



## ***REPPORT OF***

### **PLATFORM FOR EXCHANGE AND REFLECTION:**

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*“The RAFEP, a sustainable initiative, for recognition of the role and place of women in the fisheries sector in Africa”*

**11-12 June 2018, Rabat (Morocco)**

1. From 11 to 12 June 2018, Rabat (Morocco) was held a meeting of reflection and exchange on ways and means to strengthen the **African Network of Women in Fisheries -RAFEP-** as an organ of representation and support to women in the fisheries sector in Africa. This meeting was held under the theme of " *The RAFEP, a sustainable initiative, for recognition of the role and place of women in the fisheries sector in Africa*"
2. The list of participants is contained in **Appendix I**.

## *CONTEXT*

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3. Given their involvement in the fisheries sector through the workforce it creates in the sector, the revenues they generate, their contribution to investment, trade and product processing, African women working in fishing-related activities, particularly in the ATLAFCO zone, are at the heart of important issues, mainly the food security of the countries of the region and sustainable local development.
4. However, little attention is paid to the economic role of women in the fisheries sector in the majority of countries in the ATLAFCO zone. In addition to this lack of recognition, difficulties or constraints of multiple orders are experienced by these women every day: discrimination in access to resources, credit, economic information, regulatory, technical means of production and weak professional autonomy, etc.
5. However, these women have little involvement in the process of defining and making decisions in fisheries policies (fisheries management, trade, development and investment planning).
6. Faced with this situation, and following the recommendation of the Conference of Ministers of the ATLAFCO held in Ghana in 2010, calling for the establishment of a platform able to consolidate the undeniable role played by these women and to recognize outstanding contribution to the development of their country's fisheries sector, the RAFEP was created.
7. This meeting that responds to a request from members of the RAFEP, is a reflection on the search for solutions or actions to be undertaken for the consolidation of the RAFEP after 8 years of existence and a balance sheet which remains limited despite enormous efforts capacity building to improve the status of women in the fisheries sector and related activities
8. It is also a part of the consolidation of ATLAFCO's efforts for the social promotion of women living directly or indirectly in the region.

## *GENERAL OBJECTIVE*

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9. The main objective of the organization of these days of exchange and reflection is to formulate clear and realistic recommendations to reinforce the RAFEP in its action in favor of the women of the sector for a better recognition of their place by the public authorities, more autonomy and increased defense of their interests.

## *SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES*

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**10.** The specific objectives assigned to this meeting are:

- Review the actions undertaken by the RAFEP to assess their relevance and scope;
- Provide a forum for the RAFEP members to express themselves and trace the concerns and grievances of their members;
- Inform the members of the network on " the issue and the role of NGOs / Non State Actors in the development of the fisheries and aquaculture sector in Africa
- Define the actions to be undertaken in the medium and short term to make the RAFEP more efficient.

## *CONTENTS OF THE AGENDA*

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**11.** The agenda was discussed and adopted unanimously (**Appendix II**).

## *PREPARATION, INSTRUCTION METHOD AND HARDWARE*

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### **12. Preparation of the reflection days**

Participants were asked to respond to a questionnaire (**Appendix III**) to get an idea of the situation of women in fisheries or related to fisheries in the countries of the zone.

- ✓ Status and living conditions of women in the fisheries communities;
- ✓ Assessment of the RAFEP;
- ✓ The situation of women in the sector;
- ✓ Perspectives for the development of the RAFEP

### **13. Teaching method**

After each presentation, participants are invited to discuss the main ideas and concepts developed.

Two working groups were formed:

- ✓ Perspectives and strategies for the sustainability of RAFEP activities
- ✓ What mechanisms of support to the RAFEP, for more performance at the service of women in the fisheries sector

**14.** The moderation of the work of these days of reflection was entrusted to Dr. Amadou TALL Consultant

## *OPENING CEREMONY*

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**15.** Opening the meeting, **Mrs. Amy Christiane DAGO**, on behalf of Côte d'Ivoire, is the acting President of ALAFCO welcomed all the participants and congratulated ATLAFCO for this initiative.

