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*Sustainable Economic Development and
Trade Department*

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**Item 4 of the draft agenda of the meeting of senior fisheries
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Background Note:

**Small Scale Fisheries: Securing Access to Resources and
Markets**

Small Scale Fisheries: Securing Access to Resources and Markets

Principles and concepts

1. Horizontal SDG 14.B Target aims at providing access to small scale fishers to marine resources and markets. Sustainable management of the small-scale fisheries sector also brings an important contribution to SDG 14.4 Target.
2. Small-scale and artisanal fisheries, encompassing all activities along the value chain – pre-harvest, harvest and post-harvest – undertaken by men and women, play an important role in food security and nutrition, poverty eradication, equitable development and sustainable resource utilisation. Small-scale fisheries provide nutritious food for local, national and international markets and generate income to support local and national economies. Small-scale fisheries contribute about half of global fish catches. Inland fisheries are particularly important in this respect where the majority of the catches from small-scale fisheries are directed to human consumption. Small-scale fisheries employ more than 90 percent of the world’s capture fishers and fish workers, about half of whom are women.
3. In view of the paramount importance of small scale fisheries in the context of food security and poverty eradication, FAO recently (2015) adopted Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Small Scale Fisheries (also known as FAO SSF Guidelines). The objective of this non-binding document is to provide advice and recommendations, establish principles and criteria, and information to assist States and stakeholders to achieve secure and sustainable small-scale fisheries and related livelihoods. The FAO SSF Guidelines identify three key actors as critical for the implementation process:
 - Governments who have a pivotal responsibility for the implementation at local and sub-regional levels, through inclusion of FAO SSF Guidelines overarching principles into relevant policies and initiatives. Political commitment together with investments in capacity and participatory decision-making processes are required to support the development of the small-scale fisheries.
 - Fishing communities which are the main drivers for change and play a major role in a bottom-up process. Collective actions by fishing communities are needed to ensure that small-scale fisheries are duly considered in relevant policies and initiatives, and to ensure implementation of these policies and initiatives.
 - International organisations, donors, NGOs who must be at the interface of this bottom-up strategy with objectives of connecting, documenting and strengthening the aforementioned efforts, in particular through capacity building of both Governments and fishing communities.
4. Small-scale fisheries represent a diverse and dynamic subsector in virtually all ACP States, often characterised by seasonal migration in particular in West and Central Africa. The precise characteristics of the subsector vary depending on the location. However, for many small-scale fishers and fish workers, fisheries represent a way of life and the subsector embodies a diverse and cultural richness that is of high socio-

economic significance. Many small-scale fishers, fish workers and their communities are directly dependent on access to fishery resources and access to markets which is often hampered by a series of factors including remoteness from exporting centres, lack of infrastructures / services or ethnic exclusion

Securing access to resources

5. Securing and increasing the contribution of small-scale fisheries face many challenges and constraints. The development of the fisheries sector over the past decades has in many cases led to overexploitation of resources and threats to habitats and ecosystems, in particular when destructive fishing practices take place in the inshore zones (e.g. dynamite, poisoning, industrial trawling). Customary practices for the allocation and sharing of resource benefits in small-scale fisheries, which may have been in place for generations, have been changed as a result of non-participatory and often centralized fisheries management systems, rapid technology developments and demographic changes. Small-scale fishing communities also commonly suffer from unequal power relations. In many places, conflicts with large-scale fishing operations are an issue, and there is increasingly high interdependence or competition between small-scale fisheries and other sectors with higher profiles including tourism, aquaculture, mining, industry and large infrastructure developments.
6. Several initiatives have been implemented by ACP States to secure access to the resources in coherence with the FAO voluntary guidelines.

