



Confédération Africaine des Organisations
Professionnelles de la Pêche Artisanale
African Confederation of Artisanal Fisheries
Professional Organizations



ICSF
International Collective in Support of Fishworkers

Elaboration d'un guide sur le genre pour une mise en œuvre des directives volontaires visant à assurer la durabilité de la pêche artisanale

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Atelier de Participation des Femmes Francophones

Centre d'Application Abbé David Boilat, Mbour - Sénégal



Swedish Society for Nature Conservation



CAPE - Coalition pour des
Accords de Pêche Equitables



REPORT OF THE WORKSHOP FOR WEST AFRICA FRANCOPHONE WOMEN MBOUR (SENEGAL), OCTOBER 05, 2016



I. Introduction

The workshop was held in the Abbé David BOILAT training Centre in Mbour (Senegal). The participants included women representatives from artisanal professional fishing organisations from Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Mauritania, Togo and the various maritime regions of Senegal, including Casamance. Representatives from Senegal's fisheries administration, from the Sub Regional Fisheries Commission (CSRP/SRFC), from the network of journalists for responsible fisheries in West Africa (REJOPRAO) and CAOPA secretariat and General Secretary also participated (*See list of participants*).

II. Official opening ceremony

The official opening of the workshop was chaired by **Mr. Marc Emilien COLY**, Head of Department Fisheries Surveillance Unit, representing the **Directorate of Maritime Fisheries**.

Speeches were made by **Madame Micheline Dion Somplehi**, Coordinator of CAOPA Women's programme and herself fish processor, **Mr Amadou Omar TOURÉ**, from the Sub Regional Fisheries Commission (CSRP/SRFC) and **Mr Marc Emilien COLY**.

In their addresses, the speakers highlighted the importance of artisanal fisheries worldwide, and particularly in West Africa. They highlighted the place and the role of women in the entire fisheries value chain but also as a pillar of fishing communities.

Madam Micheline Dion Somplehi recalled how the FAO guidelines on artisanal fisheries were developed, until their adoption in June 2014, following several years of struggle by artisanal fishing communities and their organizations, including CAOPA and its members, and added that they were the first international instrument that recognized the equality of men and women as a basic element of the sustainable development of artisanal fisheries.

Regarding the 'Gender Guide for the implementation of the FAO Guidelines', she said it aims at helping fishing communities, their organizations, as well as those who design and implement policies and programs related to artisanal fisheries, to understand and use the guidelines for the promotion and protection of the rights of men and women in artisanal fishing communities. It focusses on the responsibilities of States, communities and their organizations to implement policies and plans that help to promote gender equality while promoting sustainable development of artisanal fishing sector.

Mr Amadou Omar Touré focused his speech on the role of West Africa artisanal fisheries in the fight against food insecurity and the preservation of jobs in the region. In this regard, there need to be appropriate regional policies and strategies for artisanal fisheries. He also invited professional organisations to address issues of internal governance and communication that some of them are facing. The CSRP found it necessary to work directly with artisanal fishing professional organizations. The CSRP therefore signed an agreement

with CAOPA, so that all the activities that are carried are supportive of sustainable small scale fisheries in the region: “We consider this partnership as a commitment towards co-management in artisanal fisheries, with the aim to involve all stakeholders in this sector, men and women”.

Mr Marc Emilien COLY first stressed the very important socio-economic role that artisanal fisheries are playing in Senegal and in the region, to create jobs, wealth and well-being, and to contribute to food security. But, as fish does not know borders, there is a necessity to have a concerted management of shared fish stocks like small pelagics for ensuring the well-being of the current and future populations living from these resources. He stressed that the FAO voluntary guidelines for sustainable artisanal fisheries are better than binding guidelines that often do not lead to a deep change of approach, neither improve good governance of fisheries. Managing sustainably artisanal fisheries, but also banning IUU fishing are major challenges, that can only be addressed if women are engaged in the process. He reiterated the firm commitment of the Senegal fisheries administration to work with the professionals from the artisanal fishing sector.

