



In brief:

1. Stakeholders hold global meet to take stock of small-holder fisheries and aquaculture contributions to food security
2. Six Kenyan women set to give men a run for their money as they dive into deep-sea fishing

KMFRI takes part in the global International Conference of Artisanal Fisheries and Aquaculture

By Ms. Gladys Mwaka, Dr. Christopher Aura, Mr Edward Waiyaki

Edits: Phionalorna Nzikwa & Jane Kiguta

#ICAFA2022, #KmfriResearch, #Aquaculture

Kenya Marine and Fisheries Research Institute (KMFRI) was a key participant at the International Conference of Artisanal Fisheries and Aquaculture (ICAFA) held between September 1 and 3, 2022. Delegates from 13 countries across the globe met at the source of Nile Hotel in Jinja – Uganda, where they presented their research findings and shared best practices for possible adoption.

Fisheries and aquaculture stakeholders drawn from central and local governments, fishers, fish farmers, international community and development partners, among others, attended the conference.

KMFRI made six presentations and was represented by Ag Fresh Water Systems Director Dr Christopher Aura and research scientists D. Cyprian Odoli, Ms Gladys Holeh, Mr Edward Waiyaki, Ms Faith Kamanga, and Ms Mary Ontwoma.

The event was organized by the Lake Victoria Fisheries Organization (LVFO) in collaboration with the Sustainable Fisheries Initiative (SFI) in support of the

Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and other development partners, including GIZ, TRUEFISH, and WorldFish also sponsored the conference.

The Minister of State for Agriculture, Animal Husbandry and Fisheries, Hon Fred Bwino Kyakulaga officially opened the conference.

The theme of the ICAFA conference was 'Breaking new grounds to recognize and celebrate the contribution of small-scale fishers towards food security and nutrition'.



Top, ICAFA attendees led by the Minister of State for Agriculture, Animal Husbandry and Fisheries, Hon. Fred Bwino Kyakulaga. Bottom, KMFRI delegation attending IYFAA Conference, with the Kenya's Director of Fisheries and Aquaculture Development, Mr. Rodrick Kundu (Front 2nd from right) and Dr. Taabu Anthony, LVFO and one of the conference moderators (back row, extreme left).



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Objectives

The conference aim was to highlight opportunities available in the sector, showcase the potential and diversity of small-scale artisanal fisheries and aquaculture, and demonstrate benefits derived from forging partnerships and cooperation with all stakeholders in the achievement of the United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's).

Additionally, the ICAFA conference sought to enhance awareness, understanding, and actions to support the contribution and sustainable development of artisanal fisheries and aquaculture, food security and nutrition, poverty eradication, and use of natural resources.

Further, it created a platform for sharing blue economy innovations, research findings, and how they can be translated into practice; initiate dialogues and increase collaboration among artisanal fishers, governments, and other partners to further strengthen their capacity to enhance sustainability, social development, and well-being. It also served as an outlet for exchanging ideas and discussing developments in artisanal fisheries and aquaculture.

The conference organizing committee welcomed all fisheries and aquaculture professionals across the globe to the International Year of Artisanal Fisheries (IYAFA) 2022 celebrations, and to the ICAFA conference.

A diverse range of practitioners, scientists, development partners, and industry representatives working across different areas of the fisheries across the world attended the meet. This paved the way for fostering interactions with development partners, and financing institutions, highlighting the benefits of collaborations in the achievement of sustainable artisanal fisheries.

KMFRI's Ag Director Fresh Water Systems Dr Christopher Aura delivered a presentation dubbed *Harnessing the value of aquaculture towards Blue growth for East Africa* and was a panelist in the lively

panel discussions. Other key speakers included Dr Shigalla Muhongo from LVFO, Prof Fredrick Muyodi of Makerere University and Mr Phillip Borel of Food Agriculture Organization.

Issues raised during presentations were threshed out during plenary sessions and round table discussions to chart the way forward.

The panel discussions focused on economic and social sustainability, and governance.

Way forward

At the tail end of the ICAFA conference, the participants agreed on a raft of measures. This includes the need to improve communications among key stakeholders in data collection, share fisheries aquaculture data and associated environmental, and socio-economic statistics right from production stage to the highest levels in the value chain. The participants also agreed there is need to share the updated information through a data clearing house.

The conference also recommended multi-stakeholder engagements in innovations that link research, academia, fisheries and aquaculture industry. It also called for involvement of beneficiaries at all levels of research, revival and revamping of co-managed artisanal fisheries structures and increased investment in fisheries and aquaculture.

This may include supporting access to inputs and Development Finance Institutions (DFIs), and making investment opportunities more accessible, diversifying investment portfolios and improving relationships with development partners.