Protecting small-scale fishing grounds from industrial fishing

7. In many ACP States, industrial fishing vessels are prohibited from fishing in the inshore zone to minimise biological impacts (on stocks and aquatic ecosystem) and physical interactions between small scale fishing vessels and larger industrial vessels. Exclusion zones vary between 3 miles from the coast to 12 miles and even more in the case of tuna fisheries. Some ACP States like Mauritania or Sierra Leone have recently extended the limits of inshore fishing areas reserved to small-scale fishermen to support the development of the sector and ensure sustainable fishing practices through the promotion of use of selective gears. Exclusion zones can also concern high sea areas exploited by small-scale fishermen like the common 12 miles exclusion radius around anchored FADs enacted by Caribbean and Indian Ocean States.
8. Setting limits to fishing areas accessible to industrial vessels increases the pressure on control and enforcement authorities. The inshore zone is generally richer than offshore zones for demersal resources such as crustaceans (e.g. shrimps), cephalopods and higher value fish species, and unscrupulous industrial operators are tempted to disregard the rules, in particular where MCS and judicial capacities are weak. Whilst the development of monitoring technology including VMS, AIS and coastal radars is becoming more integrated in ACP State policies, contribution of the small-scale fleet in participatory surveillance can give positive returns as evidenced by recent experiences in Africa (e.g. Guinea, Senegal).

Securing small-scale fishermen access rights to the resource

9. The FAO SSF Guidelines (§5A and 5B) place particular emphasis on promoting participatory management approaches such as co-management. Fisheries co-management can be broadly defined as the relationships between coastal fishing communities and Governments in which management responsibilities and authorities are shared.
10. According to FAO, co-management is seen as an effective mechanism for managing coastal fisheries. Centralised fisheries management, led and implemented by government, has often failed to deliver sustainably managed fisheries. This has been partly due to a mix of inadequate infrastructure, expertise and funding, leading to a lack of data upon which to base effective policy and the inability to enforce regulations. These problems have rendered most modern fishery management systems meaningless to SSF (Khan et al, 2004).
11. As exemplified by Senegal's co-management framework of some inshore fisheries or Seychelles' co-management system for sea-cucumber fisheries, co-management entities with legal management powers may prove to be an effective mechanism for promoting sustainable harvesting rules, local surveillance, stock enhancement measures and local site monitoring, which together help recover fish stocks in managed fishing areas and fight against IUU fishing. Community-led fisheries management is also an important instrument for enhancing internal cohesion within communities.
12. In all cases, to become successful, co-management should be a bottom-up process which is provided with considerable time to evolve and considerable effort in raising awareness and building the capacities of local actors. According to recent experiences in West African countries (e.g. Cabo Verde, Senegal, Liberia, Sierra Leone), in the Indian Ocean (e.g. Comoros Kenya, Tanzania, Madagascar) and in Pacific Islands, co-management initiatives should follow some basic principles including:
 - Defining realistic and quantifiable management objectives.
 - Broadening management plans to include migratory fishers and other stakeholders who are not part of the community on a full-time basis but whose livelihood depends on the local fisheries.
 - Aligning national regulatory frameworks, including dispute resolution mechanisms, with community management plans so they can be applied and recognised by national authorities.
 - Providing resources for strengthening capacities of coastal communities to discharge their co-management duties (i.e. training, ongoing support, information, capacity building)
 - Accompanying the implementation of local fisheries management plans with promotion of alternative livelihoods for fishers, fishmongers and fish processors in a way that supports economic development within the community, therefore expanding local fisheries management plans to local economic development plans.

13. Implementing co-management strategies is a long process that requires long term commitment by Governments and fishing communities. However, this can be a rewarding process as evidenced, among other examples, by new fisheries bylaws adopted at the initiative of fishing communities in Senegal to decrease fishing effort on small pelagics, or adoption of minimum sizes for sea-cucumbers in Seychelles to enhance stock conservation and increase prices through a joint resolution adopted in partnership between the Government and private operators (fishermen, traders and exporters).
14. As outlined above, coastal communities involved in fisheries management must have sufficient capacities to be a source of proposals for management options. For States, having local and national representative organisations can be a challenge. In this respect, international associations of small-scale fishermen can provide interesting resources through networking as shown by the examples of the *Fédération des Pêcheurs Artisans de l'Océan Indien* (FPAOI) associating producers organisations from Mauritius, Réunion, Comoros, Madagascar and Seychelles), the *Confédération Africaine des Organisations Professionnelles de la Pêche Artisanale* (CAOPA) federating coastal communities from The Gambia, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Senegal, and the Caribbean network of Fisherfolk Organisations (CNFO).

