

*Video conference report
Sure*

*“The necessary protection of fishermen during
the Covid-19 pandemic:
The promotion of maritime medicine”*



August 2020

BACKGROUND

In January and March 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) successively declared that the outbreak of the novel coronavirus (COVID -19) constitutes a Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC) and a pandemic. As a result, Governments around the world have decided to put in place various preventive measures to contain the spread of this disease. These measures include the closure of air, land, and sea borders, restrictions on movement between areas, physical and social distancing, as well as lockdown.

This set of protective measures, necessary to curb the spread of the virus, has had, according to some analysts, a considerable impact on the various aspects of social, cultural and economic life, thus compromising the efforts made to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including reducing poverty, eradicating hunger and malnutrition and creating decent jobs.

The marine fisheries sector, as a socio-economic activity sector, has suffered the full brunt of the consequences of the measures taken to contain the COVID-19 pandemic, along the value chain, whether concerning production, processing, logistics, or marketing.

For ATLAFCO member States, the fisheries sector plays an important socio-economic role in local and national economies, in terms of food security, job creation, and inflow of foreign exchange, and constitutes a vital sector. This position is all the more crucial as this sector plays a strategic role as a major contributor to food and nutritional security by providing animal proteins which are generally cheaper than meat and poultry.

The COVID-19 pandemic has confirmed, if necessary, the essential role of this sector as one of the first important links in the food chain. At the height of the health crisis, the sector, in order to meet the food needs of the populations, had to maintain its activities throughout the value chain to ensure the continuation of a regular supply of fish to the populations.

In this context, professional fishermen, along with other workers in the value chain, found themselves at the center of a difficult equation to solve: How to preserve their personal safety, their health in the particular conditions of their work, which intervenes in a small area favorable to contamination, and how to ensure at the same time their key role in harvesting seafood and transporting them to the ports of landing.

Admittedly, this health crisis linked to COVID -19 is just a new episode in the long history of the relationship between epidemics and maritime activity. The history of maritime medicine is the history of safety, prevention, and quarantines. The peculiarity of the current crisis is that it has been sudden, general, and universal in nature.

How have the countries of the region reconciled this double requirement: protect the health of actors in their workplaces - particularly on board vessels - and avoid the contamination of customers and subcontractors and meet the dietary needs of fishery products populations?

The fishing activity should only be permitted when the conditions for protection against COVID-19 are met. These measures include the wearing of masks, the washing of hands, and distancing being enforced, in order to reduce the risk of contamination by COVID-19 and in order to implement good hygiene practices and all other requirements decreed by public health authorities aiming to limit the spread of the virus.

- How have the provisions to minimize the risk of contagion in the workplace been applied??*
- What do international labor standards provide for the preservation of decent working conditions in crisis contexts?*
- What are the seafarers' health and safety rights during the pandemic?*

- *What are the strategies adopted or to be implemented in the ATLAFCO region to promote recovery, protect employment, and promote decent and inclusive work for fishermen?*

It is to these questions and many others related to the working conditions of this particular category of professionals, that the participants provided answers during discussions organized in the form of a webinar held by ATLAFCO on Thursday, August 13, 2020.

To this end, the following steps were carried out:

- *First, understanding **the situation of the maritime fishing sector** in the various States of the region in the context of this pandemic;*
- *Then, analyzing per fishing segment, **the condition of fishermen** faced with the need to work to meet food needs or, where applicable, the situation of those persons who have been laid off;*
- *Reviewing the provisions of **international law** and the various **guidelines** of relevant international organizations (WHO, ILO, FAO) for a better consideration of the working conditions of fishermen;*
- *Defining the **actions recommended** guaranteeing a safe and healthy fishing activity, capable of containing the pandemic and preserving the health of fishermen;*
- *Finally, suggesting **ways of improving the working conditions** of this particular category of workers.*

INTRODUCTION

1. ATLAFCO organized on August 13, 2020 between 9:00 a.m. and 13:30 hours (U.T.C.) an online conference, on the theme of “*The necessary protection of fishermen during the COVID-19 pandemic: The promotion of maritime medicine*”.

2. More than 69 participants took part in this meeting representing:

Member States:

Angola, Benin, Cabo Verde, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Gabon, The Gambia, Guinea, Equatorial Guinea, Morocco, Mauritania, Nigeria, Democratic Republic of Congo, São Tomé-and-Príncipe, Senegal, and Sierra Leone.

The Regional Organizations:

The African Union Inter-African Bureau for Animal Resources (AU / IBAR);

The Regional Fisheries Commission of the Gulf of Guinea (COREP);

The Fisheries Committee for the West-Central Gulf of Guinea (FCWC);

The Sub-Regional Fisheries Commission (SRFC);

The International Labor Organization (ILO);

The New Partnership for Africa's Development Agency (NEPAD)

Civil Society:

The Network of African women in fisheries (RAFEP);

The Media Observatory for Sustainable Fisheries in Africa (MOSFA);

The Advisory Council for Distant Fisheries (LDAC) of the EU;

The Moroccan Society of Maritime Medicine (SMMM);

The African Confederation of Small-scale Fishing Organizations (CAOPA);

The World Tuna Purse Seine Organization

The list of participants is attached as **Appendix I**.


OPENING CEREMONY

3. The Minister of Animal and Fishery Resources of the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire and President-in-Office of ATLAFCO, **Mr. Moussa DOSSO**, gave an opening speech of the videoconference, (Appendix II) in which he recalled the current global context, under the influence of COVID-19 which has been declared a health priority and qualified as a pandemic by the World Health Organization.



