

Statement on fish trade issues for small scale fishing sector

Prepared for the 27th session of the FAO Fisheries Committee

Mr Chairman,

We, representatives of African small scale fishing communities and professional organisations, would like to draw attention to the importance of fish trade for our sector and our communities.

- Every day, at sea, we are first to witness the fact that international fish trade opportunities push fishermen to exploit some resources beyond what is sustainable. Therefore, we, men and women from the small scale fishing sector, fully support the FAO view that fish trade should be based on a sustainable exploitation of resources and ecosystems.

We emphasize that it is indispensable for FAO and its members involve us, men and women from the small scale fishing sector, directly in all programmes, strategies or action plans that are established to ensure sustainable fishing, and also provide appropriate support to our initiatives in this area.

- We feel that fish trade should first and foremost be a way to improve human development and food security for our populations and to improve household revenues for the small scale fishing sector. To this end, we welcome the FAO proposals to improve traceability, hygiene and quality of small scale fishery products.

We request that the FAO give particular attention to the documentation and analysis of opportunities existing in regional fish markets, and national markets, for small scale fishery products. In this regard we call on the FAO to take the initiative, in consultation with its members and small scale fishing professionals, to identify barriers to regional fish trade and to find solutions to eliminate them. In particular, we would like to propose that FAO examine the possibility to set up a practical system that allows us, professionals from the small scale fishing sector, to be quickly informed about regional, and national market opportunities and demands, so that we can play an even greater role in the food security of our countries and regions.

The African artisanal fishing organizations members of the CFFA (Coalition for Fair Fisheriers Arrangements) delegation

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