



## ***African Confederation of Professional Organizations of Artisanal Fisheries***

**Conakry Declaration May, 03rd 2019**

If women are present throughout the African artisanal fisheries sector, they are particularly active in the processing and marketing sector.

During this meeting in Conakry, we, Women of CAOPA organizations, expressed our essential concerns in four areas:

- **access to fish as a resource;**
- **improvement of our working conditions;**
- **improvement of processing and trade activities;**
- **Setting up of appropriate financing systems.**

### **1. Regarding access to fish as a resource**

Due to the overexploitation of fisheries resources in Africa, many of our fishermen no longer bring back in their nets enough to supply women processors, micro- fishermen and women.

Women in the sector are directly affected by poor resource management. We also have to face unfair competition from other actors, such as fish meal processing plants, which deprive us of our fish and prevent us from contributing to the food and nutritional security of populations.

We are actors of sustainable resource management, as well as fishermen. We have proven this, in Gambia' meeting of 2018, where we made a commitment to stop buying illegally caught juveniles in order to protect our fish.

**We ask our States to commit themselves resolutely to the sustainable and transparent management of our fisheries resources, to give priority access to those who contribute to the food and nutritional security of our populations and to involve both men and women in the artisanal fisheries sector in this management.**

## **2. Concerning the working conditions**

**We call on our States to take measures to provide decent working conditions, in accordance with human rights, for women working in the African artisanal fisheries sector.**

The issue of women's occupational health and safety must become an integral part of our countries' fisheries policy and development initiatives.

**Our States must ensure that our communities have access, at an affordable price, to the public services essential to the smooth running of activities, including women's processing and trade activities: safe and hygienic waste disposal services, drinking water and energy sources.**

We also ask that our States commit themselves to our side for the future of our children: we want our children to be able to benefit from nurseries and schools that are close to fishing and fish processing facilities.

## **3. With regard to the improvement of processing and trade activities**

We call on our States to promote investment in appropriate infrastructure and organizational structures, as well as capacity building, to enable women in artisanal

fisheries to produce and market safe and good quality products, both at local and regional markets.

We ask our States to support initiatives aimed at creating added value, which focus on effective, low-cost, innovative, context-specific technologies and implemented with constant dialogue with the women who will use these technologies. Women in the sector nowadays favour environmentally friendly practices to avoid wasting not only raw resources but also water and wood when handling fish.

There are still too many obstacles to the sale of artisanal fisheries products on regional markets today. However, this is an essential link in improving food security for African populations. It is therefore essential that States ensure that fresh and processed artisanal fishery products have easier access to local, national, regional and international markets and encourage fair and non-discriminatory trade of these products.

#### **4. Regarding the financing**

The development of our activities requires considerable financial resources not covered by existing credit systems.

**We call on our States to support the setting up of savings, credit and insurance systems, with particular attention to ensure women's access to these services.**

These services should provide women with financial products and services adapted to their needs, with simplified and more flexible terms and conditions to access to credit and good spatial coverage of the maritime area used by artisanal fishing. Set up a guidance to the beneficiaries of the credits is essential to ensure that the credits are properly reimbursed and used.