4. The honorable Minister then specified that the **ATLAFCO** member states, like what is happening in the rest of the world, are facing an unparalleled health and economic crisis, which also affects the fishing sector, a vital sector for national economies and local communities.

5. **Mr. DOSSO** has also highlighted the major concern of the authorities at the level of national governments who are looking the best possible ways to reconcile the maintenance of the activity of the fishing value chain and the supply of markets, while providing operators in the sector with safe and decent working conditions in the face of COVID-19.

6. He noted that this video conferencing offers the opportunity to share experiences and best practices in the context of the current pandemic of Covid-19, while inviting experts to identify and recommend measures that are appropriate and easy to implement, both nationally and regionally. These measures should ensure greater health and social protection for seafarers, by allowing for normal resumption of fishing activities.
7. Before declaring open the deliberations of the videoconference, the Minister reiterated his warm thanks to all the participants and congratulated the ATLAFCO Secretariat for the relevance and timeliness of the theme of this videoconference which fits perfectly with the global concern of the moment.
8. Taking the floor, Mr. **BENABBOU**, Executive Secretary , addressed, on behalf of ATLAFCO, his sincere thanks and gratitude to the Minister for his constant support to the Regional Organization but also for having enhanced by his presence the videoconference opening ceremony. 
9. He added that the Minister thus gives a strong signal of his personal commitment and through him that of ATLAFCO, to subscribe in a substantial and tangible way to the efforts undertaken to contain the COVID-19 pandemic and to mitigate its impact on the fishing industry.
10. Mr. **BENABBOU** also recalled that the organization of this videoconference is part of the ATLAFCO strategy which gives a place of choice to human beings, as a pillar of any sustainable development in the fisheries sector.
11. He clarified that this activity occurs at a critical moment when the COVID-19 pandemic is still raging. In the absence of a panacea, the conference will seek to strengthen cooperation through the exchange of information, experiences and best practices, the formulation of recommendations, and the development of a roadmap with a view to ensuring decent working conditions for fishing operators and a health situation in accordance with the requirements of the competent authorities. The presentations by the experts followed by debates will raise the scientific level and answer the following main questions:
 - o What do international labor standards provide for the preservation of decent working conditions in situations of crisis?
 - o How are the provisions aimed at minimizing the risk of contagion in the workplace applied?
 - o What are the health and safety rights of seafarers during the pandemic?
 - o What are the strategies adopted or to be implemented in the ATLAFCO region to promote recovery, protect employment, and promote decent and inclusive work of seafarers?
12. Mr. **BENABBOU** also presented his thanks to the panelists and to the participants, noting that the virtual mode of this conference is an eloquent expression of the impact of the pandemic on the way of working, while wishing a speedy eradication of the pandemic and a normal resumption of face-to-face activities.

CONDUCT OF WORK

13. Mr. BENABBOU reviewed the agenda of the videoconference, which was adopted (**Appendix III**), stating that the moderation and conduct of the proceedings of the videoconference would be performed by **Dr Amadou TALL**, with the help of **Dr. Moustapha KÉBÉ** who both contributed to the preparation of the videoconference.



14. Interpreting was provided in the French and English languages.

- **Section 1: The situation of the sector of marine fisheries in the Member States in the context of COVID-19**

Presentation 1: The impact of COVID -19 on the fishery resources sector, Dr Mohamed SEISAY (AU-IBAR)

Biographical note

With 28 years of professional experience in the fishing industry, Mr. Seisay holds a PhD in fisheries science, a master's degree in fisheries biology and management, and a bachelor's degree in chemistry.

He also specializes in the assessment and forecasting of fishery resources, the development of fisheries policies, and the formulation of fisheries management plans.

Its functions and activities at AU-IBAR include developing strategies to improve good governance of African fisheries for increased productivity, profitability, and sustainability.



Summary of the presentation

15. **Dr. SEISAY** recalled the general goal of the Policy Framework and Reform Strategy (PFRS) which is to strengthen the contribution of the fishing and aquaculture sector to food security, livelihoods and wealth creation (income). This target is currently under threat due to the impact of COVID-19 and the resulting policy choice between public health and the goal of the PFRS.

16. He then considered that the lockdown measures and political decisions concerning Africa's productive sector have had a direct effect on the fisheries and aquaculture sector, namely:

- The reduction in imports of fishing inputs and the corresponding increase in the prices of available inputs;
- The reduction of fish processing, trade, and marketing activities;
- The decrease in the activities of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs);
- The loss of jobs, partial unemployment and income;
- The decrease in export volumes and import of fish, and
- The decrease in macroeconomic investments.

17. Finally, he recommended protecting and maintaining the activities of the fisheries and aquaculture sector along the value chain (supply chains, production and processing activities and infrastructure, public and private veterinary services, extension services and other services, food chains, and various markets) and mitigating the economic impacts through strengthening the fight against COVID-19, and regional cooperation for the

adoption of coherent policies and free trade to facilitate access to intra-regional markets as foreseen by the PFRS.

Presentation 2: General review of the impact of the pandemic on the fisheries sector within Member States - Dr Moustapha KÉBÉ, Consultant

Biographical note

Economist specialized in rural economics (fisheries, agriculture, livelihoods, and value chain analysis). He has extensive field experience in rural development in Africa and in the fisheries and aquaculture sector as well as in the agricultural sector.

