Note: CFFA is a platform of European and African organizations that raises awareness about the impacts of the EU-Africa fisheries arrangements on African artisanal fishing communities.

INPUTS TO THE FISHERIES REPORT:

1. **What are the main human rights challenges facing small-scale fishers and fish workers in your country?**

* **Incursion of industrial vessels in coastal areas: impacts of trawling + human right abuses**

**Foreign origin vessels often access African waters through** [joint fishing ventures](https://www.cffacape.org/publications-blog/q2nriapbiy782wqmauibptrt43x1ku)**.** Usually, the reflagging allows these vessels to have a [preferential treatment under national legislation](https://www.cffacape.org/publications-blog/african-artisanal-fisheries-at-the-forefront-of-the-fight-against-predatory-and-opaque-industrial-fishing-companies), and grants them access to waters nearer to the coast. They take advantage of weaker governance and lack of monitoring capacities of the coastal State to often access areas where they damage [highly sensitive ecosystems](https://www.cffacape.org/publications-blog/experimental-fishing-or-experimental-pillaging-in-liberia) SSF depend on for their survival. This threatens SSF’s right to a clean, safe and healthy environment, and right to food.

These vessels also threaten safety at sea for fishers, as there are risks of collision with pirogues, and they destroy artisanal fishing gear. This results in grave losses for SSF, including death ([250 deaths/year in West Africa](https://www.imsehawaii.org/iuuf/ewExternalFiles/Catching%20industrial%20fishing%20incursions%20into%20inshore%20waters%20of%20Africa%20from%20space.pdf)). There are also cases of [physical abuses](https://news.abidjan.net/articles/323416/police-maritime-apres-la-disparition-des-4-marins-lenquete-vise-les-bateaux-chinois) of artisanal fishers when they protest incursions in their reserved area, which violates their right to physical integrity.

* **Oil spills and gas leaks**

**Oil spills and gas leaks continue to cause significant environmental damage in the Niger delta.** There are also a number of offshore projects which threaten marine artisanal fisheries (in [Mauritania](https://www.cffacape.org/publications-blog/eu-mauritania-sfpa-scientists-highlight-key-sustainability-issues-do-not-consider-coral-reefs-protection), [Senegal](https://www.cffacape.org/news-blog/in-senegal-and-mauritania-the-impact-of-oil-exploitation-on-fishing-is-a-big-concern), [South Africa](https://www.masifundise.org/media-statement-small-scale-fishers-in-south-africa-do-not-support-oil-and-gas-development-on-their-oceans/)). **The oil and gas industry are violating the right to a clean, safe, and healthy environment of** more than 6 million SSF workers in Africa. Although some progress is visible in some of these companies being [brought in front of European courts](https://www.reuters.com/article/us-britain-shell-nigeria-judgement-idUKKBN2AC16A/), it is still difficult for small-scale fishing organisations to obtain reparation without the help of INGOs.

* **Fishmeal and fishoil factories**

These factories are multiplying in West Africa due to a growing global demand. It is estimated that to produce [1 kg of fishmeal, 5 kg of fresh wild-caught fish are required](https://www.cffacape.org/publications-blog/the-rich-mans-fish-feeds-on-the-poor-mans-sardinella). The growth of this industry in the region is a key factor leading to the overexploitation of small pelagics, which are a staple food of the diet in the region, traditionally caught by artisanal fishers and smoked and dried by women fish processors. This violates the right of fishers and women to traditional livelihood and the pollution of the plants threatens the rights of coastal communities to a clean, safe, and healthy environment. Finally, the redirection of fresh fish from human consumption to animal feed is threatening food security of the region, and hence violating the right to food of the West African populations.

* **Land tenure rights**

African coastal communities use the beach as a landing site. They often have no legal claim to the land (they are not owners) beyond the fact they have been [using it for decades or even centuries](https://www.fao.org/3/i2801e/i2801e.pdf). In some cases, the land belongs to the government, that can lease it to the highest bidder (hotels), and is attracted to the shiny reports of multinational companies and the promises of jobs, violating SSF’s land tenure rights and right to traditional livelihood (see examples of [Senegal](https://www.cffacape.org/news-blog/fight-against-the-installation-of-a-metallurgical-plant-in-bargny-women-fish-processors-change-their-strategy) and [Guinea](https://www.cffacape.org/news-blog/one-year-later-the-artisanal-fishing-community-of-koulwondy-continues-to-spend-the-night-in-the-open-air)).

