



## Webinar Proceedings

How can the EU-AU partnership support Sustainable Artisanal fisheries?

*The speakers*

**How can the EU-AU partnership support sustainable artisanal fisheries?  
The perspective of African civil society**

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A fisheries scientist, former director of the CRODT, the Dakar oceanographic research centre

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A fisheries professional for 30 years, he is president of CAOPA and coordinator of AFRIFISH

**TERI TUXSON**  
is from Fiji and is the Assistant Coordinator of the Locally Managed Marine Areas (LMMA) network

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President of the Côte d'Ivoire women processors' cooperative and CAOPA's women's programme

**OKELOH W'NAMADOA**  
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**Thursday, 10 February 2022**  
9h GMT (Dakar) / 10h CET (Brussels)

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In the run-up to the summit that will bring together the leaders of the European Union and the African Union in Brussels on 17 and 18 February 2022, the African Confederation of Professional Organizations of Artisanal Fisheries (CAOPA) organized a [webinar](#), with the support of the Coalition for Fair Fisheries Agreements (CFFA), in which nearly one hundred representatives of artisanal fisheries, civil society and African and European institutions participated. The objective was to exchange on how partnership relations between Africa and Europe can contribute to support sustainable artisanal fisheries in Africa.

From the outset, the moderator, Dr. Alassane Samba, recalled a series of elements of the framework that guides the partnership relations between the EU and the AU in the field of fisheries, elements on which CAOPA and its partners have pronounced themselves in recent years. For example, the African Union's Strategy and Policy Framework and Reform Strategy for Fisheries and Aquaculture in Africa adopted in 2014, where small-scale fisheries are presented as essential in the fight against poverty and for contributing to food security. Secondly, the Blue Economy Strategies of the European Union and the African Union, for which CAOPA insisted on the



importance of artisanal fisheries, which was largely ignored in these strategies. Finally, he recalled two key points of the advocacy of CAOPA and its partners in relation to the EU and the AU: the first request concerns the implementation of the FAO Voluntary Guidelines for Sustainable Small-scale in fisheries policies; the second request is to support the concerted management of small pelagic in West Africa through the creation of a Regional Fisheries Management Organization.

Gaoussou Gueye, President of CAOPA, recalled that the organization represents the voice of men and women of artisanal, maritime and continental fisheries from 27 African countries. And it is these men and women who have determined their advocacy priorities for 2022, the International Year of Artisanal Fisheries and Aquaculture.

The first priority is for states to grant exclusive fishing rights to artisanal fishers in coastal areas. These areas should be fully co-managed between the State and fishermen, and include appropriate ecosystem conservation tools, such as protected marine areas, or participatory monitoring systems. Safe access also means safety at sea. The signing and implementation of the International Labour Organization (ILO) Convention 188 will improve safety at sea for fishermen. The training of captains of canoe, the use of new technologies (geo-location, etc.), and the raising of fishermen's awareness of safety issues are essential. Returning to the question of the management of small pelagic, which are strategic for food security, Gaoussou Gueye recalled that concerted management is an imperative, - management which should give priority access to fishing for direct human consumption, rather than to the fishmeal and oil industry.

Promoting the place of women in African artisanal fisheries is also a priority for CAOPA: for this, and above all, the participation of women in professional organizations and in decision-making processes must be strengthened. For example, when the State decides to grant fishing licenses to industrial vessels or an approval to set up flour factories, which will deprive them of raw material for processing.

Improving the working conditions of women in artisanal fisheries is a necessity, which requires first of all, investments in services and infrastructure: drinking water, electricity, drainage, sanitary facilities, and work tools. These will reduce post-harvest losses, improve the supply of raw materials to women, and provide better quality processed products.

To facilitate trade in goods at national and regional level, states should work to remove existing barriers, especially harassment of women along trade routes, particularly at borders between countries, which cause delays and loss of goods for women.



Finally, echoing their position on the blue economy, CAOPA calls for African artisanal fisheries to be protected from competition from other financially and politically more powerful sectors of the blue economy, such as oil and gas exploitation, tourism or the development of coastal industries, which jeopardize the future of artisanal fisheries. The pollution of marine and coastal ecosystems by these activities is also a scourge for communities. The precautionary approach must guide the development of blue economy. Independent and transparent social and environmental impact assessments must be carried out, with the participation of affected coastal communities. No new ocean use activity should be allowed by states, or supported by donors, if it negatively impacts ecosystems (e.g. oil pollution) and the activities of the communities that depend on them for their livelihood. Transparent mechanisms for consultation and conflict resolution between users of maritime spaces, which allow for informed and active participation of affected fishing communities, must be put in place to ensure that the blue economy benefits all.

