

CFFA report of activities 2019

CFFA Team

During the first half of 2019, CFFA employed two persons part-time: André Standing (as Associate Researcher), and Béatrice Gorez (as Coordinator/spokesperson). André Standing terminated his permanent research contract in November to pursue other projects and will in the future contribute on an ad hoc basis to CFFA's work, particularly on blue growth issues.

As agreed by CFFA Steering committee end of 2018, following a recommendation from our strategic audit, CFFA recruited a third person, Ms Joelle Philippe, as Communication and Administrative officer. She started to work part time beginning of July¹.

Several experts were also contracted to provide research on specific topics: Mrs Anaid Panossian (on an ongoing project regarding the future of SFPAs), Mrs Cécile Fattebert (on small scale fisheries in Madagascar – *to be published in 2020*) and Mr Jedna Deida (update on Chinese investments in Mauritania fisheries – *to be published in 2020*).

Important voluntary contributions were also provided by CFFA board members, for both administrative work and attending/contributing as expert to meetings.

¹ The recruitment process was launched in March (ads were published in two EU journals, and on social media), and 31 applications were received. CFFA Secretariat pre-selected 10 candidates, whose applications were examined in detail by the administrative board. The 5 best applications (according to a serie of criteria) were selected by them and candidates were interviewed before the final choice was made.

CFFA Activities

1. Advocacy and Lobbying

As recommended by the strategic audit, CFFA has, in 2019, focussed its work on advocacy and lobbying. Now that CAOPA is completely financially independent, CFFA and CAOPA's relations are solely as "advocacy partners."

1.1 REGULAR LOBBYING OF EU INSTITUTIONS

In 2019, lobbying EU institutions included the organisation of meetings with newly elected MEPs from the Fisheries Committee, mainly on issues related to Sustainable Fisheries Partnership Agreements (SFPAs), which is often the 'entry point' of MEPs on issues related to CFP external dimension. This provided CFFA with the possibility to make inputs in MEPs opinions and amendments on various SFPAs (with Senegal, Mauritania, Guinea Bissau, Seychelles, The Gambia, etc).

CFFA also held a series of meetings with the European Commission (DG Mare) and with representatives of the EESC. Our weakest point is the contacts with Permanent representations of EU Member States.

CFFA remains actively involved in the work of the LDAC (CFFA is currently vice chair until 2023), which provides formal advices to the EC, to which the EC has the obligation to reply. Several advices from 2019 are interesting for CFFA's work, including:

- In May 2019, an [advice on deep sea mining, proposed by NGOs](#), was adopted at LDAC calling for a moratorium on deep sea mining, and for the EU to stop funding, facilitating or promoting the development of deep-sea mining and deep-sea mining technology. CFFA contributed to this debate with a paper, "[The climate crisis in African fisheries: The EU must end fossil fuel investments](#)." The LDAC advice was used by EU MS attending the annual session of the International Seabed Authority, to highlight interactions with fisheries.
- A [letter was sent by DG Mare to the LDAC](#) about the need for EU tuna vessels to land tuna in Ivory Coast for local women fish processors. CFFA is promoting these landings, as well as the use of the SFPA sectoral support for the women cooperatives. This provided an opportunity to restart the discussions with the EU tuna sector about the practical issues for landing these catches.
- The LDAC also sent [a letter to the EC complaining about the delay in the publication of the database of fishing authorisations](#), a key win for NGOs in the passing of the new regulation SMEFF. Regularly [updated lists of fishing authorisations for all EU vessels fishing outside EU waters](#) are now published.

CFFA also attended various meetings as part of the LDAC delegation, to prepare the EU position for international meetings (UN General Assembly, COFI, BBNJ, the G7 follow up meeting on Oceans).

Several meetings were also organised to finalise and present an LDAC performance review, which examined, amongst other topics, [how NGOs intervene \(and could improve their input\) in the LDAC](#).

The participation of CFFA to the Markets Advisory Committee is less useful/fruitful. Mostly, our action there is to stop importers and processors adopting advices that are detrimental to sustainable fisheries in third countries (notably by promoting imports of cheaper imports produced in unsustainable social and environmental conditions).

