



CAOPA Contribution to the 1st Advisory Group Meeting of the Fisheries Transparency Initiative

Berlin, July 2015

In November 2011, the **African Confederation of Professional Artisanal Fisheries Organizations** (CAOPA) hosted a regional seminar on the theme of Transparency in Marine Fisheries in Africa. The 3 days seminar brought together 60 participants, from a wide range of African organizations, including small-scale fisheries and coastal communities, to discuss in detail the problems caused by lack of transparency in the fisheries sector and to develop strategies to improve public access to information¹.

Participants asked for the following information to be made public:

- ❖ **Fisheries licensing and authorization.** Public authorities need to publish regularly updated and complete lists of licensed vessels, including the contents of licenses agreements and details of how much revenue was paid for these licenses. More complete data on licensing arrangements will ensure broader stakeholders participation in fisheries management decisions, including the monitoring of fishing intensity over time, and possible objections by civil society organisations in case too many vessels are licensed.
- ❖ **Access agreements.** the contents of all bi-lateral fisheries agreements need to be made public. This information should be shared before agreements are finalized, therefore allowing for public debate. It needs to be noted that the fisheries agreements with the European Union are publically available, but similar levels of transparency need to be extended to other distant water fishing nations, including Russia, Korea, Japan and China. It needs to be noted that, in June 2012, thanks to campaigning by European and African Civil Society Organisations including CAOPA, the ex ante/ex post evaluations of EU fishing agreements were made public.
- ❖ **Penalties and fines.** Penalties and fines for fishing boats are important information for public dissemination. This information would indicate how authorities are responding to illegal fishing and it would also reduce opportunities for corruption, including bribe payments between vessel owners and officials. Revenues from fines should be used productively for fisheries management, and the public should therefore know how much revenue the state has received from prosecuting vessels engaged in illegal fishing activities and how this has been used.

¹ Report, Transparency in the Marine Fisheries Sector in Africa, December 2011 [https://cape-cffa.squarespace.com/s/Summary_report Transparency in the Marine Fisheries Sector In Africa.doc](https://cape-cffa.squarespace.com/s/Summary_report_Transparency_in_the_Marine_Fisheries_Sector_In_Africa.doc)

- ❖ **Aid projects.** Key documents on aid projects should be shared widely in countries, including draft project proposals, mid-term evaluations and final evaluation reports. This would enable citizens to contribute to discussions on how aid is spent, to influence decisions on donor priorities, and would increase accountability of aid funds.
- ❖ **Information on state of fish stocks, catch statistics and trade data.** Information should be published widely on the status of fish stocks and on the quantities of fish being caught and traded. Not all governments collate accurate data on these issues, but being able to collect, analyse and publish this type of data needs to be prioritized.

In 2013/2014, CAOPA was actively involved in the consultation for the adoption of the FAO Voluntary Guidelines on Securing Sustainable Small Scale Fisheries, *which call for active, free, effective, meaningful and informed participation of small-scale fishing communities in decision-making processes*, and for doing so, highlight *the need for publicizing policies, laws, procedures and decisions in languages and formats accessible to all.*

CAOPA is also calling for transparency and stakeholders participation to be a pillar of the African Union Reform Strategy for Fisheries and Aquaculture, as indeed, the African Union recognized that the key problem affecting fisheries management in Africa is inadequate governance, which led to inadequate transparency and accountability, incoherent policies, limited structured participation of resource users and non-state actors in the formulation of policies and management of the resources.

More recently, CAOPA and its partners have been working on the need to develop a framework for fishing joint ventures in African fisheries that can ensure transparency by including the following measures:

- ❖ Investors must ensure that reliable and pertinent information about their activities, structure, financial situation and results is communicated to the public regularly and on time.
- ❖ Investors must apply high standards of quality in their disclosures, accounts and audits, and with regard to any information of a nonfinancial, environmental and social nature.
- ❖ Investors must improve the transparency of their efforts to clamp down on corruption and extortion, including through a public commitment to fight corruption and extortion, and information about the management systems adopted by the enterprise in order to meet these commitments.

The **AFRICAN CONFEDERATION OF ARTISANAL FISHERIES PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS (CAOPA)** was founded in 2010. The founding members are the artisanal fisheries professional organizations of Senegal, Mauritania, Guinea Bissau, Guinea, Cabo Verde, Gambia, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Ivory Coast, Togo, Tunisia, Burkina Faso, Benin, Morocco. The CAOPA is headquartered in M'bour, Senegal.

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