



# Building a Better Future for Fisheries: Collective Efforts and Fair Practices

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# Fisheries matter to people for food, income, culture

Tradition meets modernity in Agadir, Essaouira, along the Atlantic and Mediterranean coasts of Morocco.

The fishing industry in Morocco is a leading foreign exchange earner, accounting for 2,84% of total exports. For a long time the industry has been an economic pillar for the country and the largest fish market in Africa, with growing earnings in recent years.

Yet, climate change and heavy fishing is leaving marks.





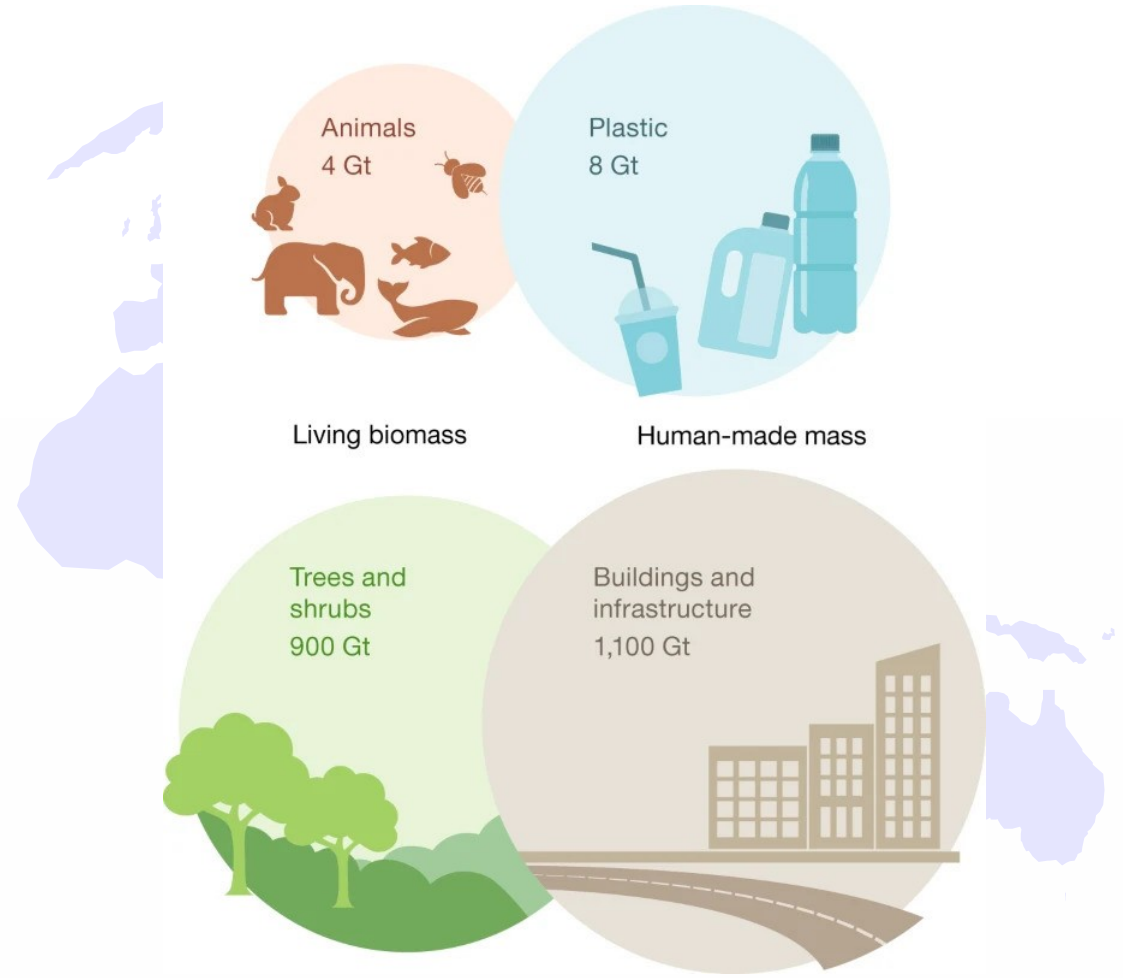
# Biodiversity under threat, particularly in the sea

## Looking at the global picture:

Comparison of the most important components of global biomass with products of human origin in 2020\*