III. Proceedings of the workshop

The workshop was chaired by **Mrs Déida LIMAM**, professional woman fish processor from Mauritania. She was assisted by **Dr. Alassane SAMBA**, researcher, Member of the Association for the Promotion and the Accountability of the Artisanal fishing sector in Mbour (APRAPAM) and **Sherif Younous NDIAYE**, Vice President of APRAPAM.

As an introduction, the chair recalled that, as a general rule, women are considered, in all the layers of society, as subordinate to men. The exercise of democracy by women in the whole society can only take place if there is a deep structural change within the society, a change of mind amongst men and women. This is also true in the fishing sector.

III.I. General Considerations

The workshop on the *Gender Guide to the implementation of the voluntary guidelines on artisanal fisheries* was first and foremost an opportunity for the majority of participants to discover the contents and develop a better understanding of the FAO Voluntary Guidelines, and to reflect about the status of implementation of the guidelines in their respective countries. In light of the key questions put forward to the participants, general observations were made, and specific examples from francophone West Africa were provided to enrich the different topics.

III.II. General observations on the Guide

- ❖ The Guide is useful for the implementation of the guidelines, but it needs to be considered that, in West Africa at least, the Guidelines themselves are still widely unknown by the central public administrations and institutions, but also by CSOS and

the grassroots communities. Raising awareness about the very existence of the Guidelines is a pre-requisite.

- ❖ Women from francophone countries in West Africa feel they have been marginalised in the participatory approach for the elaboration of the Guide, and therefore welcomed the workshop as an effort to include them, albeit at a late stage. Appropriate ways should be found so that they, from now on, continue to be included in the future work on the Gender Guide and on the Guidelines. In particular, as it is acknowledged that the Guidelines are an evolutionary process, and are not fixed once and for all, they want to be involved in the future regular assessments/reviews.
- ❖ The Guide insists that the Voluntary guidelines can use international binding agreements to try and oblige States to respect their obligations: the problem in West Africa is that these instruments, although ratified by the States, are very poorly known by administrations and other stakeholders.
- ❖ Generally, women participants from West Africa are, like their colleagues from other countries, among "the poorest and most illiterate", and their problems are very similar to those discussed in the case studies; they operate all along the value chain, particularly in post-harvest activities, but there are not enough documentation and studies to show their real contribution to the economy, nor their situation in the workplace.
- ❖ The Guide is considered easy to read and understand, and the M'bour workshop participants believe that it needs to be completed with references and cases experienced in francophone Africa, as provided in this report.
- ❖ On How to reinforce the Guidelines, participants feel that the Guide should emphasize the need to safeguard their work and working space against men who increasingly displace women from their traditional (processing) activities. It should also emphasize the need to protect women in fisheries and aquaculture rights of expression, rights of association and freedom of enterprise for women.

III.III. Observations by chapter

- **Governance of tenure in artisanal fisheries**

Issues

In West Africa, the customary rights are generally not recognized, and in that context, women have little access to land – for example, only 4% of women own land in Senegal. Foreign interests, owning fish processing plants and other factories, hotels are displacing fishers from

their landing sites, and women from their fish processing zones, often without any warning or compensation. Women are not informed or associated to the decision process leading to their displacements – it's the policy of 'fait accompli'. Women activities are considered polluting and a nuisance by authorities who make no effort to improve their working conditions.

Case 1: Construction of hotel parking lots in Teminetaye (Conakry – Republic of Guinea)

In Teminetaye, the coastal area has been used for decades by fishers landing their catches and by women fish processors and fishmongers. Recently, hotel car parks were built nearby, and fishers and women fish processors were unceremoniously evacuated from their traditional working areas. Until now, no solution has been proposed for the rehousing of their traditional activities.

Case 2: Installation of foreign owned fishmeal plants in Nouadhibou (Mauritania)

In Nouadhibou, twenty four fishmeal and fish oil processing factories have been built in the last years. This situation raises concerns among the fishermen, who had asked for only two factories, one in Nouadhibou and another in Nouakchott, to receive the waste from the artisanal fish products. The current situation also creates air pollution in Nouadhibou and affects fishing families health. It also threatens the sustainable exploitation of small pelagics, which are key resources for the region artisanal fisheries and food security.

