



**MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE ON FISHERIES COOPERATION AMONG  
AFRICAN STATES BORDERING THE ATLANTIC OCEAN  
(ATLAFCO)**

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**EXECUTIVE SECRETARIAT**

**SYMPOSIUM**

**FISHERIES IN THE GLOBAL FRAMEWORK OF BIODIVERSITY POST-2020**

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**CONCEPT NOTE**

**09-10 MAY 2023 – RABAT (MOROCCO)**

**February 2023**

## Summary

In order to integrate the fisheries sector into the environmental decision-making process in the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework, a two (02) days Symposium entitled "*Fisheries in the Global Framework of Biodiversity Post-2020*" is organized by ATLAFCO. It will address the socio-economic factors of fisheries in Atlantic Africa, the impacts of environmental decisions on the fisheries sector and ways to integrate the voice of the fisheries sector in environmental decision making.

### 1. Background and timeliness

With the conclusion of the 15th Conference of the Parties (COP15) to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) was adopted. While the GBF itself is legally not binding, it nevertheless provides guidance for modes of biodiversity conservation with concrete targets until 2030 and long-term goals until 2050.

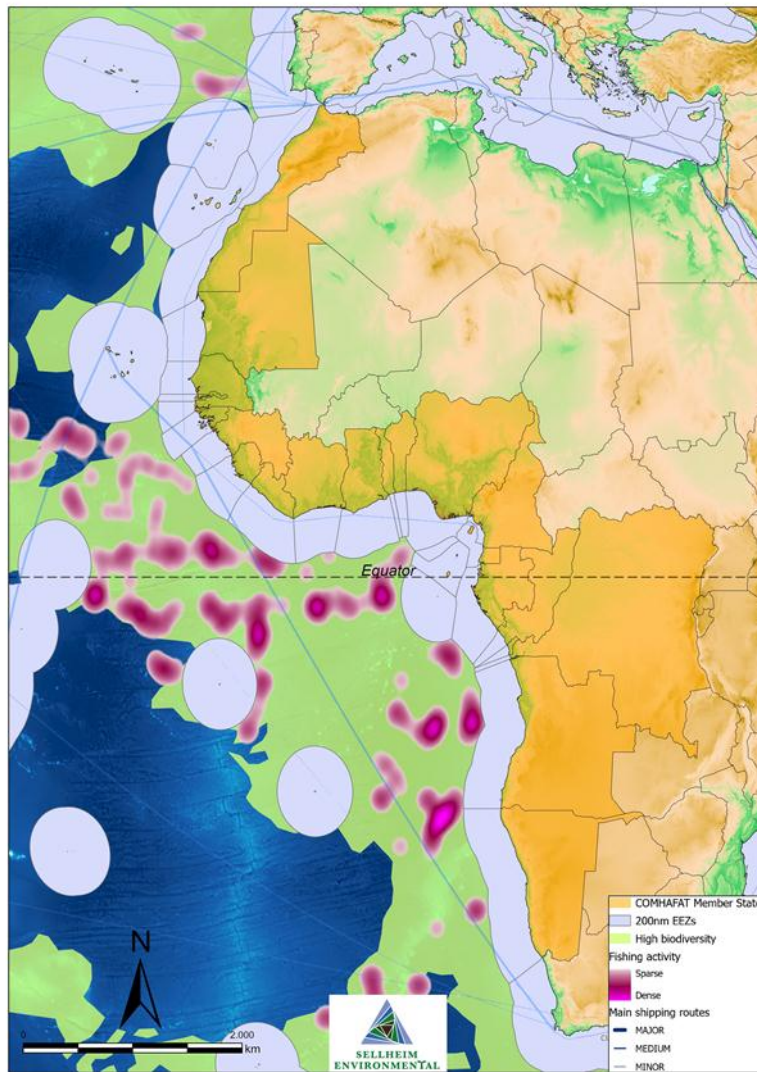
One of these targets is commonly referred to as the "30x30" target (Target 3), which aims to place 30% of the globe's terrestrial and marine areas under some sort of protection until 2030. With <sup>1</sup>this approach scientifically justified,<sup>1</sup> environmental authorities are now motivated to implement this strategy with greater rigor.

For West-Africa, with countries that are heavily dependent on the fishing sector, this approach is not without detrimental economic and social consequences. Such a policy, based on a strengthening of protection measures, could prove harmful, particularly in terms of food security and the social conditions of the populations of these countries. In Senegal, for example, the fishing sector contributes 14.19% of the gross domestic product (GDP) and constitutes about 43% of the country's protein intake.

