



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR MARITIME AFFAIRS AND FISHERIES

International Ocean Governance and Sustainable Fisheries
The Director

Brussels
MARE.B.1/

Mr. Guaoussou Gueye
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African Confederation of Professional
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Dear Mr. Gueye,

Thank you for your letter dated 15 September and the CAOPA communication on the African Union's Strategy for a blue economy in Africa. I am replying to you also on behalf of my colleagues from the directorate general for development aid who have also received a copy of your letter.

Let me start by re-stating the European Union's strong commitment and support to the UN 2030 Agenda for sustainable development, and in line with it, the implementation of the FAO guidelines on sustainable fisheries.

We would like to express our appreciation for CAOPA's analysis of the African Union's Strategy for a Blue Economy in Africa. We acknowledge that the European Commission has contributed to its elaboration through a grant to AU-IBAR, but the policy development process was fully lead by African institutions. The final policy document was adopted by the Specialised Technical Committee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Water and Environment (ARDWE) of the African Union in October 2019 and noted by the African Union Executive Council in February 2020.

CAOPA's observations are very pertinent and relevant and we will ensure that, in the course of the implementation of the new EU co-funded project "*Enhancing sustainable fisheries management and aquaculture development in Africa: A programme for accelerated reform of the sector (FISHGOV2)*", your concerns and recommendations are taken on board.

We particularly value the importance of ensuring a proper and transparent flow of information. The elaboration of national and regional strategies and plans governing the fisheries' sector requires extensive and well-documented consultation processes at different levels, including the involvement of key stakeholders such as the artisanal fishers. We recognise the important role artisanal fishers play not only in the sustainable

management of aquatic resources but also as repository of knowledge, values and practices.

We are aware of and are committed to addressing the negative impact of malpractices and corruption on the sustainable management of marine resources. This is the reason why the EU considers good governance a pre-requisite for equitable and sustainable development.

We believe that a multi-sectoral policy like a sustainable blue economy should be designed to guide and support the implementation of sectoral policies but cannot be seen as the only vehicle to address all external factors shaping and influencing them.

We concur with your concerns that the industrialisation of the fisheries' sector may displace a large number of artisanal fishers, thus exacerbating inequalities and threatening peace due to increased competition for natural resources. Gains in the industrialisation process should be accompanied by policy measures to protect the stakeholders most affected by this process. There is an urgent need to work at all levels to drive commercial fisheries towards sustainability while improving the management of the small-scale fisheries and the fish value chain. Technical and infrastructural innovations will contribute to improved, sustainable exploitation of fish resources for the benefit of Africa's populations. We believe that this change is not only driven by trade relations with third parties but it is also emerging as a strong requirement by African consumers, increasingly concerned with food safety, employment rights, environmental conservation, and sustainable use of natural resources.

We would like to take this opportunity to encourage CAOPA to continue critically reviewing policies affecting artisanal fisheries and ensuring that its voice is not only raised with international actors but also with national and regional leadership.

Yours sincerely,

E-signed
Veronika VEITS

c.c.: Raphaël Goulet, Bénédicte Caremier, DG MARE. B1
Fernando Trabada Crende, DG DEVCO. C1
Charlotte Gobin, EU Delegation to Kenya
Vittorio Cagnolatti, EU Delegation to the African Union