

**THE ABUJA DECLARATION ON
SUSTAINABLE FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE IN AFRICA**

**Adopted by the
Heads of State Meeting of the
NEPAD “Fish for All Summit”
Abuja, Nigeria, 25 August 2005**

We, the Heads of State and Government, meeting in Abuja, Nigeria, on the occasion of the NEPAD “Fish for All” Summit, on 25 August 2005,

Embracing the principles of the NEPAD vision of Africa’s development, its objectives to eradicate poverty, achieve food security and build the foundations of sustainable development in the region;

Noting the strategic guidance provided by NEPAD’s Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP);

Recalling the provisions of international and regional declarations and instruments on fisheries, food security, ocean governance, trade, the aquatic environment and transboundary waters, in particular the 2000 United Nations Millennium Declaration and Millennium Development Goals, the 2002 Johannesburg Declaration on Sustainable Development and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation;

Recognizing the dependence of millions of our people on fisheries and aquaculture for their livelihoods, for food and nutrition and for economic wellbeing and commerce, and recognizing the importance of fisheries in the social fabric of our communities and in poverty alleviation;

Conscious of the potential for increased benefits from sustainable fisheries and aquaculture and the opportunities to meet the ever-increasing demand for food fish in our countries, our region and globally;

Gravely concerned by the depletion of fisheries resources, the degradation of aquatic environments and the threats to sustainable fisheries and aquaculture;

DO HEREBY RESOLVE, without prejudice to the sovereign rights, obligations, and responsibilities of our countries under relevant international law and relevant treaties and agreements, to:

1. *Support* regional cooperation in fisheries and aquaculture through NEPAD, Regional Economic Bodies and Regional Fisheries Management Organizations, including in the management of transboundary and shared aquatic resources and ecosystems;

2. *Support* national actions to accede to, to ratify, and to implement international conventions for the sustainable use and protection of the living aquatic resources and the aquatic environment of the region;
3. *Implement* the provisions of the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries, in particular through improved governance of fisheries; ensuring the environmental sustainability of fisheries; examining means to progressively replace “open access” to fisheries resources with “limited access regimes” and introduction of rights-based fisheries; taking steps to control fleet and fishing capacity; and ensuring an equitable balance of resource allocation between small-scale and industrial fishers;
4. *Empower* fishing and fish farming communities, civil society and stakeholder organizations to effectively participate in policy-making, planning and implementation processes, with particular reference to the equitable allocation of resources, and the rights of the poor and disadvantaged;
5. *Ensure* that fisheries and aquaculture is adequately reflected in the national and regional economic policies, strategies, plans and investment portfolios, including poverty reduction and food security strategies;
6. *Foster* the development of an appropriate investment climate for fisheries and aquaculture, including legal and institutional reform and enforcement where required, improved incentives and access to capital for private investors, and strategic public sector investments;
7. *Direct* particular attention to harnessing the potential and entrepreneurship of small-scale fishers, fish farmers, fish traders and service providers and their associations, including women entrepreneurs who have been leading the development of fish processing and trade in much of the continent;
8. *Foster* small, medium and large-scale aquaculture production in a sustainable and environment-friendly manner compatible with the rational use of land and water resources and evolving market opportunities;
9. *Build* human and institutional capacity at national and regional level with particular emphasis on training institutions, transferring appropriate technologies and knowledge to small producers and ensuring a rational and scientific basis for management decisions and design of programs;
10. *Conserve* and rehabilitate aquatic environments and habitats essential to living aquatic resources and aquatic biodiversity; and take measures to prevent or mitigate adverse impacts of aquaculture on the aquatic and coastal environment and communities;
11. *Promote* trade in artisanal and industrial fish products to respond to regional and global market opportunities for African fish products, including by removal of intra-regional trade barriers, developing common approaches and positions on international trade in fish and fishery products, and on harmonizing standards on products traded in the region;

12. *Pursue* these objectives through NEPAD and Regional Economic Communities, in collaboration with international partners in science and development;
13. *Contribute* to the creation of an enabling environment for sustainable fisheries and aquaculture development by facilitating the adaptation of existing regional, national, and local institutions and regulations to the changing requirements of the sector and its challenges and opportunities;
14. *Call* upon the international community to provide the financial and technical support required to implement sustainable African fisheries and aquaculture through aligned and harmonized partnership arrangements and in pursuance of NEPAD's vision and principles for action;

AND DO HEREBY DECIDE, that the Resolution be implemented as soon as possible and that the Plan of Action prepared and adopted as a part of the NEPAD-Fish for All Summit process be used as a guideline for formulating and implementing policies, programs, projects, and strategies at national, regional and continental levels.