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<sup>1</sup> E.g. Dinerstein et al. (2020). 30% land conservation and climate action reduces tropical extinction risk by more than 50%. *Echography* 43, pp. 943-953; O'Leary, B., M. Winther-Janson, J.M. Bainbridge, J. Aitken, J.P. Hawkins & C.M. Roberts. (2016). Effective Coverage Targets for Ocean Protection. *Conservation Letters* 9.

Indeed, most of the commercially exploited fish stocks in this part of the world are overexploited<sup>2</sup>. At the same time, the Atlantic African fishing grounds have



been identified as constituting some of the "most biodiverse marine areas in the Atlantic Ocean, which justifies their protection under the 30x30 target",<sup>3</sup> particularly in light of the fishing pressure to which these areas are exposed. As shown in the map below, along the western African coast, the most intense fishing operations are located directly in these biodiversity-rich regions, while the main shipping routes also pass through them.

Under these circumstances and given

their socio-economic impact, particularly in terms of food security and sovereignty, a strengthening of protection measures through international organizations or multilateral negotiations for these regions is certainly not immediately desirable. The recently adopted Central Arctic Ocean Fisheries Agreement is an example that demonstrates the possibility for such agreement<sup>4</sup>.

Biodiversity, fishing and shipping along the Western African coast © Dr Nikolas Sellheim, *Sellheim Environmental*, 2023

## 2. Raison d'être and relevance

<sup>2</sup> FAO. (2020). Coastal Fisheries Initiative. Promoting sustainable fisheries in coastal areas. <https://www.fao.org/3/cb1210en/CB1210EN.pdf>.

<sup>3</sup> PEW Charitable Trusts. (2020). A Path to Creating the First Generation of High Seas Protected Areas. [https://www.pewtrusts.org/-/media/assets/2021/03/highseas\\_mpa.pdf](https://www.pewtrusts.org/-/media/assets/2021/03/highseas_mpa.pdf).

<sup>4</sup> Morishita, J. (2020). The Arctic Five-plus-Five process on central Arctic Ocean fisheries negotiations: reflecting the interests of Arctic and non-Arctic actors. In: Shibata, A., L. Zou, N. Sellheim & M. Scopelliti (Eds.). *Emerging Legal Orders in the Arctic. The Role of Non-Arctic Actors*, pp. 109-131. Abingdon: Routledge.

In the context of international fisheries governance, the interacting regimes that are relevant to the sustainable use of fisheries resources are problematic. On one hand, there are environmental regimes, such as the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS), the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), and the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), or the legally binding agreement on the conservation of biodiversity beyond national jurisdiction (BBNJ), which was recently concluded, which constitute a robust set of biodiversity conservation measures. And on the other hand, fisheries agencies and other departments that aim to represent their respective interests in these respective forums. This leads to a strong imbalance in representation.<sup>5</sup> The fisheries sector is, however, barely present in these fora, which makes the "interests" of the fisheries sector hardly visible in international environmental negotiations concerning the protection of the marine environment.

Thus, the protection measures adopted recently are based on environmental considerations and are therefore carried and presented in their negotiations by the national authorities in charge of environmental issues, the socio-economic factors that relate to fishing are only partially taken into account.

This has led to an imbalance between the social equity of marine protected areas and the needs of local fishermen.<sup>6</sup>

Yet, in order to meet their obligations under the CBD, it is imperative that socio-economic and cultural factors are fully taken into account in the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity<sup>7</sup>.

### 3. The Symposium

The organization of this symposium under the theme of "*Fishing in the global framework of biodiversity post-2020*" aims to address this issue by strengthening the voice of the fishing sector in the negotiations conducted within Conventions/bodies such as CMS or CITES.

The intention is not to overshadow conservation issues or to weaken the environmental sector, but rather to involve the fisheries sector in the international fora dealing with these issues and thus, to pay greater attention

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<sup>5</sup> Young, M. (2011). *Trading Fish, Saving Fish. The Interaction between Regimes in International Law*. Cambridge : Cambridge University Press.

<sup>6</sup> E.g. Bennett, N.J. et al. (2020). Social equity and marine protected areas: Perceptions of small-scale fishermen in the Mediterranean Sea. *Biological Conservation* 244.

<sup>7</sup> CBD. (1995). Preliminary Consideration of Components of Biological Diversity Particularly under Threat and Action Which Could be Taken under the Convention. Decision II/8, para. 1.

to the socio-economic consequences of the adoption of protection measures on the fisheries sector.