\* expressed as gigatons of dryweight

Source: Elhacham, E., Ben-Uri, L., Grozovski, J. et al. Global human-made mass exceeds all living biomass. *Nature* 588, 442–444 (2020). <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41586-020-3010-5>

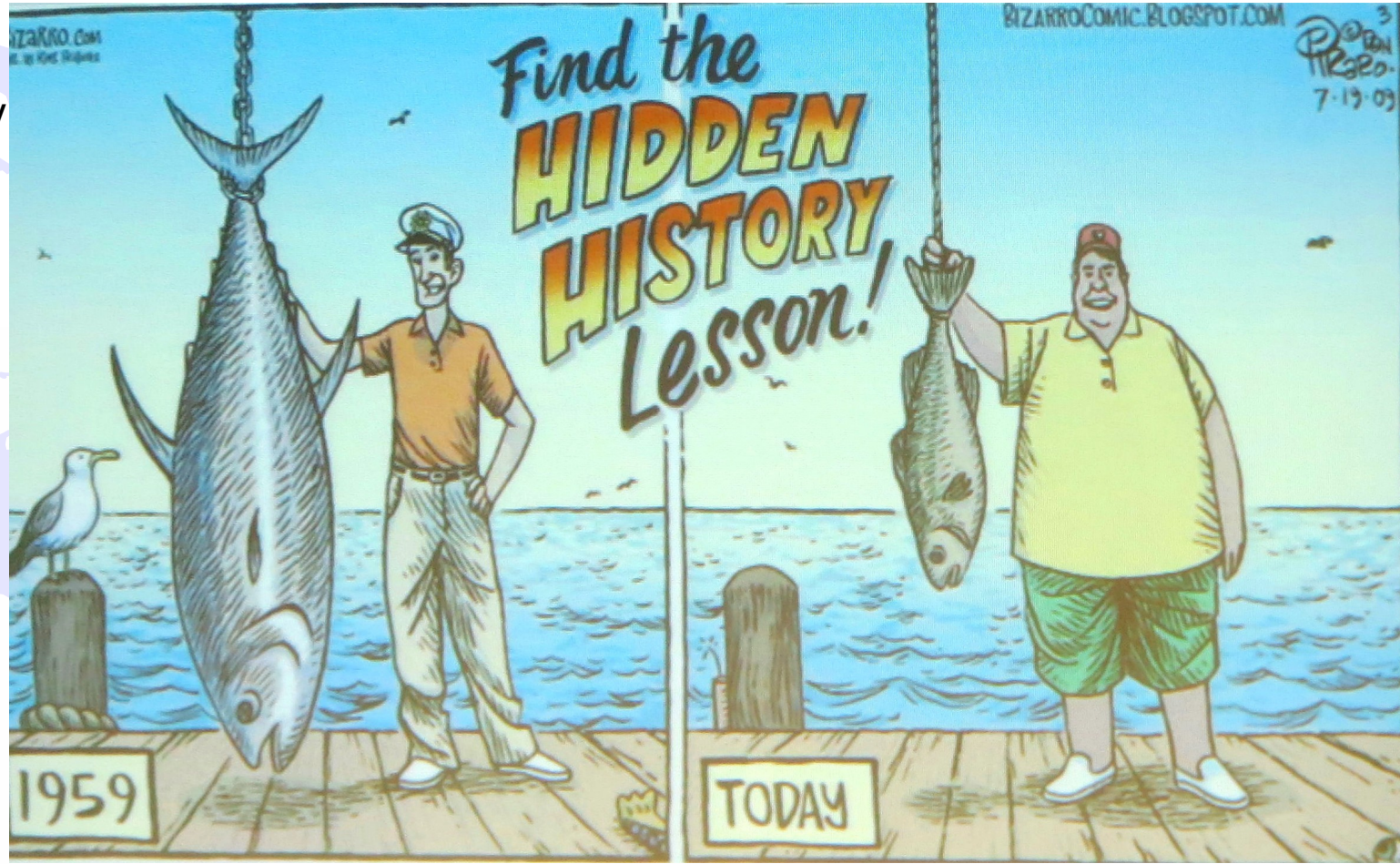




# The impact of fisheries

FAO estimates that every 5th fish is from illegal, not registered and not regulated (IUU) fishery.

