

Nouakchott Declaration of West Africa artisanal fisheries sector organisations

Assembled in Nouakchott (Mauritania) from 9 to 11 November 2009 for a workshop, organised by the Mauritanian National Fisheries Federation – artisanal section (FNP), the Swedish Society for Nature Conservation (SSNC) and the Coalition for Fair Fisheries Arrangements (CFFA), on ‘Improving governance in the European Union - West African countries fisheries relations’, the West African artisanal fisheries’ organisations representatives wish to make the following contribution to the European Union consultation on the reform of the Common Fisheries Policy, in particular the reform of its external policy:

About the objectives of the future European external fisheries policy, particularly the future fisheries partnerships between the European Union and West African countries:

- The objective of future EU external fisheries policy should be the promotion of responsible fisheries, in line with the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries recommendations; partnerships should be integrated in the West African countries poverty reductions strategies.
- The future partnerships between West African countries and the European Union must establish a framework for good governance that allows for the transparent and participative design and implementation of national and regional actions and projects, that benefit the coastal communities fishing activities (research, control and surveillance, on-shore infrastructures, etc.) as well as their living and working conditions (health, education programmes, training – in particular for women).
- Through such good governance framework, the West African countries and the European Union should collaborate in order to promote the implementation of international and regional commitments in the countries national legislations, in particular the action plans based on the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries (Action Plan for the management of fishing capacity, Action Plan against IUU fishing, etc).
- In the future partnerships, it is indispensable to delink aspects to do with the promotion of sustainable fisheries, including the mobilisation of the necessary funds, from aspects to do with the access conditions applying to the European fleets.

The following aspects must be addressed in the good governance framework:

Access to resources and ecosystem management

The conditions applying to the fleets of European origin must respect the following conditions, based on the development of responsible West African fisheries:

- The limits for the exploitation of the resources and for the fishing capacity must be based on scientific advice and recommendations.
- All fish resources that can be caught in a sustainable way by the artisanal fisheries sector must be reserved for this sector, given its importance for direct and indirect job creation, for food security on a national and regional level, and for export revenue.
- Access to other stocks must be limited, so that overcapacity does not develop, and must be conditioned in particular to the obligation to land all catches locally, and to the use of non-destructive and selective gears. The allocation of fishing possibilities must take into consideration the risks in connection with by-catches, especially of stocks that are caught by artisanal fishers.

Investments

- Investments to improve infrastructures for landing and processing catches must be of the utmost priority – the local landing of all catches made within the EEZ will not only create employment and economic activity, but it will also allow better control of what is being caught.
- Investments are also needed in technologies that will enable to increase the value of the catches (especially the improvement of sanitary conditions and traceability in order to access international as well as regional and local markets). Support projects, including at a regional level, should be implemented in a localised manner. On this point, we want to point out that the SFP project of the European Union, which was managed in a centralised manner, did not give any tangible results for West African artisanal fisheries; hence, it would be advisable to evaluate it and draw the consequences for all future support programmes aimed at adapting artisanal fisheries to the standards.
- Partnerships for sustainable artisanal fisheries, between artisanal fisheries operators from West Africa and Europe, should be promoted, in particular with the objective of adding value to our products.
- Finally, investments are needed for the training of our fishers and literacy programmes for fishing communities, with a special attention to the women active in the sector.

The participation of the men and women active in the artisanal fisheries sector

- A permanent participatory mechanism must be put in place in order to ensure that people active in the artisanal fisheries sector and civil society are properly informed and participate in the entire process of the partnership design and implementation. In this respect, provision should be made to support the establishment (or the revitalisation) of fisheries consultative committees, consisting of artisanal fisheries sector representatives, as well as civil society organisations that have an interest in sustainable fisheries.
- It is of paramount importance to raise awareness with governments in the sub- region, as well as with regional institutions (in particular the SRFC), about the importance of the sector's participation in the partnership.
- The artisanal fisheries sector stakeholders need urgently to be involved in the implementation of the European Union regulation to combat IUU fishing, in order to assess whether the flexibility measures introduced for the artisanal fisheries sector is sufficient to accommodate the characteristics of West African artisanal fisheries.
- The organisational process of the artisanal fisheries sectors must be supported, as it is an indispensable element for an active participation. In this context, particular attention must be given to giving specific support for the participation of women from the sector in the decision-making process.

Transparency, information and communication

- All the information needed to evaluate partnerships must be made available to the countries of the sub-region, so that the economic, social and ecological costs and benefits can be taken into account.
- These evaluations, as well as the existing evaluations of the partnership agreements made by the European Union, must be made available to the representatives of the sector and the civil society, so that a broad debate can be opened on the contents of the partnerships.
- The fisheries sector must be covered by the initiative for transparency in the exploitation of natural resources (Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative - EITI) – support must be given to develop transparency indicators that are suitable for fisheries, and that will allow the sector and

- civil society to specify their demands in this respect.
- Certain areas have already been identified where it is necessary to have greater transparency: the issuing of fishing licences, the price offered to producers, the market price, and public aid.
 - Transparency is also achieved thanks to the media – they raise public awareness about the sector's concerns. Also, journalists from networks like REJOPRAO, which works together with the artisanal fisheries sector, help members of sector organisations to become better informed and thus facilitate their participation in decision-making. Partnerships must support this dynamic cooperation between the sector and the media.

Promoting a regional and international approach

- A regional approach should be adopted, at least for the management of shared stocks (tuna, small pelagics).
- In this respect, a first step is to harmonise minimum access conditions, especially applicable to foreign vessels, for the access to shared stocks.
- The partners involved should press for the establishment of a sub-committee for artisanal fisheries to the FAO Committee for Fisheries. This proposal was already made at the COFI meeting in 2009, but it needs to obtain stronger support.
- We demand that artisanal fisheries sector representatives be included in the Sub-regional Fisheries Commission.

Coherence with the European Union development policy

- The partnerships must promote the development of intra-regional and national fish trade, and must not provoke market distortions which would be harmful to artisanal fishers.
- We reiterate that the artisanal fisheries sector have urged, since 2006, for the ratification of the TIR Convention (international road transport) so that our products can circulate more freely; we suggest that efforts to ratify should be reinforced through the partnerships.
- The suspension of cooperation and fisheries agreements for political reasons that are not linked to fisheries has a negative effect on the most vulnerable groups in society, especially the artisanal fishing communities. In those cases, commitments taken should be fulfilled, particularly concerning control and surveillance.

We ask this declaration to be transmitted to the European institutions – the European Parliament, the Council and the European Commission – and to the authorities of the countries in the sub-region, the regional fisheries organisations, especially the SRFC, as well as to the non-governmental organisations that are involved in the sector at the sub-regional level.

Done in Nouakchott on the 11th of November 2009

Artisanal fisheries sector organisations signatories (by alphabetical order)

Conseil National Inter-professionnel de la Pêche artisanale du Sénégal (CONIPAS) – *Sénégal*

Fédération Nationale de Pêche de Mauritanie (FNP) – section artisanale - *Mauritania*

Fédération Nationale des Coopératives de Pêche artisanale de Côte d'Ivoire (FENACOPECI) – *Ivory Coast*

Gambia Artisanal Fisheries Development Agency , GAMFIDA - *Gambia*

Réseau des Organisations professionnelles de pêche artisanale de Guinée Bissau (ROPA) – *Guinea Bissau*

Organisation de la Pêche artisanale du Cap Vert – *Cape Verde*

Union Nationale des Femmes fumeuses de Poisson de Guinée (UNFFPG) –*Guinea*

Union nationale des Pêcheurs artisans de Guinée (UNPAG) – *Guinea*