



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

Fishermen, between the need to fulfill their role as providers of food and the risks linked to their working conditions



Abdennaji LAAMRICH
ATLAFCO Secretariat

Rabat 13 August 2020



Importance of Fish and Fishermen in providing food

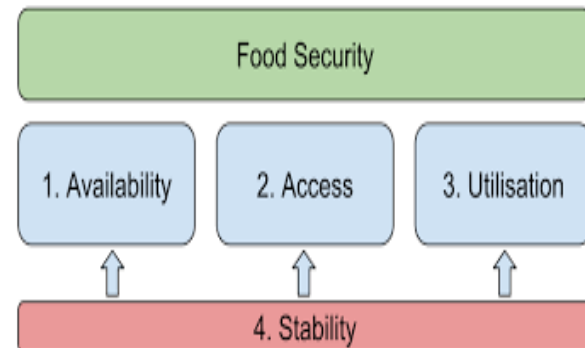
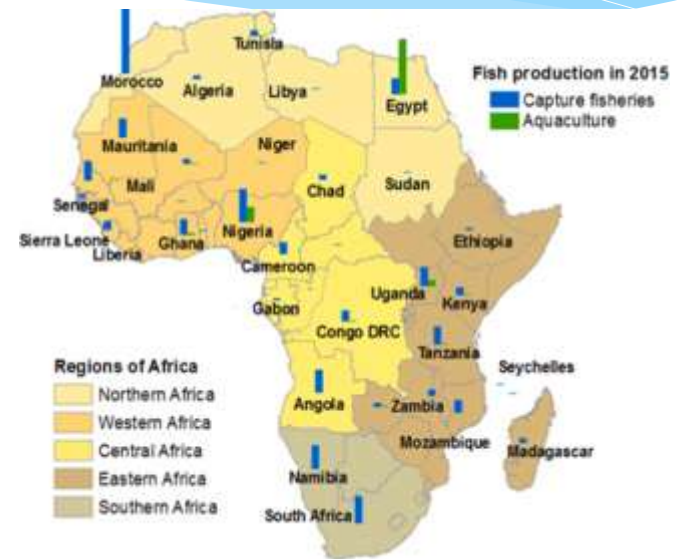


- Fish and other aquatic foods are a key part of our global food systems and a highly nutritious food group of major **social, cultural and economic** significance



FOOD SECURITY

- FAO states that “**food security** exists when all people, at all times, have **physical, social and economic** access to **sufficient, safe and nutritious food** that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life” (FAO, 2012a)