It's a vicious circle: reduced wild catches, more aquaculture of carnivorous salmon and shrimp, fisheries of wild fish for feed rather than human consumption





# The impact of climate change

Lack of O<sub>2</sub> +  
higher  
temperatures

> smaller fish

> poleward  
migration





# What to do? - Plastic-Treaty

Reduce plastic production

Change from fossil to bio-feedstock

No microplastic in products

Reduce additives drastically from currently 16.000, prohibit toxic ones (4.000 ascertained)

Increase circular economy

Transparency in reporting of companies



Sculpture of the Canadian artist Benjamin von Wong, produced with plastic from the Kibera Slums, Nairobi, before the 5th Session of the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA-5), 2022 - Source: Miragenews.com



# What to do? - Stop overfishing

Promote artisanal rather than industrial fisheries

Stop bottom trawling, particularly in protected areas

Stop harmful fisheries subsidies (SDG14.6)

Marine protected areas help to rebuild healthy stocks and increase production

Implement the Code of Conduct of Responsible Fisheries



(Photo: Senya Beraku, Ghana, Lapping on Pixabay)



# Wild-caught fish, an irreplaceable source of essential nutrients

100 g portions in nutrient deficient sub-Saharan Africa <20% of small pelagic catch (e.g. sardinella, anchovies) would meet recommended dietary fish intakes for all children (6 months to 4 years old).

Nutrition-sensitive policies are needed that ensure local supplies and promote consumption of wild-caught fish.

Source: Robinson et al. 2022. *Nature Food*, 3:1075–1084.

## Fish: Multiple, highly bioavailable micronutrients - more than just protein

### Minerals

**Fe** **Iron**  
essential for brain development in children and increases maternal survival rates.

**I** **Iodine**  
essential for brain development in fetus and young children and helps prevent stillbirth.

**Zn** **Zinc**  
crucial for childhood survival, reduces stunting in children and fights diarrhea.

### Essential fatty acids

help prevent preeclampsia, preterm delivery, low birth weight, and support cognitive development and better vision in children.

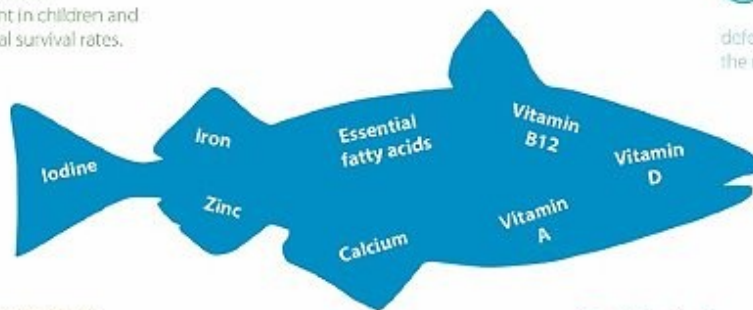
**Ca** **Calcium**  
helps prevent preeclampsia and preterm delivery, and is essential for strong bones and teeth.

### Vitamins

**B12** **Vitamin B12**  
essential for a healthy pregnancy; helps prevent brain and spinal cord birth defects, and supports healthy maintenance of the nervous system and brain in children.

**D** **Vitamin D**  
essential for the development of strong, healthy bones, teeth and muscles in children and helps prevent preeclampsia, preterm delivery and low birth weight.

**A** **Vitamin A**  
essential for childhood survival, prevents blindness, helps fight infections and promotes healthy growth.



(Infographic: WorldFish)





# What to do? - Climate change

Reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions drastically, stop subsidies for fossils

Regenerate and protect seagrass meadows, mangroves, humid zones

Establish 30% interconnected strongly protected areas

Concrete implementation of international treaties and agreements, notably the Paris Agreement



(Photo: Bishnu Sarangi from Pixabay)

