fisheries in the region. And the region should explore ways of utilizing shared fisheries reservoirs like Lake Victoria and Lake Tanganyika to contribute to poverty alleviation in the COMESA region,” Dr Mungai concluded.