



Artisanal fishers perspective on the effects of the EU CFP in third countries coastal areas

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The external dimension of the CFP today and tomorrow: current challenges and future opportunities. Governance frameworks on biodiversity and fisheries. LDAC meeting, 25 May 2023, Stockholm.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Dear participants,

On behalf of the African Confederation of Artisanal Fishing Organisations - CAOPA - and AFRIFISH, which I chair, I am delighted to be in your company once again, to renew old acquaintances and meet new colleagues, whether from the European fisheries sector, civil society or institutions.

To prepare my speech, I reminded myself of the requests I made in 2011 to the European Parliament, when the Common Fisheries Policy was about to undergo a substantial reform, to examine the progress made since then and to draw lessons for the future.

The first topic I want to address was a priority in 2011, and is still a priority today, and that is **transparency**.

Our countries' fishing agreements with the European Union are clearly at the top in terms of transparency compared to bilateral fishing agreements with other partners such as Russia and Japan.

We have the texts of the agreements with the European Union and, since 2015, following a civil society campaign that CAOPA supported, we also have the text of the fisheries agreement evaluations.

We agree with the LDAC's recommendations to improve these evaluations, such as giving more emphasis to the impacts of fisheries agreements on women in the sector, or examining in more detail the implementation of the social clause in fisheries agreements.

This last point is of interest to coastal communities, as many of the fishermen on board European vessels come from coastal communities. In Senegal, it is not uncommon for a fisherman to embark for several seasons on European industrial boats, and then return to artisanal fishing.



I want to stress that for us, transparency in fisheries agreements with our countries is not an end in itself. It is an ingredient to enable informed participation of stakeholders in the management of fishing activities in Africa.

Here too, since the last CFP reform, small-scale fishing and civil society organisations are increasingly consulted on the topic of fisheries agreements, both in carrying out evaluations and during agreements negotiations. For the future, we would like to see these stakeholder consultations become more systematic, and also to be around the table during the joint committee meetings that examine the implementation of fisheries agreements.

There are issues regarding the transparency of fisheries agreements.

Firstly, on the use of sectoral support. What is done with the money is not known, nor whether the actions supported are effective. No representative of artisanal fishers, nor of civil society, is involved in the planning of these activities, nor in their implementation, and even less in their evaluation.

Under these conditions, do not be surprised that the African public does not always have a good opinion of the European Union as a partner in the area of fisheries, while support actions carried out by other countries, such as China, are clearly identifiable by everyone.

It is absolutely essential that detailed information on what is being done with the money from the sectoral support of fisheries agreements is made available to the public, and that stakeholders are involved in the identification, implementation and evaluation of these actions if they are to be effective and benefit our people.

A second point I wanted to raise with you is the question of **access by European vessels to African fishing resources**.

Tuna agreements are based on decisions taken at the level of Regional Fisheries Management Organisations. If these agreements are to be fair to small-scale tuna fisheries, it is at the RFMO level that action is needed. In these RFMOs, the EU should support a system of resource allocation that gives priority to those who fish sustainably and contribute most to local economies, in particular artisanal fisheries. Recently, the Federation of Artisanal Fisheries of the Indian Ocean (FPAOI) insisted that, given the state of tuna resources in the Indian Ocean, effective conservation measures must be adopted, including that fleets must stop catching juveniles to allow stocks to recover. The European Union, which is present in these regional organisations, as are our countries, has a role to play in supporting these positions.

As for the mixed agreements, in the last reform, the European Union committed to ensuring that European vessels would only have access to the surplus of resources that could not be caught by local fishermen.



But how is this possible when the data on the overall fishing effort in our waters are not known? Moreover, neither by-catches nor bait catches, made up of species targeted by small-scale fishing, are counted.

How is it possible to talk about access to the surplus in the case of small pelagics in West Africa, shared resources that are still not managed in a concerted manner?

