



Confédération Africaine des Organisations
Professionnelles de la Pêche Artisanale
African Confederation of Professional
Organizations for the Artisanal Fishery

Advocating for an African Year of Artisanal Fisheries

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The AFRICAN CONFEDERATION OF ARTISANAL FISHERIES PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS (CAOPA) was founded in 2010.

The founding members of the CAOPA are the artisanal fisheries professional organizations of Senegal, Mauritania, Guinea Bissau, Guinea, Cabo Verde, Gambia, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Ivory Coast, Togo, Tunisia, Burkina Faso, Benin, Morocco.

In order to defend the interests of its members, CAOPA strives to be involved in the definition and implementation of responsible fisheries policies that contribute to the fight against poverty, but also improve working conditions of women and their involvement in decision-making.

The CAOPA is headquartered in Dakar, Senegal.

The Fisheries and Aquaculture Reform Strategy in Africa:

An opportunity to implement International Guidelines for sustainable artisanal fisheries

The address problems of governance in fisheries, that affect most African countries, the first Conference of African Ministers of Fisheries and Aquaculture, in 2011, recommended that Member states of the African Union consider the possibility of reform their fisheries policies and aquaculture.

The reform strategy which was developed subsequently identifies seven key objectives for the development of fisheries in Africa¹, including:

- ⇒ Improving the conservation and sustainable use of fisheries resources through the establishment of good governance. On this topic of good governance, it should be noted the recent commitment, under the impetus of Mauritania, currently presiding the African Union, to promote more transparency in fisheries in Africa.
- ⇒ The development of sustainable artisanal fisheries by improving and strengthening the contribution of artisanal fisheries to poverty alleviation, food and nutritional security, and improving socio-economic benefits to fishing communities.

To achieve these goals, the active involvement of the African Union and its members, - as well as all stakeholders, in particular African artisanal fishing communities-, to implement international guidelines to promote sustainable artisanal fisheries in Africa, is necessary.

Therefore CAOPA is proposing that the **African Union declares 2016 as the Year of African artisanal fisheries**, with the aim of promoting the implementation of international guidelines for sustainable artisanal fisheries in the Pan-African level, in collaboration with all stakeholders, first and foremost African organizations representing the men and women who depend on fishing for their livelihood.

¹ <http://www.africanfisheries.org/knowledge-output/policy-framework-and-reform-strategy-fisheries-and-aquaculture-africa>

The growing recognition of the importance of the artisanal fisheries sector

The international community has shown that it recognizes the growing importance of artisanal fisheries, especially in the **Declaration of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development 2012** (Rio + 20): "The Future We Want ". This paper emphasizes the role of artisanal fishing as a "catalyst for sustainable development in this sector." The UN Declaration stresses the need to protect the rights of access of artisanal fisheries resources and coastal areas on which it depends to live.

Similar provisions are also contained in the **Voluntary Guidelines on Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security**. For FAO, 'the application of these guidelines would establish the conditions under which fishermen access to fish resources, which foster more concern to protect and promote the sustainable management of the resource. In addition, the Guidelines provide a framework to overcome obstacles such as illiteracy, health problems, lack of access to traditional livelihoods and deprivation of civil and political liberties, all of which not only hinder development, but also fuel the race for fish and contribute significantly to overfishing'.

Finally, the greater recognition of the importance of artisanal fishing has been achieved by the adoption in June 2014 of the **Voluntary Guidelines to ensure the sustainability of the artisanal fisheries in the context of food security and eradicating of poverty**. The Guidelines seek to strengthen the contribution of fisheries to food security and nutrition. They also aim to promote equity and improve the socioeconomic situation of artisanal fishing communities, and responsible fisheries management. Finally, they incorporate in their approach the impacts of climate change on coastal fishing communities.

However, in order for these guidelines to become effective tools for change, especially for African artisanal fisheries, it is necessary that African governments, donor agencies, professional organizations and civil society organizations engage and invest in their implementation.

Artisanal Fisheries:

An asset for African countries to face the challenges of sustainable development

⇒ Job creation and fight against poverty

At the global level, FAO² indicates that 10% of people are engaged in fishing and aquaculture in Africa, making it the second largest continent after Asia, in terms of jobs in this sector.

The vast majority of these 12.3 million people living on fisheries in Africa are in the artisanal fisheries sector: over 7.5 million fishermen³, as well as 2.3 million women⁴, - i.e. 9.8 million, depend on artisanal fishing for their livelihood. These jobs provide income for millions of families in Africa.

African artisanal fishing is by far the leading provider of sector jobs.

⇒ Contribution to African States economies

A recent study⁵ on the value of African fisheries stresses that the contribution of fisheries to GDP of all African countries reached 1,909,514 million, with a contribution of marine and inland artisanal fisheries accounting for more than half this figure.

Artisanal fishing stimulates local economies if it is associated with policies to ensure social protection and promote the well-being of coastal communities

⇒ Contribution to food security

In Africa, for over 200 million people, fish is a source of protein and essential nutrients (fatty acids, vitamins, minerals) at low prices. FAO estimates that fish represents on average 22% of the protein intake in sub-Saharan Africa. However, in the poorest African countries, this level can exceed 50%.

In most parts of Africa, capture and trade by the artisanal fisheries sector provides a 'food safety net' to the poorest populations.

² *The State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture 2014*, FAO, <http://www.fao.org/3/a-i3720e.pdf>

³ *Maritim eand continentale artisanal fishing.*

⁴ *More than 90% in post-harvest processing and marketing.*

⁵ *The value of African fisheries*, FAO 2014, <http://www.fao.org/3/66254dd2-3778-4b4c-8989-e58107aefcad/i3917e.pdf>

Women at the center of artisanal fisheries activities

⇒ **The professional women in African artisanal fisheries are present at all stages of the value chain:**

- *Pre-financing and preparation of fishing campaigns (purchase of fuel, ice, food, medicines, etc.). Women are involved in the preparation of the fishing gear: net mending, etc.*
- *Reception of fish : while the men go fishing, women are preparing to receive the catches: cleaning crates, the smoking/salting material. Once the fish has arrived, they take care of sorting out what is to be sold on local market, what should be processed for other markets*
- *Processing: drying, salting, smoking, etc*
- *Marketing: The women sell fish on local markets as well as African regional markets.*

⇒ **Women are the pillar of the family of African artisanal fishing communities**

They support the education of children, household management, meal preparation, etc.

⇒ **Women African in artisanal fisheries are organized**

Most women of the artisanal fisheries sector are fishmongers, processors, fish traders. They are organized into cooperatives, interest groups, etc. where there is sometimes the entire value chain which is represented.

⇒ **Women in artisanal fisheries are represented**

At the level of the African Confederation of Artisanal Fisheries Professional organizations (CAOPA), women are represented equally shared in the steering committee and at meetings. At the General Assembly of the CAOPA 2013, they have identified common priorities, including:

- Access to credit: Microcredit is not enough; Bank interest rates are too high.
- Improvement of health conditions for the processing and marketing`
- Improvement of policies to support families in coastal communities: child care; education and health of children; fight against violence against women.

For more information:

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