

IMPACT OF TRADE-LINKED POLICIES ON THE MANAGEMENT OF FISHERIES IN WEST AFRICA

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ABSTRACT

The paper presents the impact of trade-linked policies on the management of fisheries in West Africa. It raises issues of national policies regarding fishery development but also the consequences of the ACP-EU cooperation and WTO stakes.

Exploited throughout the marine and estuarian zones of West Africa, halieutic resources, in the past twenty years, have become an essential element in the economic growth and development of several States, classed among the Less Developed Countries (LDC's). In this manner, the Cape Verde Islands, Gambia, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Mauritania and Senegal – all members of the Sub-Regional Fishing Commission (CSRP) – have, to some extent, succeeded, thanks to revenues derived from halieutic exploitation, in palliating a constant decline in agricultural income accompanied by weak, unstable growth characterized by increasing structural indebtedness. Fishing, with a total turnover, for all these countries put together, of over 900 million USD (in 2004), has not only permitted the public authorities to balance their trading accounts, but has also made considerable contributions to employment, in the sectors of both capture (with a total of 200,000 fishermen) and post harvest (unloading – processing – fish trade – marketing).

The shift of commercial and public interests towards the fishery sector has nevertheless encouraged the emergence of situations impossible to control: the increasing numbers of fishermen from the small-scale sub-sector, aggravating an already critical fishing effort accompanied by the undesirable side-effects of fishing agreements. The combination of these factors is contributing to an over-exploitation of resources and constituting a biological threat to certain species (particularly, coastal demersal species), which, in a kind of chain reaction, is now jeopardising whole sectors of the halieutic economy of these countries. These phenomena are, in part, linked to the strong extraversion of the national halieutic economies, encouraging gross, massive exportation of raw materials. Apart from the specific constraints proper to each State, they illustrate the two-fold lack of commercial policies implemented on a sub-regional level within the fishing sector: 1) insufficient consideration given to environmental and social parameters where the preservation of a sustainable halieutic economy is concerned; and 2) commercial strategies tending to discourage the development of fishing production.

The international context stands in increasing need of the definition of common, harmonized policies in relation to the fishing sector. Despite sectoral dependence vis-a-vis the European market, the commercial preferences and advantages benefiting the member countries of the CSRP under the terms of the EU-ACP agreements are doomed as a result of WTO regulations and the objectives of liberalisation. Similarly, the multiple impacts, constraints and defects of commercial policies relating to the fishing sector in each of the countries, justify the definition of convergent public strategies on several different levels (common management of certain stocks – common access policies – regional fishing quotas – harmonisation of the regulatory mechanisms relating to exploitation – standards relating to the components and characteristics of fishing equipment).

Keywords: Trade, fishery management, cooperation, West Africa

INTRODUCTION

Exploited throughout the marine and estuarian zones of West Africa, halieutic resources, in the past twenty years, have become an essential element in the economic growth and development of several States, classed among the Less Developed Countries (LDC's). In this manner, the Cape Verde Islands, Gambia, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Mauritania and Senegal – all members of the Sub-Regional Fishing Commission (CSRP) – have, to some extent, succeeded, thanks to revenues derived from halieutic exploitation, in palliating a constant decline in agricultural income accompanied by weak, unstable growth characterized by increasing structural indebtedness. Fishing, with a total turnover, for all these countries put together, of over 900 million USD (in 2004), has not only permitted the public authorities to balance their trading accounts, but has also made considerable contributions to employment, in the sectors of both capture (with a total of 200,000 fishermen) and post harvest (unloading – processing – fish trade – marketing).