Securing access to markets

15. The FAO SSF Guidelines devote a full section on post-harvest, value chains and trade. According to FAO SSF Guidelines (§ 7), States should facilitate access to local, national, regional and international markets and promote equitable and non-discriminatory trade for small-scale fisheries products. Whilst not the topic of this note, focus on export markets should be carefully evaluated by ACP States in view of the supply conditions of the domestic markets. There are examples (e.g. Senegal) of domestic supply becoming insufficient to cover the needs because of developed exports markets for SSF.
16. Securing access to markets covers a full range of issues. The next paragraphs develop some of these main issues.

Infrastructures

17. States, in partnership with international donors, have a central role in providing decent infrastructures to facilitate marketing. Infrastructures include *inter alia* landing sites for small scale fishermen, processing and storage facilities and roads to facilitate the distribution of fisheries products.
18. Adapted infrastructures support reduction of post-harvest losses which according to Diei-Ouadi and Mgawe (2011) are of three main types:
 - Physical loss: fish that, after capture or landing, is not used for a number of reasons (e.g. insect infestation).

- Quality loss: fish that has suffered deterioration in quality, and is sold for lower than optimum price. Quality loss may occur for many reasons, including lack of proper refrigeration and storage facilities.
- Market force loss: loss caused by mismatch of market demand and supply conditions, forcing operators to sell their product at a price below expectations (e.g. loss due to poor or incorrect market information).

19. A study conducted by FAO in five sub-Saharan countries found quality losses to account for more than 70% of total losses, while physical losses seldom exceeded 5 percent. The financial impact of such losses was found to be significant. In Ghana, for example, EUR 70 million are lost annually in the smoked fish processing and purse seine fishery (*in* FAO, 2017). Market force loss are more difficult to assess, but can be significant. For example, the successful recovery of the octopus fishery in Mauritius after a seasonal closure underpinned a sudden increase in landings which drove the price down by 30%. This experience led to provide fishing communities with cold storage facilities to smooth out demand-supply variations (Smartfish, 2016), such investment being especially relevant for highly seasonal fisheries.

20. Infrastructure projects should also include as much as possible innovation. Two interesting examples cited in FAO (2017) demonstrate how technology can improve access to the market. In 2013 FAO helped members of a cooperative in Côte d'Ivoire to design, construct and use a new type of smoking oven. The new technology helped users to reduce production losses, which were previously as high as 40%. It also helped improve fish quality, increase value added, and improve working conditions for women by reducing their exposure to heat and smoke. The technology is now being widely used in fish processing units of several African countries. A second example from Kenya concerns a fish species that women must dry and sell the fish within six hours, after which it loses its value. Brokers who buy the fish collude to keep prices low. The Kenya Marine and Fisheries Research Institute has set up a fish market information network that women can access through their mobile phones. The data has helped women bargain better, and improved incomes by around 20%.

21. Lessons drawn from recent infrastructure development in Africa show that:

- Prior to construction, careful assessment of environmental, economic and social impacts of infrastructure projects is needed to take relevant measures to minimise unexpected effects.
- Providing or authorising new infrastructure should not encourage overfishing. States investing in new infrastructures should ensure that a fisheries and aquaculture regulatory framework is in place to prevent increases of fishing effort.
- When planning new infrastructure, States should include facilities for providing workers with decent working conditions (e.g. health and security) and take stock of technical innovations in production, distribution and marketing.

