



*African Confederation of Professional  
Organizations of Artisanal Fisheries*

## Joint Statement

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### **Transparency in the allocation of access to fisheries is essential**

Brussels, Dakar, 26 January 2021

*Summary* In this joint statement on the occasion of the 34th session of the FAO Committee on Fisheries and with regard to item 9 of the agenda "Fight against IUU fishing", CAOPA and CFFA stress that the fight against IUU fishing, and the promotion of sustainable fishing requires that the conditions for good governance are in place, with transparency as an essential element.

The Confederation of African Artisanal Fisheries Organisations (CAOPA) and the Coalition for Fair Fisheries Arrangements (CFFA) welcome the initiatives taken by the FAO and its members to improve the traceability of fishing operations, such as catch documentation schemes and the allocation of a unique identification number for vessels.

However, we would like to stress that in order to combat IUU fishing, it is not enough to propose technical solutions or to sign international agreements, such as the PSMA. It is also necessary to create the conditions for **good governance** in fisheries to enable these solutions to be effective and these agreements to be properly implemented.

The participation of local fishing communities in the management of resources, the information of citizens on the technical and financial conditions of access,

the regular publication of updated lists of licensed vessels, including those of foreign origin, are essential elements of this good governance.

Many coastal African countries have fishing agreements with foreign countries or fishing companies. The publication of these agreements, as well as information on their implementation, is essential for sustainable fisheries, which protects the future of local artisanal fishing communities.

We also want to stress that **not all legal fishing is sustainable**.

In Africa, there are many examples where the authorities issue licences to vessels, often of foreign origin, thereby legalising their activities, while this puts pressure on the fish resources and the marine environment that is not compatible with sustainable resource exploitation. This unsustainable legal fishing, which endangers coastal communities, is often the result of corrupt practices. To combat this phenomenon, the publication, in an accessible format, of credible information on the licences granted and the financial and technical conditions of access is also essential.

By promoting transparency in the various elements of fisheries management, which have been defined in particular in the standards of the Fisheries Transparency Initiative (FiTI), FAO will help further developing countries to fulfil their responsibilities as flag States and coastal States.

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**Brussels and Dakar, 26 January 2021**

For further information

CFFA

[secretariat@capecffa.org](mailto:secretariat@capecffa.org)

[www.cffacape.org](http://www.cffacape.org)

CAOPA

[caopa.peche@gmail.com](mailto:caopa.peche@gmail.com)

<https://caopa.org/>