



African Confederation of Professional Organizations of Artisanal Fisheries

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CAOPA Statement on Aquaculture

(Item 5 on decisions taken and recommendations made by the Sub-Committee on Aquaculture of the Committee on Fisheries at its Tenth Session (Trondheim [Norway], 23-27 August 2019) <http://www.fao.org/3/ne706fr/ne706fr.pdf>

And Special Event on Improved Management Practices and Guidelines for Sustainable Aquaculture Development, Sub-Committee on Aquaculture Tenth Session Trondheim (Norway), 23-27 August 2019 <http://www.fao.org/3/na137fr/na137fr.pdf>

The African Confederation of Professional Organizations of Artisanal Fisheries (CAOPA) welcomes the attention given by the Sub-Committee on Aquaculture of the Committee on Fisheries to the development of sustainable aquaculture that contributes to the elimination of hunger, particularly through guidelines that cover all aspects of aquaculture.

In our view, the development of these guidelines for sustainable aquaculture must take into account both the environmental and social impacts that aquaculture facilities can have on the sustainability of the activities of coastal communities and on the coastal environment.

In their discussion of these guidelines, the members of the Aquaculture Sub-Committee recognized this issue, recalling that in a number of countries, aquaculture development has entailed social and environmental costs, including the irrational use of water and natural feed (wild fish) for aquaculture, destruction of mangroves, loss of biodiversity, etc.

Very often, in African countries, the installation of an industrial aquaculture farm means for small-scale fishing the loss of coastal territories, both at sea and on land, which it occupies for its activities. The introduction of industrial aquaculture in highly productive areas such as lagoons, deltas, swamps and mangrove areas reduces the food production capacity of these ecosystems and prevents the exercise of our traditional fishing activities.

The other aspect which is essential for us in the development of these guidelines is the consideration of the whole production chain when looking at the sustainability of aquaculture activities, including the sustainability of the production of feed used in aquaculture farms.

Feeding fish from industrial aquaculture with meal from wild fish is an industrial model that aggravates overfishing and food insecurity in Africa.

Even with the improvements that have been made, which reduce the amount of wild fish in the diet of farmed fish, it still takes several kilos of wild fish for one kilo of farmed fish. With the announced development of industrial aquaculture, the pressure on wild fish stocks will only increase.

In West Africa, we have seen an exponential increase in the number of factories producing fishmeal for industrial fish farming and aquaculture in the last decade. These factories are wreaking havoc. Fishing for fishmeal competes with local artisanal fishing for human consumption. Our food security is under threat. Fish meal factories are also a source of pollution that affects the health of people in coastal communities.

It will be essential that future guidelines take this aspect into account. It would be unjustifiable for us if aquaculture dependent on fishmeal, produced in competition with fishermen fishing for human consumption, were to be declared sustainable, even through a labeling system.

We encourage the Aquaculture Sub-Committee to take these points into consideration, and to involve in their work the artisanal fisheries organizations affected by the development of industrial aquaculture and the flour industry.
