



World Fisheries Day 2021

CAOPA declaration



Confédération Africaine des Organisations
Professionnelles de la Pêche Artisanale



African Confederation of Professional
Organizations of Artisanal Fisheries



The International Year of Artisanal Fisheries and Aquaculture (IYFAFA) is launched!

Dear participants,

Saly/Senegal, 21 November 2021-Meeting over the last two days, we, the African Confederation of Artisanal Fisheries Professional Organizations (CAOPA), with members in 27 African countries, representing men and women in maritime and continental artisanal fisheries, have clarified what we expect from it.

Our first objective is to ensure that our fishermen have safe access to the abundant fish resources they need. Fishermen know the fish better than anyone else. With the right support, fishing communities are best



placed to manage coastal fisheries, including areas designated as protected marine areas, and bring the fish back to them.

But this must not be spoiled by bad governance.

Our efforts must not be ruined by the lack of recognition of our sector by our authorities, which is due to the lack of data on our sector and the lack of visibility of the contribution of our men and women to the welfare of our compatriots.

Our efforts must not be ruined by our authorities giving too much access to destructive fishing, allowing illegal and irresponsible fishing to go on with impunity.

Our efforts must not be ruined by the exploitation of oil and gas, by the destruction of mangroves and landing and processing sites to build luxury hotels, polluting industrial zones or fishmeal factories.

Our management efforts must not be ruined by greed and corruption, which occur mostly in the darkness of offices, but sometimes on our beaches, in the artisanal sector.

As the saying goes, "When you point a finger at someone, there are three fingers pointing at you". Our first duty is to be responsible players if we are to be responsible managers of our fisheries.

At the beginning of our discussion, our Secretary General recalled his pride in seeing how, after ten years of existence, CAOPA has succeeded in giving confidence to communities to claim their rights, to assert their benefits, in social, economic and cultural terms and as managers of coastal ecosystems, but also to assume their duties.

We are also proud after listening to all the positive experiences shared yesterday, especially those of women, on how they have, with small means, improved the living conditions of their whole community.

The message we have received is clear: whether it is to improve processing techniques or to increase the availability of affordable raw materials, innovation is the key to the survival of our sector.

Throughout the next year, we, the young generation of CAOPA leaders, will assist our CAOPA leaders by relentlessly knocking on the doors of



our decision makers, at the regional, national, African levels and ask them to entrust us with the co-management of our coastal zones and to invest in them, with sufficient human and material support.

We will ask them to support innovations in the value chain, especially women's activities, by providing appropriate infrastructure and services.

Yesterday, we learned that the president of CAOPA was elected to head the African platform of non-state actors in fisheries promoted by the African Union.

It makes us all proud, but more importantly; it gives us hope that our voices will be heard by all the member countries of the African Union.

With so many opportunities to make the International Year of Artisanal Fisheries and Aquaculture a success in Africa, we, the younger generation of CAOPA leaders, have a clear path forward.

With the energy of our youth, with the experience of our elders, following in their footsteps, passing through the doors they opened for us, we have only one message to send to our decision makers:

Get ready, we're coming!

Long live African artisanal fishing!