

## **LDRAC statement on Mauritania to the EC**

Referencia:R-08-11/WG4

Adopted by the LDRAC Executive Committee

With regards to ongoing negotiations of renewal of the Fisheries Partnership Agreement between the EU and Islamic Republic of Mauritania LD RAC would like to make some comments.

In Mauritanian waters, where EU fleets have been traditionally operating, activities of other industrial distant water fleets have become significant, and these fleets are competing with EU fleets for access to the surplus of fishing resources.

In line in UNCLOS, LDRAC is in full support of principle of scientific based fishery, and of the fact that EU fleets should access only the surplus of fishing resources that can't be caught by local fleets, taking into account the needs of other developing states in the region to access this surplus<sup>1</sup> and the need to minimize economic dislocation in states whose nationals have habitually fished in the zone or which have made substantial efforts in research and identification of stocks (UNCLOS Art. 62.2 and 62.3. )

First of all, to ensure these principles are applied in the case of the agreement with Mauritania, we feel there should be full transparency about the cumulated fishing effort of all fleets involved in the various fisheries, and the potential existence of a surplus.

At the same time, LDRAC is concerned that the Commission seems to consider that 'local catches' include catches of other industrial distant water fleets, therefore the application of the above mentioned principles, will result effectively in withdrawal of EU fleet, NOT for the benefit of the Mauritanian fleets, but for the benefit of other distant water fleets, competing with EU fleet for access to the surplus .

LDRAC is of the opinion that, like for all other agreements, discussion about what share of the potential surplus is attributed to the EU fleets should be based on best available scientific data regarding the cumulated fishing effort of all fleets, and on the principle that, in particular for demersal species, 'catches by the local fleets' mean catches by vessels flying the flag of Mauritania- it should NOT mean the catches of all fleets ( except EU fleets ) operating in Mauritanian waters. <sup>2</sup>

We feel it's crucial to ensure the Mauritanian party is made fully aware of the EU willingness to have all data concerning the cumulated fishing effort, in order to have an efficient and objective discussion on surplus available at the next round of negotiations. In particular, we would like the EC to clarify whether the issue of cumulated fishing effort and surplus were discussed at the last EU-Mauritania Joint Scientific Committee, held last October.

Considering the increase of the fishing capacity of other industrial distant water fishing fleets in recent years in Mauritanian waters, the LDRAC feels that, in case

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<sup>1</sup> This is particularly important for small pelagics, which are of vital importance for Senegalese small scale fisheries

<sup>2</sup> In the case of migratory species, particularly small pelagics, due attention should be given to the need of fleets from neighbouring countries, particularly artisanal fleets from Senegal, given their high dependance on these stocks for their livelihoods and food security

a surplus for a species is clearly proven to exist, priority should be given to those who fish more sustainably, and those who respect international conventions which Mauritania is signatory in terms of conditions of employment (ILO), safety of life at sea (IMO), hygiene and sanitation in food (OMS) and international trade (WTO), and, in that context the reference level for the calculation of the share of the EU's access to that surplus should be based on the percentage represented by the share of the surplus accessed by the EU fishing fleet involved within whole period of present Protocol.