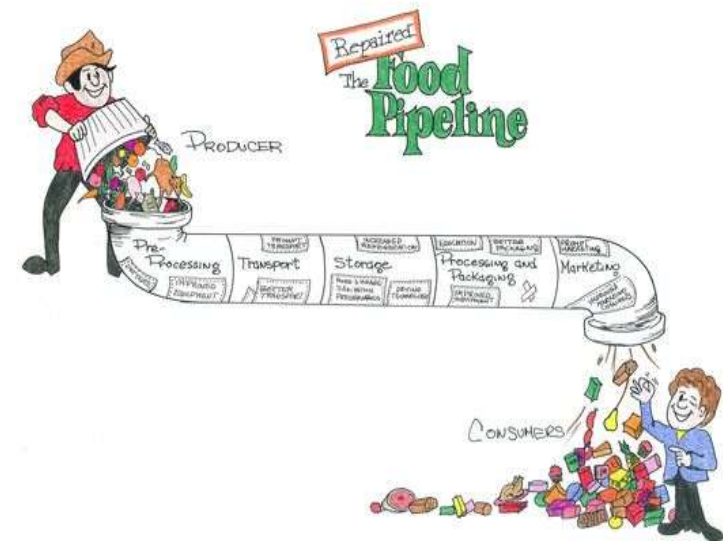


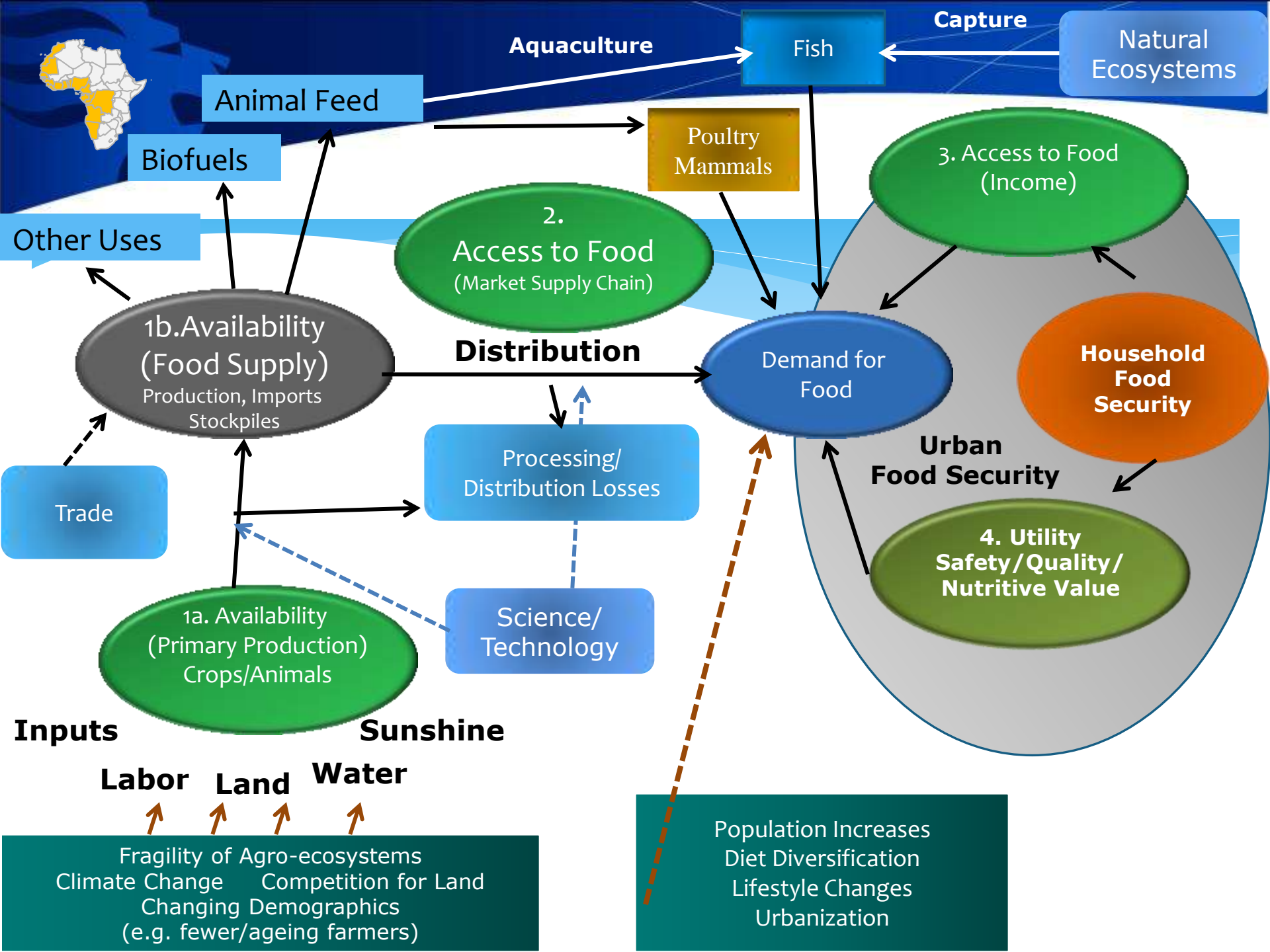


Importance of fish and fishermen in providing food



- In addition to being important for the livelihoods of many fish-dependent communities
- Fish and fish products are among the most highly traded food products in the world
- The connections between *harvest, handling, processing, distribution* and *consumption* - **the supply chain** - are essential to understand in
 - determining the role of fisheries
 - demonstrating the diverse range of activities and people involved in the process (**fishermen and processors**)







Why is food a security issue?