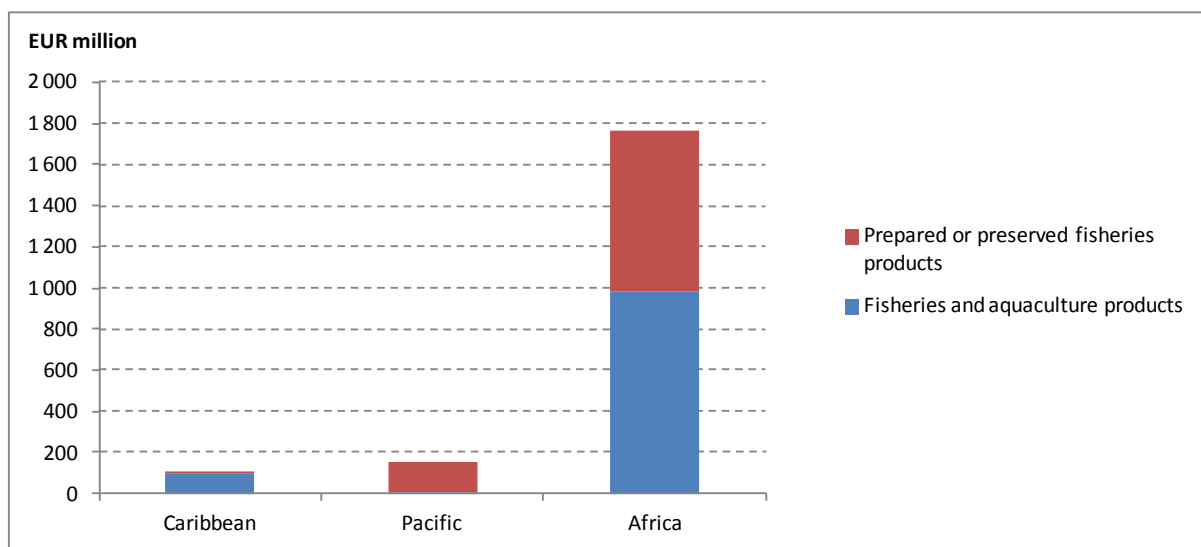
- According to experience, the public-good nature of investments often leads to inadequate maintenance. States should seek for ways to catalyse private investments and focus on investing in the enabling conditions for such private investments to materialise, for example in ice-making plants or landing and processing facilities.
- Beneficiaries of the infrastructure projects (i.e. coastal communities) should be fully associated in the planning process to ensure full appropriation of the facilities and of the technology.

Facilitating intra-regional trade for small-scale fisheries products

22. In Africa, fisheries and aquaculture products are an important commodity subject to sub-regional trade from countries producing fish in excess of domestic needs to countries showing a net deficit of their supply balance sheet. For example, small pelagic fish species landed in West African countries like Senegal or Mauritania are an important source of supply for neighbouring landlocked countries like Burkina Faso and Mali or for the large domestic markets of Côte d'Ivoire, Cameroun and Nigeria (DAI, 2015). Historically much of this trade was informal. Also, many fish processors / traders may rely on imported frozen raw material for periods when national supplies are insufficient. Processors have distinct interests from fishers in this respect, which should be reflected in trade policies of ACP countries.
23. In addition to inadequate road infrastructures, intra-regional trade in West Africa is still hampered by irrelevant and sometime cumbersome custom regulations. The Regional Economic Integration organisations such as ECOWAS or UEMOA are working on establishing the conditions for single regional markets, but progresses are slow and need to be supported by Member States. By contrast, the free trade area promoted by SADC, EAC and Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) appear to be well on track.
24. When progressing toward custom integration, Regional Economic organisations should take into account the disruption risk affecting primarily Small Scale Fisheries (SSF) operators in transition from informal to formal trade through adoption of transitional measures.

Overcoming technical barriers to trade with the EU

25. EU market imports of fisheries and aquaculture products touched their decade value peak in 2015, reaching EUR 22,3 billion. While a large part of imports into the EU originate from northern European countries (e.g. Norway, Iceland, Russia). In 2015, the value of ACP States imports into the EU was in excess of EUR 2 billion, representing about 10% of total EU imports. In weight, imports from ACP States into the EU are nearing 500 000 tonnes of fisheries and aquaculture products, as shown in the following graph, the African group of ACP States is a large supplier of the EU market (EUR 1.8 billion), preceding the Pacific group of ACP States (EUR 180 million) and the Caribbean group of ACP States (EUR 100 million).