He worked for six and a half years as a civil servant at FAO under the Sustainable Fisheries Livelihoods program (SFLP).

He has worked on public policies, fisheries resource management and value chains in the fisheries and aquaculture sector in Africa with many international organizations such as FAO, the African Development Bank (AfDB), the African Union, and the European Union (EU).



Summary of the presentation

18. In his presentation, **Dr. KÉBÉ** considered that the fisheries sector in Africa is hit hard by the pandemic, which represents a real threat to the economic, social and environmental sector, especially its most vulnerable layer, i.e. fishing communities. He explained the decrease in requests and transactions, caused by the impact on small-scale fishing:

- Socio-economic impact such as decrease / loss of household income and export earnings
- Impact on fishing activities (working conditions and safety of fishermen at sea compromised)
- Impact on the value chain
- Impact on the value chain (increase in prices of landed products).

19. Then, he emphasized the sharing of different experiences in the management of the COVID-19 health crisis and its impacts on the small-scale fishing sub-sector in order to take advantage of good initiatives and practices and better strengthen the resilience of fisheries in West Africa:

- Social distancing
- Mobility of fishermen
- Offering of alternative markets
- Government programs for economic and social resilience.

20. After recalling the life circle of small-scale fishermen (health crisis - economic problem - resumption of activities) with in particular their low socio-economic resilience, **Dr KÉBÉ** concluded on the post- COVID-19 prospects. To this end, he indicated that the fishing industry could take advantage of the disruptions to improve traceability and commercial practices and that best practices (especially in terms of cleanliness and hygiene in the workplace) must be shared.. The mitigation strategy will be based in particular on improving the working and safety conditions of the most vulnerable groups in the fisheries sector.

Presentation 3: Preventive measures taken in response to Covid-19 in the area of marine fisheries: the case of Morocco - M. Ahmed EL KOUHEN, Director at the Department of Marines Fisheries.

Biographical note

Holder of a PhD in materials science coupled with a postgraduate diploma in management and business administration. Mr. EL KOUHEN worked for seven years as Director of the Training Institute in Airport Management and Operation under the National Airports Office, before joining the Department of Marine Fisheries in which he has been working for 25 years.

Currently, he is Central Director in the Department of Marine Fisheries and he is in charge of three major missions: the administrative management of seafarers, maritime training, and the rescue of human lives at sea.

Summary of the presentation

21. Mr. EL KOUHEN gave an overview of regulatory measures, of the health protocol for the prevention of risks related to Covid-19 awareness campaigns, as well as of the screening campaigns carried out in the fisheries sector in Morocco.

22. He presented the decree taken by the Minister of Agriculture and Marine Fisheries, setting the list of activities of the fishing sector not concerned by the exceptional measures in order to maintain the regular supply of the market in fish..



23. The author placed the emphasis on the different stages of the development of health and guides as well as safety and conduct measures relating to:

- Seafarers;
- Industrial fishing units;
- Life aboard fishing units;
- Maritime training institutions;
- Seafarer health outposts.

24. He concluded with the presentation of awareness COVID-19 screening campaigns targeting seafarers, women workers in industrial units, and the staff of maritime training institutions.

- Section 2: The condition of fishermen at risk of contamination by Covid-19

Presentation 4: Fishermen, between the need to fulfill their role as providers of food and the risks associated with their working conditions - Mr. Abdennaji LAAMRICH (ATLAFCO)

Biographical note

Holder of a Degree of Higher Studies in International Law from the Paris Sorbonne University in 1985, Mr. LAAMRICH joined the Ministry of Ocean Fisheries and the Merchant Marine as a marine inspector. In 1988, he was admitted to the World Maritime University in Sweden where he obtained a Master's degree in General Maritime Administration. In 2003, he obtained an MBA from Anglia Polytechnic University in Cambridge.

Currently, he serves as head of the Department of Cooperation and Information Systems at ATLAFCO.



Summary of the presentation

25. Mr. LAAMRICH defines fish and other aquatic foods as having economic, social and cultural importance, but also as constituting a key element in global food systems.
26. The author also dealt with the role of fishermen as suppliers of fishery products, but also with the risks linked to their working conditions, particularly in this context of a pandemic.
27. The links between harvesting, handling, processing, distribution and consumption - the supply chain - are essential to understand in order to determine the role of fisheries and demonstrate the diversity of activities and people involved in the process (fishermen and processors).
28. The author found that the measures taken to contain the spread of COVID-19 have disrupted all segments of the national and international supply chains.
29. To this end, the protection of each step of the supply chain is fundamental to avoid global and local food crises and to protect fish-dependent economies.
30. Finally, Mr. LAAMRICH recommended coordinating, planning and implementing effective and urgent short and long-term responses to this ongoing crisis.

Presentation 5: The case of industrial fishing - M. KIM, Vice-President of the World Tuna Purse Seine Organization (Ghana)

Biographical note

With 18 years of experience in the tuna fishing industry, he currently serves as Vice -President of the World Tuna Purse Seine Organization.



Summary of the presentation

31. Mr. KIM's presentation shows the seriousness of COVID-19 in the fishing industry. Despite enormous care and precautions, the infection began to occur even on board fishing vessels.
32. Due to the nature of the enclosed space of a boat, there is a high risk for all the crews to be infected. Currently, it should be noted that more than 10 teams have been infected in the Atlantic Ocean.
33. Among the consequences, there is the difficulty in supplying a ship (linked to the problems of the well-being of the seafarers), the non-boarding of auxiliary personnel during transshipment and unloading (delay of work), the loss of jobs, as well as reduced consumption of tuna leading to lower tuna prices and poor performance in tuna activities.

