

KEYNOTE ADDRESS BY DR. RASHID TAMATAMAH, THE PERMANENT SECRETARY – FISHERIES, MINISTRY OF LIVESTOCK AND FISHERIES, AT THE HIGH-LEVEL STAKEHOLDERS’ MEETING ON THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A FISHERIES LAW ENFORCEMENT ACADEMY (FISHFORCE)

Director of Ceremony,

Your Excellency, Ms. Elisabeth Jacobsen, Norwegian Ambassador to Tanzania,

Prof. Hamudi I. Majamba, Dean, UDSM School of Law,

Prof. Hennie van As – Nelson Mandela University,

Prof. Musilia Wambua, Dean – School of Law, University of Nairobi,

Prof. John Baloro, Dean – Faculty of Law, University of Namibia,

Distinguished delegates,

Ladies and gentlemen.

Good morning.

First and foremost, allow me to extend a special welcome to all delegates, especially to our beloved brothers and sister from South Africa, Kenya, Mozambique, Madagascar, and Namibia. You are most welcome to Tanzania, and as we say in Kiswahili, *Karibuni Sana*.

I am indeed, delighted to be with you this morning and make a few remarks before we kick-start the discussions on establishing a fisheries law enforcement academy in Tanzania. And, please allow me to say beforehand that the effort to establish the academy and the FishFORCE has come at the right moment in the history of combating various fisheries crimes in Tanzania.

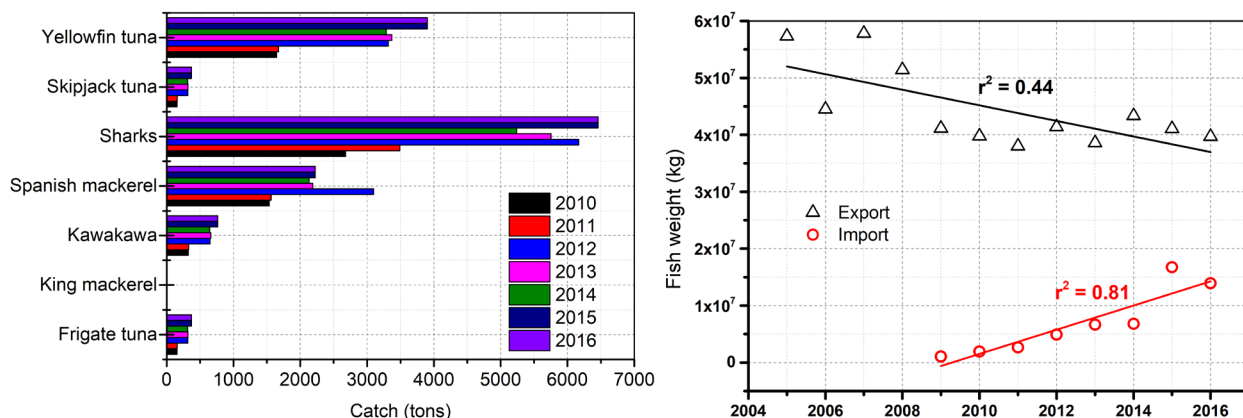
Chairperson,

Tanzania is harboured by all great lakes of East Africa and several major transboundary rivers, and the Indian Ocean in the east. And so, Tanzania is 6.6% freshwater and has an exclusive economic zone (EEZ) of about 24% (223,000 sq.km) of the country's landmass (945,087 sq.km). However, the freshwater fisheries contribute about 85% of the total fish production, while the marine waters provide only 15% of the total productions. This is not by accident. The marine fisheries are mainly artisanal, contributing over 90% of all marine fish productions. The small portion contributed by the industrial and offshore fishing operations are marred by illegality, underreporting and several other criminal acts.

Chairperson,

It is an undeniable truth that our waters play a significant role in the economies of communities directly dependent on fisheries and to our country—through exports and food security. Fisheries contribute about 22% of animal protein, and the number of people employed by the fisheries sector has been increasing each year, and the socio-economic impact, therefore cannot be overemphasized. Notwithstanding however, the freshwater and marine ecosystems are facing threats from multiple stressors; including point and non-point source pollution, over-fishing, and various unsustainable economic activities which pose extra management challenges. And, on top of all these, there is, also, the impact of climate change which has in the recent past, been shown to cause declines in productivity of lakes (e.g., Tanganyika) and marine waters alike, ultimately causing decline of fish productions.