DRIVERS

CAUSES

Globalization

**Diseases
(COVID 19)**

Conflict

Poverty

Climate Change

Food Shortages

Food Price Increases

Food Contamination

Food Insecurity

SYMPTOMS

Deterioration of Health

Deterioration of Nutrition

Hunger

Loss of Life

Civil Unrest

Economic Instability

Political Instability

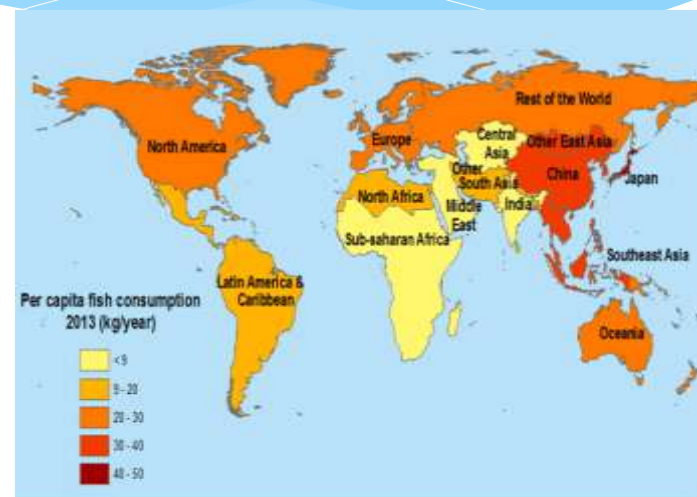
Social Instability



Fishermen's dilemma

- ❑ Through the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) ([UN, 2015](#)), the world has committed to ending all ***forms of food and nutrition insecurity***
- ❑ **Fish** has significant potential to contribute to the goal of **reducing food and nutrition insecurity in Africa**
- ❑ Fish provides 19% of [animal protein](#) intake to Africans
- ❑ **Fishers** often work long hours under harsh weather conditions, increasing the likelihood of accidents or injury
- ❑ FAO estimates that ***fisheries is one of the most dangerous and risky occupations in the world***

- ❑ Fishermen and their communities are currently facing the threat of the COVID-19 pandemic which is affecting
 - ❑ the entire ***value chain***
 - ❑ **livelihoods** depending on it

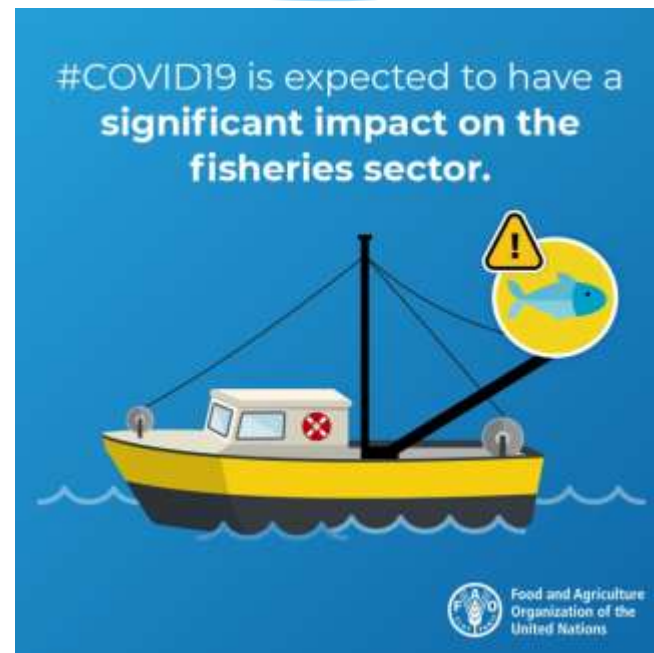




Indirect impact from the pandemic on the fish sector



- ❑ Although COVID-19 does not affect fish, the fish sector is still subject to indirect impact from the pandemic through:
 - ❑ changing consumer demands
 - ❑ market access
 - ❑ logistical problems related to transportation and border restrictions
- ❑ Falling production from reduced fishing efforts will lead to lower supplies, access, and consumption of these foods
- ❑ Decreased consumer demand and increased transaction costs will have a knock-on effect that will **push the price of fish foods up** and make them **less affordable for poor consumers**
- ❑ Many people employed in these supply chains, such as fish vendors, processors, suppliers or transport workers will **lose their jobs**





