



# The African Women artisanal fish processors celebrating the International Women's Day 2015

Bissau March, 08 2015

## BISSAU DECLARATION





We, women fishmongers, micro fishmongers, artisanal fish processors, members of artisanal fisheries professional organisations part of the African Confederation of Artisanal Fisheries Professional organisations, CAOPA, gathering in Bissau on the occasion of the International Women's Day ;

### *Whereas African artisanal fisheries:*

- ▶ are an asset for African countries to face up to the challenges of sustainable development;
- ▶ are by far the sector's largest job provider in Africa;
- ▶ stimulate local economies if they are associated with social protection policies and policies for the promotion of the coastal communities' well-being;

### *Whereas:*

- ▶ Improving governance, taking into account the whole value chain, could lead to a better distribution of economic and social benefits of fisheries to African populations, as well as better preservation of ecosystems on which our communities depend for their livelihoods;
- ▶ In most parts of Africa, capture and trade by the artisanal fisheries provide a 'food security net' for the poorest populations;
- ▶ The women engaged by profession in African artisanal fisheries are present at all stages of the value chain; they are the backbone of the family in African artisanal fishing communities;
- ▶ Because of their place in coastal communities, women have to play an important role, alongside artisanal fishermen, in the management and resolution of conflicts within fishing communities, between fishing communities, including between fishing communities of neighbouring





countries, in particular through initiatives taken by CAOPA professionals, such as the Joint Committees.

### *Given that:*

- ▶ **Coastal fisheries are confronted with new challenges:** many coastal fish stocks are fully exploited or overexploited, leading to competition between fishermen and even conflicts.
- ▶ **The economic and social performances of these fisheries are therefore falling.** Many coastal communities that depend on fishing live in poverty and are excluded from decision-making and on the margins of development. In addition, other uses of marine resources and unsustainable fishing activities threaten biodiversity, marine ecosystems and coastal communities that depend on them for their livelihoods
- ▶ **Poor governance in fisheries affects most African countries.** In particular, there is a significant lack of transparency in the management of the fishing sector, often detrimental to artisanal fishing communities; formal mechanisms for fisheries stakeholders' consultation and participation in decision-making are usually absent or ineffective.
- ▶ **There are limitations in our countries' legal arsenal for fisheries,** including in relation to artisanal fisheries, in order to ensure transparent, participatory and sustainable management of our fisheries for the benefit of coastal communities and populations;





### Concerned by:

- ▶ **The increasing vulnerability of women of artisanal fishing communities,** which does not allow them to fulfil their role in contributing to food security, through processing and marketing of fisheries products activities, or to fulfil their responsibilities for the well-being of families and the raising of children.

### Welcome:

- ▶ **The resolution of the First Conference of African Ministers of Fisheries and Aquaculture in 2011** that recommended to the African Union Member States to consider the possibility of reforming their fisheries and aquaculture policy; that this process is on-going since 2013 under the aegis of NEPAD and the African Union IBAR program;





- ▶ The growing recognition of the importance of the artisanal fisheries sector, in particular in the Declaration of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development 2012 (Rio + 20); the Voluntary Guidelines on Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests;
- ▶ Finally, the greater recognition of the importance of artisanal fishing, which has been achieved by the adoption in June 2014 of the Voluntary Guidelines to ensure the sustainability of the small scale fisheries in the context of food security and eradicating of poverty. The Guidelines seek to strengthen the contribution of fisheries to food security and nutrition. They also aim to promote and improve the equitable development and to improve the socio-economic situation of the communities of artisanal fishing and the sustainable and responsible fisheries management. Finally, they incorporate in their approach the risks of climate change

We, African women fishmongers, micro fishmongers, artisanal fish processors:

▶ ***Propose that the African Union declares 2016 the "African Year of Artisanal Fisheries"***

With the aim of promoting the implementation of the international FAO guidelines for sustainable small scale fisheries at pan-African level, in collaboration with all stakeholders, first and foremost African organizations representing the men and women who depend on fishing for their livelihoods.





- ▶ **Call on African governments to support and defend this demand;**
- ▶ **Call on African Ministers of Fisheries and Aquaculture, in the context of the reform strategy in African fisheries, to implement in their national laws, the FAO international Voluntary Guidelines for Sustainable Small Scale Fisheries,** in order to:
  - improve governance for a more transparent and participatory management of fisheries;
  - give priority access to resources for sustainable artisanal fisheries
  - implement the right to food, and ensure the contribution of fisheries to the realization of this right;
- ▶ **Call on technical and financial partners, professional organizations and civil society organizations to invest so that these guidelines become effective tools to allow the artisanal fisheries sector to deploy its full potential as a driving force towards social, environmental and economic sustainable development, preserving their cultures, their knowledge and traditional skills.**



CAPE - Coalition pour des Accords de Pêche Équitables





**We hope that on this International Women's Day, our rulers will hear our voices, the voices of African Women in artisanal fisheries.**