1.2. JOINT ADVOCACY WITH CAOPA AND OTHER NGOS

In 2019, as CAOPA is now fully financially, CFFA relations with CAOPA have been almost exclusively about developing joint advocacy/lobbying. In 2019, the joint CFFA/CAOPA advocacy focussed on four issues:

- Making EU-Africa fisheries relations more sustainable, particularly SFPAs
- Protecting food security in West Africa, currently threatened by the production of fishmeal/fishoil
- Promoting social sustainability/decent working conditions for men and women in the African artisanal sector
- Addressing blue growth issues

Several activities were organised on these issues, that also involved collaboration with other NGOs. They included:

Making EU-Africa fisheries relations more sustainable

- Advocacy to make EU-African SFPAs more sustainable: One of the key issues CFFA has been advocating for is to make the fishing agreements (SFPAs) between EU and African countries more sustainable. In 2019, several agreements were coming up for renewal in West Africa, including Senegal and Mauritania.
 - CFFA has long time relations with CAOPA members in both Senegal and Mauritania. To prepare our positions for SFPAs negotiations, a meeting was organised in M'Bour beginning of 2019. Professionals, men and women of Senegal, Mauritania, but also The Gambia, Guinea-Bissau and Ivory Coast were invited and shared their experiences of fisheries agreements. The IMROP Research Institute was also represented, as well as PRCM and CFFA. A series of [priorities were retained for the negotiations](#). CFFA presented these priorities to the European institutions, and our Senegalese partners issued a paper, targeting Senegalese decision makers during the negotiations, based on these priorities.
 - CFFA also provided a written contribution that was included in the ex ante and ex post SFPAs evaluations for [Sénégal](#), [Mauritania](#) and the [Seychelles](#).

- In November also, CFFA facilitated the organisation of an event at the European parliament, hosted by two EFA/Greens MEPs, which focussed on [the perspectives of the coastal communities with regards to SFPAs](#). Five CAOPA members intervened in the panel, which focussed on currently negotiated SFPAs or protocols or recently approved (Mauritania and Seychelles, The Gambia) and the presentation of women in fisheries issues.
- Policy coherence with SDGs:
 - In September, BFW and CFFA wrote an article for the SDG Watch publication: [“Who is paying the bill: \(Negative\) impacts of EU policies and practices in the world.”](#) BFW/CFFA article highlighted areas of the EU external fisheries policy where more efforts are needed to ensure coherence with sustainable development goals.
 - In November, BirdLife, CFFA, WWF invited African partners, including CAOPA and PRCM for a week of meetings with prime decision-makers from the European institutions and a one-day technical-level seminar to discuss how to make Sustainable Fisheries Partnership Agreements truly sustainable so that they really contribute to Sustainable Development Goals. The week’s highlight was a high-level panel discussion with key stakeholders from artisanal fisheries, NGOs and research institutes hosted by the European Economic and Social Committee with very good feedback from all the participants. Recommendations were produced to start a conversation on how to make SFPAs truly sustainable in the future and will be discussed at the LDAC and with DG MARE early 2020.
- Formal complaints: In January 2019, [CFFA submitted a formal complaint to the European Commission against Italy](#), as Italian trawlers have been reported to fish illegally (incursions in coastal areas) in Sierra Leone and The Gambia, without Italy, or the EU, taking decisive action.
 - A meeting was organised with the EC in March to discuss our complaint.
 - We then received a unsatisfactory letter from the EC asking for more details. In [our reply, we, again, urged the Commission to initiate the infringement proceedings](#) against Italy and inquire about the alleged failure of Italian authorities to control the activities of the vessels flying their flags.
 - In December 2019, we were informed that our complaint had been integrated in an EU Pilot case/plan of action to address shortcomings identified by an EC audit of the monitoring of the Italian external fleet. We are still waiting for the results of this pilot case. CFFA will continue to monitor the situation of the external fleets from countries like Italy (but also Greece, the Baltic states), which do not fish much under SFPAs (they fish under private licenses) but reportedly cause important damages to coastal ecosystems and communities in African countries.

Protecting food security in West Africa, threatened by fishmeal/fishoil production

- Support to local fisheries organisations: In the Gambia, with CFFA support, fishing organisations held a Press Conference in September to discuss the escalating fishmeal crisis with several stakeholders, including the Ministry of fisheries, but the government declined

their invitation saying the fishers had no right to intervene in government matters. It's the first time that such a press conference was organised independently. The initiative was condemned by senior figures in government, and local fishing organisations report being intimidated and threatened. However, this helped raise awareness about the crucial issues facing not only Gambian fishing communities but local fish consumers. This issue was underlined with contacts CFFA had with MEPs regarding the adoption of the EU-Gambia SFPA.