Indirect impact from the pandemic on the fish sector

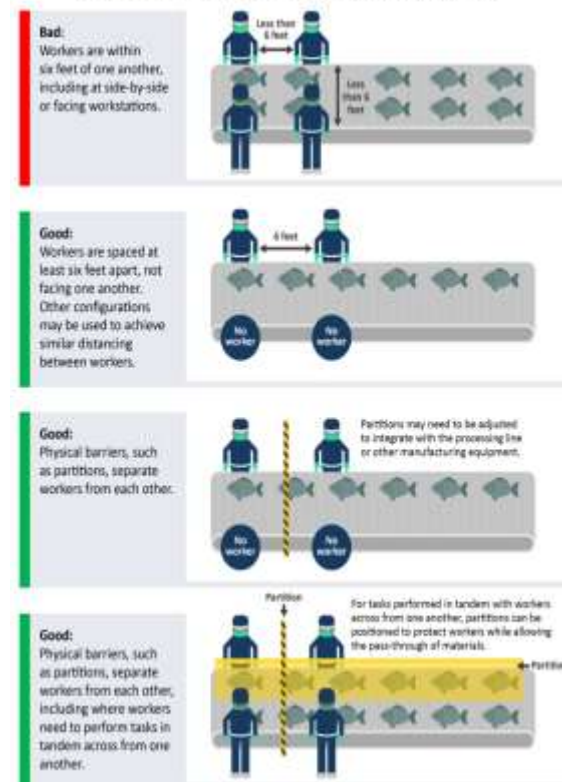


- ❑ The COVID-19 epidemic, and the measures taken to combat it, are proving increasingly challenging for **men and women active in the African artisanal fisheries**
- ❑ The processing sector faced closures due to **reduced/lost consumer demand**
- ❑ Significant impact, especially on **women**, who form the majority of the workforce in the post-harvest sector
- ❑ The restrictions imposed in most African countries to:
 - ❑ Assembling of people
 - ❑ Circulation of people and goods
 - ❑ Closing down of traditional markets for artisanal fisheries products



MAKING ACCESS TO FISH DIFFICULT TO THE NEEDIEST

How to Align Seafood Processing Workstations, if Feasible





Risks linked to fishermen working conditions



- ❑ **Measures taken** to contain the spread of COVID-19 have **caused disruption in all segments** of both domestic and international supply chains
- ❑ Protecting each stage of the supply chain is fundamental to avoid global and local **food crises**, and **protect fish-dependent economies**
- ❑ In our region, **due the lack of facilities and equipment**
- ❑ Maintaining the hygiene to fight the epidemic is complicated:
 - ❑ on board the vessels
 - ❑ in fish landing sites
 - ❑ processing sites
 - ❑ markets
- ❑ Fishers, and fish processors and vendors (many of whom are women), **are exposed to a greater risk of infection**, as they have close contact with others at all stages of the value chain (CFFA, 2020)





Improving fishermen work conditions



- ❑ **Working conditions** and the **safety of fishers** in both small and industrial sectors have been affected owing to having to work longer periods, which increases fatigue and stress
- ❑ However, the pandemic health crisis does present an opportunity **to address** and **improve** the **working** and **sanitary** conditions of these most vulnerable groups (FAO 2020)*



BY IMPLEMENTING THE RELEVANT INTERNATIONAL LEGAL INSTRUMENTS

*ADDENDUM TO THE STATE OF WORLD FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE 2020
SUMMARY OF THE IMPACTS OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC ON THE FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE SECTOR





CONCLUSION

- ❑ Communities across West Africa now face the combined effects of COVID-19, **chronic hunger**, conflict, and **climate change** (Africa Press Office 2020)
- ❑ The COVID-19 pandemic has revealed the fragility of our **health** and **food** systems
- ❑ It started as a **health crisis**, but soon affected all sectors of the economy including **fisheries** imposing serious challenges to the achievement of all SDGs
- ❑ As the understanding of the implications of the pandemic is **still incomplete**
- ❑ An urgent need to **coordinate**, **plan** and **implement** effective short- and long-term responses to this unfolding crisis





Thanks for your attention



“It is time to put armed conflict
on lockdown and focus together
on the true fight of our lives.”

UN Secretary-General, António Guterres



United
Nations

#coronavirus | #COVID19

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