Last but not least, the general feeling was that stakeholders need a mindset change and should begin seeing aquaculture as a viable and sustainable option, and not as an alternative. Focus should be on the value chain, products and market diversification and exploration of new innovative and marketable approaches.



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Fisheries and aquaculture players should make deliberate efforts aimed at increasing fish production and investment in modern aquaculture innovations.

For environmental sustainability, it was recommended that there be concerted efforts to mitigate pollution by stopping runoff water from contaminated fields to drain into the open water sources, control inputs into water bodies, avoid plastic pollution, and find ways of turning trash into cash. There were also calls to protect marginal wetlands, support biodiversity conservation, curb the spread of invasive species and invest in the protection of Rufigia.

The conference felt that applied and basic research in aquaculture and fisheries should be harnessed to find solutions, and effectively disseminate the findings. Adoption of digital technologies in fish data collection by artisanal fisheries and mobile applications will enhance the management of the fisheries and aquaculture and promote information sharing and marketing in fish value chains.

The participants were told for the sector to thrive, building capacity of the trainers is necessary. This will empower them to sensitize communities on the importance of harvesting mature fish, and help them explore alternative sources of livelihoods by leveraging technologies and available incentives.

Additionally, to enhance sustainability of the sector, more focus on stopping illegal fishing in the region is needed, and only licensed fishers should fish. This will curb overharvesting of fisheries resources.

It is hoped that the ICAFA conference will boost the development and expansion of international, regional, and national partnerships and associations, and foster new ties.

In safeguarding the interests of the fisheries and aquaculture sector, existing policies, regulations, guidelines, and laws should be harmonized. Where



KMFRI's Ag Fresh Water Director Dr. Christopher M. Aura and other delegates during the panel discussions

guidance. Existing policies should also be updated to represent interests of both men and women in the sector to enhance benefits accrued from the fisheries and aquaculture along the diverse value chains.

And as the curtains fell on the ICAFA conference,



Ms. Gladys Mwaka being awarded as the best presenter during the ICAFA conference

KMFRI's research scientist Ms. Gladys Mwaka from the mariculture department took top honours as one of the conference's outstanding presenters.



Six women defy all odds to become the first ever trained deep-sea fishers in Kenya's male-dominated venture

By Jane Kiguta, Phiona Nzikwa, and Nancy Mwiti
#DeepSeaFishing #GenderAgenda

They exude confidence - are sassy, trendy, bubbly, beautiful and full of hope. This description fits best the six young women from Kenya who, defying all odds, made history by being the first ever women fishers to be trained in deep sea fishing, a scenario that seemingly deviates from the norm.

This is no mean feat - it's indeed a huge milestone in Kenya worth celebrating.

The six lasses, who exhibit a totally different persona from that of common fisher folk, were among the batch comprised of 10 fishers who embarked on the 10-day deep-sea fishing training cruise, an initiative aimed at building capacity of local fishermen to enable them exploit fisheries resources in Kenyan waters.

The programme will also improve their knowledge and skills on sustainable fisheries management, proper fish handling practices and, data collection and recording.

Training women as deep sea fishers will encourage fellow women to take the plunge, and pursue the little known but lucrative marine and maritime careers.

The trainees - four being men - boarded fishing vessel FV Seamar II, and were flagged off at the historical event held on 26th August, 2022, at Liwattoni Fishing Complex in Mombasa.



RARING TO GO: KMFRI Marine Fisheries Assistant Director Dr Nina Wambiji with the deep-sea fishing trainees | Photo by PhionaLorna Nzikwa

The function took place through collaborative efforts of Kenya Marine and Fisheries Research Institute (KMFRI), the State Department for Fisheries Aquaculture, and the Blue Economy (SDF&BE), Kenya Fisheries Services (KeFS), and the county governments of Kilifi, Kwale, Lamu, Tana River, and Mombasa.

Undoubtedly, the youthful women have broken the norm and cultural barriers, and claimed a coveted space in the fishing venture largely dominated by men.

Once the women complete the training, they will be licensed to work in both Kenyan and territorial waters as deep sea fishers onboard fishing vessels across the globe.

The six, Teresia Kichinda, Leonida Maxine, Emily Mukeyadula Doyo, Najma Machuyu Said, Vivian Obondo and Fatuma Abdhalla Ahmed hail from the five counties of the Coastal region. They are expected to change the face of the fishing industry, which is likely to generate gender conversations around the male-dominated field, and hopefully inform gender-sensitive policies in the sector.



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Currently the fishers have been undergoing training onboard fishing vessels hired through KMFRI namely MFV Seamer II, MFV Jonas and MFV Miss Jane.

KMFRI's chief mandate is to collect fisheries data for dissemination to diverse stakeholders. These crucial scientific findings informed the need for the deep sea training.