While the marine artisanal fishery is dwindling, thus jeopardizing the livelihoods and food security of coastal communities, the offshore fishing companies are discarding whatever is not in their interest—polluting the oceans and denying us of this important protein and income source. Nonetheless, we are seeing a steady increase in catches from the EEZ (Sharks, Tuna and Tuna-like species) (see Fig. 1). For example, shark catches increased from 2500 tons in 2010 to about 6500 tons in 2016, while yellowfin tuna’s catches doubled from <2000 tons to 4000 tons during the same period. This increase is partly related to improved management measures as a result of the establishment of the Deep-Sea Fishing Authority (DSFA) in 1998, which was amended in 2007.



Chairperson,

Fisheries is one of the priority sectors in the national development agenda. This is demonstrated by the commitment to reduce food insecurity and poverty through development visions (e.g. vision 2025), programmes and national development strategies. The fisheries sector development programme was launched in 2010, which advocates for sustainable management, development and conservation of fisheries resources.

Similarly, the second National strategy for growth and poverty reduction (NSGPR II) recognizes fisheries, including aquaculture, as an important sector in the poverty reduction effort through improved livelihood and nutrition. Fisheries contributes about 2.5% to the Tanzania's GDP, which is relatively small compared to the amount of water resources available for fish production. However, the fisheries sector is employing over 4 million Tanzanians, thus contributing a whopping 35% to the rural employment pool; and the potential for growth is available. We need to close the loopholes that are costing the sector the much-needed revenues.

Chairperson,

It is disheartening to see that Tanzania cannot sustain her demand for fish and that the trajectory of fish imports is posed to overtake the exports. The demand for fish was about 730,000 tons in 2016 while the productions were just above 50% of this figure. Although this deficit can be explained by declining fish catches, which are also linked to illegal fishing, the illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing is responsible for most of this predicament. It has been estimated that IUU in artisanal, deep-sea and commercial fishing operations is responsible for about 20% loss in fish landings, which is costing our economy an estimated 400 million dollars annually. The current government is building on past experiences and efforts are underway to stop this from continuing. Again, this we cannot do it alone. We need our neighbors and other stakeholders in the region to significantly reduce these egregious crimes.

Chairperson,

The government of Tanzania has been working tirelessly to combat illegal fishing in our waters and claim back the 'food security sovereignty' while protecting our natural resources. Just last year, the National Multi-Agency Task Team (NMATT) conducted several operations in freshwaters and the Indian Ocean. To illustrate the success of this activity, a total of 110 offenders were apprehended and jailed in Lake Victoria while one person who was found to possess large quantities of illegal fishing gears was fined and paid a total of about \$150 million. Similarly, for the Indian Ocean, 'Operation Jodari', which was conducted in collaboration with the Sea Shepherd Global resulted in the apprehension of a Malaysian fishing vessel, the Buah Naga #1, and one Chinese flagged vessel, the Tai Hong 1. These were caught with loads of shark fins without their carcasses. The offenders from Buah Naga #1 are currently serving a 20-year prison sentence after they failed to pay nearly five hundred thousand dollars (\$500,000) fine that was levied. In total, foreign fishing vessels were levied fines to the tune of eight million dollars (\$8m). Thus, the effort to empower law enforcers and our staff on fishing crimes and the formation of a FishForce will renew our resolve to improve and continue fighting crimes in fisheries. Again, this effort has come at an opportune time; and we are grateful for every support you are providing.

Also, Tanzania has been collaborating with SmartFish to conduct monitoring, control and surveillance in our waters. Those efforts have resulted into many arrests and confiscation of illegal fishing gears in Lakes Tanganyika, Victoria and the Indian Ocean, and the identification of the problem of IUU in lake waters. This effort has particularly been productive in combating blast fishing, which is rampant in the Dar es Salaam nearshore waters, thus

devastating coral reefs and reducing future catches and jeopardizing livelihoods and food security. The joint operations found a web of criminal networks of organized crime syndicates. This involved blast fishing, illegal drug trafficking, human trafficking, gun running, and wildlife and timber smuggling. It was because of this that the Dar es Salaam waters are somewhat safe now. And we will continue to work on the different root-causes of these crimes to ensure blast-free coast waters in Tanzania.

