

**THE MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE ON FISHERIES COOPERATION
BETWEEN AFRICAN STATES RIVER ATLANTIC OCEAN**



EXECUTIVE SECRETARIAT

ATLAFCO BUREAU EXPERTS MEETING REPORT

AGADIR (MOROCCO), FEBRUARY 2, 2023

I- _ Opening session

1. The meeting of experts from the Bureau of the Ministerial Conference on Fisheries Cooperation between African States bordering the Atlantic (COMHAFAT), was held in Agadir (Morocco), on February 2, 2023, in preparation for the 11th Ordinary session of the Ministerial Conference.
2. The delegates of the following 7 member countries of the ATLAFCO bureau took part in the said meeting:
 - Côte d'Ivoire, Presidency
 - Mauritania, 1st Vice-Presidency
 - Guinea, 2nd Vice-Presidency
 - Senegal, 3rd Vice-Presidency
 - Guinea-Bissau, 4th Vice-Presidency
 - Gambia, Rapporteur
 - Morocco, permanent member
3. The following representatives also attended the meeting as observers:
 - Two member states (Benin and Cameroon)
 - International Whaling Commission (**IWC**)
 - The Fisheries Committee of the Center-West of the Gulf of Guinea (**FCWC**),
 - The Regional Fisheries Commission of the Gulf of Guinea (**COREP**),
 - Intergovernmental Organization for Information and Cooperation for the Marketing of Fishery Products in Africa (**INFOPECHE**)
 - The Network of Maritime Science and Fisheries Research Institutes (**RAFISMER**),
 - The African Network of Women in Fisheries (**RAFEP**),
 - Media Observatory for Sustainable Fisheries in Africa (**MOSFA**)
4. The list of participants is attached in **Appendix I**.
5. The Executive Secretary of ATLAFCO **Mr. Abdelouahed BENABBOU** took the floor to introduce the meeting

6. The representative of Morocco (host country), **Mr. Yassine EL-AROUSSI** welcomed the participants and wished them a pleasant stay in Morocco.
7. The meeting was chaired by **Mr. Alain Ahuatchy KODJO**, Technical Adviser to Minister **Sidi Tiémoko TOURE**, representative of Côte d'Ivoire, who holds the current presidency of ATLAFCO.
 - In his opening speech, he indicated that this meeting is being held in preparation for the 11th Ordinary Session of the Conference of Ministers of ATLAFCO.
 - The President invited the delegates to make their constructive contributions in a spirit of unity in order to finalize at a clear and exhaustive report which will be submitted to the Ministers, members of the Bureau of our Conference.
 - The Chairman declared the meeting of Experts open.
8. The Executive Secretary expressed his satisfaction at finally seeing this meeting of experts take place after several years marked in particular by the COVID 19 pandemic.
9. A round table was made for the presentation of the participants.
 - The Secretary General of the CPCO took the opportunity to present to the Experts the new Secretary General identified at the last conference of Ministers of this organization in the person of Mr. Antoine Gaston DJHINTO, former Director of Fisheries of Benin.
 - The Experts were also informed of the election of **Mr. Amadou Teliwell DIALLO**, of the Republic of Guinea, as President of the CBI.
 - The participants welcomed the election of the very first African at the head of this international organization and also encouraged applications for the position of Executive Secretary of the said organization, vacant from May 2023.

II - Agenda

10. The agenda for the meeting (**Appendix II**) was adopted as it stood.

III - Thematic presentations

11. Taking the floor, the Executive Secretary clarified that this Bureau meeting will provide an update on the progress of activities relating to the implementation of the recommendations of the 10th Conference of Ministers, held in Abidjan in August 2018. .

12. He then made a presentation of the main conclusions and/or recommendations resulting from the last session of the Conference of Ministers.

13. The experts were also informed through thematic presentations of the progress of the initiatives taken by the secretariat for the implementation of these recommendations.

14. Regional Onboard Observation Program (ROOP),

- The participants in the meeting were able to take note of the conclusions of the study which was launched on the subject, in particular the need for a staff of 150 observer posts with regional competence, for an annual budget of 1.6 million euros, nearly 50% of which could be fully covered by a contribution from the shipowners.
- While noting with satisfaction the training of 32 Regional Observers, the experts note that the effective implementation remains dependent on a specific agreement between the Parties, establishing a mechanism for mutual recognition of observers with regional competence, which will allow observers designated by their States to be accredited, to validly observe fishing activities, whatever or the vessel's fishing area.
- The experts propose to submit to the Conference of Ministers, for adoption, a **general framework Convention - Monitoring, Control and Surveillance**, which provides, among other provisions, for the implementation of a program of observers with **regional competence**, with draft application protocol detailing certain methods of implementation, in particular scientific.

15. Opportunity for the creation of a Regional Fisheries Management Organization,

- The experts were informed of the results of the study commissioned following the recommendation of the 10th Conference of Ministers relating to the creation of an RFMO for the ATLAFCO zone.