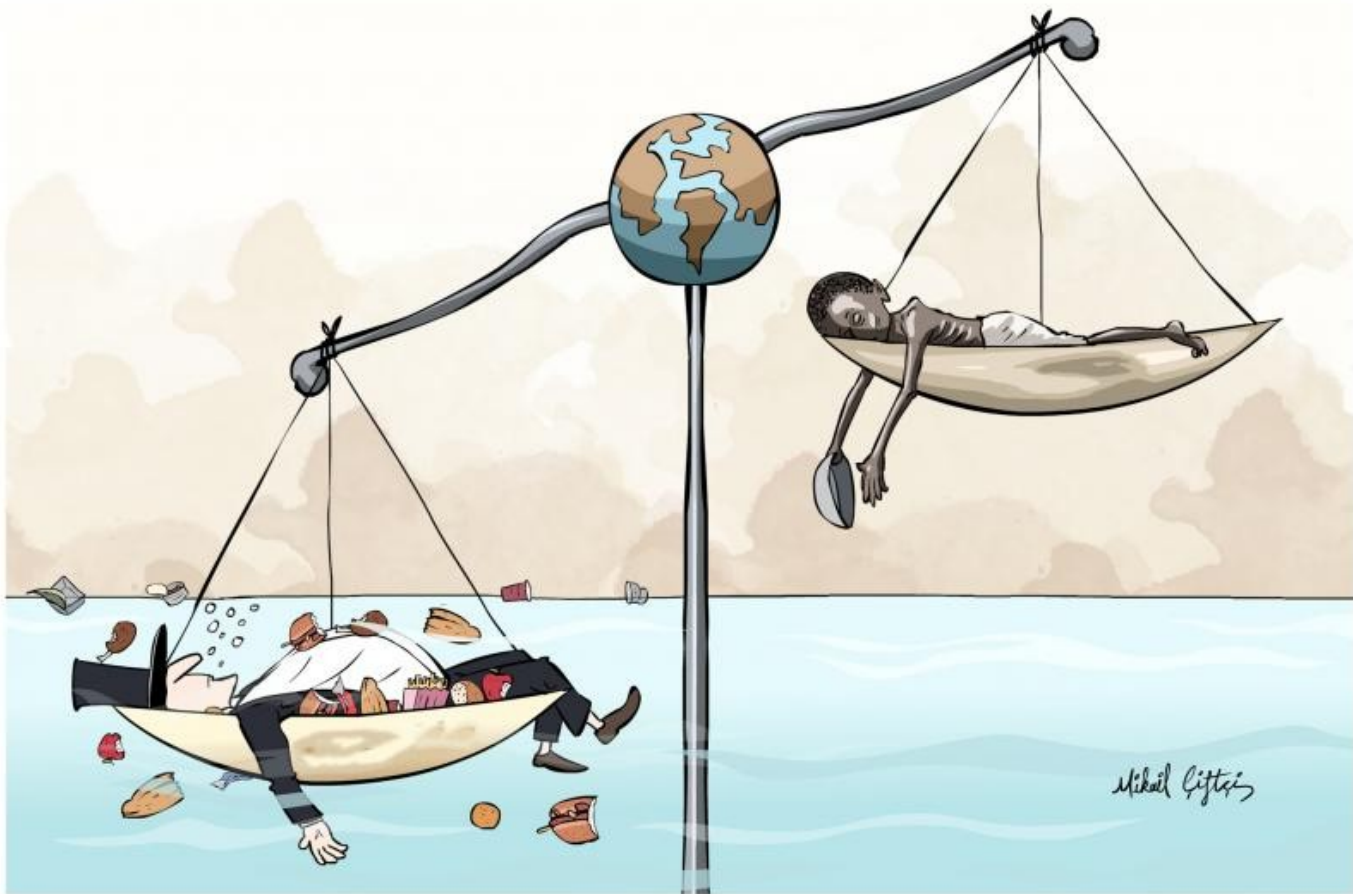


# Addressing North-South Injustices

Between 1990 and 2015 an estimated USD 242 trillion flowed from the 'developing world' to richer nations.

This amount would have been enough to end extreme poverty 70 times over.

Source: James Bradley, 2024. *Deep Water. The World in the Ocean*. Scribe Publications Australia



(Photo: Cartoonmovement.com)

