

LDAC REPORT
FAO AGADIR DIALOGUE
SOCIAL SUSTAINABILITY IN THE FISHERIES VALUE CHAIN
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1. Introduction – What is the LDAC

The LDAC is an EU fisheries stakeholder-led body with the mission to provide advice to the European Commission and the EU Member States on matters pertaining to the external dimension of the CFP, in particular fisheries agreements with third countries, relations with RFMOs in which the EU is a contracting party, and with international organizations such as FAO or UN.

The LDAC is made up of 52 fishing sector organisations (including catching, processing and marketing sectors, and trade unions) and other groups of interest (including environmental NGOs and CSOs) from 12 EU coastal Member States.

The importance of the EU distant water fleet represented in the LDAC is reflected in that, despite being less than 1% of the total number of EU vessels, they represent near 20% of catches with a volume of 2 million tons of supply of high quality fish into the EU market (data from STECF AER 2018).

2. Labour conditions and decent work at sea is a work priority for the LDAC

One of the LDAC work priorities is the promotion of decent working conditions at sea through encouraging a swift ratification and implementation by Flag and Coastal States of international legal instruments of labour and social law related to maritime safety and working conditions at sea, namely: (a) *IMO Cape Town Agreement 2012 on the Implementation of the Provisions of the Torremolinos Protocol of 1993 relating to the Torremolinos International Convention for the Safety of Fishing Vessels, 1977 (as amended)*; (b) *IMO International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Fishing Vessel Personnel, 1995 (STCW-F)*; (c) *ILO Work in Fishing Convention, 2007 (C188)* and (d) *Agreement on Port State Measures to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing of the FAO*.

It must be reminded that, in accordance with UNCLOS art 94, flag states have the responsibility and duty to adopt any legal measures for ensuring maritime safety at sea including legislation of social and technical matters.

The LDAC has submitted a letter to FAO on 8 February 2019 asking to be engaged in the consultation process to develop guidelines on social sustainability of the fisheries value chain. This letter was submitted jointly with the members of the EU Social Dialogue representing both the trade unions (ETF) and the ship owners' (Europeche) organisations, respectively.

3. Importance of effective fight against IUU fishing to ensure responsible fishing along the fish value chain

It is important to ensure the adequate implementation of EU and international regulations on this matter, being the main ones for the LDAC:

- EU Regulation on Fight against IUU Fishing (Council Reg 1005/2008)
https://ec.europa.eu/fisheries/cfp/illegal_fishing_en
- EU Regulation on Sustainable Management of External Fishing Fleet - Regulation (EU) 2017/2403
<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32017R2403>
- FAO IPOA on fight against IUU fishing:
<http://www.fao.org/fishery/ipoa-iuu/en>
- FAO Port States Measures Agreement
<http://www.fao.org/port-state-measures/en/>

The LDAC also works closely with its partner organisation, the Ministerial Conference on Fisheries Cooperation among African States Bordering the Atlantic Ocean (ATLAFCO-COMHAFAT) to put in place a regional approach to MCS in the Atlantic façade of Africa, with two specific feasibility studies on a regional observer programme of inspections at sea and a regional harmonized port control scheme. More info:

<http://www.fao.org/fishery/rfb/comhafat-atlafco/en>
<http://www.comhafat.org/en/publications.php?id=3>

4. Specific reflections from the LDAC on how to improve sustainability in the fisheries value chain

The LDAC believes that the role of all economic actors (incl. catching, landing, processing, transformation, commercialization and import/export trading and retailing) are crucial to ensure that fisheries value chain is sustainable and responsible. Full chain traceability must be measurable across all steps of the chain against objective indicators and cross-check verifications are needed to ensure credibility.

One important aspect for a socially responsible and sustainable value chain is to foster transparency of both public and private fishing agreements with coastal states. In this sense, the role of the EU Sustainable Fisheries Partnership Agreements (SFPAs) with third countries is very important as instruments for development cooperation and social sustainability, both through the revenue generated by the access and the projects developed under the sectoral support, in particular emphasizing the importance of the role of women as key economic players, enhancing their importance in the fisheries value chain (extraction, processing, transformation and marketing), quantifying their contribution to the economic and social fabric of coastal communities in African countries.

In this sense, sectoral support is very important in terms of training of both fishermen and officials, capacity building, development of key infrastructures (ports, landing facilities, frigorific cameras), or technology for improving traceability, amongst others. An example of good use of sectoral support is the Kingdom of Morocco, which has shown clear improvements in the field of capacity building, port infrastructures or training for control inspectors.

The European Commission has encouraged the LDAC fisheries stakeholders, fleet operators and companies to develop a comprehensive approach which pools all the elements of the value chain so it is able to distribute the benefits among all intervening parties.

There is a recent example which looks to enhance the implementation of SFPAs in Cote d'Ivoire with initiatives from Spanish tuna operators to sell *faux poisson* (by-catches of tropical tuna) at a fixed price and through direct supply to a women cooperative of fish processors located off the port of Abidjan. This initiative has been supported by the European Parliament and is currently being monitored by the relevant unit of DG MARE in the field together with the LDAC.

More info: <https://cape-cffa.squarespace.com/new-blog/2018/9/21/the-akwaaba-spirit-the-role-of-women-in-ivory-coast-artisanal-fisheries>

Another important area is to align aspects of social responsibility to trade policy and build on existing requirements stated in the sustainable Development Chapter of GSP+ signed between the EU and third countries such as Philippines. This Chapter puts an obligation to the recipient country to ratify and implement 27 international law instruments of human, labour and social rights. There are also social and labour indicators in the Free Trade Agreements which do not only apply only to fisheries but all traded products.

5. Take home messages – wrap up and conclusions

The LDAC is supportive of the FAO work mandate given by the Fish Trade Sub-Committee in 2017 and adopted in COFI in 2018 to develop guidelines on this matter. However, the LDAC stresses that these guidelines must be inclusive and comprehensive in terms of stakeholders engagement from both the entire fishing sectors and NGOs. The guidelines must also be designed to achieve a full-chain and digital-based seafood traceability.

It is the LDAC opinion that this aim can only be achieved through close coordination with other UN agencies to avoid overlapping and inefficiencies. In particular, the work developed by ILO must be considered, which has been the leading agency in setting labour standards for fish workers with direct participation and involvement of social partners. In particular, consistency with minimum labour standards set by ILO C188, providing an adequate differentiation in scope and requirements to industrial and artisanal fisheries looking at specificities of each of these activities.