Several KMFRI senior researchers are key trainers in the deep-sea fishing programme. They equip trainees with skills and knowledge on how to conduct fish sampling, fish species identification, data recording, appropriate fishing gears for use and mending of gears, among others.

KMFRI has been coordinating the programme in collaboration with Kenya Fisheries Service (KeFs), Kenya Maritime Authority (KMA), Bandari Maritime Academy, and public institutions namely Matuga Training Institute, Technical University of Mombasa, Coast General Hospital, Pweza Ltd and Kenya citizenry at large.



KMFRI's Ag Director Ocean and Coastal Systems Dr James Mwaluma at the Liwattoni flagging-off event |Photo by PhionaLorna Nzikwa

Speaking at the event, KMFRI Ag Director of Ocean and Coastal Systems Dr. James Mwaluma, who was representing the CEO, said, "KMFRI has done a lot of research in the ocean, and I can say that there is so

much to learn onboard. The deep-sea training is a lifetime opportunity for you to go onboard and learn."

Addressing the trainees Dr Mwaluma added, "Put to practice everything you will learn as the experience and certificates you have received today will give you a platform to explore several opportunities, not only locally but also internationally."



Fisheries, marine and maritime stakeholders with the deep-sea fishing trainees | Photo by PhionaLorna Nzikwa

Speakers of the day from SDFA&BE, KeFs, Bandari Maritime Academy, and Kenya Maritime Authority, among others, congratulated the trainees embarking on the final leg of the training. Special recognition was accorded to women trainees for persevering through all odds, and they were encouraged to reach out to other youths.

The officials urged them to be ambassadors of the programme, saying it will inspire their peers to join them and acquire invaluable skills which will enhance service delivery in marine and maritime sector for posterity, and set the pace for future generations.

The Deep Sea training programme was a presidential directive by the immediate former President Uhuru Kenyatta. Initial trainings started on November 2019



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after successful applicants were shortlisted following the advertisement of the vacancies on the local dailies.

This intervention is aimed at improving livelihoods through sustainable management of marine resources.

Despite the debilitating effects of the global Covid-19 pandemic that hit Kenya from early 2020, so far 440 deep sea fishers have been trained under the initiative.

About the deep-sea training programme

The five-year programme, which targets to train 1000 fishers annually, was commissioned as a Presidential Directive in 2021, and is hoped to make the thriving Blue Economy sector more vibrant, and contribute significantly to the achievement of food and nutrition for the Kenyan population.

The training programme has four stages, and kicks off with a 5-day theoretical training on fisheries management. Thereafter, the trainees embark on a 5-day shallow water fishing practicals onboard boats hired from local Beach Management Units (BMUs).

Following successful completion of the theoretical and fishing practical training sessions, fishers undergo a 10-day training on Standards of Training Certification and Watch keeping (STCW) at Bandari Maritime Academy in Mombasa followed by 10-day deep-sea fishing practicals onboard deep-sea fishing vessels, marking the end of the training.

Proper application of acquired fishing skills in the fisheries industry will support the thriving blue economy sector and boost the overall growth of the country's economy.



Deep sea fishers in the past batches of trainees being briefed before setting sail for the deep-sea fishing training| Photos by Milton Apollo

It is envisaged that as more and more young people continue to receive training as deep sea fishers, more opportunities that include construction of fishing vessels by Kenya National Shipping Line will be created, opening new jobs.



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Pictorial Page by Jane Kiguta



KMFRI excellent performers in the FY 2021-2022 after the award ceremony held in Mombasa on 16th September, 2022 | Photo by Milton Apollo



Top, Indonesian delegation with KMFRI managers. Bottom, Indonesian delegation led by HE Dr Mohamad Hery Saripudin, the Ambassador of Indonesia and the Permanent Representative to UNEP&UN-Habitat in Nairobi pay KMFRI CEO Prof James Njiru a courtesy call during their visit at the Institute to explore possibilities of operationalizing and concretizing the partnerships on Blue Economy between Indonesia and KMFRI | Photos by Paul Kimanzi

Deputy Director Finance and Administration CPA Abraham Kagwima with Ag Director Fresh Water Systems Dr Christopher Aura show off trophies after the award ceremony | Photo by Milton Apollo



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Participants, who included KMFRI staff, during the International Coastal Cleanup Day held on 17th September 2022, in Kenya's South Coast. KMFRI supports efforts to restore and conserve the ocean through various research projects | Photo Courtesy



KMFRI CEO Prof James Njiru with Sweden Ambassador HE Ms Caroline Vicini in Nairobi where the two explored areas of collaboration | Photo Courtesy



The Registrar of Lands, Laikipia county issues KMFRI CEO Prof. James Njiru a title deed for a parcel of land in Rumuruti for the institute to build an office. The county has further reserved 43 acres for KMFRI | Photo Courtesy