**16.** She then recalled that this meeting is an opportunity to give actresses and stakeholders a consolidation of efforts aimed at the social advancement of women living directly or indirectly in the fisheries in the region, as the RAFEP must be a sustainable initiative

in the region in favor of recognition of the role and place of women in the sector in Africa

17. To this end, she proposed to have a vision and a consensual agreement of all stakeholders on the need to draw up an action plan inspired by the RAFEP's renewal prospects for a better contribution to the promotion of women in the fisheries sector in Africa.
18. She declared open the proceedings of this meeting.
19. In his turn, **Mr. Noureddine ALILO**, representing the Ministry of Agriculture, Maritime Fisheries, Rural Development and Waters and Forests welcomed the representatives of the professional organizations of women in the fisheries sector of the ATLAFCO member countries , as well as the distinguished guests at the work of this meeting
20. He then stressed that through this platform for exchange and reflection, the point will be emphasized on the revitalization of RAFEP for a better contribution to the advancement of women in the fisheries sector in Africa.
21. In her intervention, **Mrs. Marta Piccarozzi**, Evaluation and Strategic Planning Specialist at FAO-Rabat, thanked COMHAFAT for the kind invitation addressed to the FAO Representation in Rabat to participate in this meeting, which deals with an important issue for women in the agricultural and fisheries sectors.
22. She emphasized that women constitute a high proportion of workers in subsistence aquaculture, artisanal and industrial processing, fresh fish and retail trade, environmental organizations and even administrative posts.
23. While mentioning the central role they play and the difficulties they face in their daily work in the exercise of their activities, recalled that the situation of women in the primary sectors is a major concern for FAO is the international community.
24. In her turn, the President of the RAFEP, **Mrs. Beyene Ateba BALIABA** stressed the importance of the theme chosen for this meeting and took this opportunity to thank the ATLAFCO that worked for the creation of the RAFEP and doesn't spare any effort to promote the woman of fisheries in Africa.
25. She pointed out that the objective of this meeting is to define a strategy for the medium and long term for a revitalization of the African Network of Women in Fisheries (RAFEP) with a view to making a better contribution to the advancement of women operating in the fisheries sector in Africa.
26. In his address, **Mr. Abdelouahed BENABBOU**, Executive Secretary of ATLAFCO thanked Côte d'Ivoire, for its strong presidency of ATLAFCO, the Moroccan authorities through the Fisheries Department, for its constant support to ATLAFCO and their permanent commitment to fisheries cooperation in Africa and the OFCF for its support and accompaniment.

27. He recalled that the creation of the RAFEP responds to the recommendation of the Conference of Ministers of the ATLAFCO held in Ghana in 2010, calling for the establishment of a platform able of consolidating the undeniable role played by these women and to recognize their outstanding contribution to the development of the fisheries sector of their countries.
28. He added that the organization of these days follows the many requests made by the members of the Network to sustain and strengthen its action for a better defense of women in the fisheries sector

## *CONDUCT OF WORK*

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29. The work of the meeting took place in two main sessions, the first through presentations followed by discussions and the second consisted of the distribution of the participants in two working groups.
30. During the 1<sup>st</sup> session on *the place of women in the fishing sector in West Africa: a paradoxical situation*, the participants were able to follow with interest the presentations as well as the 2 short films which highlighted the contradictory situation in which women are working in the fisheries sector in Africa.
31. It has been found that they occupy an important part in the fishing, processing and marketing activities and invest in the whole sector. They are therefore at the heart of important issues, including food security and local development.
32. On the other hand, despite this central economic position and their contribution to the fisheries sector, these women who face multiple constraints and difficulties in carrying out their activities find little attention and of recognition by institutional actors of fisheries policy in Africa.’.
33. It is thus confirmed that, despite their undeniable socio-economic contribution and considerable contribution to fishing communities, women working in the fisheries sector in Africa are confronted with difficult working conditions as well as enormous needs and are only marginally involved in the decision-making process of fisheries policies. .
34. Finally, the questionnaire was used (**Annex III**) and a tour de table was organized to enable participants to express themselves and give an overview of the situation of women in the sector in their country respectively. Almost all the interventions confirmed the findings and conclusions of the presentations on the status of African women working in the fisheries sector
35. The 2<sup>nd</sup> session entitled "*The Need for a Strategy for the Promotion of African Women in the Fisheries Sector*" was devoted to the formulation of the recommendations to strengthen the RAFEP.