To this end, the Symposium:

- Explores ways to integrate fisheries considerations into environmental decision-making;
- Provides background information on the socio-economic role of fisheries in western Africa and other regions;
- Discusses the potential impacts of the 30x30 objective on artisanal and commercial fisheries;
- Discusses the role of fisheries in the recently concluded negotiations on BBNJ;
- Proposes solutions to reconcile conservation, security and food sovereignty
- Proposes strategies and solutions for a greater involvement of fisheries administrative entities in the decision-making process regarding conservation and environmental protection.

#### 4

About ten speakers will be invited, with a speaking time of about 15 minutes, in order to leave enough time for discussions.

In addition to the representatives of the fisheries authorities and professionals of the sector, representatives of the environmental administrations of the ATLAFCO member states and other countries facing this problem, will also participate.

#### **4. Results and objectives**

The expected results of the Symposium are mainly related to the visibility of the fisheries sector in international negotiations on the protection of the marine environment. Through the representation of the fisheries sector and community representatives, it is expected that environmental authorities will gain a better understanding of the challenges that fisheries are and will be facing in light of more protective measures.

The objective of the Symposium is to help reconcile the interests of the environment and the fisheries sector to ensure the conservation and sustainable use of marine species in the future, and the sustainability of the

fisheries sector, and consequently the communities that depend on it, within the global framework for biodiversity post-2020.

**Objective 1:** To raise awareness of environmental decision-making issues and the socio-economic aspects of fisheries, and to explore ways of recognizing the importance of the fisheries sector in discussions in international forums.

**Objective 2:** To represent the interests of the fishing industry and to enable the exchange of information between fisheries and environmental authorities

## Draft Agenda

<b>Day 1: 9 May 2023</b>			
	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Potential speaker</b>	<b>Duration</b>
<b>09:00 — 09:15</b>	Opening of the Symposium & Approval of agenda	COMHAFAT (chair)	15 mins.
<i>THEME 1: The fisheries sector in current environmental negotiations</i>			
<b>09:15—09:30</b>	Problem description	Eugene Lapointe	15 mins.
<b>09:30—09:45</b>	Fisheries in the BBNJ negotiations	Joji Morishita	15 mins.
<b>09:45—10:15</b>	Open discussion		30 mins.
<b>10:15—10:30</b>	Break		15 mins.
<i>THEME 2: Potential impacts of the 30x30 Target on the fisheries sector</i>			
<b>10:30—10:45</b>	Fisheries governance in post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework and BBNJ	Opes Oceani	15 mins.
<b>10:45—11:00</b>	Commercial fisheries and the 30x30 Target in the high seas	Sian Rees (University of Plymouth)	15 mins.
<b>11:00—11:30</b>	Open discussion		30 mins.
<b>11:30—13:00</b>	Lunch break		90 mins.
<i>THEME 3: The socio-economic importance of the fisheries sector for COMHAFAT and other states</i>			
<b>13:00—13:15</b>	Commercial and artisanal fisheries in Atlantic Africa	SEAFO or COMHAFAT	15 mins.
<b>13:15—13:30</b>	Artisanal fisheries in the Caribbean	Daven Joseph	15 mins.
<b>13:30—14:00</b>	Open discussion		30 mins.
<b>14:00—14:15</b>	Break		15 mins.
<b>14:15—15:15</b>	Guided discussion on presented topics		60 mins.
<b>15:15—15:30</b>	Wrap-up and conclusion	COMHAFAT	15 mins.

## Day 2: 10 May 2023

	Topic	Potential speaker	Duration
09:00—09:15	Opening of Day 2	COMHAFAT (chair)	15 mins.
	<i>THEME 4: Conservation and/or sustainable use? How to reconcile potentially adversarial concepts</i>		
09:15—09:30	Marine conservation for whom/what?	Environment authority representative	15 mins.
09:30—09:45	Cui bono? Local fishers perspectives on marine conservation and food security	Fisheries representative	15 mins.
09:45—10:15	Open discussion		30 mins.
10:15—10:30	Break		15 mins.
	<i>THEME 5: Fishing for a solution. Improving the integration of the fisheries sector in environmental decision-making</i>		
10:30—10:45	Establishing linkages between fisheries and environmental authorities	Fisheries consultant (Carlos Mazal?)	15 mins.
10:45—11:00	Strengthening local voices in environmental decision-making	Nikolas Sellheim	15 mins.
11:00—12:00	Open discussion		60 mins.
12:00—13:30	Lunch break		90 mins.
13:30—14:30	Development of recommendations		60 mins.
14:30—15:00	Summary and closing of the meeting	COMHAFAT (chair)	30 mins.