



African Confederation of Professional
Organizations of Artisanal Fisheries

President

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Mbour, April, 2nd 2020

TO THE ATTENTION OF THE TECHNICAL AND FINANCIAL PARTNERS OF THE CAOPA

Subject: Measures to help African artisanal fisheries cope with the coronavirus crisis

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The coronavirus epidemic in the world and in Africa, and the measures being taken by governments to combat it, affect all actors in the artisanal fisheries sector in Africa: fishermen, women processors, fish wholesalers and carriers.

Compliance with the restrictions placed in most African countries on the gathering of people is particularly difficult in the artisanal fisheries sector, where at each stage of the chain there are close contacts: fishermen on the canoes, women at their processing site or at the market, etc.

Hygiene recommendations such as hand washing and the use of masks are also a challenge; particularly due to the lack of sanitation facilities and access to clean water remain in many artisanal fishing communities.

In many countries, professional organizations are raising awareness of the importance of compliance with these measures, and in some cases they have provided preventive health kits for anyone active in the artisanal fisheries value chain.

Restrictions on the movement of people and goods, the suspension of air traffic, the closure of hotels and restaurants negatively affect traditional markets for artisanal fisheries products:

local, regional and even international markets, and make access to fish difficult for the most deprived people in our countries.

Women in African artisanal fisheries are particularly affected. Due to their limited means, they buy fish on a daily basis. **How can they have access to the raw material if they are confined to their homes? How can they continue their processing and sales activities? How can they continue to feed their families?**

In view of these many challenges, urgent action must be taken by governments, in consultation with professional organizations, to enable artisanal fisheries to pursue their activities and keep on providing products that are an affordable and essential source of protein and other vital nutrients for our populations.

Thriving artisanal fishing communities are essential to food security in Africa.

For CAOPA, this crisis must be an opportunity to improve the long-term hygiene and working conditions of men and women throughout the African artisanal fisheries sector.

The FAO Voluntary Guidelines for Sustainable Artisanal Fisheries, as well as the Policy Framework and Reform Strategy for Fisheries and Aquaculture in Africa, can guide us in this process.

More than ever, in this time of crisis, we expect our decision-makers to adopt urgent measures to ensure the sustainable development of artisanal fisheries.

Yours sincerely,

GAOUSSOU GUEYE