Presentation 6: The case of coastal and / or small-scale fishing - Mr. Gaoussou GUEYE, President of CAOPA

Biographical record

Mr. GUEYE has been a fishmonger since 1995 with more than 30 years of experience in the Senegalese small-scale fishing sector and more than 10 years of experience in Africa and the sector of industrial fishing.



President of the Platform of Non-State Actors in Small-Scale Fisheries and Aquaculture in West Africa (PANEPAO)

President of the African Confederation of Professional Small-scale Fishing Organizations (CAOPA)

President of the Association for the Promotion and Accountability of Actors in Small-scale Maritime Fishing (APRAPAM)

Member of the International Consultative Group of the FiTI (Fisheries Transparency Initiative)

Summary of the presentation

34. The presentation of **Mr. GUEYE** stressed that CAOPA is always engaged in the mobilization to combat, or even eradicate, the Covid-19 pandemic, which continues to make havoc in Africa and in the rest of the world, and is in the process of bring the world economy to its knees, thus affecting the fishing sector, especially that of the small-scale fishing sub-sector.

35. **Mr. GUEYE** further indicated that the restrictions imposed in most African countries on gatherings, on the movement of people and goods, as well as the closure of traditional markets for products from small-scale fisheries, make difficult the access to fish for the poorest.

36. The President of CAOPA proposed to ATLAFCO member States to improve the working conditions of men and women in the sector by ratifying ILO Convention number 188 on work in fisheries and to implement the Voluntary Guidelines of the FAO aiming to ensure the sustainability of small-scale fisheries (SSF Guidelines) through national action plans drawn up in a transparent, participatory, and gender-sensitive manner.

Presentation 7: The Case of Women - Mrs. Imane MOURABITI, Gender Expert

Biographical note

As a consultant and expert on gender, Mrs. MOURABITI has been interested in social development in Morocco for the past ten years. Her focus areas involve the conditions of women in Morocco as well as the growth of the NGO fabric for better social cohesion, especially for vulnerable populations.

Since 2004, she has worked with various international organizations operating in social development and the promotion of women: Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC), International Youth Foundation (IYF), International Organization for Migration (IOM), the British Council and other organizations.



Summary of the presentation

37. **Mrs. MOURABITI's** presentation began by pointing out that in Morocco, the participation of women in the fishing sector remains very limited, and that it was classically attached to related trades (mending of fishing nets and work in fish processing units). Recently, an effective participation of women in this activity is being observed.

38. Then **Mrs. MOURABITI** gave the example of women operating in the sector:

- Female fishers of the structured landing site of Belyounech (Northern Morocco) who initiated the process of female integration in the sector and whose short-term experience is encouraging;

- Female seaweed collectors who constitute a fairly large population in the small-scale fishing sector but who still suffer from structural problems related to the effective recognition of their activity.

39. According to **Mrs. Mourabiti**, Covid-19 is a real test of the Government's ability to respond to health crises in the fishing sector, particularly among fishers and more particularly among women.

The response to this pandemic has been heterogeneous:

- The response was meeting the aspirations for certain categories (female fishers)
- The response was insufficient for others (women collectors of seaweed).

Presentation 8: The case of women in small-scale fishing in Côte d'Ivoire - Mrs. Christine AMY DAGO, President of RAFEP.

Biographical note

As a woman benefiting from a long experience as a fish seller and processor and a defense activist for the improvement of the condition of women in the fishing sector, Mrs. AMY DAGO is:

- *President of the Cooperative Society of Fish Vendors of the Abidjan Fishing Port (SCOOPS COOVEP)*
- *President of the National Network of Fishing Women in Côte d'Ivoire (RENAFEP)*
- *President of the African Network of Women in Fisheries (RAFEP).*



Summary of the presentation

40. Mrs. DAGO considers that the restrictive measures taken to fight the Covid-19 pandemic are very taxing on small-scale fishing, because the men and women concerned maintain close contact at all stages of the value chain.

41. According to her, these restrictive measures are disrupting the habits and all the activities of the actors of the small-scale fishing sector, already hit by rather difficult working, health, and living conditions.

42. The President of RAFEP insisted on the efforts made by the women of small-scale fishing in Côte d'Ivoire to ensure the continuation of their activities in order to ensure the livelihood of their families but also that of the Ivorian population, by opting for prevention and awareness-raising.

43. Finally, Mrs. DAGO called for full involvement of women's organizations (including local associations) in the development of future responses to the implementation and monitoring of the 2030 Agenda.

Presentation 9: The Case of Long-Distance Fishing: The working conditions of fishermen on E.U. vessels operating in the waters of African countries - M. Alexander RODRIGUEZ, LDAC Executive Secretary

Biographical note

Holder of a Degree in Law and Economics from the University of Vigo (Spain) with a Master cum Laude in European Union Law from the Catholic University of Leuven (Belgium) and a specialization in doctoral studies in International Public Law and Fisheries Policy from the



University of A Coruña (Spain).

