

## REGIONAL WORKSHOP ON AMR IN AQUACULTURE FOR ENGLISH SPEAKING AFRICAN COUNTRIES

- Director of Ceremonies
  - Deputy Minister of Lands, Agriculture, Fisheries, Water, and Rural Development, Hon **Davis Marapira**
  - Directors of VS and Fisheries of Zimbabwe and staff of the two Departments
  - Distinguished Delegates from EN Countries of Africa (ah and Fisheries)
  - Representatives of International Orgs (FAO (Berhanu Bedane), AU IBAR (Nelly Isyagi), SADC (G Thobokwe), WHO, UNEP, etc)
  - WOAHA Colleagues from HQ, & EA
  - experts regionally and internationally
  - Distinguishes Ladies and Gentlemen
- 
- **I greet you all this morning**
  - Let me start by thanking the Government of Zimbabwe for hosting this regional workshop on AMR in aquaculture for English speaking African countries
  - On behalf of the World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH), I am honoured to extend a cordial welcome to all participants to this important workshop.
  - Aquaculture is the fastest-growing sector in global food production and plays an increasingly critical role in enhancing food security, supporting livelihoods, and promoting economic development throughout Africa.
  - As this sector continues to expand, it is our responsibility to ensure its sustainability and resilience.
  - Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR) in aquaculture is not just about fish, but protecting public health, sustaining livelihoods, safeguarding ecosystems, and keeping global trade, as well.
  - AMR constitutes one of the most urgent global health challenges of our era.
  - Within aquaculture, the inappropriate and excessive application of antimicrobial agents can expedite the emergence and dissemination of resistant pathogens.
  - These pathogens do not remain confined to a single farm, species, or nation; rather, they traverse aquatic environments, food systems, and trade networks, impacting animals, humans, and the environment.

- WOAHA, in collaboration with its members and partners, has long acknowledged that AMR is a One Health issue requiring coordinated efforts across multiple sectors.
- Effective management necessitates adherence to science-based standards supported by robust surveillance systems, prudent antimicrobial use policies, and heightened awareness at all levels.
- WOAHA is committed to assisting its members by establishing and advocating for international standards on responsible antimicrobial use, enhancing surveillance systems for AMR and antimicrobial utilization in aquatic animals, providing capacity-building through training, technical support, and guidance, and fostering collaboration among countries, sectors, and stakeholders.
- This collective effort aims to ensure the sustainable growth of Africa's aquaculture industry without compromising the health of animals, humans, or the environment.
- This workshop offers a valuable platform to:
  - Examine the current status of AMR in aquaculture within Africa.
  - Identify gaps and opportunities for enhancing national capacities.
  - Exchange best practices concerning antimicrobial stewardship and responsible usage.
  - Foster regional cooperation aligned with WOAHA's standards and objectives.
- Your engagement demonstrates a collective dedication to protecting animal health, ensuring public safety, and maintaining the effectiveness of antimicrobial agents for future generations.
- Let us utilize this workshop as a forum to develop practical solutions and strengthen collaborations.
- Together, we can promote the growth of aquaculture in Africa that is safe, sustainable, and resilient against the threat of antimicrobial resistance.
- I wish you productive discussions and successful outcomes.
- Thank you.