The shift of commercial and public interests towards the fishery sector has nevertheless encouraged the emergence of situations impossible to control: the increasing numbers of fishermen from the small-scale sub-sector, aggravating an already critical fishing effort accompanied by the undesirable side-effects of fishing agreements with the EU, China and other nations. The combination of these factors is contributing to an over-exploitation of resources and constituting a biological threat to certain species (particularly, coastal demersal species), which, in a kind of chain reaction, is now jeopardising whole sectors of the halieutic economy of these countries. These phenomena are, in part, linked to the strong extraversion of the national halieutic economies, encouraging gross, massive exportation of raw materials. Apart from the specific constraints proper to each State, they illustrate the two-fold lack of commercial policies implemented on a sub-regional level within the fishing sector: 1) insufficient consideration given to environmental and social parameters where the preservation of a sustainable halieutic economy is concerned; and 2) commercial strategies tending to discourage the development of fishing production.

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COMMERCIAL POLICIES AND HALIEUTIC SECTORS OF WEST AFRICA

Dème et al. [1] have demonstrated the pluri-functionality of West African fisheries. These fisheries are characterised by a variety of functions within the national economies: job creation, contributing to food security and earning strong currencies. The present context of adjustment of economies nevertheless makes the realisation of each of these objectives illusory, since concern is focused on the consolidation of exterior accounts. For this reason, the public management of halieutic resources implies exports. This orientation is seen very clearly in Senegal and Mauritania, from the point of view of international trade and monetary constraints, and to a great degree by Gambia, Guinea-Bissau and Guinea-Conakry, which are earning increasingly greater sums of money from the exploitation of national halieutic resources, viewed as a sort of welcome commercial “manna from Heaven”.

Nevertheless, the absence of an established link between trade and the exploitation of resources has led the public authorities to draw up management measures unrelated to commercial considerations, and which are, therefore, placed increasingly on the defensive by opportunistic actors with very close connections to the international market. An evaluation of the effects of the trade on fishery sectors in 6 countries in West Africa [1-6] stresses this lack of understanding, on a national scale, of the relations between trade and marine ecosystems. All these studies stress the difficulty, at the present time, of devising management measures in response to the effects of the penetration of forces related to the international markets in national production systems. Furthermore, an evaluation of the effects on the global policy of each country in the Sub- Region stresses two elements tending to jeopardise all efforts aimed at achieving so-called durable development:

- The first is the phenomenon of “ecological dumping”, defined as the selling, below cost, of natural resources, distorting the economic growth trajectory based on an unwise exploitation of renewable and non-renewable natural resources;
- The second is the concept of consistency in sectoral and national policies, revealing that the coordination of public policies, in particular, those dedicated to production, the marketing of natural resources and the management of those resources, generates much greater positive fallout for a country than policies which are mutually inconsistent.

The cooperation model resulting from the Lomé Agreements, replaced, since 2000, by the Cotonou Accord, permits the ACP countries to export all their fishery products in the absence of the customs barriers imposed upon other countries acting as European suppliers. This system contradicts WTO regulations, for two reasons. On the one hand, the agreement is discriminatory, since the commercial preferences only relate to the ACP countries, instead of all developing countries. On the other hand, the agreement is non-reciprocal, since European exports enjoy no preference upon entering ACP countries. During the WTO meeting at Doha in 2001, the EU-ACP countries obtained

a new derogation from the WTO regulations until 31 December 2007. In the wake of the Cotonou Agreement, negotiations began in September 2002 for the purpose of achieving new methods of cooperation by 2008 [7]. In reality, the customs concessions granted by the EU to the ACP countries in regards to fishery products are becoming less and less preferential. On the one hand, the customs differential has been seriously eroded due to a general reduction in customs duties engendered by the GATT Accords. On the other hand, increasingly greater numbers of countries are enjoying freedom from customs duties on the European market. Thus, the totality of Least Advanced Countries (LAC) have been enjoying the same preferences as the ACP countries since 2001, with the "Everything But Arms" initiative (EBA). This phenomenon, i.e., the reduction in customs duties, has been accompanied, for several years now, by profound changes in conditions of access to the Community market. The principal importing countries have therefore drawn up sanitary and technical measures which must henceforth be respected by all potential importers. While the WTO regulations permit restrictions on discriminatory measures, for developing countries, these new measures are often viewed as distortions in trade, further marginalising them from the sphere of international trade.