Mr. RODRIGUEZ started his professional career in 2004 as a lawyer specializing in maritime and commercial law. Afterwards he was appointed Deputy Secretary General of the North Western Waters Advisory Council (NWWAC) in Dublin (Ireland) from 2007 to 2014. Since January 2015, he serves as Executive Secretary of the Long Distance Advisory Council (LDAC) where he is responsible for the representation of the long distance industrial fishing fleet operating in international waters.

Summary of the presentation

- 44.** In his presentation, **Mr. RODRIGUEZ** began by mentioning the opinion of LDAC and the response of the European Commission (EC) on the safety and health measures for seafarers in EU fishing fleets to deal with Covid-19.
- 45.** In this sense, LDAC submitted on May 27, 2020 a letter to the EC asking for a visual brochure in all EU languages providing essential information on health and safety measures to ensure the well-being of the staff of European fishing fleets during the Covid-19 pandemic. This brochure should provide shipowners and crews with standard procedures:
- Before departure: early detection test, travel restrictions, etc.
 - On board and during the fishing trip: preventive measures, and treatment of the suspected cases,
 - Landings and arrivals at ports: quarantine windows, tests, crew changes, etc.
- 46.** The EC responded at the beginning of the month of July, saying that although the EU has actively adopted measures to mitigate the socioeconomic impact of Covid-19 for fishing and aquaculture, it has no mandate in terms of public health and especially in terms of prevention, diagnosis and management of infectious diseases.
- 47.** The EC invited LDAC to share information between members and fishermen based on recommendations from WHO and the ILO. In addition, national governments can adopt country-specific restrictions and measures.

- Section 3: The necessary improvement of working and living conditions in fishing activities

Presentation 10: Reminder of international legislation - Pr. Miloud LOUKILI, Rabat School of Law.

Biographical note

Professor of Law of the Sea and International Environmental Law at the Rabat Agdal School of Law, at the Mohammed V University;

Professor of Law of the Sea at the Moroccan Academy of Diplomatic Studies (Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation);

Member of the Board of the Group of Studies and Research on the Mediterranean (GERM), Rabat

Co-President of the Scientific Council of the Forum of the Sea, city of El Jadida, Morocco (2014-2019)

Founding Member of the African Network for Environmental Law, Rabat, Morocco, 2016

Advisor to the Economic, Social and Environmental Council (CESE) for Coastal Law and the Blue Economy



Summary of the presentation

48. Professor LOUKILI's presentation underlined the fact that the mega-health crisis caused by COVID-19 has created an unprecedented situation that has affected all countries around the world and the fishing sector has been strongly impacted. To face this pandemic, the international community drew on an existing legal and regulatory base, both rich and varied, of which he recalled the main legal instruments:

- i. Maritime Labor Convention 2006 (ILO), Seafarers' Identity Documents Convention (Revised), 2003 (ILO), No. 185,
- ii. Repatriation of Seafarers Convention No. 166 (Revised), 1987 (ILO),
- iii. Health Protection and Medical Care (Seafarers), Convention 164, 1987 (ILO),
- iv. Seafarers' Welfare Convention, 1987 (No. 163) (ILO), etc.

49. In the same vein, **Professor LOUKILI** noted that other legal standards have been adopted, including the security recommendations set jointly by the FAO, the ILO, and the IMO in 2010 as well as the related implementation guidelines of 2011.

Presentation 11: The protection of seafarers and fishermen in the context of Covid-19: ILO's experience since the beginning of the pandemic - M. Brandt WAGNER, ILO

Biographical note

Head of the Transport and Maritime Transport Unit of the Sectoral Policies Department of the International Labor Office at the secretariat of the International Labor Organization

Mr. WAGNER joined the ILO in 1990, where he participated in all the work of the ILO in the field of navigation and fisheries, including the development and implementation of the Maritime Labor Convention, of 2006, of the Seafarers' Identity Documents Convention (Revised), 2003 (No.185), and the Work in Fishing Convention, 2007 (No.188).

Mr. WAGNER frequently represents the ILO at meetings of the IMO, FAO, the Paris Memorandum of Understanding on Port State Control, and other international and regional bodies. He is the ILO focal point for NU-OCEANS.



Summary of the presentation

50. Mr. WAGNER's presentation highlighted some of the work done by the ILO, often with other international organizations, concerning COVID-19, particularly in the maritime sectors, and insisted on safety and security issues and related issues.

51. Despite the differences between the shipping and marine fisheries sectors, much work has been done regarding the protection of seafarers that can be useful in the commercial fishing industry. This can help identify existing guidance that can be used in the fishing industry, at least for larger vessels, and also help identify additional work that needs to be carried out.

Presentation 12: Change of crew of fishing vessels and COVID-19: Professor Kaoutar MERBOUH

Biographical note

Having a rich in a long academic and field experience, Prof. MERBOUH holds a PhD in maritime law and is a master mariner. Licensed professor at the Faculty of Legal, Economic and Social Sciences of Tangiers;

Research focus areas: maritime law, transport law, insurance and alternative dispute resolution methods.

Summary of the presentation

52. Prof. MERBOUH's presentation deals with the issue of changing the crew of fishing vessels and the protection of people during this change in Covid-19 times.

53- She analyzed:

- The effects on fishermen and on the marine environment of the refusal to change crew, as well as
- The protection of seafarers before the change of crew and after the change of crew.

53. The Professor concluded by strongly recommending to take all the necessary measures in these times of COVID-19, to ensure the safe change of crew of fishing vessels through the collaboration between all the local administrations and the owners of fishing vessels so as to preserve both the health of fishers and the marine environment.