- This study concludes on the need to create an RFMO, which will have to be done through the negotiation of a new regional instrument.
- The experts took note of the preparation of a draft **Convention founding a new** RFMO for the ATLAFCO space, which could serve as a working basis for the negotiations.
- To launch this initiative, the experts propose to:
 - a) present to the Conference of Ministers, for its adoption, a joint political declaration, affirming the will of the countries to engage in the process of negotiation of the founding convention,
 - b) mandate ATLAFCO to lead this initiative in collaboration with the three sub-regional fisheries organizations (FCWC, COREP and SRFC), the regional economic communities (ECOWAS, ECCAS), the FAO, the African Union and any other competent organization.

16. Partnership between ATLAFCO and two international organizations

- The Secretariat informed the experts on the latest initiatives undertaken in the continuity of its policy of openness to its environment, through the establishment of institutional partnership relations (MoU) with 2 international actors: The International Maritime Organization (IMO) and the International Whaling Commission (IWC).
- The participants congratulated the Secretariat for the actions undertaken by ATLAFCO to diversify its technical partnerships. The meeting invites the Secretariat to pursue efforts to explore new partnership frameworks in support of the objectives that the Conference has set itself.
- The experts propose the approval by the Conference of Ministers of these two memoranda.

17. Launch of Fish Stock Assessment Campaigns in the ATLAFCO Region.

- The experts underlined the need for a good knowledge of the state of fishery resources, oceanographic and environmental parameters, for sustainable management.
- The experts were informed of the mobilization by ATLAFCO of a budget for the 2023 financial year, to carry out surveys to assess the fish stocks of the Member States.
- The Moroccan authorities have agreed to support this initiative by making a research vessel available to States that request it.

- The experts wished that the States already having a research vessel could benefit from ATLAFCO budgetary support within the framework of their national campaign.
- The experts welcome this initiative and thank the Moroccan authorities for their contribution to carrying out the stock assessment campaigns in the ATLAFCO Region.

18. Secretariat operating costs

- The experts took note of the difficulties encountered by the Executive Secretariat in coping with the increase in its **operating costs**, combined with the very low contribution of Member States.
- The experts endorsed the Executive Secretariat's proposal to raise the ceiling to be deducted from future revenue under the Regional Fisheries Development Fund (RFDF) from the **current 16% to 25%**.
- The experts invite the Member States to regularize their arrears of contribution and to put in place internal mechanisms able to ensure the regular payment of their annual contributions.
- In addition, the experts propose to examine the increase in the contribution of the Member States.

19. Place and date of the next Ordinary Session of the Conference of Ministers

At the 10th Conference of Ministers in 2018 in Abidjan, the commitment was made to hold the next conference in the Republic of Guinea (**Annex III**).

Taking the floor, the Delegate of the Republic of Guinea delivered a message from the Minister of Fisheries and Maritime Economy, announcing the decision taken by the Council of Ministers in Guinea to host the 11th Conference of Ministers of ATLAFCO, in June 2023 in Conakry.

The Experts recommend to approve this proposal.

IV- Miscellaneous



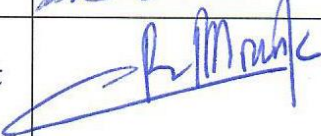
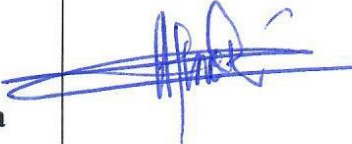



- No points were recorded under the various
- 20.**The participants took good note of the logistical support of the Kingdom of Morocco provided to the Executive Secretariat and thanked the Kingdom for its constant support to ATLAFCO.
- 21.**The meeting welcomed the progress made by ATLAFCO and its now essential role in regional and continental fisheries cooperation, under the Presidency of Côte d'Ivoire, represented by **Mr. Sidi Tiémoko TOURE** , Minister of Animal and Fisheries Resources.
- 22.**The work accomplished by the Secretariat and the efforts made in carrying out its mission were greatly appreciated. Congratulations and encouragement were thus addressed to the Executive Secretary of ATLAFCO.
- 23.**The meeting renewed its thanks to its technical and financial partners for the support given to ATLAFCO.
- 24.**This report of the Experts was prepared in French then translated into English by the Executive Secretariat of ATLAFCO and will be sent to all Member States.

VIII- Closing of the meeting

- 25.**The Chairman of the Meeting declared the work of the Meeting of Experts closed at 18:30.