Commercial mechanisms such as the Cotonou Accords associating Europe with the countries of the Sub-Region have placed the halieutic channels in a position of false competitiveness and increased dependence vis-a-vis the European market, due to the privileges granted (exemption from customs duties and non-limitation of quantities on entry). In this manner, the constantly increasing export volumes of countries like Mauritania and Senegal have generated pressures both food security and on resources -- not to mention the fact that the fishing agreements concluded with the EU are further exacerbating these same pressures [8]. Moreover, the entry into effect of the WTO regulations once again jeopardises the favourable position of the ACP countries on the European markets for transformed products. Europe will now have to conclude free-trade agreements with the ACP countries at the end of a transition period lasting until 2008. For instance, the new data relating to the liberalisation of commercial trade in fact threatens the privileges granted the ACP countries by the Lomé Accords due to the simple fact that the production costs of African fish are between 25% and 50% higher than those of Asian countries, particularly, Thailand or the Philippines

On another level, west African studies on trade [1-6] have stressed the importance of monetary factors, both internal and external, which appear to be just as important as the volume of exports itself. Fluctuations in the dollar and the yen thus have notable repercussions on the value of exports: the example of Mauritanian octopus shows that, with the same volume of exports, the amount of foreign currency earned may vary by as much as 100% from one year to another [7]. On the national level, a drop in the value of a currency logically implies increased exports, and vice-versa. The case of Guinea-Conakry is highly revealing, since the Guinean Franc has seriously depreciated over the past few years, making the nation's exports more competitive on the sub-regional scale (mention should also be made, once again, of the effects of the devaluation of the CFA Franc on Senegal by the team from Senegal: enhanced penetration of halieutic products on the European markets following the devaluation, with the exception of the tuna fishing vessels unloading part of their captures at Dakar. Mention should also be made of the few obligatory unloadings of certain categories of demersal vessels consisting, however, of a hodgepodge of species or of fish unsuitable for export to Europe) [9].

The latest element relating to the interference of trade in the functioning of fishing systems has been stressed by Senegal and Mauritania. The increased importance of fishing for export purposes is basically due to the enhanced profitability of the units of production following the transition from the capture of traditional pelagic species to that of demersal species with a high export market value. Over and above the more attractive prices on the latter market, mention must be made of an important reduction in the amount of investments for fishing equipment. These two factors, combined, explain the infatuation with demersal species accompanied by a gradual loss of interest in small pelagic species. This explains the trend, which began in the mid-1980s, away from the capture of species with a poor commercial value, but which are highly prized by local populations (short-bodied sardinella, for example), towards noble demersal species intended for the European markets (particularly the enclosed regions in which the populations have poor purchasing power).

THE EFFECT OF COMMERCIAL AND ASSOCIATED MEASURES ON RESOURCES AND ECOSYSTEMS

Demersal species, cephalopods and shrimp are the groups of species most frequently targeted for export and hunted by Community vessels in West African waters. Demersal species are the *raison d'être* of the fishing agreements negotiated with the countries of the Sub-Region: as a proof of the rate of utilisation nearly 100% in the case of demersal licences relating to species with a high commercial value, such as octopus, shrimp, hake and other noble

demersal species. The existence of national fleets specialising in these species creates serious competition between the Community and national fleets [11]. The result, stressed by each of the 6 studies [1-6], is a generalised over-exploitation of all demersal species over the entire West African continental shelf. Thus, due to their sole activity of fishing for stocks which have been scientifically declared to be in chronically poor health, Community vessels are contributing to the movement towards an over-exploitation of resources, which is entirely opposed to the declarations of intent of the Common Fisheries Policy, particularly as regards respect for the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fishing (the findings of the “Fishery Information and Analysis System” (FIAS) project have confirmed, on the scale of the Sub-Region and after three years of work, the obvious over-exploitation of all demersal species with a high commercial value, see www.siap.org).

