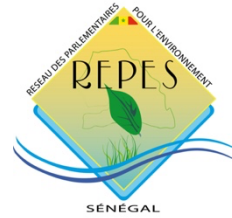




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RESEAU NATIONAL DES CLPA



Transform
Bottom
Trawling



H.E. Papa Sagna MBAYE
Minister of Fisheries and Maritime Economy (MPEM)
Dakar
Republic of Senegal

8 November 2023

Subject: The issue of bottom trawling in Senegal

Your Excellency,

We wish to draw your attention to the crisis of Senegal's fisheries sector caused by the environmentally destructive, unsustainable and often illegal fishing practices of the country's trawler fleet, and to urge you to take immediate and strong action to mitigate the environmental and socio-economic impacts of this fishing activity and protect the livelihoods and food security of artisanal fishing communities.

Artisanal fishing communities are the beating heart of Senegal's fisheries sector. They supply over 80% of the fish landed in the country, playing a critical role in ensuring food security in a nation where fish accounts for 70% of all energy intake of animal origin. Small-scale fishing supports the livelihoods of hundreds of thousands of households.

Yet, these communities are under threat from severe declines in fish populations driven, in part, by overfishing by the bottom trawling industry.

The Senegalese fleet of bottom trawlers is one of the largest in West Africa. It has expanded in recent years, despite being already at overcapacity. Environmentally destructive fishing practices, such as the use of nets with non-regulatory mesh sizes and incursions by bottom trawlers into the area reserved for artisanal fishers, further aggravate the sector crisis. Artisanal fishers have seen the volume of their catches decline dramatically and are forced to compete with bottom trawlers for dwindling resources in overexploited fishing grounds.

The country's bottom trawler fleet is mainly controlled by foreign players from the European Union, China and elsewhere in Asia through joint fishing companies. These structures enable the plundering of Senegal's fisheries resources. The production from Senegal's bottom trawl industry almost exclusively supplies foreign markets, while many Senegalese households struggle to buy fish from local markets for their personal consumption.

The true extent of the damage being caused by bottom trawling is obscured by insufficient data. However, it is clear that declining catches and frequent loss of property because of incursions by trawlers have serious consequences on the livelihoods and living conditions of artisanal fishing communities.

To limit the damage caused by bottom trawling in Senegal and protect populations from precarity, ambitious and strong measures must urgently be implemented.

In this context, we invite you to take the following measures:

- Prevent and reduce the impacts of bottom trawling on the environment, including through a significant reduction in the sector's fishing capacity, and work to restore degraded ecosystems;
- Improve transparency in the governance of Senegalese fisheries, in particular through information-sharing;
- Reform fisheries management by placing emphasis on co-management – ensuring the effective participation of artisanal fishing communities in decision-making;
- Strengthen monitoring, control and surveillance of fishing activities, and provide effective and dissuasive sanctions against illegal fishing activities; and
- Promote sustainable artisanal fisheries, which secure the livelihoods of communities and the nation's food security.

To consolidate and further detail these measures, the undersigned call for the creation, by decree and on the proposal of the Directorate for Management and Exploitation of the Seabed, of a multidisciplinary and multi-actor framework to reflect on the issue of bottom trawling, with the aim of preventing and reducing its impact on marine ecosystems and on the livelihoods of those who depend on them.

Respectfully yours,

Signatories:

1. AGIRE
2. BirdLife International – Africa Region
3. Blue Ventures
4. Collectif National des Mareyeurs pour le Développement du Sénégal (CNMDS)
5. Conseil National Interprofessionnel de la Pêche Artisanale au Sénégal (CONIPAS)

6. Environmental Justice Foundation
7. FENAGIE PECHE
8. Greenpeace Africa
9. Réseau des Parlementaires pour la Protection de l'Environnement au Sénégal (REPES)
10. Réseau National des Conseils Locaux de la Pêche Artisanale (RNCLPA)
11. Réseau National des Quais de Pêche du Sénégal
12. Réseau Régional d'Aires Marines Protégées en Afrique de l'Ouest (RAMPAO)
13. Transform Bottom Trawling Coalition
14. Union Nationale des Mareyeurs du Sénégal (UNAMS)
15. Union Nationale de Pêcheurs Artisans du Sénégal (UNAPAS)