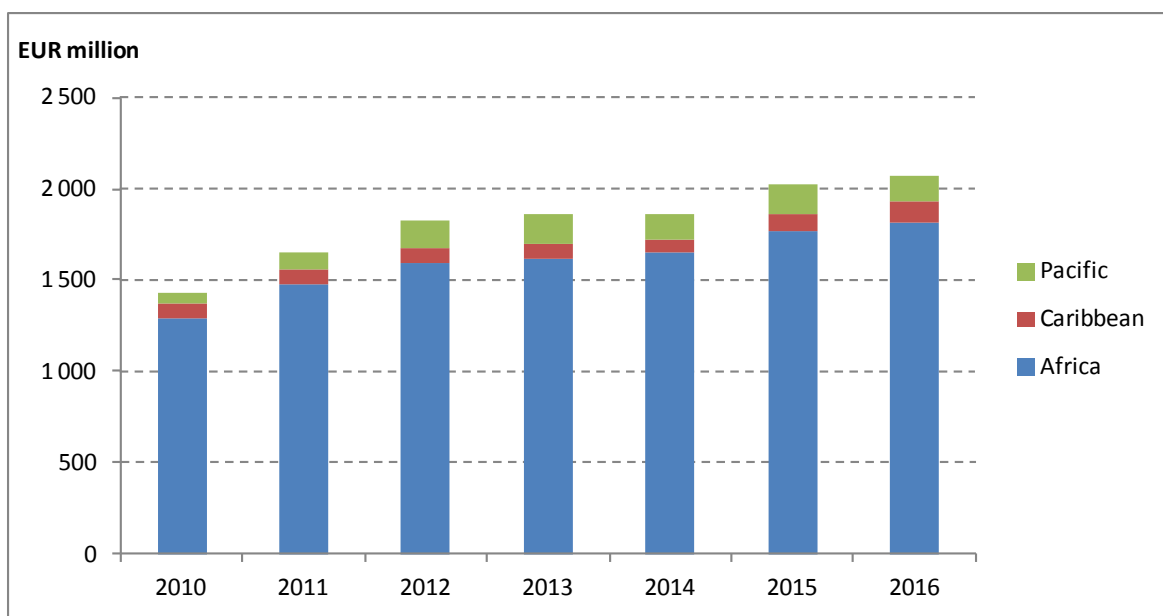


Source: COMEXT database

Note: Fisheries and aquaculture products include CN chapter 03 / Prepared or preserved fisheries products include CN sections 1604 and 1605

Figure 1: Imports of fisheries and aquaculture products into the EU by groups of ACP States in 2015

26. The dynamics of EU trade with ACP countries shows that the value of ACP States export to the EU has steadily increased since 2010, with a progression of 40% for the African group, 43% for the Caribbean group and 150% for the Pacific group, making a 45% increase in total.
27. The share of small-scale fisheries products in ACP State exports of fisheries and aquaculture products to the EU is not known. However, it is assumed to be substantial for fresh products or certain fisheries products caught by artisanal fishers (i.e. lobsters and molluscs).
28. To access the EU market, ACP States have to overcome two main technical barriers stemming from application of the EU regulations, namely the sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) standards regulations and the IUU regulation. The increase in trade demonstrates that despite the challenges faced in meeting EU regulatory requirements on sanitary standards and illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing, ACP producing countries are increasingly complying with these requirements, although with difficulties as far as SSF are concerned.



Source: COMEXT database

Figure 2: value of ACP imports of fisheries and aquaculture products into the EU

29. Concerning the SPS regulations, exporting States must have an approved competent sanitary authority to certify compliance with SPS standards of export supply chains, with access to accredited laboratories for testing the products. The national legal framework must be adapted to be equivalent to those set out in EU regulations, with which facilities and establishments through which fisheries and aquaculture products transit must comply. For small-scale fisheries, compliance with SPS norms requires considerable investment and implementation of new practices, such as the conservation of fisheries products in insulated refrigerated boxes onboard the vessels, improved handling practices upon landing or processing and implementation of a food safety management system based on HACCP principles.
30. Many (33 as from June 2017) ACP States with significant amounts of fisheries and aquaculture products could successfully designate a competent authority and fulfil the conditions for being in the list of third countries authorised to export to the EU. This result has been obtained in part as a consequence of the large EU funded technical assistance programmes including the all ACP SFP programme (2002-2010) and the ongoing EDES programme (2010-2016). However, experience from ACP States show that maintaining the conditions for being authorised to the EU can be onerous, or cannot simply be met (e.g. Guinea Bissau, Liberia or Sierra Leone). Critical points include, but are not limited to, ongoing training and recruitment of inspectors and maintenance of an approved laboratory for testing the products. A recent study conducted in the Pacific (FFA, 2015) shows that regional cooperation can contribute to lower the costs borne by individual countries, in particular for laboratory testing or training of personnel, while supporting improved effectiveness of SPS controls. Regional or sub-regional cooperation on SPS issues could be an avenue to explore by African or Caribbean ACP States. According to information received, this is already an option explored in some regions. For example, the Eastern African Community is about to approve and publish and harmonised border inspection manual. Also, there is harmonized SPS Measures for fish and fishery products; which contain Standards