Case 3: Tourism development in Toubacouta and Sandikoly in Senegal Saloum Delta

In the Saloum delta, in Senegal, the authorities have privileged touristic development to the detriment of artisanal fishing. The Saloum delta has become a zone for industrial scale tourism, where facilities for welcoming tourists visiting the delta natural environment encroach up to the rivers banks, depriving women of their traditional processing sites.

Case 4: Lomé women fish processors workspace reduced

The artisanal fishing quay in the port of Lomé is now barely 45 meters wide, and harbors hundreds of pirogues. Next to it, a thousand women operate on a daily basis in a very small space. Fishermen, women fish processors and fishmongers walk on each other. About five years ago, the Togolese Government completed, without prior consultation, the enlargement of the Lomé Autonomous Port, which mainly hosts containers. This space, of 450 meters long, was previously dedicated to artisanal fisheries activities. The port of Lomé authorities have decided to suppress the workspace of the women for the expansion of this industrial port.

In all the examples cited, participants suggested plans for coastal development and occupation of the land should be elaborated in a participative manner, and in a way that recognises and protect coastal communities space they need for their livelihoods.

- **Resources management**

The main issues raised by the participants concern the allocation of access to foreign fleets, - Asians, Russians or European- , coming to plunder West Africa fish resources. This is done without taking into account the views of the professionals; no information is provided to the communities on the content of these agreements (whether in Mauritania, in the Rep of Guinea or Senegal), no woman is consulted and women views are not represented when such decision are taken, although these decisions have disastrous consequences on the availability of fish for fishers to catch and for women to process. States do not respect the signed international conventions when they deliver to the deliverances of licenses.

Case 5: Super trawlers licensed to fish small pelagics in Senegal

These last years, the Senegalese artisanal fishing sector have made all that was possible to stop the issuing of fishing authorizations for small pelagics to foreign trawlers. Many have spoken out to further request that the small pelagic fishery should be exclusively reserved to the Senegalese artisanal fishery which is very active in this segment and contributes greatly to food security.

The fishing authorizations allocated to foreign trawlers, mainly Russians and East Europeans, were deemed illegal by the artisanal fishing sector. Following several years of mobilization, on March 25th 2012, the President of the Republic, then newly elected, decided to cancel the 29 fishing authorizations issued by the former government. That was a huge victory for the Senegalese artisanal fishing sector. However, Russian operators are now coming back, through the purchase of a local processing plant, which will then charter Russian trawlers for catching small pelagics and other resources.

To preserve and protect the access of artisanal fishing communities to resources on which they depend, more and more voices are also supporting the idea of extending the zone reserved to artisanal fishing, which has been set at 7 nautical miles for decades, so to stop trawlers of foreign origin coming in the coastal area.

- **Social development, employment and decent work.**

Generally, participants expressed that, on fish processing sites in West Africa, women do not enjoy any protection and stay all day working in the smoke and dust, with important negative

impacts on their health. There is no health coverage, neither any minimum support for medical help. There is no support for child care (crèches) or for pregnant women. Jobs are lost by women because of the unavailability of suitable financing, and because wealthier men come and take their place.

Case 6: Arrival of foreign interests on the fish trade/processing sites in Cayar, Nianing, Mballing, Joal -Senegal

Between 2011 and 2014, more than ten industrial processing units were installed by Asian (Korean and Chinese) operators in Cayar, M'bour et Joal (Senegal). As a result, they compete with the women fish processors for accessing fish raw material. Chinese and Koreans operators go down directly to the beaches to buy fish for their processing factories. By doing so, they violate the Senegalese law which stipulates that "A foreigner does not have the right to be a wholesaler, unless he goes through a Senegalese national recognized wholesaler who decides to sell him his products". Financial capacities of the fish processing women and these industrials are not to be compared. These industrial operators can afford any fish they like, as they can propose double or triple the price than what the fish processing women can afford.

In Nianing, the rural exodus brought to the coast men from inland regions and neighboring countries, who took the work generally done by women, displacing them from their traditional activities and depriving them of their revenue.

In Mballing, a site which had been dedicated to women fish processors evicted from Mbour coastal area when the fishing quay was built lost half of its surface to accommodate the building of foreign owned fish processing units.