- Advocacy:
 - CFFA published a paper, [calling on European businesses with interests in the fishmeal sector to act responsibly and end their investments](#) and support for fishmeal and fish oil in Mauritania, Senegal and the Gambia. A public disinvestment campaign by European businesses will send a strong message to other companies and investors from outside Europe, including China and Turkey, to follow their lead. This came out as some NGOs like SFP (sustainable fisheries partnership) were reportedly looking at ecolabelling fishmeal from West Africa.
 - CFFA further interacted with MSC about this issue, in the context of a [discussion about the role of MSC for small scale fisheries](#).
 - CFFA also started a discussion with the NGO Changing Markets, based on their [report on fishmeal production in West Africa](#). CFFA later signed up with other NGOs to a letter sent by Changing Markets to fishmeal importers and investors in Europe, questioning the sustainability of their operations, and urging them to stop.

Promoting social sustainability/decent working conditions for men and women in the African artisanal sector

- Public consultations:
 - In June, CAOPA and CFFA attended an FAO consultation on social sustainability, and further jointly [commented on a FAO guide draft](#) on this issue, highlighting the need to address artisanal fisheries value chains, from boat building to distribution and retailing.
- Raising awareness:
 - CFFA presented CAOPA achievements on this topic (SSF good practices in social sustainability) at the [FAO Conxemar Congress on social sustainability](#) in October 2019 in Vigo.
 - Both CFFA and CAOPA attended an [FAO regional technical seminar in Ghana on safety at sea and decent work](#) in line with the SSF guidelines.
 - In September, CFFA attended a 3 days meeting on fisheries and aquaculture organised by Ethofish (animal welfare organisations) in Faro (Portugal), highlighting the importance to defend sustainable livelihoods and decent working conditions in African fisheries.

Addressing blue growth threats for sustainable small-scale fisheries

- Compatibility with FAO guidelines: During the year, CFFA developed an important work looking at the compatibility of the blue growth concept with the FAO Voluntary guidelines.

- In April, CFFA facilitated a seminar organised in Stockholm by SSNC on the blue commons idea. This was attended by CAOPA, SSNC, and ICSF. The seminar involved video link ups with 10 international experts on fisheries and the commons concept.
- In May, CFFA attended the [Slow Fish Festival](#) in Genova presenting on the blue economy concept and chairing discussions on the topic.
- Based on these exchanges, CFFA published the paper [“Is Blue Growth compatible with securing small-scale fisheries?”](#) In this report, CFFA highlights six areas of concern that demonstrate how incompatible blue growth is with the development of healthy, sustainable artisanal fisheries and how it prevents the advance of the responsible governance of tenure to achieve food security and poverty eradication.
- A second paper, [“From Blue Growth to Blue Commons”](#) presented a critique of blue growth and presenting an alternative perspective, rooted in the “blue commons” concept, which rejects the promise of more economic growth, dependence on private financing and market-based systems for conservation, and includes bold systems of redistribution. Other organisations, like ICSF and FAO, used the seminar and CFFA material to develop their own work on this topic in 2020.
- Investments and securing SSF:
 - In July, CFFA organised for CAOPA to intervene in a [seminar organised by the European Social and Economic Committee \(EESC\) on investments in Africa](#), highlighting the need to have investments in small scale fisheries (women fish processing in particular) and to protect SSF from the negative impacts of some investments in destructive industries (fishing joint ventures, oil exploitation, mass tourism, etc).
 - Looking in more detail at oil exploitation, CFFA further published a [paper on public finance for oil and gas investment in Africa](#) and a paper looking at a 2018 [British Petroleum \(BP\) oil drilling project off the coasts of Mauritania and Senegal](#). The paper explored how the project EIA was deliberately misleading and allowed this controversial project to be approved.
- Climate change:
 - At the time of the publication of the IPCC-report on Climate Change and the State of Our Oceans, CFFA published comments on the report, questioning how governments would react to IPCC suggestions to tackle the climate emergency, [“New IPCC-report on Climate Change and the State of Our Oceans: Will this expose the fallacy of Blue growthism?”](#)
- Advocacy:
 - In November, for World Fisheries Day, in response to the leaked priorities of the new Commission which completely overlooked fisheries, [CFFA wrote a letter to the new Commissioner for Environment and Oceans](#), asking to secure small-scale fisheries and put them back at the centre of an Oceans inclusive strategy. The letter was co-signed by 15 small-scale fisheries organisations, environmental and development NGOs.
 - In December, [CFFA worked with CAOPA and the local fisheries organisations of the Republic of Guinea in support of an evicted fishing community to the benefit of a luxury hotel](#). In response to a letter sent by CFFA, CAOPA and Bread for the World (BFW) to the Guinean Ministry of Fisheries to protest for the eviction of this fishing