After this first presentation, three panelists highlighted a series of important elements to ensure sustainable artisanal fisheries: transparency and community participation in resource management; innovation in the artisanal fisheries sector, particularly by women and young people in the sector; and finally the importance for African civil society and artisanal fisheries to speak with one voice.

Teri Tuxson, from Fiji, is the Deputy Coordinator of the Pacific Network of Locally Managed Marine Areas (LMMA). She began by explaining that LMMA works with local coastal communities to help them implement community-based coastal zone management. This starts with informing them and raising their awareness, and then improving their capacity to manage their resources. LMMA also works to strengthen their presence in various decision-making processes that affect them.

Although more attention is given to tuna fisheries in the Pacific, it is the small-scale coastal fisheries that are the backbone of Pacific coastal communities: they are a source of livelihood and income for rural communities. Small-scale fishers traditionally have guaranteed access rights, and so the mainstay of inshore fisheries management is participatory community management. While governments in the region generally have a positive attitude towards community-based management, their investment in inshore fisheries management and targeted enforcement is insufficient, both in terms of human and financial resources.

Teri Tuxson used the example of the sea bass fishery to illustrate the many challenges of this community-based management of coastal fisheries. It is a species of very high commercial value, fished by small-scale fishermen throughout the region and has great potential to contribute to their income. But stocks have



collapsed and the management put in place has not been able to address the problem of overfishing, which is facilitated by a lack of transparency, inadequate monitoring and reporting, a lack of information to the fisherman on the prices charged in the sea bass value chain, insufficient control, etc. The result is losses of tens of millions of dollars in the Pacific region. Studies have shown that if the management of this resource was more careful, and if there was more transparency in the industry, there would be an increase in the average annual value of BDM exports of 80-105%, an increase in landings of 97%, and an improvement in reproductive stocks.

The three actions proposed by LMMA to have healthy coastal fisheries for the benefit of all: Transparent and accountable governance by authorities of high commercial value species, with attention to improving participatory mechanisms, and publication of all official documents that relate to these fisheries; a sustainable blue economy through increased national investment by governments in coastal fisheries management; the identification by each Pacific country of the main challenges for coastal fisheries, and the implementation of a national coastal fisheries management priority, to address these challenges, each year: fishermen no longer want empty promises from their governments, they want concrete action. For the role of civil society, we must continue to advocate for coastal communities to be heard at national and regional levels.

Micheline Dion Somplehi, Coordinator of CAOPA's Women's Program, focused her presentation on the innovative capacities of women in the African artisanal fishing sector. She began by reminding the audience that African fisheries, which are mainly artisanal, are the largest sector of the blue economy in Africa. Women are active throughout this sector: they pre-finance fishing trips; they receive and sort the fish when it is landed, and they process it and market it. Through their activities, they make fish - a source of protein, fatty acids, vitamins and minerals - available at affordable prices to more than 200 million people in Africa. This is a central role that these women play, given that fish accounts for an average of 22% of protein intake in sub-Saharan Africa, and in the poorest African countries, this level can exceed 50%.

Women are innovative in their daily work to improve their working conditions and the living conditions of their families. The first thing women need to do this is to have enough fish to process, of good quality, at affordable prices.

In Mali, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire and Kenya, women are finding solutions for this, such as starting small-sacale fish farming, often coupled with vegetable production. This is a good way of supplementing their supply of raw materials, but also of coping



with periods when fishing is stopped (biological rest, for example). Women's initiatives in this sector should be supported.

Women are also aware of the importance of conserving fisheries resources, which is why, on International Women's Day organized by CAOPA in The Gambia in 2018; they pledged to stop buying and processing juvenile fish.

Innovation in processing activities has been important in recent years, notably with the introduction of the FTT oven which allows women to work no longer in smoke for more than ten hours a day, improves the quality of processed product, and reduces the amount of fuel needed, which also contributes to the fight against deforestation. The use of solar energy offers new perspectives for processing activities.

Access to decent housing, nurseries and schools close to women's workplaces is also an area where women are innovating. In Côte d'Ivoire, for example, cooperatives have launched the initiative: 'A fish wholesaler, a roof', which enables women to gradually buy a comfortable home at low cost.