Appendix I: List of participants

1- Members of the Bureau:

N°	Pays	Nom & Prénom	Titre	Emargement
1	Côte d'Ivoire	Mr KODJO Ahuatchy ALAIN	Conseiller Techni que Pêches du Ministre des Ressources Animales et Halieutiques	
2	Gambie	Mme Anna MBENGUA CHAM	Director fisheries department	
3	Guinée	Mr Keita Balla MOUSSA	Directeur National Adjoint de la Pêche Maritime	
4	Guinée-Bissau	Mr Alfredo MALU	Directeur Général de la Pêche Industrielle Ministère de la Pêche	
5	Maroc	Mr Yassine EL AROUSSI	Chef de Division de la Coopération/DP M	
6	Mauritanie	Mr Lamine CAMARA	Directeur de l'Aménagement des Ressources et des Etudes	
7	Sénégal	Mr Diane FAYE	Directeur des pêches maritimes	

2- Observers:

N°	Pays/Organisme	Nom & Prénom	Titre	Emargement
1	Bénin	Mr BRITO Urbain T.A.S.	Directeur des pêches	
2	Cameroun	Mr Guy Iréné Mimbang	Directeur des Pêches, de l'Aquaculture et des Industries Halieutiques	
3	RAFISMER	Mr Mohamed IDHALLA	Administrateur	
4	RAFEP	Mme Amy Christiane DAGO	Présidente	
5	CPCO	Mr Antoine DJHINTO Mr Séraphin Nadje DEDI	Secrétaire Général	
6	COREP	Madame Flore WORA	Administrateur	
7	Infopêche	Dr Helguilè SHEP	Directeur	
8	OMPDA	Mr André Naoussi	Coordinateur	
9	CBI	Mr Amadou Tellivel DIALLO	Président	

10 CNSHB/GUINEE Ousmane Tagbe' CAMARA Directeur

Appendix II: AGENDA OF THE MEETING

1- Opening of the Meeting

- Address by the Minister of Agriculture, Maritime Fisheries, Rural Development and Water and Forests (Morocco)
- Address by the Minister of Animal and Fishery Resources, current Chairman of COMHAFAT (Côte d'Ivoire)

2- Adoption of the agenda

3- Presentation of the themes

- a.** The Regional On-Board Observation Program;
- b.** Study on the transformation of ATLAFCO into an RFMO;
- c.** The new ATLAFCO partnership (IWC, IMO);
- d.** Assessment of fish stocks in the ATLAFCO area;
- e.** Operating costs/Regional Fisheries Development Fund (RFPF);
- f.** Date and venue of the next session of the Conference of Ministers;

4- Discussion and adoption of the report of the Experts meeting

5- Statements by the Heads of Delegations

6- Other matters

7- Break (drafting of the report of the meeting)

8- Adoption of the final report of the meeting

9- Closing of the meeting

Annex III

SPEECH BY THE MINISTER OF FISHERIES AND ECONOMY AT THE ATLAFCO BUREAU MEETING, 02 February 2023

- Mr. Representative of the Ministry of Agriculture, Maritime Fisheries, Rural Development, Waters and Forests of Morocco;
- Mr. Representative of the Ivorian Minister of Animal and Fisheries Resources, Acting President of ATLAFCO;
- Mr. Executive Secretary of ATLAFCO;
- Distinguished Experts from Member States;

Ladies and gentlemen,

I would like to seize this august meeting of experts from ATLAFCO Member States to communicate the message of the Minister of Fisheries and Maritime Economy, which was scheduled for the meeting of ATLAFCO Ministers.

Allow me above all to fulfill a duty, that of transmitting the fraternal and friendly greetings of His Excellency **Mr. Mamady DOUMBOUYA**, President of the Transition, Head of State, Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces to **His Majesty Mohamed VI** King of Morocco.

Allow me also to warmly thank the Moroccan authorities for all the attention given to my delegation since our arrival.

My thanks and my congratulations also go to the members of ATLAFCO's executive secretariat for all the work done so far and which has made it possible to hoist our intergovernmental organization among the reference organizations on a continental scale.

These same thanks go to our Chairman-in-Office for the quality of his service, and to all the countries and our partners who invest in helping our organization. I want to mention the Kingdom of Morocco, the OFCF of Japan and many others...

Ladies and gentlemen,

One of the recommendations of ATLAFCO session held in Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire) relates to the designation by consensus of the Republic of Guinea for the Presidency of the Institution. To do this, an invitation is made to Guinea to organize an extraordinary session for the transfer of service between the outgoing Minister (Minister of Animal Production and Fisheries Resources of Côte d'Ivoire) and the incoming Minister (Minister of Fisheries, of Aquaculture and Maritime Economy of the Republic of Guinea), and also for the installation of the Bureau to accompany the President in the exercise of his mandate.

The handover was delayed by the appearance of the Coronavirus pandemic.

The Republic of Guinea is ready to host the 11th session of ATLAFCO in June 2023 in Conakry. This decision was adopted during the Council of Ministers of November 2022,

chaired by His Excellency the President of the Transition, Head of State, **Colonel Mamady DOUMBOUYA**.

Thus, a meeting will be organized with the Executive Secretariat of ATLAFCO to define the modalities of organization of this extraordinary session.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The good results obtained condemn us to no longer stop on such a good path. The ways and means must be identified during this meeting of the ATLAFCO Bureau to strengthen our operational capacities and better respond to the aspirations of our populations. I invite all actors to look in this direction.

Finally, I wish full success to the ATLAFCO Bureau meeting.

Thank you.