



African Confederation of Artisanal Fishing Organisations

Declaration - World Fisheries Day Sô-Ava, Benin - 21 November 2023

We, the representatives of the men and women working in small-scale fisheries from thirty African countries, meeting in Cotonou, Republic of Benin, on 19 and 20 November 2023 to discuss emerging fisheries issues and our concrete initiatives to safeguard our interests and improve our living and working conditions,

Recognising the contribution of small-scale fisheries and aquaculture to the sustainable development of African countries, and in particular to the fight against poverty, hunger and malnutrition,

Noting the progress made in implementing the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries (FAO 1995)

Noting that 2024 will coincide with the tenth anniversary of the adoption of the "Voluntary Guidelines for Sustainable Small-scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication" (FAO 2014) and of the Policy Framework and Strategy for Reform of Fisheries and Aquaculture in Africa (AU 2014)

Bearing in mind that 2024 will be a year of transition towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030, in particular goal 14.b, which requires States to guarantee access to resources and markets for small-scale fishing.

Noting the continuing negative effects of the covid-19 pandemic, which considerably aggravated the crisis in the fisheries and aquaculture sector.

Recalling that women are central to all the sustainable development goals, in particular because they contribute to food security and improved nutrition in poor and vulnerable households, and that the artisanal fisheries and aquaculture sector has the potential to develop opportunities for women.

Referring **to** the Declaration on Sustainable Fisheries and Aquaculture of the Committee for Fisheries (FAO 2021)

Considering that the Call to Action launched by artisanal fishing communities from around the world in 2022, on the occasion of the International Year of Artisanal Fisheries and Aquaculture, must be translated into action at the African level.

We

Reaffirm our commitment to ensuring that the initiatives taken by African artisanal fishing professionals do not remain isolated initiatives, but are adequately supported by our decision-makers and their partners,

Reiterate the urgent need to improve the living and working conditions of the women and men in African artisanal fishing communities who feed millions of people in Africa.

Ask that the various initiatives taken to implement the priorities of the Call to Action inspire our decision-makers, convince them to support them and replicate them in their own countries. This must be done in close consultation with small-scale fishing professionals, in order to build on experience already gained, and to take account of local particularities.

Reaffirm that the major challenge in terms of governance of the fisheries sector in Africa lies in the conditions of access to resources, which must be based on the principles of transparency and equity, while giving priority to small-scale operations and promoting co-management.

Salute the dynamism of women in the small-scale fishing sector and **praise** all the initiatives they have presented, for showing innovation, solidarity and creativity to find lasting solutions to everyday challenges.

Launch an urgent appeal to Technical and Financial Partners to effectively support the initiatives of professional organisations within the framework of the Call to Action to build resilient artisanal fishing communities by developing national Strategic Plans to implement these actions by 2030.

Long live small-scale African fishing

Long live the men and women of African small-scale fishing

Long live Africa