Presentation 13: Medical visit of fishermen in the context of Covid-19- Dr. Tarik GHAILAN, President of the Moroccan Society of Maritime Medicine (Tangiers)

Biographical note

-Occupational doctor with the Ministry of Labor and Professional Integration and seafarer doctor with the Chamber of Maritime Fisheries of Tangiers.

-Holder of a doctorate in medicine from Mohammed V University in Rabat, specialist in occupational medicine, Graduate from the University of Rennes I (France) and specialist in maritime medicine and diving medicine, laureate from the University of Cadiz (Spain).

-Holder of a second PhD in scientific research in life and health sciences (from the Mohammed V University in Rabat) and author of numerous communications and scientific publications.

-President of the Moroccan Society of Maritime Medicine and permanent member of IMHA

-Deputy Mayor of the city of Assilah (northern Morocco)



Summary of the presentation

54. In his presentation **Dr. Ghailan** explained the role of the seafarer doctor in the context of COVID-19, the seafarer medical visits, and the response in case of an emergency: suspicion of COVID-19, as well as the steps to be followed.

55. He then gave an overview on the distribution of healthcare personnel during the COVID-19 epidemic due to the infection by the virus, with an emphasis on the designation of diseases, the time of treatment, as well as the short-list of the main types of work likely to cause these diseases.

- Section 4: Towards enhanced protection of fishermen, as strategic players in the fishing industry

56. At the end of the various presentations and the discussions that followed, the participants made a number of recommendations (**Appendix IV**):

57. The participants first recalled the strategic importance of the fisheries sector among the ATLAFCO Member States and recalled the need to consider the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030.

- 58.** The participants also noted that the Member States of ATLAFCO, like other countries of the world, have not been spared by COVID-19.
- 59.** It was noted that the measures taken (social distancing, partial or total lockdown, and border closures) to contain the spread of COVID-19 have had a definite impact on the fishing sector.
- 60.** In addition, the participants recognized the need to maintain fishing activities and other related activities during the period of the health emergency to ensure the food security of populations, and that decent work is essential for sustainable development, given the real risks faced by this category of professionals in the exercise of their activities.
- 61.** The participants declared to be aware of the need to protect the lives of workers, of their families, and of the populations around them. They recalled that in times of crisis, international labor standards constitute a solid basis for developing appropriate strategic responses.
- 62.** Finally, the participants highlighted the vulnerability of fishing stakeholders, especially those in the small-scale sub-sector in the ATLAFCO region in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- 63.** On this basis, the following recommendations were made:
- 1) Undertake** socio-economic and environmental impact studies (supply of fishery products, jobs, income, working conditions, state of the fishery resource, consequences on health, etc.) of COVID-19 on the maritime fishing sector in ATLAFCO member States;
 - 2) Maintain** the activities of the fisheries value chain and ensure a regular supply to the market under the best conditions of health security;
 - 3) Apply** the relevant recommendations and measures recommended by international organizations (WHO, ILO, IMO, FAO) to limit the spread and direct effects of COVID-19, by:
 - Putting in place at the national level, health protocols for the prevention of risks faced by fishing operators in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic, (health guides, awareness and screening campaigns, and other measures.)
 - Popularizing best practices for preventing and combating COVID-19 contamination among the general population and among seafarers in order to minimize the risk of the pandemic spreading;
 - Ensuring the conduct of training sessions on the proper application of infection prevention measures and good hygiene practices in workplaces (ships, canoes, landing sites, processing units, markets, and other locations);
 - Encouraging the transposition at the national level of the provisions of the relevant International Conventions and Guidelines;
 - ✓•The ILO Work in Fishing Convention 188 of 2007 which entered into force in 2017;
 - ✓•The Maritime Labor Convention, 2006 (MLC, 2006);
 - ✓•The FAO Voluntary Guidelines, aimed at ensuring the sustainability of small-scale fisheries in the context of food security and poverty eradication.

- 4) **Pay** special attention to small-scale fishing workers and to women in the sector, due to their greater vulnerability;
 - 5) **Encourage** permanent social dialogue and cooperation with the social partners, to better inform themselves about their working conditions and better dissemination of best practices;
 - 6) **Promote** maritime medicine by setting up public infrastructure or through social services in favor of this segment of the working population. This will in particular strengthen resilience to crisis situations, such as COVID-19;
 - 7) **Advocate** for the conversion of ad hoc response measures to the current health crisis into full-fledged social protection systems:
 - Removal of financial barriers to quality health care;
 - Reinforcement of income security;
 - Inclusion of workers in the informal economy;
 - Protection of income and jobs, and improvement of social protection.
 - 8) **Promote** regional cooperation in the fields of social protection of seafarers, in the training of maritime medicine, and the sharing of experiences in the management of health crises affecting the maritime fisheries sector.
64. After having once again thanked the ATLAFCO Secretariat for the perfect organization, the panelists for the quality of their presentations, and the participants for their rich contribution to the debates, as well as the interpreters for the facilitation of the deliberations, **Dr. Amadou TALL** announced the end of the videoconference at 13:30 hours U.T.C.