The creation of solidarity funds for women in the artisanal fisheries sector is also an important innovation in terms of financing adapted to their activities.

For all those who want to invest effectively in women's innovative activities, it is important first to better understand their working conditions: statistics on the sector must include data on women, their activities must be better documented, and analysis of the impacts of policies and initiatives must be gender sensitive.

In concluding her presentation, Micheline Dion Somplehi emphasized that women are the bearers of innovations for sustainable fisheries, which contribute to food security, employment and the fight against poverty. To value their actions, they need access to fish, access to services and infrastructure, and to be recognized as stakeholders in the decision-making process.

Okeloh W'Namadoa, Secretary General of AFRIFISH, then introduced this new organization of African fisheries NSAs, which is financially supported by the AU Inter-African Bureau for Animal Resources (AU-IBAR) and the AU Development Agency (AUDA-NEPAD). The desire of African fisheries NSAs to organize themselves to speak with one voice on the continent was conceptualized in 2010 at the first CAMFA (Conference of African Ministers of Fisheries and Aquaculture) conference in The Gambia.

This pan-African organization is based on five platforms bringing together non-state fisheries actors at the level of African regions. Both these regional and continental



platforms have been supported by the AU FISH GOV I and FISH GOV II projects, funded by the EU.

The Pan-African Platform of Non-State Actors in Fisheries and Aquaculture (AFRIFISH), composed of regional representatives, was founded on 19 November 2021. This platform provides a space for interaction and advocacy, helps create new links between African fisheries non-state actors and stimulates their coordination, strengthening their capacity to promote the interests and rights of African artisanal fishing communities.

As the lead agency for fostering coordination between regional platforms, AFRIFISH seeks to build strong links with key development partners in fisheries and aquaculture in Africa, such as the European Union (EU).

Referring to AFRIFISH's priorities, Okeloh W'Namadoa stressed that access to marine and inland resources MUST be guaranteed to African artisanal fishers, in line with Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 14b, which is to guarantee access to the resources they exploit and the areas where they fish. Currently, there is too much competition from foreign fishing fleets in the areas where artisanal fishers operate.

Like CAOPA, he also called for African states to sign and implement the International Labor Organization (ILO) Convention 188 on work in the fishing sector. To date, only six African states have signed this convention.

Fisheries and aquaculture are the largest component of the blue economy sector in Africa, and fish is the main renewable food resource of the blue economy. Unfortunately, the fisheries and aquaculture agenda of most African countries is unclear, which risks placing African fishing communities in a precarious situation, where they will be overshadowed by the other components of the African blue economy sector. Although the scope of the blue economy differs among African countries, most agree that the appropriate use and conservation of marine, inland water and coastal resources can contribute to food security, job creation and sustainable and inclusive economic growth, as well as to climate change mitigation and adaptation. Fisheries and aquaculture stakeholders in Africa and globally must protect and religiously defend the interests of fisheries and aquaculture and dependent communities in the exploitation of the African blue economy. In conclusion, he pleaded for the European Union (EU) to set-up a strong working relationship with AFRIFISH for a promising fisheries and aquaculture for future generations in Africa.

Dr Anaïd Panossian, a legal expert on fisheries and gender for CFFA, then gave some information on the EU's support for artisanal fisheries through the EU's



cooperation policy, which is handled by the European Commission's Directorate General for International Partnerships.

720m has been committed to promote better ocean governance in partner countries. The fisheries and aquaculture portfolio accounts for a large part of this fund spread over more than 40 projects worldwide and comprising regional, continental, transcontinental and bilateral projects. Africa is the main beneficiary of these European funds.

Broadly speaking, the programs are divided between support to the state budget and support to projects (via NGOs, professional organizations, etc.). The combination of these two approaches is important for the governance of fisheries and aquaculture.

Support to artisanal fisheries takes place at different levels, with the majority of projects impacting on the artisanal sector, which is the main sector in most partner countries, including those focused on value chains, for example FISH4ACP, where the majority of selected value chains are from the artisanal sector.

Some projects specifically target the artisanal fisheries sector, either through regional programs, for example the ECOFISH program in India which provides specific support to selected artisanal actors. Or they are bilateral programs, supporting a specific aspect of artisanal fisheries (e.g. employment in Mauritania with Promopêche, food security in Liberia, food processing in Mali). Many small projects implemented by civil society organizations (CSOs), in cooperation with local communities, were selected, such as the Far Ban Bo program in Ghana, the program supporting the National Federation of Artisanal Fisheries in Mauritania and another in Sao Tome and Principe.