Workers from the sub-region (Burkina Faso, Mali, Guinea) are also coming to the processing site in Joal, competing with the women fish processors installed there who eventually lose their jobs.

To address those issues, women fish processors proposed the authorities to give them access to the 'professional card'. Until now, only Senegalese fishermen and traders can get such a card, which recognises them as professionals and gives them the exclusive right to operate (foreign fishers/traders can't get that card) – but women don't have access to the professional card. Women organised a national tour of the localities to raise awareness about the issue, met with the decision makers. A governmental decree is now in preparation, to allow women fish processors to receive the professional card. Women feel this would protect them against foreign operators coming and taking their jobs.

Case 7: Decent working conditions on the fish processing site in Hann

In Hann, like in all other registered landing quays in Senegal, the artisanal fishing landing sites are always divided into two zones: "Zone Afrique", where products are landed for local and regional markets, and "Zone Europe". In the Zone Afrique, fish is simply thrown on the ground". While in the Zone Europe, any fish that falls on the ground is discarded right away. In the "Zone Afrique", the landing site is covered with mud. In the "Zone Europe", the access

is controlled, and the place regularly cleaned. This zone is equipped with a laboratory: Landed catches are controlled and then loaded straight into the refrigerated trucks and then to the packing plants. These products are exclusively destined to be exported to Europe. Women fish processors in the 'Zone Afrique' work in insalubrious conditions, with pollution and parasites jeopardizing the fish they process. No cleaning services or hygiene facilities are made available to the women from the 'Zone Afrique'

- **Value chain, post-harvest activities and trade**

Women are mainly involved in the post harvesting operations, with some exceptions, where they are also themselves harvesting sea products such as shellfish, like in the Gulf of Guinea. They are beginning to become active in aquaculture (mussels production in Senegal).

In West Africa, ECOWAS nationals can in theory operate in all Member States, but this provision is applied at the whim of the countries. Some women participants, mainly Senegalese, explain their difficulties to go and sell their products on the markets of other countries: they are harassed on the way by controllers, and asked to pay heavy sums to be able to circulate between countries. Most of the time, women are not informed of the ECOWAS regulations about free circulation of people and goods. However, foreign men and women come to Senegal to buy fish, process on the spot and export to their countries without obstacle. This creates not only frustration amongst the Senegalese women but also has repercussions on the availability of raw material for them, ending up with women losing their jobs.

Case 8: Installation of foreign colonies for the processing and export of sardinella in Joal-Senegal, Diogue et Kafountine

Participants from Togo and Mauritania highlighted that, in their countries, no foreign operator has direct access to the purchase of the fish. But in Joal (Senegal), foreigners can directly purchase fish on the beach, and install their own processing facilities, without any implication of existing local women organisations. This shows women are not involved in the management of their own work space, which is solely the responsibility of the administrative and municipal authorities.

- **Men-women equality**

Discrimination between men and women really hinders progress in West Africa where traditional customs and religious considerations exacerbate and distort men-women relationships. Some people exclude women from certain jobs like fishing, or regional trade. Women are supposed to be more competent for processing fish in factories, but their salaries are lower than the salaries of men for the same work. Participants stressed the inadequacy of the credit schemes offered by banks, managed by men who do not trust women to lend them money.

Case 9: discrimination against a woman entrepreneur in Thiaroye-Senegal

A very enterprising lady from Thiaroye was stopped from buying her own pirogue by men from her community. Thanks to her entrepreneurial spirit and her tenacity, she finally developed an alternative lucrative activity: the farming of mussels. Her business is now successful and she has created several jobs in her community.

Case 10: development of a regional commercial activity by a woman entrepreneur in Nouadhibou

To start with, the woman entrepreneur struggled to be allowed to buy and manage her own fishing pirogue, something which is traditionally reserved to men. The challenge for her was also to develop contacts with foreign buyers in the region, studying the trade circuits, the prices, as well as strategies and practices in countries where Mauritanian fishing products could be sold. She is now owning and controlling her own business, selling fish products in the sub region.