36. Prior to the presentations, the women's contribution to sustainable development, the circumstances of the creation and the objectives of the RAFEP and its record since its creation were recalled.
37. The second set of presentations explained the new context in which women working in the sector are now operating, such as climate change, stagnant catches in the oceans and the internationalization of markets, and These are all factors that put additional pressure on the livelihoods of these women and even threaten their existence as entrepreneurs to reduce them to salaried status.
38. Two working groups were set up :
- ✓ **WG1** : Perspectives and strategies for the sustainability of RAFEP activities
  - ✓ **WG 2** : What support mechanisms for the RAFEP, for more performance in the service of women in the fishing sector
39. The conclusions of their deliberations focused on the identification of major constraints and realistic proposals for improving the sustainability of RAFEP's activities and the expected support mechanisms.
40. In the ensuing discussions, participants, after acclaiming the more than honorable record in terms of activities carried out for women in the sector, proposed ways of improving the position of the RAFEP at the center of the new strategy to promote African women working in the fishing sector
41. Taking the floor, **Mr. Hiroshi Takagi**, as representative of the WFF, began by recalling the importance of the fisheries sectors for African countries for their contribution to food security, livelihoods, , employment, biodiversity and socio-economic development.
42. He added that marine living resources are a wealth that must be preserved and an asset to ensure the nutritional and food security of the population.
43. . However, they are threatened by the overconsumption of cetaceans. He presented 2 films demonstrating his remarks, based on scientific research conducted by Japan
44. Finally, he invited the RAFEP, as a group of representatives of African women working in the fisheries sector, to participate in the work of the 67th Session of the International Whaling Commission to make their voice heard and defend the principle of sustainable use of marine resources.

## *RECOMMENDATIONS*

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45. At the end of these days of reflection, the participants formulated recommendations which were submitted to the participants who adopted them.
- 46.. The recommendations are made **in Appendix IV**
47. All presentations are available in the original language on the ATLAFCO website at the following address:  
<http://www.comhafat.org/en/actualites.php?id=70>
48. The proceedings of the meeting are declared closed at 13h :00