Appendix I

List of participants				
N°	COUNTRY / ORGANIZATION	FIRST NAME, FAMILY NAME	TITLE	E-MAIL
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9	Côte d'Ivoire	Mr. Moussa DOSSO	Minister of Animal and Fishery Resources of the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire and current Chairman of ATLAFCO	-
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19	Fisheries Agency of Japan Tokyo - Japan	Mr. Takaaki SAKAMOTO	Director, Overseas Fisheries Cooperation Office, FAJ	Takaaki_sakamoto720@maff.go.jp
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21		Mr. Juma JALLOW	Ministry of Fisheries, Water Resources and National Affairs	jumajallow86@gmail.com
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23		Mr. Michael	Director of the Fisheries Commission	michyad2000@yahoo.com

		ARTHUR-DADZIE		
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37	MOSFA	Mr. André NAO USSI	Journalist / Coordinator	andrenaoussi@gmail.com
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Opening remarks

His Excellency Moussa Douso
Minister of Animal and Fishery Resources of the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire,
President-in-Office of ATLAFCO

Online conference: "The necessary protection of fishermen during the COVID-19 pandemic: The promotion of maritime medicine"
August 13, 2020

Dear Delegates of the ATLAFCO Member States,
Dear Experts,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

At the start of my speech, I would like to express all my joy for the honor bestowed upon me to open, in my capacity as President-in-Office of ATLAFCO, this online conference on "The protection of seafarers- fishermen in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic".

Like the rest of the world, Africa is still facing an unparalleled health and economic crisis, due to the Coronavirus, declared to be a global pandemic by the World Health Organization. The accelerated proliferation of Covid-19 on the international scene has simultaneously shaken the economic and health security of nations, and threatens to endanger the social conditions of several hundred million people around the world.

Our purpose today is not to carry out a comprehensive analysis of the socio-economic impact of this pandemic, but rather to focus on the consequences of this crisis on an essential sector for the economies of the countries of our regional space, and more particularly on the men and women who are active there, at all levels of the value chain.

What is at stake is of course the fishing sector.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

During this multidimensional crisis and in order to limit the spread of the virus, our Nations, as is the case in almost all parts of the world, have been required to take a series of preventive measures and to restrict movement as much as possible, by declaring a state of health emergency throughout their territory.

In doing so, despite the risks involved, certain economic sectors, because of their strategic role, had to continue their activity. This is the case for the fishing sector, which, owing to its large contribution to meeting food needs, particularly in our countries and in this context of national border closures, continued its activities at all levels of the value chain.

Whether there is a lockdown imposed or not, the workers in the sector, in particular the fishermen, have been called upon to maintain their activity in order to carry out their mission of supplying essential foodstuffs to the populations. These professionals thus remained in the front line and had to face, in addition to the risks inherent in the specific nature of their work, new threats linked to the health crisis, in order to carry out their mission.

Given the particularities of work at sea and of the fishing professions such as arduousness, dangerousness, and the sustained pace of work, the promotion of decent and secure working conditions for people active at sea is an ongoing concern.

However in the context of Covid-19, this concern has become a priority, given the role of fishermen in the supply of essential foodstuffs and the risks involved. The small size of their workspace exposes them more than other categories of professionals to very real risks of contamination by the virus.

In addition, the application of occupational health and protection measures in the context of this health crisis is essential to protect both the lives of workers, of their families, and of the populations around them, and ensure the continuity of work and economic survival.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Fishermen are facing a real risk. The implementation of the necessary measures will thus minimize the risks of contamination contracted at their workplace, and the risk control measures must be specifically adapted to the needs of workers who are on the front line of the pandemic.

How did our Authorities, and how do they continue to, manage this double requirement: ensure supplies of essential foodstuff to meet the needs of the populations and minimize the risk of contamination contracted in the workplaces where fishermen are operating?

What international standards have our Authorities used as a basis to maintain the activity of the sector while protecting the safety and health of workers?

It is to all these questions that the Online Conference will try to provide answers to better prepare ourselves for the future.

This Conference is also an opportunity for us to pool our information and compare our experiences about practices intended to protect seafarers in the context of this pandemic.

I am convinced that through the presentations of the experts and the exchange of views that they will not fail to generate, we shall be able to identify and propose robust measures at the national level and decisive actions at the multilateral level, with the aim of ensuring greater protection for this category of professionals.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Before closing my speech, I would like to congratulate the ATLAFCO secretariat for the organization of this videoconference and for the choice of the subject which fits with a global and still topical concern.

My thanks also go to the experts who kindly agreed to provide us with their knowledge on the subject, and for their definite contribution to the success of the goals of this conference.

While wishing every success to our deliberations, I urge you to redouble your efforts to join this collaboration momentum in favor of better protection of our valiant fishermen.

Thank you for your attention.

Appendix III

Agenda

Opening of the conference

Opening speech by His Excellency Moussa Dosso, Minister of Animal and Fishery Resources, President-in-Office of ATLAFCO, Republic of Côte d'Ivoire

Introduction of the conference by Dr. Amadou Tall, moderator

- **Section 1:** the situation of the marine fisheries sector in the Member States in the context of COVID -19

- *The impact of COVID-19 in the fishery resources sector*, - **Mr. Mohamed Seisay (AU-IBAR)**
- *General review of the impact of the pandemic on the fishing sector in the Member States*, - **Dr. Moustapha Kébé, Consultant**
- *Preventive measures taken in the face of COVID-19 in the marine fisheries sector, the case of Morocco* – **Mr. Ahmed El Kouhen, Director at the Department of Marine Fisheries.**

- **Section 2:** The condition of fishermen facing the risk of contamination by COVID-19