community, [the Minister expressed support for the fishing community](#). This is an issue that we will follow up in 2020 (after elections in Guinea).

2. Communication and publications

2.1. DESIGN

With the arrival of the new Communications officer, a new designing for the organisation was created, namely through a logo, and brand colours, which will give a more recognizable image and increased visibility to the organisation.

Throughout the following months, more attention was given to layout of reports, infographics and photography, as well as issues of royalties (i.e. using images without royalties, or images from partners who have given authorization). Photography is now always credited or is royalty free.

Other documents/elements have been (re)designed and give a more “corporate” image to CFFA such as email signatures, design of official letters, contracts, and other templates.

2.2 CONTENT

A new website was launched in November featuring additional elements such as the twitter thread, a search bar, an archive, a contact form and more information about CFFA generally. In terms of organisation of content, a clearer distinction between CFFA publications and policy briefings and news articles on current issues and on CFFA actions and activities.

An additional subpage was created with FAQs which is still being developed. This page is thought for a wider audience that wants to understand key issues that CFFA works on: EU long-distance fleet, certification schemes in Africa, etc. This page is also meant to address common myths known by the wider audience and for which CFFA is often contacted by journalists, who often expected oversimplified answers.

2.3 CAMPAIGNING

A more systematic approach to establish contacts with MEPs has been started. An introduction and congratulations letter were sent early September to all the new MEPs of the Fisheries Committee of the European Parliament, which was a good way to start a conversation and present the work of CFFA. Some solid contacts have been established and CFFA is regularly consulted by MEPs from almost all the groups on issues concerning SFPAs and impacts of EU actions on African coastal communities.

Secondly, a mailing system has been established with a contact list that is constantly updated. The mailing is designed according to the new branding and usually is sent around whenever there is a new CFFA publication, with a brief section containing the latest news. The mailings attempt to target key dates on the calendar (matching negotiations, women’s international day, etc.). Apart from targeting key decision-makers in Brussels, it also keeps CFFA partners informed on the actions CFFA is doing

and of the key discussions that are happening at EU level. The feedback has so far been very good and has triggered discussions at LDAC level.

2.4 MEDIA RELATIONS

This is the weakest point. CFFA is often contacted by journalists that have very little knowledge on fisheries issues who ask very broad and often biased questions. There is a big challenge in terms of how to respond to these queries in a balanced way and how to make sure this is reflected in the final product. In a certain way, as mentioned above the FAQ is a mitigating measure. However, a longer-term work needs to be done on raising awareness, on giving detailed and thorough answers, and on providing feedback when these answers are poorly reported.

3. CFFA annual Steering Committee

The Steering committee was held early December in Senegal after the World Fisheries Day celebration. A delegation of 5 members of CAOPA and 5 members of REJOPRA participated, as well as CFFA staff and our partner BFW. We examined the activities undertaken in 2019, and planned for the activities in 2020, in light of CAOPA priorities, decided at their GA held just the days before.

This was also an occasion to examine the collaboration with REJOPRA, and to plan activities, in particular the organisation of a journalists training.

4. Support and collaboration to REJOPRA

The collaboration with REJOPRA in 2019 was disappointing.

CFFA provided very little of the planned support to REJOPRA in 2019 for writing original articles, as the new team was not able to organise a call for papers. Only two articles were proposed during the year. Nevertheless, journalists from the network posted on the REJOPRA website <http://sipanews.org/> the articles they had published in their respective national newspapers

It was not possible for REJOPRA to organise a journalists' training in 2019, but after a discussion on this topic during the CFFA annual meeting end of 2019, it was possible to organise this training in January 2020.

An issue remains the formal registration of REJOPRA. A registration has been made in South Africa in 2019, but it does not meet CFFA and its funders conditions in terms of governance. We hope this will be addressed in the course of 2020.

Brussels, 13 March 2020