

Charter of the African Confederation of Professional Artisanal Fishing Organizations

(Charte de la confédération africaine des organisations professionnelles de la pêche artisanale: CAOPA)

Final Version

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I. Preamble

Despite its importance in the economic, social and cultural development of Africa, artisanal fishing is not really sustained by development policies. In the world today, almost three quarters of fish stocks are exploited at their maximum level, overexploited or in threat of disappearance and Africa is the continent suffering the most. The plundering of resources through unregulated, uncontrolled and illicit fishing today puts in danger the survival of the communities of fishermen and constitutes one of the greatest threats for future generations.

Professional organizations are formed in different countries without individually having the power to stop this scourge and to influence fisheries policies. Although programs or projects to support the sector are initiated by states or NGOs from the North and the South, they do not focus sufficiently on the extreme importance of the professional actors of artisan fishing. Thus, aware of the problems of the sector and the emergency to find solutions, a group was formed, taking the initiative to create a Confederation of Professional Organizations of African Artisanal Fishery through the following steps:

In September 2006, the professionals of the Artisanal Fishing Industry of Senegal (CONIPAS), Mauritania (NPF) and Guinea (UNPAG) met the media in their countries at a workshop in Nouadhibou entitled "Meeting between media and professionals of artisanal fisheries of West Africa for sustainable management of the resource." This workshop has given the opportunity to the artisanal fishery professionals to discuss the issues of responsible fishing, the relationship between media and artisanal professionals of the fishery, and the role that the media can and should play in the implementation of responsible fishing.

Thus the creation of a journalistic network in West Africa for sustainable fisheries was the first act of commitment from the participants to the awareness of sustainable fisheries. One year later, in September 2007, the professionals of the three countries met again in Saly (Mbour, Senegal) for a midterm evaluation. This workshop was used for training on topics about "the impact of the traceability in the artisanal fisheries", "the new economic partnership between the ACP countries and the EU, "the constraints and impacts on our economies", and "the illegal and unregulated fishing with no controls". This workshop was the birthplace of the beginning of a group of professional artisanal fisheries in Africa. An appeal was launched to help and organize the countries which were not yet involved.

In December 2008, the professional organizations of three countries (Senegal, Mauritania and Guinea) and other observer countries (Gambia, Liberia, Guinea Bissau, Ghana, Sierra Leone and Togo) met in Conakry around the theme: "Watch the future: proposals from the artisanal fishing communities of West Africa for the implementation of sustainable fishing". One of the strong recommendations from this meeting in Conakry was the establishment of the Confederacy of Artisanal Professional Fisheries of Africa. In June 2009, the monitoring committee composed of the Gambia, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Mauritania and Senegal met in Dakar to develop a charter, statutes, and regulations within the African Confederacy of the Artisanal Fishery Organizations.

II Charter

For sustainable and responsible fisheries

As a professional organization of artisanal fisheries in Africa, we recognize the vision, mission, values and principles enshrined in this charter, and are aware and convinced that artisanal fishing communities are a cornerstone of social and cultural development in Africa. We are committed to ensuring compliance with this charter becoming our basic reference to guide our strategic direction, our relationships and our actions.

The charter has a dual purpose:

- To have a guide that defines the partnership between the national professional organizations of artisanal fisheries of all member countries as well as
 - . the various departments and their different branches in each country
 - . the sub-regional institutions which are involved in fishing, especially the sub-regional commission of fishing in each African region or any other similar organization,
 - . the sub-regional institutions like CEDEAO, UEMOA, CEMAC
 - . the economic commission of the African Union
 - . the New Economic Partnership for the African Development (NEPAD)
 - . national and international funding and support institutions that develop artisanal fisheries including the United Nations
 - . the international and national private sector
 - . the civil society organizations from South and North supporting the sector
- Establish guidelines and benchmarks to monitor the mission of the Confederation.

I.1. Vision

Professional organizations of artisanal fisheries in Africa defend material and moral interests of their members; their legitimacy in this role is recognized by governments and national and international institutions; they are involved to define policies for responsible and sustainable fisheries contributing to fight against poverty, and also for better improvement of working conditions for women and to give them more power in decision making. The artisanal fishing is recognized as an engine of economic development in Africa and as a priority investment area for food security and the employment of vulnerable people (women and youth).

I.2. Mission:

The CAOPA

In relation to the national federations

I) works with governments and national and international institutions to define and implement policies for sustainable fisheries, to prevent and resolve border conflicts, to foster an African dynamic of fishery development and to evaluate the resource for the welfare communities of artisanal fisheries.

II) makes efforts to sustain women in order to help them have more decision making on fishing and the implementation of fishing policies.

III) Supports artisanal fishing communities to grow by helping them better appreciate their resources and use them to ensure sustainability, to become involved in the implementation of fisheries policies and to make beneficial impacts, to establish a development of organizations to defend their local interests, to work together to resolve conflicts, to strengthen their capacity to effectively carry out the recovery of these resources

IV) agrees to participate in co-management, to develop capability proposals and communication strategies to influence fisheries policy

V) builds and disseminates experiences and lessons learned from good and bad practices

VI) mobilizes the necessary resources - both financial and intellectual resources - to support the development of the African confederation of artisanal fishing.

VII) becomes and remains a force to deal with all states and other national and international development partners

I.3. Foundations, principles and values that govern the African Confederation of the Artisanal Fishery Organizations:

Considering itself around common values to defend the professional interests of artisanal fisheries: transparency, integrity, loyalty, justice, responsibility, solidarity and peace, the real importance of actors in building consensus around the definition and implementation of fisheries policies,

The CAOPA adopt the following principles:

1.3.1. Respect non-governmental, apolitical and non-denominational ethics for non-profit

1.3.2. Recognize the state in its sovereign functions as the first partner of artisanal fishing industry organizations in Africa

1.3.3. Defend by all legal means the material and moral interests of all professional artisanal fishing organizations being members of the CAOP or not

1.3.4. Never work to the detriment of members of the organizations or to artisanal fishing

1.3.5. Prevent conflicts and contribute to their resolution

1.3.6. Stay independent in thought and in action

1.3.7. Respect the commitments contracted

1.3.8. Search the consensus resulting from a constant and constructive dialogue between professionals of all countries with respect for the specificities of each

1.3.9. Be engaged in development of professional organizations of artisanal fisheries

1.3.10. Defend the inclusion of men in general and women in particular in fisheries policy

1.3.11. Work resolutely towards the establishment of good governance in all member organizations

1.3.12. Commit to defend under all legal forms sustainable and responsible fisheries

1.3.13. Protect the marine environment and coastal ecosystems against all forms of pollution or degradation harming the resource

1.3.14. Commit to combat illegal fishing and bad fishing practices

1.3.15. Work with research to use the results and to integrate technical and technological innovations to ensure future generations a better future of the resource