

EU Coherence debate

Common Fisheries Policy and Fisheries Development in ACP countries

a. In the context of the debate on coherence between the various EU policies, it needs to be examined how the Cotonou Convention objectives are taken into account in the various aspects of the Common Fisheries Policy that have an impact on ACP countries fisheries.

b. The three main aspects of the Common Fisheries Policy influencing ACP fisheries development are:

- European market fish supply policies. In 2006, the EU fish supplies depended for 68 % on imports. Regulations applying to import from third countries are also becoming more complex (SPS standards, etc)
- The signing of Fisheries Partnership Agreements (FPAs) between the EU and ACP countries, allowing the access of EU fishing fleets to ACP fish resources, in exchange for a financial compensation;
- European fishing sector activities in ACP countries, outside the scope of fisheries partnerships agreements, particularly through the setting up of joint ventures.

c. Four aspects of the Cotonou Convention objectives are particularly relevant for an examination of coherence between fisheries and development:

- Poverty alleviation, in as much as poverty encompasses notions such as *vulnerability*, in terms of *access to natural resources, access to information and to political participation*. In the same way, the role of fish in ACP countries *food security* is crucial for ACP sustainable development. A critic often heard concerning Fisheries partnership Agreements is the fact that some of them allow access to ACP resources that are fully exploited, or even over exploited. This jeopardizes the access of coastal communities to resources on which they depend for their life and livelihoods.

- The integration of developing countries into the world economy. If the Cotonou Convention (and the future Economic Partnership Agreements) provide, despite the continuous tariff preferences erosion, a welcome support to ACP fish exports on the EU market, other elements of EU policies can constitute barriers, like the obligation to comply with a set of sanitary and phyto sanitary standards. The promotion of European investments in order to improve ACP fish added value is also an important element to consider. Finally, the potential competition between European fish market supply and local/regional food security in ACP countries is also important.

- Regional Integration This objective is extremely important for fish resources management in ACP countries (research, fight against illegal fishing activities, etc), in particular when dealing with migratory species. The efforts of ACP countries to harmonise their position at regional level, particularly concerning the signing of framework fisheries agreement, is an important element to consider when examining coherence issues.

- Good governance. Good governance is crucial for effective fisheries management (notably to combat illegal fishing), but also for all issues linked to democratic participation of ACP populations, fishing communities in particular, in decision making processes that affect the use of ACP countries fish resources, for example in the negotiation of fisheries aspects within EPAs and FPAs.