

STATEMENT BY HON MAVIS HAWA KOOMSON, MINISTER FOR FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE DEVELOPMENT OF GHANA AT THE SYMPOSIUM ON “FISHERIES IN THE GLOBAL FRAMEWORK OF BIODIVERSITY POST – 2020” HELD IN RABAT, MOROCCO ON 09TH - 10TH MAY 2023

**CHAIR OF ATLAFCO,
COLLEAGUE MINISTERS,
EXECUTIVE SECRETARY OF ATLAFCO,
HEADS OF DELEGATION,
RESOURCES PERSONS,
DISTINGUISH INVITED GUESTS,
FRIENDS FROM THE MEDIA,
LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,
ALL PROTOCOL OBSERVED.**

It is a privilege to be given the opportunity to deliver a statement at this important Symposium: A symposium on “Fisheries in the Global Framework of Biodiversity Post – 2020” held in the beautiful city of Rabat in Morocco. I thank the Executive Secretary and Staff of ATLAFCO for organizing this important symposium

His Excellency, Nana Addo Dankwa Akuffo-Addo President of the Republic of Ghana has asked me to extend his greetings to His Majesty King Mohammed VI of Kingdom of Morocco and the Government of Morocco.

I wish to extend our sincere gratitude to Minister for Agriculture, Marine Fisheries, Rural Development and Forests of the Kingdom of Morocco and the ATLAFCO Secretariat for inviting Ghana to participate in the Symposium.

The fisheries and Aquaculture Sector of Ghana contributes significantly to the economic development of the nation. The sector supports the livelihoods of over 3 million people, earns over USD 200 million annually from export of fish and fishery products, accounts for 60% of animal protein intake by the population and the annual per capita consumption of fish in Ghana is 26 kg. Thus, the sector contributes significantly to food and nutritional security.

However, in recent times the fisheries sector has been confronted with challenges, especially the menace of IUU fishing practices, climate change, pollution of our seas and oceans and destruction of marine habitats.

Environmental issues resulting from destruction of mangroves and marine habitats; and pollution of seas and oceans has negative impacts on the fisheries resources and biodiversity.

Mr. Chairman, Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, we are currently observing declining trend in fish catches especially for the small scale fisheries due to environmental issues. Consequently, there is declining profit of fishing operations especially the artisanal fishers and prevalence of poverty in fishing communities.

There is evidence of rising water surface temperature and sea level, increase in water salinity, ocean acidification and changes in fish distribution due to the impact of climate change. The quantity and quality of water resources required for aquaculture production are being affected by climate change. There are also observed extinction of some fish species and disruption in traditional fishing patterns.

The implications of the above are the observed decline in marine fish production particularly for small-scale fishers and farmers, loss of investments and livelihoods, changes in fish migration behaviour and increase in aquatic food prices making it difficult for low-income earners to meet their protein requirements.

Failure to address the negative impact of environment on fisheries does not only affect food security but the livelihoods of fishers and artisanal fishing communities who are the most vulnerable to climate change.

Mr. Chairman, Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, organization of the Symposium has come at the opportune time. Looking at the topics to be treated during the Symposium, it is my expectation that solutions and answers would be found to the challenges.

I wish the participants fruitful deliberations

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION AND MAY
GOD BLESS US ALL**