



*African Confederation of Professional Organizations of Artisanal Fisheries*

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## **CAOPA Statement on the Guide for the Social Sustainability of Artisanal Fisheries Value Chains**

*(Item 6 Decisions taken and recommendations made by the Sub-Committee on Fish Trade at its Seventeenth Session (Vigo, Spain, 25-29 November 2019))*

<http://www.fao.org/3/ne709fr/ne709fr.pdf>

CAOPA supports the request of the Sub-Committee on Fish Trade to strengthen the capacity of FAO members to better understand value chains in the artisanal fisheries sector, as well as FAO's commitment to **develop a guide on social responsibility along fish value chains**.

In Africa, our sector is essential for the food security of the population and provides, according to FAO, more than ten million jobs for men and women in African coastal communities. To give an example, a pirogue fishing small pelagic in Senegal can employ around 100 people from the catch to the consumer's plate. It is essential that the sector be able to provide decent living and working conditions for all those working in the sector.

The measures taken to combat the Covid 19 pandemic in 2020 are proving increasingly difficult for men and women working in African artisanal fisheries. Due to the lack of facilities and equipment, maintaining hygiene and sanitary measures to combat the epidemic is complicated on board pirogues, at landing sites, processing sites and markets. Everywhere, the dilapidated facilities and tools along the value chain and the lack of sanitary facilities in many artisanal fishing communities is a challenge.

For CAOPA, the Covid crisis 19 must be an opportunity to respond to the long-standing challenges in African artisanal fisheries, in particular to improve the living and working conditions of men and women in the sector.

We have international instruments at our disposal for this purpose.

For example, ILO Convention 188 on Work in Fishing covers key issues to promote safe and decent working conditions on board vessels in artisanal fisheries. But the entire value chain of artisanal fisheries is not covered by this Convention, particularly women in the sector. Today, in most African countries, the working conditions of these women are not decent: the women processors work all day long in smoke, sometimes amidst rubbish, without access to sanitation, drinking water or electricity. Often their young children accompany them and live in the same inhuman conditions.

The improvement of women's working conditions is taken into account by the FAO Voluntary Guidelines for Sustainable Artisanal Fisheries, particularly in the chapters on Social Development, Employment and Decent Work and the chapter on Value Chains, Post-harvest Activities and Trade.

For the future **guide on social responsibility in fish value chains**, CAOPA supports the creation of a specific document for artisanal fisheries with references to social aspects and minimum requirements drawn from the FAO Voluntary Guidelines and ILO Convention C188 on Work in the Fishing Sector.

These guidelines should help all stakeholders, including governments and the industry, to implement these instruments, through national/regional multi-stakeholder action plans, to promote socially responsible value chains and to empower men and women in artisanal fisheries.

In this context, a number of key provisions should be introduced, including: the issue of land rights, responsible resource management, adaptation to climate change, combating pollution, promoting food security.

The value chains of small-scale fishing are much more varied and diverse than the value chains of industrial fishing (fishermen, porters who transport the fish from the pirogue to the shore, people in charge of shucking the fish, cutting, processing, transporting, selling, carpenters who build the pirogues, etc.). It is important that the entire value chain, i.e. all these operators, are clearly identified and taken into account when the guide is drawn up.

The guidelines should also pay particular attention to women in artisanal fisheries value chains, as the problems they face in improving the social sustainability of their work are very specific and different from those of men.

Finally, it will be important that this guide takes into account the potential negative impacts that a company in the industrial fishing sector can have on the sustainability of artisanal fishing operations, as well as on the food security of local populations. For example, a company producing fishmeal in West Africa, an activity that undermines people's food security and traditional artisanal fishing activities, should not be certified as 'socially sustainable', even if it takes measures to improve the working conditions of its employees.