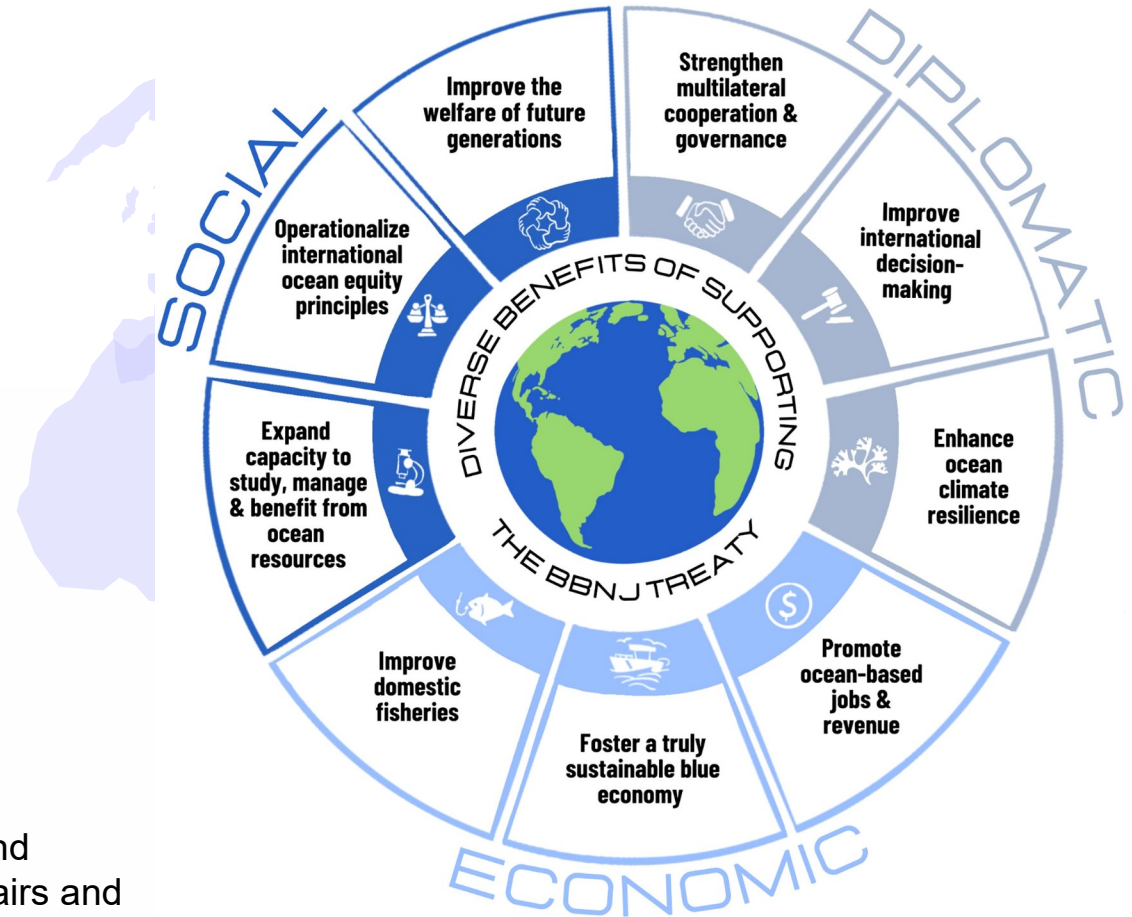


# From International Agreements...

Governments have agreed on a treaty under the Law of the Sea for protecting biodiversity in waters beyond national jurisdiction (BBNJ). It subjects the High Seas among others to measures to protect 30% for biodiversity recovery.

The admirable consensus-forming international negotiation processes harbour many lessons for advancing maritime security, especially when local communities are participating in governance affecting their futures.

Santos, B.S., *et al.* (2022). The diverse benefits of biodiversity conservation in global ocean areas beyond national jurisdiction. *Front. Mar. Sci.*, Sec. Marine Affairs and Policy, Vol. 9 | <https://doi.org/10.3389/fmars.2022.1001240>





# ...to implementation 'on the ground' (1)

Human security needs **participation in governance with economic and life perspectives for young people** to stay in the countries and not take high risk journeys across the sea or the desert in pursuit of dreams that have already ended in death or bad delusions for many.