1. **What good practices could be shared from your country that has strengthened the recognition, protection and remedies for small-scale fishers and fish workers?**

In 2022, small-scale fishing organisations from 5 continents drafted a “[Call to action](https://www.cffacape.org/ssf-call-to-action)” for their governments, which contained 5 priorities to secure small-scale fisheries ([SDG 14b](https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal14)) before 2030. They themselves have undertaken actions to address the challenges they face:

* Securing **preferential access** and **tenure rights** and co-manage 100% of coastal areas: The African Confederation of Artisanal Fisheries Organisations (CAOPA) commissioned [a series of studies on artisanal fishing zones](http://www.cffacape.org/publications-blog/preferential-access-ssf-artisanal-fishing-zone) in 7 countries to document the challenges faced by SSF. These were undertaken in a participative way: the consultants collected the views of fishers, and “restitution sessions” were organised in the countries, with fisheries stakeholders and authorities, to discuss the findings. In some cases, like the [Guinea](https://caopa.org/en/guinea-caopa-presents-the-findings-of-the-study-on-the-challenges-of-artisanal-fishing-zones/15/12/2021/actu/3766/) study, it allowed for authorities to review the legislation in place.
* Guaranteeing **women’s participation** and support their role in innovation: Women are present at all stages of SSF value chains and are essential in getting the fish to consumers. But their work is unrecognised and their working and living conditions are dire. Several initiatives have taken place in Africa to support women’s accessing [funds](https://caopa.org/en/senegal-mbour-creation-of-a-solidarity-fund-in-the-village-of-mballing/28/01/2022/news/3897/) to buy the fish, [preserve the fish](https://www.cffacape.org/news-blog/something-cool-for-cte-divoire-women-fish-processors-will-give-them-more-power-in-the-marketplace), or [to speak with one voice](https://www.cffacape.org/news-blog/to-go-far-you-have-to-be-together-the-ivorian-women-in-artisanal-fisheries-can-tell-you-how).

1. **To what extent small-scale fisheries, coastal communities, and fishery workers have been included in national and international policy processes related to the fisheries sector?**

The International Year of Artisanal Fisheries and Aquaculture played a big role in the recognition of artisanal fisheries in the fisheries sector. However, despite the commitments in support of SSF, words do not equal action: [access to marine resources and markets is not yet secured for small-scale fisheries](https://www.cffacape.org/publications-blog/despite-what-fao-says-access-to-marine-resources-and-markets-is-not-yet-secured-for-small-scale-fisheries) (SDG 14b). There is also a need for more participation and visibility of SSF in other fora [where decisions have impacts](https://www.cffacape.org/publications-blog/an-ambitious-high-seas-treaty-must-not-come-at-the-expense-of-coastal-fishing-communities) on their livelihoods and on their ability to contribute to food security (climate change, biodiversity…), so that their right to information and meaningful participation are respected.

1. **What are the main concerns regarding working conditions in the fisheries supply chain? Which parts of the supply chain are the most dangerous or problematic?**

* [Safety at sea](https://www.cffacape.org/news-blog/the-number-of-deaths-of-african-artisanal-fishers-is-devastatingly-high-says-new-research) for fishers as they increasingly must navigate further to find fish (see [Senegal’s](https://www.cffacape.org/news-blog/concrete-measures-to-improve-working-conditions-in-small-scale-fisheries-in-senegal) examples)
* [Working](https://www.cffacape.org/news-blog/one-year-later-the-artisanal-fishing-community-of-koulwondy-continues-to-spend-the-night-in-the-open-air) and [living conditions](https://www.cffacape.org/news-blog/affordable-social-housing-to-improve-the-living-conditions-of-women-fish-processors-in-cte-divoire) for women fish processors (especially fish smokers)