## Appendix I: List of participants

N°	Country	Name & Surname	Institution	E-mails
1	<b>Bénin</b>	Ayaba Victoire GOMEZ	Représentante du RENAFEP	<a href="mailto:daoudaliou@gmail.com">daoudaliou@gmail.com</a> ; <a href="mailto:aligovic@gmail.com">aligovic@gmail.com</a>
2	<b>Cameroun</b>	Beyene Ateba Epse BALIABA	Réseau Camerounais des Femmes de la Pêche Présidente du RAFEP	<a href="mailto:beyene.beyene@yahoo.fr">beyene.beyene@yahoo.fr</a>
3	<b>Cameroun</b>	FOKOU Marie Madeleine	Trésorière du Réseau Camerounais des Femmes de la Pêche	<a href="mailto:beyene.beyene@yahoo.fr">beyene.beyene@yahoo.fr</a>
4	<b>COMHAFAT</b>	Abdelouahed BENABBOU	Secrétaire Exécutif	<a href="mailto:benabbou.comhafat@gmail.com">benabbou.comhafat@gmail.com</a>
5	<b>COMHAFAT</b>	Mohammed HADDAD	Responsable financier	<a href="mailto:haddad.comhafat@gmail.com">haddad.comhafat@gmail.com</a>
6	<b>COMHAFAT</b>	Abdennaji LAAMRICH	Conseiller/Chargé de Programme	<a href="mailto:laamrichmpm@gmail.com">laamrichmpm@gmail.com</a>
7	<b>COMHAFAT</b>	Atsushi ISHIKAWA	Expert/OFCF	<a href="mailto:a615@ruby.ocn.ne.jp">a615@ruby.ocn.ne.jp</a>
8	<b>COMHAFAT</b>	Hayat ASSARA	Assistante de direction	<a href="mailto:hayat.comhafat@gmail.com">hayat.comhafat@gmail.com</a>
9	<b>COMHAFAT</b>	Mohamed SADIKI	Cadre	<a href="mailto:sadiki.comhafat@gmail.com">sadiki.comhafat@gmail.com</a>
10	<b>COMHAFAT</b>	Ali BOUALI	Consultant	<a href="mailto:bouali1952@gmail.com">bouali1952@gmail.com</a>
11	<b>COMHAFAT</b>	Amal MOUTTAKI	Chargée de projet	<a href="mailto:mouttaki.comhafat@gmail.com">mouttaki.comhafat@gmail.com</a>
12	<b>COMHAFAT</b>	Abdelkrim MRABTI	Webmaster	<a href="mailto:akarim.mrabti@gmail.com">akarim.mrabti@gmail.com</a>
13	<b>COMHAFAT</b>	Karima CHOUKRANI	Secrétaire	<a href="mailto:mkarima241@gmail.com">mkarima241@gmail.com</a>
14	<b>COREP</b>	FLORA WORA	Administrateur aux Ressources Humaines, Financières et à la Logistique	<a href="mailto:wora.flore@yahoo.fr">wora.flore@yahoo.fr</a>
15	<b>Côte d'Ivoire</b>	Amy Christiane DAGO	RENAFEP CI / UNACOOFEP CI	<a href="mailto:dagoamy@yahoo.fr">dagoamy@yahoo.fr</a>
16	<b>Consultant</b>	AMADOU Tall	Consultant	<a href="mailto:amadou.tall@gmail.com">amadou.tall@gmail.com</a>
17	<b>CPCO</b>	Abena Serwah Asante	commerce du poisson et agent de l'aquaculture en charge également des	<a href="mailto:abena.serwah.asante@gmail.com">abena.serwah.asante@gmail.com</a>

