

## **Africa-Economy**

### **COMHAFAT to hold Tuesday meeting in Moroccan town**

#### **APA-El Jadida (Morocco) By Abdoulaye Traore, our special correspondent**

An extraordinary session of the board of the Ministerial Conference on Fisheries Cooperation between African States Bordering the Atlantic Ocean (COMHAFAT) focusing on the restructuring of the regional body is slated for El Djadida on Tuesday.

El Djadida is a littoral town in full economic and demographic expansion situated not far from Casablanca, Morocco.

Inspired by the cause for organizational renewal, the COMHAFAT meeting will discuss new funding regulations aside from the restructuring of the executive secretariat as suggested by a panel of experts with a view to reinvigorating the organization and putting it on a sounder footing to meet the challenges of the future.

During their gathering, members of the COMHAFAT board will also examine its budget, strategic plan for the period 2012-2015 and move toward the preparation of the 9th ministerial session of the organization.

Established in 1989 and headquartered in Rabat, the capital of Morocco, the COMHAFAT brings together a total of 22 African countries sharing the Atlantic Ocean shoreline and bound by common regional fisheries cooperation.

Staging the latest meeting in El Djadida to give the COMHAFAT a new lease of life coincides with the town's growing prestige as a promising settlement of the future.

Being the capital of Doukkala, the 3rd agricultural region of the Moroccan Kingdom, this metropolitan settlement is endowed with major industrial complexes including the Jorf Lasfar complex and the largest deepwater port in Africa.

The state of euphoria by forward-looking "Djedidi" (inhabitants of El Djadida) found expression in expediting great projects the result of which are first-class hotels and highly rated tourist attractions, added to the prestige of the renovated old harbour.

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## Morocco - Africa-Economy

### **New management blueprints for a resurgent COMHAFAT**

#### **APA - El Djadida (Morocco) Abdoulaye Traore, Special Correspondent**

Basic new blueprints for the Ministerial Conference on Fisheries Cooperation between African States Bordering the Atlantic Ocean (COMHAFAT) have been introduced to set the stage for a resurgence of the organization after 22 years in operation.

The new initiative was announced at the opening on Sunday of the meeting of experts from member countries of the organisation in the Moroccan coastal town of El Djadida, near Casablanca.

COMHAFAT comprises 22 coastal countries sharing the Atlantic Ocean and a common fisheries policy.

In addition to the agreement with the government for the official establishment of the COMHAFAT headquarters in Morocco, the conference also adopted a new legal blueprint giving the organization the status of an international organisation in the tradition of like-minded regional and international groupings in Africa and the world.

A programme of action over the period 2012-2015 and new organisational procedures related to financial and staff regulations, as well as a new manual of procedures have been submitted to relevant experts, leaders of the fishing sector and representatives of institutions attending the event.

The blueprints would guide the course of change and usher in “a new era of dynamism, rigour, transparency and close interactions between member states” Youssefi Abdeljebbar, the representative of Morocco’s Agriculture and Maritime Fishery Minister said at the opening ceremony.

Mr. Abdeljebbar said in addition to its plans for increased financial support, Morocco was also considering ways of providing the organisation with an “appropriate” headquarters commensurate with the magnitude of its ambitions and brand new image.

While commending the pace at which the restructuring project was conducted, the Moroccan official invited member states to literally take over control of the organisation, keep faith with its grand objectives and contribute to its burgeoning international reputation.

Created in 1989 as an international body seeking to promote regional fisheries cooperation between the 22 African countries bordering the Atlantic Ocean, COMHAFAT has never had a headquarters it can call its own.

The organization, which has its offices within the Moroccan Fisheries Ministry, is also run by Moroccan civil servants.

However, if the current resolutions are anything to go by the irony will soon be consigned to the past

as the organisation re-examines its status in a changing world.

“The COMHAFAT we have today is different from that of the past” the organisation’s Executive Secretary, Mr. Hachim El Ayoubi observed.

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### **Africa-Economy-Fisheries**

#### **ATLAFCO extraordinary session kicks off in Morocco**

##### **APA El Jadida (Morocco) Abdoulaye Traore, special correspondent**

An extraordinary session of the Bureau of the Ministerial Conference on Fisheries Cooperation among African States Bordering the Atlantic Ocean (ATLAFCO /COMHAFAT) on Tuesday opened in the Moroccan town of El Jadida, under the chairmanship of Ghana’s Food and Agriculture Minister and current chairman of the organization, Kwesi Ahwoi.

Fisheries ministers from Cameroon, The Gambia, Ghana, Senegal and Morocco and representatives of research institutes, partner organizations and associations such as the Dakar-based “African Network of Women in Fisheries (RAFEP) are present at the meeting.

Angola and Togo, two States, which are members of the Bureau, have also sent delegations led by their respective directors of fisheries.

At the end of their working session, participants should validate the results of working group on the fundamental documents and the restructuring project of the Executive Secretariat of the organization.

It is expected that once ratified by the forthcoming ministerial conference of all 22 member countries, these texts will re-energize the organization and help member States to address the various challenges facing the fisheries sector.

