



## **WORLD OCEANS DAY 2019**

### **Eighth (8th) Mbour Forum**

#### **Concept note**

**Theme: Women and Men of the Ocean: Issues and Challenges for the improvement of women's working conditions in the artisanal fisheries sector**



## **Context and Justification:**

In most coastal African countries, artisanal fishing is the backbone of coastal communities, and its dynamism is a guarantee of sustainable development. An essential aspect for the sustainability of communities is to ensure decent living and working conditions for the women and men of these communities.

The African Confederation of Professional Organisations of Artisanal Fisheries (CAOPA) and the Association for the Promotion and Empowerment of Actors in Artisanal Maritime Fisheries (APRAPAM-Senegal) have committed themselves through their constitutive acts to work towards sustainable fisheries that take into account economic, social and environmental aspects. In this strategic orientation, they promote the gender aspect, particularly with respect to women, in their organizational and decision-making processes. They are working to improve and strengthen their means to allow them to access to sustainable economic and social living conditions, based on international instruments that define the principles and objectives that concern them and that bind the signatory States for their implementation.

The World Oceans Day 2019 celebration, whose theme this year is "*Gender and Oceans*", is an opportunity to explore the gender dimension in humanity's relations with the ocean. It is an opportunity for CAOPA and APRAPAM to organize the eighth edition of their forum on this theme, focusing mainly on the difficult living and working conditions of members of coastal communities, women in particular, and the necessary actions to be taken by all stakeholders to improve the situation.

This choice is not fortuitous, because on the one hand it corresponds to our strategic orientation, which is in line with the spirit of international instruments that promote sustainable fishing and improve the living conditions of artisanal fishing communities, and on the other hand, African coastal countries have committed themselves to the implementation of international instruments that serve as a guide to improve working conditions in artisanal fisheries. Among these we can mention:

- **The Universal Declaration of Human Rights** adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations on 10 December 1948 in Paris in its clause 22;
- **Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development"** adopted on 25/9/2015, by the Member States of the United Nations in its objectives 5, 8 and 14; The international community through the United Nations (UN) has agreed to "*Conserve and sustainably use*

*oceans, seas and resources for sustainable development"* (SDG 14). It provides a framework for the sustainable management and protection of marine and coastal ecosystems.

- **The ILO's primary objective** is to *"promote opportunities for women and men to obtain decent and productive work, in conditions of liberty, equality, security and human dignity"*.
- **ILO Convention C188** on work in fishing: it applies to all vessels, including artisanal ones. Senegal ratified Convention 188 in September 2018 and it will enter into force on 21 September 2019.
- **The Voluntary Guidelines for Sustainable Artisanal Fisheries** in a Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication, in these Guidelines: Social Development, Employment and Decent Work (Chapter 6), Value Chain, Post-harvest Activities and Trade (Chapter 7);
- **African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights** in its Clause 12 sections 1 and 2;
- **Policy Framework and Reform strategy for Fisheries and Aquaculture** in Africa (UA) chapter 4.2. On the "Development of artisanal fisheries"

This option to highlight women in the gender dimension is explained by the place and important role of women in artisanal fishing communities that are present throughout the sector by their activities more focused on post-harvest operations: processing and marketing of fresh products. Thus, they are at the heart of important issues, including food security and employment creation in the countries of the region and sustainable local development. African countries that have ratified these international instruments must recognize that *"women's rights are enforceable by the state and their implementation requires a continuous provision by the state."*

In most coastal African countries, artisanal fishing is the backbone of economies and its dynamism is a guarantee of sustainable development. An essential aspect for the sustainability of communities is to ensure decent living and working conditions for women and men of these communities.

However, the increasing consumption of fish and other fisheries resources is likely to have social, economic and environmental consequences, due to the number of significant problems, such as overfishing, IUU fishing, marine pollution exacerbated by the negative impacts of climate change on the oceans, and recently the uncontrolled development of fish meal and oil

refining facilities in West Africa. These factors affect the world's most vulnerable communities, including artisanal fisheries, as fish remains the primary source of food and/or employment.

The negative impact of human action on the ocean is proven by well-documented scientific observations that show that the ocean is emptying of its biomass, warming and acidifying, putting huge pressures on marine life.

Moreover, it is important to implement these Conventions at the same time to ensure sustainable fishing, particularly artisanal fishing, in order to cover the rights of men and women to decent working conditions, so that artisanal fisheries can benefit from the provisions listed above.

These various aspects have been the subject of many discussions between the Professional Organisations of the CAOPA member countries, including the last meeting organised in May 2019. The participants in this meeting recalled that their first concern is access **to natural resources**:

*"Given the overexploitation of fisheries resources in Africa, many of our fishermen no longer bring back in their nets enough to supply women processors, micro-fish wholesalers and fish wholesalers.*

*Women in the sector are directly affected by poor resource management. We also face unfair competition from other actors, such as fish meal processing plants, which deprive us of our fish and prevent us from contributing to the food and nutritional security of populations.*

*We ask our States to commit themselves resolutely to the sustainable and transparent management of our fisheries resources, to give priority access to those who contribute to the food and nutritional security of our populations and to involve both men and women in the artisanal fisheries sector in this management.*

### **Workshop Objectives:**

#### **- Overall Objective**

- Encourage African States to commit themselves resolutely to the sustainable and transparent management of fisheries resources, to give priority access to those who contribute to the food and nutritional security of populations and to

involve both men and women in the artisanal fisheries sector in this management.

**- Specific objectives:**

- ✓ Identify and shed light on the difficult living and working conditions of members of coastal communities, particularly women;
- ✓ Identify necessary actions to be taken by all stakeholders to improve the situation of coastal communities;
- ✓ Identify the measures to be taken by all actors to improve the contribution of artisanal fisheries to food security;
- ✓ Identify ways and means for coastal communities to participate in environmental protection and the fight against coastal and marine pollution.

**Expected outcomes:**

- ✓ Sensitive areas that affect oceans and other water bodies are identified and their impacts on fishing activities assessed;
- ✓ A memorandum is being prepared for decision-makers to raise awareness and encourage different users to adopt behaviours that promote the health of the oceans and other water bodies;
- ✓ The elements for designing an advocacy programme for decision-makers, raising awareness of users of oceans and other water bodies are identified;
- ✓ The actions that can be carried out by professional artisanal fisheries organisations, particularly in the protection of the coastal marine environment and the health of workplaces, shall be identified, discussed and adopted for their implementation.

**Workshop schedule. Participation:**

The workshop will be held in two stages:

1. **A morning panel discussion** bringing together women members of APRAPAM, CAOPA and other organizations from different countries and active in the various artisanal fishing trades. The aim will be to review the issues of women in the fisheries sector in general and artisanal fisheries in particular through an exchange of experiences. The purpose of this activity is to highlight the major difficulties common

to them and to propose measures and means of resolving them in accordance with the provisions of the various conventions and regulations in force in the countries.

2. **A press conference in the afternoon** with the presence of the media (print and broadcast) to draw the attention of national and international opinion, national policy decision-makers and international organizations to the worries and expectations of women in the fishing sector in order to find appropriate solutions for them.

**Place and Date:**

The workshop will take place on June 13, 2019 to celebrate World Oceans Day, at the Abbé David Boilat Centre in Mbour.