- *Fishermen, between the need to fulfill their role as providers of food and risks to their working conditions*, - **Mr. Abdennaji Laamrich (ATLAFCO)**
- *The case of industrial fishing*: - **Mr. Kim, Vice-president of the World Purse Tuna Seine Organization (Ghana)**
- *The case of coastal and / or small-scale fishing*: - **Mr. Gaoussou, President of CAOPA**
- *The case of women* **Ms. Imane Mourabiti, Expert on Gender**
Mrs. Christine Amy Dago, - President of RAFEP
- *The case of long distance fishing: The working conditions of fishermen on E.U. vessels operating in the waters of African countries* – **Mr. Alexander Rodríguez, LDAC Executive Secretary**

- **Section 3:** The necessary improvement of working and living conditions in fishing activities

- *Reminder of international legislation*, - **Pr. Miloud Loukili, Rabat School of Law**
- *The protection of seafarers and fishermen in the context of COVID -19: the experience of the ILO since the beginning of the pandemic* - **Mr. Brandt Wagner, ILO**
- *Change of crew of fishing vessels and COVID-19*, **Pr. Kaoutar Merbouh, Tangiers Faculty of Law**
- *Medical visit of fishermen in the context of COVID -19*, **Dr Tarik Ghailan, President of the Moroccan Society of Maritime Medicine (Tangiers)**

- **Section 4:** Towards a reinforced protection of fishermen, as strategic actors in the fishing industry

Recommendations and measures to be adopted to protect sailors aboard fishing vessels

Appendix IV

RECOMMENDATIONS

Through the various discussions during the teleconference, the participants made the following recommendations:

- **Recalling** the strategic importance of the fisheries sector in ATLAFCO member states through its strong contribution to food and nutritional security, job creation and national wealth;
- **Considering** the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals for 2030, in particular **SDG 3**: " *Ensure **healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages***" and **SDG 8** which aims to "*promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment, and **decent work for all***";
- **Noting** that the Member States of ATLAFCO, like other countries in the world, have not been spared by COVID-19, declared on January 30, 2020, by the World Health Organization (WHO) as a **public health emergency of international concern** under the International Health Regulations (2005) and qualified as a **pandemic** on March 11, 2020;
- **Noting** that the measures taken (social distancing, partial or total lockdown, and border closures) to contain the spread of COVID-19 have had a multidimensional impact on the various socio-economic activities, including the fisheries sector as a key sector which contributes to food and nutrition security and to livelihoods around the world;
- **Recognizing** the need to maintain fishing activities and related trades during the period of the health emergency because of the essential contribution of fishing to the food and nutritional security of the populations;
- **Convinced** that decent work is essential for sustainable development, for the fight against income inequalities and for the eradication of poverty, especially in areas affected by humanitarian emergencies;
- **Taking into account** the actual risk to this category of professionals in the exercise of their activities, particularly in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic;
- **Aware** of the need to protect the lives of workers, of their families, and of the populations around them, and to ensure the continuity of work and the economic survival;
- **Recalling** that in times of crisis, international labor standards provide a solid basis for developing appropriate policy responses that are focused on the crucial role of healthy and safe decent work, for a fair and sustainable recovery;
- **Considering** the vulnerability of fishing stakeholders, especially those in the small-scale sub-sector in the ATLAFCO region in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic;

Participants recommend:

- **To undertake** socio-economic and environmental impact studies (supply of fish products, jobs, income, working conditions, state of the fishery resource, health consequences...) of COVID-19 on the sector of marine fisheries within the ATLAFCO Member States;
- **To maintain** activities of the fisheries value chain and ensure a regular supply to the market under the best possible safety conditions;
- **To apply** the relevant recommendations and measures recommended by international organizations (WHO, ILO, IMO, FAO) to limit the spread and direct effects of COVID- 19, by:

- Putting in place at the national level, health protocols for the prevention of risks incurred by fishing operators in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic, (health guides, awareness and screening campaigns, and other measures)
- Popularizing the best practices for the prevention and fight against contamination by COVID-19 among the population and seafarers in order to minimize the risk of the pandemic spreading;
- Ensuring the conduct of training sessions on the proper implementation of infection control measures and good hygiene practices in the workplace (vessels, canoes, landing sites, processing plants, markets, etc.);
- Encouraging the transposition at the national level of the provisions of the relevant international conventions and guidelines;
 - ✓•The ILO Work in Fishing Convention C 188, 2007, which entered into force in 2017;
 - ✓•The Maritime Labor Convention, 2006 (MLC, 2006);
 - ✓•The FAO Voluntary Guidelines, aimed at ensuring the sustainability of small-scale fisheries in the context of food security and poverty eradication.
- **To grant** special attention to workers from the small-scale sector and to women, because of their greater vulnerability;
- **To promote** permanent social dialogue and cooperation with the social partners, in order to be better informed of their working conditions and for a better dissemination of best practices;
- **To promote** maritime medicine by setting up public infrastructure or through social services in favor of this segment of the working population. This will in particular make it possible to strengthen resilience to crisis situations, such as COVID-19;
- **To advocate** for the conversion of ad hoc response measures to the current health crisis into full-fledged social protection systems:
 - Removal of financial barriers to quality health care;
 - Reinforcement of income security;
 - Inclusion of workers from the informal economy;
 - Protection of income and jobs, and improvement of social protection.
- **To promote** regional cooperation in the fields of social protection of seafarers, in the training in maritime medicine, and the sharing of experiences in the management of health crises affecting the marine fisheries sector.