“Those challenges facing us can only be deal with at the regional level,” Ghana’s Food and Agriculture minister said at the opening of the session, commending the progress made in the strengthening of the regional cooperation.

To that regard, the Ghanaian official paid tribute to the Moroccan kingdom for its “key” support and its decision to put at the disposal of the organization a headquarters, which is expected to give more visibility and efficiency to ATLAFCO/COMHAFAT.

ATLAFCO/COMHAFAT was set up in 1989 to coordinate and harmonize the efforts and capacities of all parties for the preservation and exploitation of fisheries resources.

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## Morocco -Africa-Fisheries

### Senegal calls for strategy on regional cooperation to fight illegal fishing

#### APA-El Djadida (Morocco) By Abdoulaye Traore, special APA correspondent

The Senegalese Minister of Maritime Economy, Khouraiichi Thiam called for the strengthening of regional cooperation to fight against illegal fishing, during a session of the Ministerial Conference on the Fisheries Cooperation between Countries Bordering of the Atlantic Ocean (COMHAFAT), held Tuesday in El Djadida, Morocco.

“Unreported and unregulated illegal fishing is performed by pirate vessels, which amounts to \$23 billion worth of our common fisheries resources,” said the Senegalese official while urging the COMHAFAT to increase its commitment to curb this scourge.

According to Mr. Thiam, the poachers are generally operating 21 miles away from the coast, at a distance that cannot be reached by national vessels to defend African states’ national or international ownership.

Referring to the specific case of Senegal, the minister said that 1.4 million tonnes of fish from the Cape Verde islands are migrating every year to the coast of Senegal where they remain for almost four months.

“This stock of fish cannot be consumed because we are not equipped enough to catch them,” emphasized Mr. Thiam.

Therefore, he called for the implementation of a strategy on regional cooperation so that the developed countries can help the under-developed ones.

“In doing so, we will be able to secure a good fleet, and then fishing would not only be reserved to foreign vessels.”

The Rabat-based COMHAFAT is a regional body which was established in 1989 to harmonize efforts and capacities of its 22 member countries in a move to preserve and sustainably exploit their fisheries resources.

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## Africa-Economy

### COMHAFAT members urged to pay dues

APA-El Djadida (Morocco, by APA special correspondent)



Member countries of the Ministerial Conference on Fisheries Cooperation between Countries Bordering the Atlantic Ocean (COMHAFAT) have been urged to regularly pay their contribution and arrears to the organization.

The call was made during a session held Tuesday by the regional body in the Moroccan littoral town of El Djadida.

Except for Morocco, which assured the organization of an operating budget, other COMHAFAT member countries have so far failed to pay their mandatory dues, the organization's executive director, the Moroccan national Hachim El Ayoubi, told APA.

As an organization for regional integration bringing together 22 African countries sharing the Atlantic Ocean shoreline, the COMHAFAT has embarked on a major restructuring project the implementation of which, should require a total of about \$1,271,000 over the next three years.

It was significant to the operational capability of the organization that membership dues are paid regularly, Mr. Khouraiichi Thiam, the Senegalese Minister of Maritime Economy said during his speech before his peers from Cameroon, The Gambia, Ghana, Morocco and delegates from Angola and Togo, the six other countries comprising the COMHAFAT board.

The COMHAFAT has suggested two methods of financing the organization by member countries, namely voluntary contributions and payment of dues, which amount to \$10,000 for category B countries as the dues from category A countries are yet to be determined, Mr. Hachim El Ayoubi revealed.

## **Africa-Japan-Economy**

### **Japanese Foundation hails COMHAFAT's new management approach**

#### **APA El Jadida (Morocco) by special correspondent Abdoulaye Traore**

The Special Advisor of the Japanese Foundation for International Cooperation in Fisheries (OCPF), Yoshihiro Tagagi, has expressed satisfaction with the new management approach and progress made by the Ministerial Conference on Fisheries Cooperation among African Countries Bordering the Atlantic Ocean (COMHAFAT), still underway in the Moroccan town of El Jadida.

“We are very pleased to be able to contribute to the recovery of the organization at all levels,” Mr. Tagagi said, insisting that COMHAFAT has shown the way to all its partners by setting up a new management approach and putting in place the human and financial means matching its ambitions.

As an observer, the Japanese official was on Tuesday attending an extraordinary session of COMHAFAT on the review of the reform and revitalization documents of the regional body based in Rabat, Morocco.

He said Japan had always stood by COMHAFAT, recalling that 12 years ago, the Foundation had supported the cash-trapped African organization by bankrolling the setting up a Fisheries Development Fund.

This fund, according to Mr. Tagagi, was part of Japan and its African partners' common vision of sustainable resource management.

He pointed out to the cooperation and fisheries agreements signed in the 1970s between Japanese parties (government and private firms) and most of the governments of COMHAFAT member countries.

Japan is still believed to have fisheries agreements with over 10 COMHAFAT member states, including Morocco, Mauritania and Senegal.

As a semi-public organization, OCPF is led by former officials of the Japanese Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries. It remains one of the closest partners of COMHAFAT, which is in the process of setting up new management tools.

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