## Some necessary steps:

- People to **know their rights**, e.g. the Guidelines to secure sustainable small-scale fisheries
- Video on the **SSF Guidelines** and gender equity in **Pidgin English, Wolof, Yoruba** done, **Fante** done with partners in Nigeria and Ghana



Small-Scale Fisheries Guidelines Video in Pidgin English



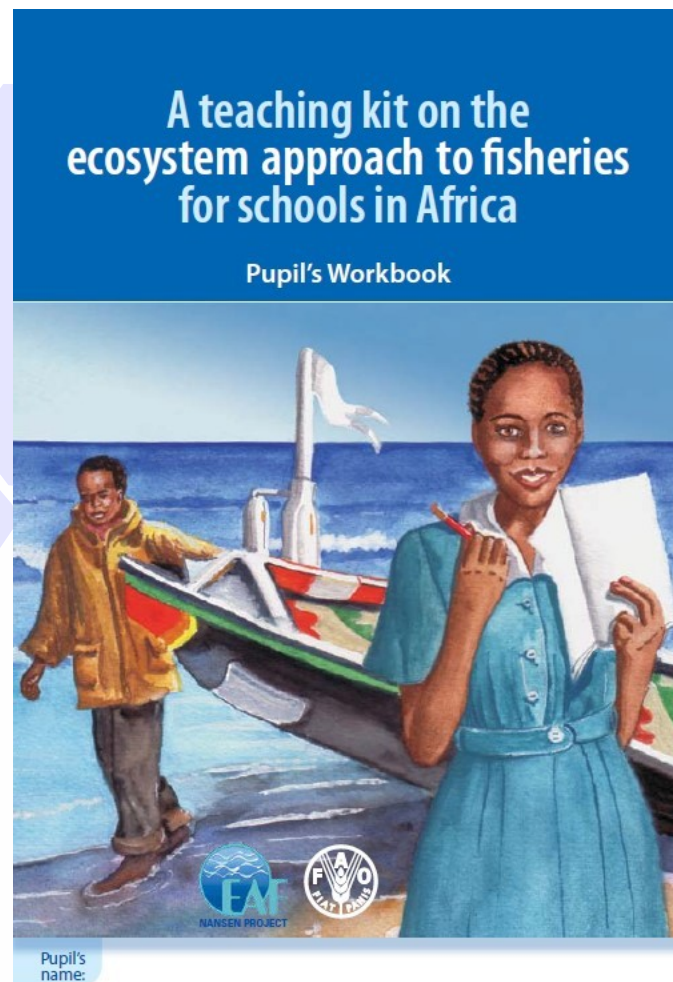
Gender Equity Video in Pidgin English



## ...to implementation 'on the ground' (2)

Industrial resource extractions and pollution provoke damage to the coastal environments and their ecosystems which sustained many people's livelihood. That is a powerful driver for irregular migration and criminal acts. Restoring resources brakes that vicious circle. How?

- **Teaching and adopting the ecosystem approach to fisheries** from early age (e.g. teaching kit developed by *Mundus maris*)
- **Take out less than can regrow**
- **Let juvenile fish grow to reproduce**
- **Curb pollution**
- **Compensate small-scale fishers for a transitional period with reduced fishing until recovery to avoid being drawn into criminal practices**





## ...to implementation 'on the ground' (3)

In Nigeria *Mundus maris* together with Fish Party and other partners organises webinars and other activities to alert particularly younger professionals in coastal communities to the importance of being well-informed and influencing policy in favour of marine and social protection, **create opportunities for women and youths.**

Work in direct support to women in fishing communities through **capacity strengthening** alternates with efforts to engage government stronger in **policy** development pro poor and pro safety.



Picture: Oluwaseyi Aiyeobasan on Pixabay



# Hardship for local fishers, women and men

The disappearance of ‘people fish’ largely from overfishing by industrial vessels of undeclared, but suspected Chinese beneficial ownership, creates great hardship for women and men in local artisanal fisheries in **Ghana**.

In **Senegal** similar conditions have provoked a spike in irregular emigration by whatever means. The confirmed death toll is much more than 500. A large alliance of civic organisations urges the government to take more decisive action to stop the loss of lives and youths for the future of the country. *Mundus maris* supports the appeal.



Foto: Herbert Bieser from Pixabay



# Transparency and accountability

- Invest in people, **strengthen coastal communities and collective action**
- Strengthen respectful links of communities with regional and national governments to create spaces for innovative solutions not based exclusively on resource extraction and export – **hold governments accountable** for keeping citizens out of harm's way, rebuild resources and implement the Voluntary **Guidelines for Ensuring Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries** adopted by FAO-COFI in 2024!
- Build **broader coalitions** incl. with local businesses; this enhances chances of success, but this requires rights-based approaches without excessive power differences; accept it's hard work, willingness to learn, recognise women as equals. **Tenure rights for SSF!**







## Call to more action (1)

- Women must have **access to social services and professional support** – build networks and trust, not cheap factory labour
- Strengthen local organisational and technical capacities; respect and emphasise **cultural heritage** for buy-in
- **Connect** international agreements to local experience to enhance agency, confidence and fairness.
- Listening, respectful dialogue and encouragement of **collaboration** are key
- **Certifications** and labels can help but are no panacea as fraud is widespread.





