

# ACP Group calls for reforms in fisheries governance for sustainability

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Geneva, 24 March 2017/ ACP: Experts have highlighted the importance “coherent global actions” to ensure the sustainability of the world’s fish stocks – a valuable export commodity for more than 60 ACP countries. Fisheries is particularly significant to the ACP’s 37 member states that are classified as Small Island Developing States (SIDS) as well as coastal economies.

“What is needed is to reform the existing governance approaches to effectively transition our marine fisheries to a sustainable path of high productivity, healthy and resilient stocks in order to secure economic and environmental benefits to our society into the future,” said ACP Assistant Secretary General in Charge of Sustainable Economic Development and Trade Mr. Viwanou Gnassounou. ([Read full statement](#) <sup>(1)</sup>)

However, capacity and resource constraints pose a challenge for implementing commitments under the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (specifically Goal 14 of the Sustainable Development Goals on ocean resources), highlighting the need for collaboration and long term commitments that involve international organisations, public and private sectors, as well as civil society organisations working in coherent way.

At the multi-stakeholder [Oceans Forum](#) <sup>(2)</sup> organised 21-24 March by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), various partners including the ACP Secretariat, the UN Food and Agricultural Organisations (FAO), the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP), the Commonwealth Secretariat and the International Fisheries Institute sought to develop policy options and novel approaches to trade-related aspects of sustainable fisheries.

Mr. Gnassounou underlined trade policy as an essential part in addressing the “alarming state” of marine fisheries in ACP



countries.

Pointing to SDG Target 14.6, he reiterated the call by the ACP Group for a “multilateral, realistic and pragmatic agreement” that prohibits fisheries subsidies granted to operators of fishing vessels targeting stocks in an overfished state, and to vessels involved in IUU fishing.

“Marine fisheries are mostly shared resources since fish does not respect sovereign states boundaries. Therefore addressing the fisheries management challenges require effective and coherent global actions to prevent and reverse overfishing, IUU fishing and overcapacity,” he continued.

ACP Ministers in charge of Fisheries have endorsed a strategic plan for effective fisheries management that aims to sustain fisheries productivity and while unlocking and enhancing the economic benefits from fisheries.

The 5<sup>th</sup> meeting of ACP fisheries ministers is scheduled for September 2017, and will target reinforced political and financial commitment to:

- Build the capacity to develop and implement policy and management frameworks that are underpinned by sound evidence generated analytical scientific work;
- Enhance capacity and collaboration to ensure robust monitoring and enforcement to eliminate IUU including the implementation of regional and international obligations; and
- Increase investments and measures to unlock the economic potential of fisheries value chains and accrue benefits to

coastal countries particularly the SIDS.

“To deliver on the SDG 14... will require a shift from the business as usual. We at ACP shall remain engaged in working with other partners in advancing the implementation of the SDG 14 and in particular contribute sustainable fisheries and maximize benefits from the marine fisheries,” stated Mr. Gnassounou.

Outcomes of the *Oceans Forum on Trade-related Aspects of SDG 14* will feed into two upcoming inter-governmental Conferences: the High Level United Nations Oceans Conference (New York, June 2017); and the 11th WTO Ministerial Conference (Buenos Aires, December 2017).

- Press ACP

(Photo: UNCTAD Oceans Forum panel, including ACP Assistant Secretary General Mr. Viwanou Gnassounou (right).  
Twitter/ David Vivas)

[More about the Oceans Forum on Trade-related Aspects of SDG 14](#) [2]

[Statement by ACP ASG Mr. Viwanou Gnassounou at the Oceans Forum](#) [1]

[ACP Fisheries Strategic Plan](#) [3]

[Summary report of the 4th meeting of ACP Ministers in charge of Fisheries and Aquaculture 2015](#) [4]

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<a href="#">Summary Ministerial Meeting-Fisheries Aquaculture.pdf</a> [6]	643.7 KB
<a href="#">Fisheries Strategic Plan 2012.pdf</a> [7]	749.75 KB

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