Operational Procedures (SOP), Code of Practise (CoP) and Inspectors Guide (IG) all for fish and fishery products.

31. Whilst many ACP countries have been able to successfully meet international sanitary requirements for exports, many countries have been able to upgrade food safety conditions for their domestic markets. Insanitary conditions along the supply chain often prevail in the small scale sector, and responsible food safety authorities fail to recognise and take action regarding significant hazards in traditional products, such as carcinogens smoked fish (Goulding, 2015).
32. Concerning IUU fishing, the implementation of EU regulation 1005/2008 presents a significant challenge to ACP States. Even if the IUU regulation offers some flexibility to partner States for issuing simplified catch certificates for small-scale fisheries products, States must ensure that small scale vessels at the origin of the products exported were duly authorised to fish, requiring implementation of traceability systems along the supply chain in particular to ensure that the consignment does not contain fish products other than those subject to controls. As shown in the previous figure, the implementation of the IUU Regulation in 2010 did not lead to notable trade disruption, but for some countries with dispersed small scale fleets over several landing points, certifying the catches to be exported remain a challenge. For some African States, traceability of fisheries products destined to the EU market could be implemented through updated registration and licensing regimes of small-scale vessels and registration of authorised buyers and processors, as well as designation of authorised landing site to streamline landings. Note that ACP States have received considerable assistance from the EU for implementing the IUU regulation between 2011 and 2013 through a dedicated all ACP programme, and that both SPS and IUU certifications are considered under the sectoral support programmes implemented under Sustainable Fisheries Partnership Agreements concluded between coastal States and the EU.

33. Key conclusions for the consideration by ACP Fisheries Ministers

- ACP States should recognise the importance of the small scale fisheries from a socio-economic perspective and from a food security perspective, and collect relevant information to take due consideration of the sector in the development policies taking into consideration good practices promoted by the FAO SSF Guidelines.
- ACP States should give exclusive fishing rights to small scale fishermen in the coastal areas. Monitoring, control and surveillance measures should be in place to ensure that industrial vessels comply with exclusion zones, including development of participatory surveillance scheme associating small-scale fishermen.
- Depending on the context, ACP States should implement co-management mechanisms of fisheries resources in partnership with fishing communities, which may involve transfer of some State management responsibilities and duties. ACP States should ensure that fishing communities engaged in co-management have the necessary human and financial resources to discharge their management duties.

- ACP States should support investment in infrastructure programmes to facilitate the development of the small-scale fisheries sector while improving working conditions. When planning investments, ACP States should ensure that new infrastructures will not be an incentive for increasing fishing effort and verify that adequate provisions are enacted in fisheries regulations or bylaws. They should consider shifting from a central planning to a matching funding model for state support and seek for ways to catalyse private investment through creation of an enabling environment for the private sector.
- While evidence shows that technical barriers did not have visible impacts on the level of trade between ACP States and the EU, ACP States still face the challenge of maintaining SPS conditions and IUU conditions up to the standards expected by the EU, especially with respect to SSF. Concerning SPS, ACP States should consider regional cooperation to mutualise costs and increase effectiveness of controls, with particular benefits to be obtained from designating regional laboratory testing facilities. They should ensure that minimum food safety standards are established and applied in the domestic fishery chain. Concerning the IUU regulation, ACP States should implement traceability systems to facilitate catch certification of small-scale fisheries products.

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