Case 11: Appropriate credit schemes in Nianing (Senegal) and in Ivory Coast

The availability of suitable financing is a certain blockage for women's activities. In Nianing (Senegal), as part of an FAO program on climate change managed by CAOPA, the 33 local groupings of women (GIE – each GIE counts between 10 and 15 women) each received 400.000CFA francs (+800\$) to establish a credit system. Each member of the GIE can borrow money from the GIE, paying 5% interests within 6 months. The interests add up to the fund, which nowadays amounts to 5 million CFA francs in some GIE. Reimbursements are controlled by members, and most of the credits taken are reimbursed within the agreed delays. This fund has allowed women to operate without the stress of having to reimburse huge interests to inflexible banks.

In Ivory Coast, the women fish processors cooperative CMATPHA, which counts more than 1500 members, has set up since 2013 a system whereby each member pays regularly a sum into a fund. Each member can use the fund proportionally to the cumulated amount of her monthly contribution. All contributions are registered in the individual logbook of the member. This system has also allowed the cooperative to gather information from its members about their activities – the type of product they process, the quantities sold per month, etc. This system has strengthened the culture of savings.

These examples were discussed by the participants to suggest solutions to fight against discriminatory practices against women:

- women should not look for men or authorities support, but ‘put a foot in the door’ by exploiting sea resources available to them/new resources.

- learn from other women about how to minimize taboos and discriminatory practices, and develop solidarity initiatives amongst women.

- The example of solidarity funds that exist in Nianing and elsewhere should be replicated, offering women credit formulas suited to the seasonality of activities and with appropriate conditions for reimbursement.

- **Policy coherence, Coordination and interinstitutional cooperation**

In West Africa, the interventions by Governments and development partners have always favored the maritime fishing production sector (continental fishing and aquaculture have only been recently recognized, and regulatory texts for these sectors are still absent).

The post-harvest sector, where many women are active, is little documented, lacks reliable statistics. That explains it doesn't feature in most countries economic reports and analyses. Policies are defined without participation of women, who are not well organised and hardly represented in decision-making bodies. There are not informed of legislations, signed agreements and conventions, and are not even informed when decisions are taken to displace them.

Participants also noted the institutional instability in West African countries and the little interest carried fishing as a vital sector in the economy.

Case study 12: The fisheries administration should not be drowned in a larger Department

The examples of Togo, Benin and Ivory Coast highlight that the fisheries administration is only a small part of a bigger administration, and fisheries issues get lost in the policy making. Participants proposed to develop an advocacy to emphasize the economic, social and nutritional importance of artisanal fisheries, without forgetting that in West Africa coastal States, more than 60% of the population live in the coastal area. For the participants at the workshop, these elements would justify that fisheries should have a separate fully fledged administration.

- **Information, research, and Communication**

Participants agreed that little, or even none, reliable data existed on artisanal fisheries in general and on the activity of women in particular. The weakness of local professional (women) organisations also means difficulties to share information, exchange experiences.

Participants agreed with the proposals in the Guide that studies should be undertaken on women in fisheries contribution to the economy and to the well-being of communities. A particular attention should be given to the production of statistics reliable and clear to assess artisanal fishing in general and the contribution of women in particular.

In West Africa, organization of women at national and regional level through networks should help with the sharing of information and experience, as well as with giving a stronger voice to women in fisheries.

- **Capacity building**

All participants noted, in West Africa, the lack of representation of women in the upper echelons of their national organisations, where posts are occupied by men. Consequently, they have very little say about how organisations are managed and the stances they take. They receive also very little information about decision taken. States should support the democratisation of organisations, with more women as leaders. Capacity building programmes should be designed after a comprehensive participatory diagnosis of the problems encountered by women in the sector.

- **Support to the implementation and follow-up**

The women insisted that the FAO Guidelines, the final gender guide and the proceedings of the M'bour workshop should be widely disseminated within the sector and to decision makers. Gender focal points should be identified in all countries professional organisations to monitor the progress for the implementation of the guidelines from a perspective of equality between men and women.

The full and free participation of women in fisheries in all fora where their future is decided decides is essential, - be it professional and community organizations, dialogues with the State, with the funding agencies, etc. In this context, women must claim equal representation and leading positions within the professional organisations in artisanal fisheries.

Promoting the Gender Guide for the implementation of the guidelines offers also a unique opportunity for women groups to join in networks at national and regional level.

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