



RECOMMENDATIONS

LDAC CONFERENCE ON EXTERNAL DIMENSION OF THE CFP LAS PALMAS DE GRAN CANARIA, 16-17 September 2015

GENERAL STATEMENTS

1. We recognise the progress made with the latest reforms to the exterior dimension of the European Union Common Fisheries Policy aimed at changing the emphasis from access agreements, inconsistent with the Development Co-operation Policy, to a partnership-based regulation that is more focused on the Policy Coherence for Development (PCD). Going forward, agreements must conclude in the mutual interest of the Union and the third countries involved.
2. We recognise the importance of fishing, especially artisanal fishing, for African countries given the important contribution it makes to providing jobs, food security and to the economy of the African continent.
3. We must remember that the essence of the partnership between African countries and the European Union should be the joint promotion of sustainable environmental, social and economic development based on transparency and the participation of non-governmental stakeholders, especially the professionals who depend on fishing for their livelihood. The conservation of resources and the protection of the marine environment are essential in order to guarantee sustainable fishing for future generations.
4. We must remember that the EU and its African partners have a raft of instruments for attaining this goal: Sustainable fisheries partnership agreements, the presence of the EU and of the African countries in the Regional Fisheries Management Organisations and other pertinent international bodies, a strict and non-discriminatory application of national and European legislative measures (such as the regulation for fighting IUU fishing), EU-ACP trade agreements, development aid and investments.



The coherence of these policies for the sustainable development of fisheries in third countries constitutes an important European Union commitment. The trade agreements signed with third countries in particular should promote fair and sustainable social and environmental production conditions that are in line with international regulations.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR PROGRESS AND CHALLENGES

1. Harmonisation of the conditions of access for foreign fleets to African waters to fish tuna, small pelagic and demersal species, with a view to establishing favourable conditions for fishermen operating sustainably and responsibly.

1.1. Certain elements of the regulations concerning the new sustainable fishing partnership agreements or SFPAs (such as limited access to surpluses, contribution to the food supply, non-discrimination clause, human rights clause, transparency, etc.) are useful in this context. SFPAs are the best instrument available to formalise equitable relations between EU and Africa, as they contribute to guarantee sustainable exploitation of fisheries while helping to development for cooperation globally.

1.2. It is also essential to develop a regional approach for tuna fisheries: establishment of regional observer programmes, enrolment of crew members (who have the pertinent training), regional inspection and control system. The European tuna purse seine fleet is willing to engage in this activity in collaboration with political decision-makers, the scientific community and the control authorities of the EU and Africa.

1.3. There is a need to develop and agree on effective joint management of small pelagic stocks off the coast of Northwest Africa by the countries of the region, given the strategic importance of these resources for the food security of many African countries. Although regional projects and institutions already exist with the objective to develop such joint management, major steps still have to be made.



The recent adoption of the new Fishing Act in the Islamic Republic of Mauritania may be a new starting point to develop effective management of shared pelagic stocks in the region. The EU pelagic fleet is willing to engage in this process under the banner of and supported by the SPFA's that the EU entertains with the countries in the region.

- 1.4. As far as other fisheries (e.g. demersal) are concerned, there is a need to guarantee legal certainty for EU operators as well as to promote measures applicable to all fleets (i.e. EU and non EU) to guarantee harmony between the industrial and the artisanal fishing fleets to co-exist peacefully. This may require a zoning system that allows for the protection of the local artisanal fishing sector. Also it would be desirable a prompt and speedy implementation of the conditions arising from the SFPAs and its Protocols from both the EU and the African countries, so they can be adequately executed without producing unnecessary delays in the fulfilment of the SFPAs, e.g. licence issuing, landing permits and infringements procedures.
- 1.5. European investors in the fisheries industry in third countries (joint ventures) must be included and recognised by the CFP. The EU must promote a dialogue with African countries that fosters the development of a regulatory framework for joint venture with respect to catch (applicable to all vessels of foreign origin), processing and marketing that guarantees that joint ventures operate transparently, do not compete with artisanal fishing and contribute to the development objectives of the country in question.
- 1.6. Working conditions: as with the merchant marine, instruments to protect workers and decent working conditions must be included in European regulations on fishing matters (especially ILO Convention 188 on working conditions in the fishing sector) as well as in fishing partnership agreements (see the recent example of the sustainable fishing partnership agreement signed with Mauritania) to guarantee the same working conditions, the same protection of workers' rights and the same levels of training.



2. Improve scientific knowledge and the international governance of fisheries.

2.1. Transparency of fishing activities

The levels of transparency required for the activities of the European fleets that operate under agreements must be applied to the activities of the European fleets that operate outside of the fisheries partnership agreements (joint ventures, charters, private agreements). The reform of the European fishing authorisation regulation (FAR) will provide an opportunity to act in this sense.

The EU must promote transparency globally and support initiatives adopted so that coastal countries publish the texts of access agreements, up-to-date lists of registered vessels, information on the global fishing effort per fishery, etc.

Pursuant to international law, this information is essential to allow the surpluses on which all agreements with the EU, or any other region, is based to be calculated. The EU must guarantee an on-going dialogue with partner countries in order to be able to roll out a common policy strategy that will foster the application of sustainable and equitable fisheries governance.

2.2. Consultation and participation of fisheries stakeholders (especially the professionals that depend on fishing for their livelihood) in partnership agreements between EU and African countries should cover the following elements: the negotiation of fisheries partnership agreements; the application of the concluded agreements (joint committee), even sectorial support; the work carried out in the framework of the RFMOs; the application of development co-operation projects, etc.

2.3. Data quality and scientific advice

The new EU European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMMF) and the Development Funds must be used and serve to enhance our knowledge of fish stocks. It is essential to have data collection and analysis programmes and simpler more efficient methodologies for assessing data-poor fish populations. There is also a need to consolidate the co-operation between professional fishermen, NGOs and European and African scientists by rolling out pilot studies and co-operation initiatives. The application and utilisation of the data must be duly regulated.



2.4. Accountability and improvement of the use of European aid assigned to developing African fishing.

Sectorial support for fisheries partnership agreements must be assigned to the fishing sector given the growing needs of African countries with respect to:

- Covering the costs of fishing management;
- Infrastructures (port infrastructures, basic services, e.g. water/electricity supply)
- Capacity building and training of fisheries inspectors and crew members;
- Improving the supply and availability of fish for food security of African populations by providing support to the work done by women in the fisheries sector.

2.5. Fight against illegal, undeclared and unregulated (IUU) fishing

The fight against IUU fishing must be accompanied by promoting a legal framework for an environmentally, socially and economically sustainable and equitable fishing.

The EU and its partners must co-ordinate their efforts in such a manner that the political will and the instruments established in the framework of international and European legislation (catch certificates, system of mutual assistance among member states of the EU, SVT and AIS, etc.) put an end to the IUU fishing that takes place off the African coasts, among other places.

Technological advances (SVT, electronic fishing log, on-line learning programmes for inspectors, electronic catch certificates, etc.) and the exchange of information in real time among all the parties involved will contribute to the fight against IUU fishing.

The EU and its African partner countries will continue in their attempts to establish a world-wide shipping register (IMO number) and to support the ratifications necessary for the pertinent instruments of international law to come into effect, such as the FAO agreement on port state measures.

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