Gender inclusion is addressed through a cross-cutting approach in the majority of EU projects, for example in the Pacific-European Union Marine Partnership (PEUMP) in the Pacific, where the EU is investing in data collection on women's contribution to the fisheries sector, or in Far Ban Bo in Ghana, Ampiana in Madagascar, Promopêche in Mauritania and CAPFish in Cambodia.

The programming of projects covering the period 2021-2027 is currently being finalized. The Multi-annual Indicative Program (MIP) for Sub-Saharan Africa 2021-2027 is the document that provides the basis for the overall programming of the EU's international partnerships.

This new programming gives greater emphasis to oceans and fisheries, with a specific focus on civil society organizations, women and an inclusive approach.

There are 6 priorities, one of which is the Green Transition with a sub-priority dedicated to Water and Oceans, and a Specific Objective on improving the



sustainable use and management of oceans, coastal zones, river basins and lakes. One of the very interesting dimensions of this new programming is that the EU emphasizes support to CSOs as a central element applied to all areas and priorities, with a "people-centered approach" that focuses on empowering local communities, social justice and participatory decision-making, etc.

The EU wants to work "with the main regional networks and associations in the fisheries and aquaculture sectors and with private sector operators in the agriculture, fisheries and food value chains".

It is an open door for professionals to make themselves known, in order to get involved in the definition and implementation of future programs.

Furthermore, in the Multiannual Indicative Program for Sub-Saharan Africa, the EU recognizes the importance of aquatic food systems for food security and the importance of small-scale fisheries in achieving food security, and will put a clear focus on small-scale fisheries, proposing "a structured partnership with (...) small-scale fisheries networks to strengthen their capacity to provide services and advocate for their interests".

Furthermore, the promotion of gender equality, inclusion and a human rights-based approach as well as investment in women and youth is also a key element of EU programming, which includes "mainstreaming increased education for women, girls and youth, emphasis on women's economic empowerment and land rights in projects and programs". There is also a focus on equal access, sustainable trade and economic opportunities for all, including women, youth and people with disabilities, with an emphasis on women's business associations. Women's access to finance should therefore be facilitated.

Special attention is given to shared resources and a call is made for common approaches and regional management of transboundary fish species, such as small pelagic in West Africa. The Project Management Institute (PMI) insists on strengthening regional cooperation and coordination of policies, such as MCS, research and data sharing, sustainable management and also coherence with other policies (Sustainable fisheries partnership agreements (SFPAs), Regional fisheries management organizations (RFMOs)). This can also provide another basis for promoting regional management of small pelagic.

The focus on green transition includes ocean governance, including sustainable fisheries, the fight against IUU fishing and the blue economy (note that there is no systematic reference to the sustainable blue economy). The inclusive use of ocean and water resources is clearly stated.

Another important aspect of the Small Initiatives Program (SIP) is the sustainable blue economy, which has not been very prominent in previous International





Partnership Program (INTPA). It has been introduced for the first time in ECOFISH. Although it does not focus on fisheries in the development of the sustainable blue economy, the MIP emphasizes the importance of integrated coastal zone management and the circular economy. This should serve as a basis for stressing the need to protect small-scale fisheries from other competing sectors of the blue economy, and also for promoting co-management in coastal areas and the integration of small-scale stakeholders in the process of developing and implementing MPAs for example.

The EU also contributes to the development of sustainable fisheries through its Sustainable Fisheries Partnership Agreements (SFPAs) with third countries, with part of the financial contribution being fully funded by the EU to support the local fisheries sectors and fisheries governance in the partner country, including the artisanal sector, taking into account the needs of local communities.

It is important that coherence is ensured between these policies, in order to optimize the results of these projects and to ensure that the final beneficiaries are the main actors.

In order for the EU to develop relevant projects based on this programming, in a participatory and inclusive manner, it is important that organizations make themselves known to the EU Delegations present in the majority of African states.

It is hoped that this dialogue will also take place through the potential EU-Africa Task Force for Policy Cooperation and Dialogue on International Ocean Governance, which may be created soon, following a feasibility study published last month, for which artisanal fisheries stakeholders were consulted (including CAOPA).

