

We call on Ministers...

...in charge of fisheries to accelerate the development and implementation of transparent, gender sensitive and participatory national strategic plans of action to foster support for artisanal fishing communities guided by the SSFG and regional policy that are adequately resourced to best address tenure rights, co-management, access to markets, the inclusion of women and youth, and resilience in national and regional contexts.



Women fishers in Bissau. © Carmen Abd Ali

The signatories

The African Confederation of Artisanal Fisheries Professional Organisations (**CAOPA**) brings together professional organisations of men and women from 26 African countries. Its main objective is to foster a pan-African dynamic for the development of sustainable artisanal fisheries for the well-being of coastal communities, and to contribute to the food security of populations.

LMMA International is a grassroots network dedicated to advancing locally-led natural resource management. LMMA supports networks in Indonesia, the Philippines, Papua New Guinea, Palau, Pohnpei, Fiji and the Solomon Islands, and engages with more than 15 other countries in the Indo Pacific.



Fishers on the beach in Ghana. © Samuel Abohi

A CALL TO ACTION for artisanal fisheries

ACP artisanal fisheries are the most important sector of the oceans economy, and provide livelihoods, employment, food security and revenue to ACP populations. They rely on access to healthy oceans and ecosystems but their future is threatened by poor fisheries management, pollution or competition for space by other blue economy sectors



Access to fisheries resources and 100% of coastal areas co-management

It is essential that men and women in artisanal fisheries participate effectively in the decisions that affect them and are able to build on their rights over coastal fishing areas to sustainably co-manage coastal areas and fisheries resource



More visibility of SSF, transparency and accountability in fisheries management

Political will and effective ocean governance (rooted in public participation, transparency and accountability) are vital to the reforms needed to ensure the benefit of healthy fisheries benefit for ACP coastal communities and populations



Protecting artisanal fisheries from competing "blue economy" sectors

The negative impacts of more powerful BE sea and land-based sectors (oil and gas exploitation, deep-sea mining, tourism, fishmeal factories) jeopardise the future of SSF. The precautionary approach and transparency should guide any new ocean use



Promote the role and participation of women and youth, and their innovation

Women are present at all stages of ACP artisanal fisheries value chains and are an essential link in getting the fish to consumers. However, their work is often unrecognised and invisible, their contribution not valued and their working and living conditions are dire



Building resilient coastal communities

The Covid-19 crisis has demonstrated more than ever the importance of resilient and healthy artisanal fisheries to feed people. Artisanal fisheries will be the first to suffer the impacts of climate change on the oceans, due to their geographical location and their limited means

The challenges

Action is urgently required to address the following key challenges in order to ensure that artisanal fisheries are protected and restored so that they may continue making their **major contributions to national wealth, health and wellbeing.**

Reaching the Sustainable Development Goals, in particular **SDG 14.b** that calls states to provide **access to marine resources and markets for small-scale fisheries** is of paramount importance in this context.



Support





Actions TO ACHIEVE SUSTAINABLE SMALL-SCALE FISHERIES

The following actions should be considered by the OACPS for the concrete implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals that benefits ACP artisanal fisheries, in particular SDG 14.b that calls states to provide access to marine resources and markets for small-scale fisheries

Fishers in Papua New Guinea © Elodie Van Lierde



Securing access to fisheries resources, and ensuring 100% co-management of coastal areas

Artisanal fisheries are often side-lined in decision-making processes that fail to recognise the rights and responsibilities of local communities in achieving sustainable fisheries. Effective participation can be ensured by:

- Securing access rights to resources for artisanal fisheries, including by granting them exclusive fishing rights to coastal areas, as it already occurs in some OACPS, by closing inshore areas to industrial fishing and other industrial activity; protecting title, tenure, access, and resource rights; and ensuring free, prior and informed consent for any new ocean use or activity, including for conservation purpose;
- Ensuring that equitable and appropriate co-management systems are in place for 100% of all coastal areas, including for coastal marine protected areas, and that sufficient financial and human means are devoted to support it; and
- Promoting participatory surveillance, including putting in place a specific legal framework that defines clearly the roles and responsibilities of the authorities and government and fishers and the support to be provided by the government.



Ensuring visibility of artisanal fisheries, transparency and accountability of fisheries management

Transparency and accountability are essential for good governance and sustainable management of fisheries. Another element that is crucial is data. However, public information on artisanal fisheries is insufficient, and women are particularly neglected in official statistics. This can be addressed by:

- Improving gender sensitive data collection and dissemination of information on the artisanal fisheries sector, including the contribution of women in fisheries; and
- Publishing all official relevant information, including legislation, fishing authorisation, data on performance and the rationale for management regulations; texts of authorisations, permits and approvals, including those for ocean, coastal sea and land based industrial projects; information on foreign aid projects and new forms of financing for ocean conservation, including blue bonds and debt-for-nature-swaps.



Protecting artisanal fisheries from competing "blue economy" sectors

Blue economy activities impact fishing communities. The precautionary approach and transparency should guide any new ocean use, and OACPS members should:

- Not allow nor support any new ocean use activity, if it negatively impacts ecosystems and the activities of communities that depend on them for their livelihoods;
- Demonstrably support, in national budgets, adequate environmental regulation mechanisms for current uses and activities before any new development is allowed; and
- Carry out independent social and environmental impact assessments, with the utmost transparency and with the participation of affected coastal communities; and developing transparent and effective mechanisms for (1) Consultation which allows for informed and active participation of affected fishing communities, (2) Conflict resolution between users of maritime spaces, and (3) Grievance redress.



Promoting the participation of women and youth, supporting their role in innovation

Women are often side-lined in decision-making due to their invisibility. In addition, they face dire living and working conditions which hamper their ability to innovate and contribute to food security. Youth encounter difficulties in accessing land and credit, as well as finding decent employment. These challenges can be addressed by:

- Capacitating women and youth to actively engage in professional organisations and decision-making, including for fisheries management decisions;
- Prioritising investments in basic services and infrastructure, such as access to potable water, electricity, drainage and sanitary facilities at processing sites; access to market facilities; training in market development, e.g., for exporting products; and investing in infrastructure that improve women living conditions and those of their families, such as decent housing, day care centres near processing sites, or training in the use of new technologies;
- Removing existing barriers to trade at national and regional levels, particularly stopping the harassment of women along trade routes and border controls; and
- Supporting the purchase of innovative processing tools, like FTT ovens or solar fridges, facilitate access to land and credit; support participatory research for the development of artisanal fish farming.



Building resilient artisanal fishing and coastal communities

The Covid-19 crisis has demonstrated more than ever the importance of artisanal fisheries to feed people. Artisanal fisheries will be the first to suffer the impacts of climate change on the oceans, due to their geographical location and their limited means. Equitable co-management (see point 1 above) is essential for the sustainability of communities, but ACP countries should also support their resilience by:

- Developing, in consultation with fishing communities, specific policies and plans for climate change adaptation and mitigation, and measures for disaster risk reduction and emergency response; and
- Strengthening capacities, including the development and support of professional organisations for effective, legitimate and democratic representation, and supporting initiatives that improve the communities' resilience, particularly facing resource scarcity, helping them reduce post-harvest losses or developing supply alternatives.



Women fish processors in Senegal © Mediaproduct