			Etats non acteurs de soutien,	
18	<b>CSRP</b>	Yacine DIOP	Chargée des ressources Humaines	<a href="mailto:yacine.diop@spscrp.org">yacine.diop@spscrp.org</a> ; <a href="mailto:yacine.cellediop@gmail.com">yacine.cellediop@gmail.com</a>
19	<b>FAO/Rabat</b>	Marta Piccarozzi Personne ressource	Spécialiste en évaluation et planification stratégique.	<a href="mailto:rabat@magrama.es">rabat@magrama.es</a> ; <a href="mailto:FAO-MA@fao.org">FAO-MA@fao.org</a>
20	<b>Gabon</b>	Jeanne ASSENGONE NDONG	Mareyeuse/Centre des Pêches d'OWENDO	<a href="mailto:assengone.jeanne@yahoo.com">assengone.jeanne@yahoo.com</a>
21	<b>Gambia</b>	Salli SARR	Head Of Women Fish Smokers	<a href="mailto:dawda_saine@yahoo.com">dawda_saine@yahoo.com</a>
22	<b>Guinée</b>	Mama Yawa SANDOUNO	Représentante/ Réseau national	<a href="mailto:keriwel@yahoo.fr">keriwel@yahoo.fr</a>
23	<b>Guinée Bissau</b>	Antonia Adama DJALO	Présidente /RENAMUP	<a href="mailto:antoniadamadjalo@hotmail.com">antoniadamadjalo@hotmail.com</a>
24	<b>Guinée Equatoriale</b>	CELESTINA JONES BOLECHE	Mareyeuse du Réseau National	<a href="mailto:norberlia@hotmail.com">norberlia@hotmail.com</a>
25	<b>Infosamak</b>	MAHTATE Olaya,	ingénieur agroalimentaire.	<a href="mailto:olaya.mahtate@infosamak.org">olaya.mahtate@infosamak.org</a>
26	<b>JICA</b>	M. Mohamed Amin SAKALY	Chargé de programmes (Coopération sud-sud et triangulaire/ Pêche)	<a href="mailto:SAKALY-MohamedAmin@jica.go.jp">SAKALY-MohamedAmin@jica.go.jp</a> <a href="mailto:MOBILE">MOBILE</a>
27	<b>Liberia</b>	Theresa SIA BAYON	Artisanal Fishermen /Association Lafa	<a href="mailto:lafawomen@yahoo.com">lafawomen@yahoo.com</a> ; <a href="mailto:liberiaartisanalfishermen@yahoo.com">liberiaartisanalfishermen@yahoo.com</a>
28	<b>Maroc</b>	MESSAOUDA RACHID	Présidente /REMAFEP	<a href="mailto:ramafep1@gmail.com">ramafep1@gmail.com</a>
29	<b>Mauritanie</b>	NEDWA MOCTAR NECH	Association Mauritanie 2000	<a href="mailto:nedwa.nech@gmail.com">nedwa.nech@gmail.com</a>
30	<b>Mauritanie</b>	Aiche Bezeide	Responsable de Communication, Réseau National des Femmes de la Pêche	<a href="mailto:aichabezied@yahoo.fr">aichabezied@yahoo.fr</a>
31	<b>MPM/Maroc</b>	Noredine ALILOU	Unité genre et développement	<a href="mailto:Nalilou4@gmail.com">Nalilou4@gmail.com</a>
32	<b>REPAO</b>	Papa Gora Ndiaye	Secrétaire Exécutif	<a href="mailto:gndiaye@gmail.com">gndiaye@gmail.com</a>

33	<b>REPAO</b>	Caroline Kama Personne ressource	Economiste au REPAO	<a href="mailto:caroline.kama@repao.org">caroline.kama@repao.org</a>
34	<b>Sénégal</b>	Awa DJIGAL	Représentante du RAFEPAS	<a href="mailto:djigalawa@yahoo.fr">djigalawa@yahoo.fr</a>
35	<b>Sierra Leone</b>	Kanu Benrina Demoh	Representative Of Women In Fisheries	<a href="mailto:kadijatujalloh4@gmail.com">kadijatujalloh4@gmail.com</a> <a href="mailto:demohkanu@gmail.com">demohkanu@gmail.com</a>
36	<b>WFF &amp; GGT</b>	Takagi yoshihiro	Conseiller	<a href="mailto:ytakagi8@yahoo.co.jp">ytakagi8@yahoo.co.jp</a>

## Appendix II: Agenda

*“RAFEP-, a sustainable initiative, for recognition of the role and place of women in the sector in Africa”*

Rabat (Morocco), 11-12 June 2018

1st day: 11 June 2018	
08 :00 - 09 :00	Registration
09 :00 - 09 :45	<b>Official Opening :</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Address by the representative of Côte d’Ivoire, Acting President of ATLAFCO</li><li>- Address by the representative of the host country(Morocco)</li><li>- Speech by the President of RAFEP</li><li>- Speech by the Executive Secretary of ATLAFCO</li></ul>
09 :45 - 10 :00	Introduction of the meeting
10 :00 - 10 :15	Break
<b>1<sup>st</sup> Session : Women in the fisheries sector in West Africa: a paradoxical situation e</b>	
10 :15 – 12:30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- "Socio-economic contribution of women processors in fisheries "– Mrs. Caroline Kama (REPAO)</li><li>- The socio-economic contribution of the African woman practicing in the fishing sector, a difficult recognition – Mrs. <b>NEDWA MOCTAR NECH Mauritania 2000</b></li><li>- Difficulties and constraints faced by African women in the fisheries sector - <b>Dr Amaddou Tall</b></li><li>- Discussion</li></ul>
12 :30 - 13 :30	Lunch
<b>2<sup>nd</sup> Session : The need for a strategy for the promotion of African women</b>	
13:30 - 15 :30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Women's contribution to sustainable development - <b>Mr. Mohamed Sadiki (ATLAFCO)</b></li><li>- The RAFEP, taking into account the strategic interests of</li></ul>

