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 building resilience in national and regional contexts.

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.

The negative impacts of more powerful blue economy 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.

Protecting artisanal fisheries from competing “blue economy” sectors is of paramount importance in this context.

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 resources.

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.

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 blue economy 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.
Actions TO ACHIEVE SUSTAINABLE SMALL-SCALE FISHERIES

The following actions should be considered by the ACPs for the concrete implementation of the recommendations outlined above, to ensure an effective and sustainable management of all marine sectors and ensure that their respective biodiversity is protected and prioritised.

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;
- Demonstrateably 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.