

Statement on IUU fishing issues for African coastal communities

Prepared for the 27th session of the FAO Committee on Fisheries

Mr Chairman,

We, representatives of African small scale fishing communities and professional organisations, welcome FAO's efforts to help combat IUU fishing. Our communities suffer greatly from industrial trawlers coming, at night, to fish illegally in zones which are normally reserved for small scale fishing. They destroy our resources, they destroy our coastal zones, they destroy our nets and they even kill our fishermen, when fishing with their lights off, they collide with our artisanal boats.

We would like to draw your attention on the following:

- Our states lack human and material means to organise an efficient surveillance at sea. However, cost effective initiatives have been organized to combat IUU fishing operations of these boats in the coastal zone. An example is the participative surveillance organized in collaboration with artisanal fishing professional organizations, as was organized in Guinea with the support of FAO.
- Vessels engaging in IUU fishing often fish in the waters of several neighbouring countries. It is therefore indispensable for our coastal states to cooperate, at regional level, to exchange in full transparency all information concerning these boats (flags, infractions, repeating offenders etc). The setting up of a global register of fishing vessels involved in illegal activities as proposed by FAO should take into account this necessity to share information amongst countries from the same region.
- It is also necessary for our states to cooperate with port states where fish stolen from our waters is landed, to prevent this fish being marketed. This fish coming from IUU sources competes directly on these markets with fish caught legally, including by artisanal fishermen. In this context, we would like the FAO to continue organizing regional meetings with coastal states and port states to define a framework for cooperation to combat IUU fishing. We would also like fishing organizations to be invited to these meetings.
- The trade in IUU caught fish must be halted. We call on FAO and its members to look at how traceability can be applied to fish products originating from small-scale fisheries when fish is collected from several vessels. Its important that fishery products from the small-scale sector are not prevented from accessing markets because they don't comply with the administrative requirements of traceability, as used to combat IUU fishing.
- We call on FAO and its partners to develop a model based on pilot projects that directly involve fishworkers, towards establishing traceability of fishery products appropriate for the sector.

The African artisanal fishing organizations members of the CFFA (Coalition for fair Fisheries Arrangements) delegation to COFI

This statement was supported by:

Greenpeace

ICSF – International Collective in Support of Fishworkers

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