	<p>women in the value chain of the African fishing sector – <b>Mr. Naji Laamrich (ATLAFCO)</b></p> <p><i>Presentation of the RAFEP (Status, Structure, Objective, activities ...)</i></p> <p><i>What is the balance of the action of the RAFEP? (Acquired, challenges, obstacles)</i></p> <p><i>Strengths and weaknesses in structuring the RAFEP</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- African women in fisheries and emerging challenges (Climate change, scarcity of resources, internationalization of markets ...)- <b>Mr. Papa Gora Ndiaye (REPAO)</b></li> <li>- Discussion</li> </ul>
<b>15 :30 - 15 :45</b>	<b>Coffee-break</b>
<b>15:45 - 17 :30</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Challenges of setting up platforms for non-state actors in the development of the fisheries and aquaculture sector in Africa: <b>Dr. Amadou TALL</b></li> <li>- <b>WG 1</b> : Perspectives and strategies for the sustainability of RAFEP activities <i>Identification of major constraints and proposing realistic and sustainable solutions</i></li> <li>- <b>WG 2</b> : What support mechanisms for the RAFEP, for more performance in the service of women in the fisheries sector</li> </ul>
<b>2<sup>nd</sup> Jour: 12 June 2018</b>	
<b>09:00 -10 :30</b>	<p><b>Continued work of the groups</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Presentation of the results of the group work</li> </ul>
<b>10:30 - 10:45</b>	<b>Break</b>
<b>10:45 -12 :30</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Discussion</li> <li>- Conclusions and Recommendations</li> <li>- End of the meeting</li> </ul>
<b>12 :30 -13 :30</b>	<b>Lunch</b>
<b>General Assembly</b>	
<b>13:30 – 17:00</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Welcome and word of the President</li> <li>• Approval of the minutes of the previous General Assembly</li> <li>• Presentation of the moral report and review of the activities of the RAFEP <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Presentation of the accounts and balance sheet of the previous financial year</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

	<p style="text-align: center;">✓ Presentation of the activity report</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Election and installation of the new office</li><li>• Work plan 2018-2019</li><li>• Miscellaneous</li><li>• Minutes of the General Assembly</li><li>• Closing</li></ul>
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## **Appendix III: Questionnaire**

### **1 - General information**

- Country: \_\_\_\_\_
- Corporate name: \_\_\_\_\_
- Type of organization:  Cooperative,  Association,  Network,  others \_\_\_\_\_
- Activity:  Fishing,  Fish trade,  Transformer,  Other \_\_\_\_\_

### **2 - Place and living conditions of women in fishing communities**

- Who manage the family income? :  Husband,  Woman,  Patriarch
- Do you have the only professional activity related to fishing?  
 Yes  
 No, What are the non-fishing activities performed \_\_\_\_\_?
- What are your sources of funding?  Own Funds  Credit  Don
- Do you have any difficulties in the exercise of your activity?  Yes  No  
If yes, specify why
- Do you think that your business is moneymaking?  Yes  No
- What are the trades and roles played by women in the fishing industry in your country?

### **3 - Assessment of the RAFEP**

- What are, in your opinion, the main achievements of the RAFEP for the promotion of women involved in fishing activities?
- What do you think are the strengths of the RAFEP as a women's promotion structure in the fisheries sector?
- What do you think are the weaknesses of the RAFEP that prevent it from fully playing its role of supporting women in the sector?

### **4 - The situation of women in the sector**

- What are the main problems / difficulties that women in the sector face in carrying out their activities?
- What are the main needs of women to improve their situation?
- Are you optimistic or pessimistic about the situation of women in the future?