In addition, a few weeks ago, more than 30 members of the NMATT received training in dealing with fisheries crimes in Tanzania. This effort, together with the establishment of the courses that this meeting will be discussing, are important to continue the fight. Allow me to reiterate that we are ready to invest into fighting the criminal acts for the security of our people, economy and nation.

Chairperson,

I understand that most of us in this room, are familiar with the concept of fisheries crimes and its genesis. Some of you were present at the 23-24 November 2016 meeting in Mombasa, Kenya, and the 28th March 2019 meeting which was held here in Dar es Salaam and financed by the NMU. The second meeting was intended to inform us on the FishForce Academy and the idea of establishing a training program on fisheries crime by the University of Dar es Salaam. We are grateful for the support accorded to us by the NMU and everyone who is investing into making this objective a reality.

Chairperson,

Because fisheries crimes are transnational, they require joint efforts to abate. However, fisheries crimes are stealth and may be hard to recognize and deal with. They are organized in nature, and transnational criminal groups increasingly turn to illegal fishing, thus threatening food security, and the economic, social and political stability of maritime states, Tanzania included. The illegal activities do not stop at fishing. Criminals use fishing vessels to commit other crimes including drug trafficking and human trafficking because their nomadic navigation patterns and long periods at sea make it easy for these vessels to blend into the maritime background without suspicion. Criminal networks also use the proceeds of large-scale commercial fishing to finance other illegal activities. We cannot and should not allow this to continue.

Chairperson,

Fisheries crimes can take different forms, including illegal fishing, money laundering, and document, tax and customs fraud. More often than not, illegal fishing boats engage in all sorts of crimes such as falsification of their identities/origin and registering their vessels in multiple countries, and most of them are owned by 'shell' companies—making it hard to track and prosecute. While illegal fishing is probably the most commonly fought of the crimes I just listed, and one that the fisher communities can identify easily, these other crimes are equally egregious. In this regard, we must work together to address these challenges for the sustainable management of our natural resources.

Chairperson, ladies and gentlemen,

I am aware that the Fisheries Crime Law Enforcement Academy of the Nelson Mandela University (South Africa), has established a pilot project in close collaboration with the South African Fisheries Department that aims to build local law enforcement expertise and strengthen cooperation between agencies, domestically and cross-border, towards enhanced law enforcement in addressing fisheries crimes. This is to be achieved via a combination of hands-on expert training of fisheries control law enforcement officers from multiple relevant agencies, continued post-training support, and focused research.

Chairperson,

I will be lying if I told you I don't support or welcome this initiative, especially that it is extending into Tanzania. I am confident that the University of Dar es Salaam and other relevant institutions are ready to cooperate with the FishFORCE Academy to ensure the training programme is developed after all necessary processes have been completed. I would like to assure you our highest regard and that the Government of Tanzania is willing to support and offer all necessary assistance to make this initiative a reality.

And finally, **Chairperson,** I may not be an expert in fisheries crime, but I know one thing, that our people are suffering from increasing fish prices which is caused by declining fish catches. I know that if we do not act now and continue to press the offenders, it is for our own detriment. I know that IUU fishing is denying us the opportunity to feed our people and build a

stronger blue economy. And I know that fishers are injecting a lot of money into the fisheries and receiving very little returns from it, which may impact the number of people employed by the fisheries sector and the contribution to the national economic growth. Galileo Galilei once said, I quote: "All truths are easy to understand once they are discovered; the point is to discover them": end of quote. I would like to add to this great quote that understanding the truths and the root-causes is not enough; we must employ deliberate efforts and act in accordance with the urgency of the problems. We should not wither. The force we start with should be sustained if we must experience a fishing-crime-free Indian Ocean.

Chairperson,

Before I conclude, I wish to welcome the delegation to visit the various attractions, not very far from where we are, at the end of your meeting. Take a tour to the historical town of Bagamoyo, go to Saadani National Park or to the Mikumi National park in Morogoro. Believe me, you will not be disappointed.

Distinguished Delegates, ladies and gentlemen, **I now have the privilege to declare this high-level stakeholders' meeting on the establishment of a fisheries law enforcement academy officially open.** I wish you fruitful deliberations in your meeting and successful engagement as you discuss.

I thank you for your attention