



Pour une Pêche Ecologique  
génératrice de Progrès social  
[promoconsult\\_pechecops@yahoo.fr](mailto:promoconsult_pechecops@yahoo.fr)

# CAPE

Coalition pour des Accords de  
Pêche Équitables  
[cffa.cape@scarlet.be](mailto:cffa.cape@scarlet.be)

January 7th

## *Denouncing the EU-Mauritania Fisheries Agreement protocol: Putting the "Fisheries Partnership" to the test*

*The European Commission proposes to denounce the EU - fisheries agreement protocol before end of January 2008. The method is brutal; true partnerships are built up through dialogue, not ultimatums. Nevertheless, this could provide an opportunity to review particular aspects of the agreement that may have contributed to the over exploitation of Mauritanian resources and undermined the sustainable development of the Mauritanian fisheries sector.*

Recently, twenty Spanish boats fishing for octopus in Mauritanian waters decided to stop their activities there due to the declining profitability. It's worth recalling that since the arrival of the European fleet in 1995, the octopus stock has been subjected to a 30 to 40% excess in fishing effort.

Some months ago, a report from FAO sounded another alarm bell. This time for one of the West African small pelagic stocks: the round sardinella, a resource vital for the West African artisanal fishing sector and targeted by EU "super trawlers" fishing under the EU – Mauritania agreement, is showing signs of over exploitation.

For Pêchecops and CFFA, it has been the ostrich policies adopted by both Mauritania and the EU have led to the degradation of the main Mauritanian fish stocks.

Since 1999, together with artisanal fishing representatives from the Mauritanian National Fisheries Federation (FNP), Pêchecops and CFFA have regularly warned that maintaining the fishing pressure on these stocks would result in profitability losses, for both the national and foreign fleets that exploit them. In Mauritania, this loss of profitability is reflected in the erosion of the Mauritanian fleet's capacity to contribute to the national economy. Fisheries contribute 25% of Mauritania's budgetary receipts, but most of these come from the EU fisheries agreement financial compensation.

According to Dr Ahmed Mahmoud Cherif, president of Pêchecops: *"This increased financial dependency towards the single European partner bears risks, and the pressure put on the authorities by the EU's denouncement of the agreement shouldn't distract the Mauritanian government from its priority: to put an end to over exploitation of its resources, through adjusting fishing capacity with the resources*

*available, as has been recommended during the Etats Generaux du secteur de la Pêche' meeting, held in Nouadhibou from 14<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> December 2007."*

For Sid'ahmed Ould Abeid, President of the FNP's artisanal section, "*The precautionary approach must be the guiding principle. A partnership agreement with the EU shouldn't allow European fleets to access over exploited stocks, and shouldn't allow access for fishing vessels that either use unselective fishing gears or methods that may impact negatively on the environment.*"

For CFFA, any protocol to the agreement should include provisions both for fisheries management and development, particularly as regards the artisanal fishing sector, an actor central to sustainable fisheries development. A variety of proposals were made during the *Etats Généraux du secteur de la Pêche* meeting, for the rehabilitation and the sustainable exploitation of fisheries: in terms of research, surveillance, investments in infrastructures and services, etc

The European Union bears co-responsibility for Mauritanian fisheries resource depletion. It cannot turn a blind eye to these proposals and wash its hands of its commitment to support, in a substantial way, the sustainable development of fisheries in Mauritania.

-----