Finally, Anaid Panossian stressed that the EU has made progress in the inclusion of CSOs, and that this is far from being achieved at the level of African administrations and regional organizations. It is the duty of the partner state to have the same approach, to promote the participation of CSOs in decision-making processes, to systematically consult professional organizations and to design projects with them.

## Questions and debate

Following these presentations, the moderator proposed a series of questions and answers. The main issues discussed were the following:

- Improving the effectiveness of funding allocated under the EU-AU partnership

Several participants lamented the lack of impact of EU funding for African artisanal fishing communities.



One participant highlighted the lack of post-funding control in place to ensure that funds are used in the best possible way to serve the interests of artisanal fishing communities - there are many 'high level' commitments with all sorts of promises of support for artisanal fisheries, but nothing filters down to the grassroots communities, and few results are seen. Another participant noted the lack of information about these initiatives and projects at the community level. In the end, there are no results for African fishing communities and it is a waste of money for the EU

This observation was widely shared: the results of the funding are rarely seen, they are poorly seen, and those involved in small-scale fishing are not aware of the projects that are supposed to support them.

The problem is not only at the level of project monitoring, but already at the level of project definition. The definition of the projects is done with the national administrations which have a poor knowledge of the artisanal fisheries sector in their country and therefore do not take it into account, neither in the national policies, nor in the projects for which the countries request financing.

The participation of artisanal fisheries actors by appropriate means must be a priority for the definition, implementation and evaluation of the results of the projects supported under the EU-AU partnership. This also shows the importance of advocacy at national, not only pan-African, level for the consideration of the needs of African artisanal fisheries, as identified by the actors (CAOPA, AFRIFISH).

Several participants also stressed the importance of human and financial investment by states in policies and related budgets, rather than having a 'project' approach, which is not a long-term approach, and where there is a lot of competition for access to funding.

Several speakers insisted on the dialogue between decision-makers and stakeholders. Thus, ECOWAS recalled that their first strategic priority in terms of fisheries policy concerns governance and support to artisanal fisheries in West Africa. The NSA platform is supported by ECOWAS and this will most likely continue in the framework of another EU-ECOWAS funding and also with the AfDB (For more information on this subject, a request can be sent to [a.traore@ecowas.int](mailto:a.traore@ecowas.int))

It was also noted that African artisanal fisheries and the European Union have significant mutual interests. These should be promoted through the intensification and densification of the Artisanal Fisheries-European Union Dialogue. Requesting and supporting dialogue between artisanal fisheries organizations and EU administrations in Brussels and in African countries: this is simple and almost without financial cost, and is the first step to making the needs of artisanal fisheries better known to European decision-makers.



- Participation of artisanal fishing communities in resource management :

Most of the presentations presented the establishment of co-management of areas set aside exclusively for artisanal fisheries as a solution. One participant stressed that co-management is essential for the sustainability of the exploitation of fisheries resources, and requires close collaboration between rights holders (fishing communities) and duty bearers (government). Another participant remarked that it is important to identify the type of co-management to be put in place so that fishermen are really listened to and heard and that management decisions really come from them. Local knowledge is not integrated into the data - this is something that is important for co-management.

Another question was asked about how LMMA's vision of participatory coastal fisheries management in the Pacific has been implemented. Teri Tuxson replied that the LMMA network has been consistently involved not only in community interventions, but has participated in the development of regional frameworks. One of these regional policies is "The New Song of Coastal Fisheries, the Noumea Policy" which outlines the steps needed to help achieve sustainable coastal fisheries management

- Harmonization of policies for shared resources

Several participants reiterated the importance of harmonizing policies, especially for shared small pelagic resources. Appropriate zoning and restrictions must be put in place for the sustainability of small pelagic resources. There must be a regional fisheries management organization for these resources, with a binding vocation, because if we are not careful, we will no longer have small pelagic.

- The importance of supporting research

The importance of governments providing sufficient support and funding for fisheries research was raised by several participants. The current state of fisheries research is worrying in many countries. For example, there used to be surveyors along the beaches to collect data, now there are very few. For the realities of artisanal fisheries to be reflected in research, the barriers between scientists and communities need to be broken down. Professional organizations, artisanal fishers and coastal communities have an important role to play in monitoring fisheries programs and projects, research and fisheries management. Artisanal fisheries professionals should advocate for an increase in the contribution of state budgets to research funding and for increased dialogue between scientists and communities to ensure the sustainability of resource exploitation and conservation.