For us, fishing agreements giving access to shared fish stocks between neighboring countries should be based on scientific evidence of a surplus at the appropriate regional level.

In this respect, we very much appreciate the LDAC's efforts to promote sustainable management of small pelagics in West Africa and to warn of the dangers of industrial production of fishoil and fishmeal from small pelagics.

Today, it still takes 5 kg of small pelagics to make one kilo of fishmeal which is often used to feed farmed fish that will then be consumed by Europeans. If Europe does not stop the entry of these fish, raised with the fishmeal from our small pelagics, then the European Union, like China, Norway and Turkey, deprives the women fish processors of their livelihoods, and starve the populations of West Africa.

Regarding the access of European vessels to the coastal zone of African countries through fisheries agreements, we welcome the fact that, since the last reform, the European Union's policy has been not to negotiate access to areas where artisanal fishers operate. This measure should be extended to all fleets of foreign origin.

The fisheries agreements contain a non-discrimination clause, which commits the EU's partner country to apply the measures laid down in the fisheries agreement to all foreign fleets. But in practice, we see that this is not happening. Vessels from other countries do not comply with conditions similar to those laid down in the agreement, particularly in terms of zoning. It will be important in the future, if the EU really wants to contribute to protecting the access of small-scale fisheries to resources, as provided for in Sustainable Development Goal 14 b, that it be stricter on the respect of this non-discrimination clause.

This brings me to the subject of joint ventures. Not all industrial vessels of foreign origin are considered foreign. We have more and more vessels, especially trawlers, which form joint ventures with nationals of our countries, allowing them to fly the local flag. But make no mistake. These boats, if they are flagged to our countries, are still controlled by foreign companies. Mostly Chinese, but also Russian or European. Incidents of illegal fishing, such as incursions into the zone reserved for small-scale fishing, often involve these vessels operating under joint ventures.

In the fisheries agreements, the European Union promotes the constitution of joint ventures, without giving further details. This does not seem to be a responsible attitude given the situation.



At the LDAC meeting in Las Palmas in 2015, in which I had the honour to participate, participants unanimously called for joint ventures to be covered by the CFP. We asked that the EU promote the development in African countries of a regulatory framework for joint ventures, applicable to all foreign vessels, in the catching, processing and marketing sectors, which ensures that joint ventures operate transparently, do not compete with artisanal fisheries, and contribute to the development objectives of the country concerned. Unfortunately, 8 years on, there has still been no progress on this point, and we deplore this. We hope that the current review of the CFP will be an opportunity to put this issue back on the agenda.

Finally, briefly, I would also like to emphasise that fisheries relations with the European Union are not just about fisheries agreements and the EU's positions in regional fisheries organisations.

EU policies that shape fisheries relations with African countries include policies on the blue economy, development aid, trade and environmental conservation. Together these different policies should ensure that artisanal fisheries are adequately supported and protected.

In the framework of the 30x30 initiative, to which the EU and African countries subscribe, we of course recognise that protected areas are important for restoring and conserving biodiversity on African coasts, and for supporting coastal communities that depend on fishing. However, it is essential that African countries adopt a participatory and transparent approach to identifying these areas and developing rules on the fishing activities that are allowed in them.

In addition, the social and economic costs of establishing a protected area for the artisanal fishing communities living in the vicinity must be taken into account. Indeed, if fishermen have to avoid some protected areas and go further at sea, this has a cost. If fishermen are involved in the management of the marine protected area, like participative surveillance, this has a cost in financial terms but also in terms of the time dedicated to this activity by the fishermen. And these costs must be compensated.

In recent years, we have seen the EU increasingly support the establishment of protected areas through fisheries agreements. This will undoubtedly increase with the implementation of the 30x30 initiative. It will be important for the EU to ensure that the process of establishing these conservation tools is done in a transparent, gender-sensitive manner, with the informed participation of coastal communities, and takes into account the necessary compensation of communities associated costs.

Thank you very much