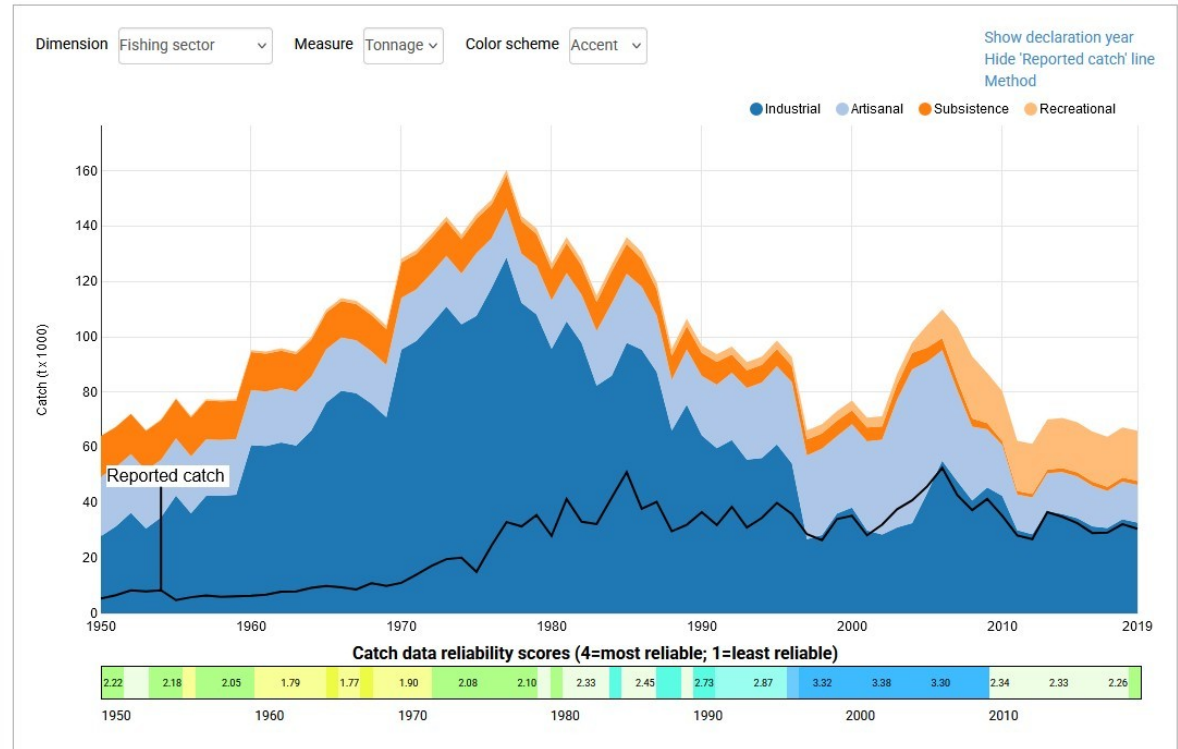
## Call to more action (2)

- The biggest **Moroccan fleet** segments are in the Atlantic EEZ and industrial, still challenging to record well.
- Moroccan small-scale fishers are particularly numerous on the Mediterranean coast representing a strong **cultural heritage**
- At the forthcoming **UN Ocean Conference**, 9-13 June 2025 in Nice, it would be great to have Morocco also represented by some of these **experienced artisanal fishers**, especially at the Med Day.

Catches by Fishing sector in the waters of Morocco (Mediterranean)

[Download Data](#)

[Feedback](#)



Catch reconstructions by the Sea Around Us Initiative



# Support fair fisheries governance

See the video of the Environmental Justice Foundation funded by the European Union about involving small-scale fishers in fighting IUU fishing by industrial fleets and defend their livelihoods



[\*\*A Global Toolkit for Participatory Fisheries Governance\*\*](#)



# Small selection of literature

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# Thanks for your attention

## Mundus maris looks for collaboration

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