### **5 - Future prospects of the RAFEP**

- What are the main expectations of women vis-à-vis the national networks?
- How to strengthen national networks to make women's voices heard by public authorities?
- What are the main expectations of women vis-à-vis the RAFEP?
- What are the medium-term priorities of the RAFEP to maximize the social and economic benefits of women in the sector?
- Propose actions to be undertaken to make the RAFEP an actor promoting the inclusion and participation of women in decisions?
- What are the urgent actions to be undertaken by the RAFEP to support women in the Sector?
- How to promote empowerment and sustainability of the RAFEP?

## Appendix IV: Recommendations

### Participants at the RAFEP meeting

- A. Recognizing** the crucial role played by African women operating in fisheries-related activities, particularly in the ATLAFCO zone, through the size of the workforce it creates in the sector, the incomes they generate, their contribution to the investment, trade and processing of fishery products;
- B. Reaffirming** their significant participation in poverty reduction, food and nutrition security and its role in social dynamics in fishing communities, given its place within the family unit;
- C. Noting** the low recognition of the importance of their role and their vulnerability to poverty, malnutrition and climate change with a differentiated impact between men and women;
- D. Observing** the difficulties and constraints experienced by women in the fishery, inherent in the physical and economic accessibility of services, the availability of social health services, education, and the inadequacy or lack of public support of women's fisheries organizations and networks;
- E. Noting** the low participation of these women in the process of defining and making decisions in fisheries policies (on fisheries management, trade, development and investment planning);
- F. Referring** to the principles of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development adopted by the United Nations in 2015, including Goal 5, which is aimed at gender equality and the empowerment of women; and at the 60th session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (CSW60), which focused on women's empowerment in relation to sustainable development;
- G. Founded** on the equal rights and empowerment of women as democratic principles and as conditions for the effectiveness of sustainable development policies, as stipulated in the 1995 Beijing Conference Plan of Action;
- H. Based** on the recommendations of the Pan-African Fisheries and Aquaculture Policy and Strategy Reform Framework, on the key role of women fishers and the establishment of mechanisms to promote and protect women women's rights to participate in all aspects of fisheries governance and management;
- I. Referring** to the June 2014 declaration of Malabo, reaffirming the determination of African States to ensure through thoughtful and targeted public support for all categories of people, including women, to participate directly in growth and development opportunities; and benefit from it to improve their lives and livelihoods;
- J. Considering** the crucial role of civil society / non-state actors, such as the RAFEP, in defending the interests of women fishers and their socio-professional promotion;
- K. Welcoming** the actions taken so far by the RAFEP to improve their political and economic powers, through organizational, professional and entrepreneurial capacity-building sessions;

- L. Recognizing** the importance of ensuring the participation and joint ownership of all actors whose roles and responsibilities in improving the fishing potential are decisive;

## **RECOMMEND**

### **To the RAFEP members**

1. To develop a strategy and plan to contribute to gender equality, the defense of women's rights, their empowerment and the inclusion of women in decision-making processes, as set out in relevant international instruments;
2. Support, through professional capacity-building actions, the operationalization of established national networks, the establishment of new ones in the member states of the ATLAFCO which are still lacking them and encourage new memberships;
3. Strengthen the recognition of RAFEP as a regional professional organization for women by regional and international specialized bodies;
4. Endorse a commitment to seek long-term funding for the implementation of the actions agreed as part of the strategic plan.

### **At the national networks level**

5. To become involved as women's professional organizations in the decision-making process (from the definition of needs to the completion of the project) of everything related to the fishing sector;
6. To strengthen the managerial, advocacy and communication capacities of women's professional organizations in the fisheries sector;
7. To campaign to sensitize the stakeholders (public administrations ...) to the gender dimension and its close relationship with sustainable development and the importance of the role of women in the sector;
8. To promote national inter-network exchanges of experts, information, technology and know-how;
9. To open the membership of the national networks to female university researchers, fisheries experts and scientists, for more skills of these networks.