Under these conditions, the Community fishing agreements concerning the demersal species, shrimp and cephalopods are incompatible with the sectoral policies of the countries of the Sub-Region, since they aggravate the fishing effort for over-exploited species. But as such, the vessels under APC are not in a situation of conflict with the objectives of conservation as the national fleets could be: over-exploitation concerns everyone! It is also useless to blame over-exploitation solely on the vessels under agreement. The truth of this statement can be proven by a single example: vessels under Community agreement capture less than 8,000 tons of demersal species in Senegal per year, while the industrial and smallscale fleets fish capture more than 80,000 tons for export. But the Community vessels are still considered responsible for this lamentable situation...

THE EFFECT OF COMMERCIAL AND ASSOCIATED MEASURES ON THE MARKET SUPPLY AND FOOD SECURITY

Measures to liberalise trade, in the form of fishing agreements with the EU, or in the form of increased exports of demersal species and other seafood products with a high commercial value, have repercussions on national consumption. The first observation, stressed by the study-countries, is that neither the Community vessels under agreement, nor national vessels, operate for the account of the national markets. While the first do not unload their captures in national ports, the second do; but their captures are still not offered for sale on the national markets: all species with a high market value are exported. This clearly implies that the national fishing fleets operate, in part, not for the account of the West-African consumer, but rather, for that of the European consumer.

All this would be inconsequential if fish did not represent a major source of animal protein for the coastal populations of the countries of West Africa. In Guinea- Bissau, Failler and al. [10] mention rates of consumption of more than 100 kg/adult/year, while the Senegal team stresses the growing importance of fish in the contribution of protein of animal origin for the coastal populations (which may attain 75%). Migration to the large coastal urban centres of Nouakchott, Dakar, Banjul, Bissau Conakry, Praia and Mindelo are accompanied by changes in habits of consumption, in which fish is gradually replacing meat. This substitution is explained by two factors: the first is the abundance of small pelagic species at low prices in view of the surplus production recorded by the small-scale fleet; the second relates to the high prices of meat products, particularly, red meat from livestock breeding areas in the interior of the country (or imported). In this context, the absence of unloadings, accompanied by national exports, have the following repercussions (with the exception of small pelagic species in a cyclical state of abundance at the present time):

- 1) a reduction in the supply of fish on the national markets, with the corollary result, in the present situation of an increasing rarity of resources, of higher prices, which, in turn, has the effect of reducing the purchasing power of West African households, a majority of whom already live below the poverty level;
- 2) an initial phenomenon of substitution, between the species traditionally consumed, and species characterised by very low consumption -- or no consumption at all -- a decade ago, as well as between species with a high market value but now absent, and species consumed, until recently, by low-income families only; in the first event, this implies a change in consumer habits, without any perception of the loss of nutritional or energetic values, and, in the second event, price increases in species with a poor market value, depriving poor households of their traditional fish markets. In general, this implies a reduction in the range of choice for the populations or, in other words, an increased vulnerability of these same people, due to their increased dependence on range of narrower range of potential consumer products.
- 3) a second substitution phenomenon between fish and poultry, in part, imported from Europe (particularly due to export subsidies) due to the lower prices of white meat compared to fish prices;

4) a rendering of West African public opinion opposed to fishing agreements with the European Union due to an impression that they are being despoiled of their fish. Even if, for the moment, civil society has been unable to express an opinion on the subject, the forthcoming negotiations for a partnership agreement run the risk of arousing criticism.

COMMERCIAL FISHING OR DEVELOPMENT AGREEMENTS AND THE CHANGE OF COURSE ANNOUNCED WITH THE NEW COMMUNITY FISHING AGREEMENTS

To date, all the Community agreements concluded with the countries of the Sub-Region are purely commercial in nature. The study-countries in fact consider that the budgets allocated to so-called developmental actions are merely practical and inexpensive methods by means of which the EU attempts to pacify all the actors evolving in the fishing industry: research, small-scale fishing, supervision, fishery management, etc. The significant portion of the amount allocated to development actions in the new protocols of agreement is also perceived as an elegant way to satisfy everyone. It is therefore an artifice intended to obtain general consent, as well as a pretext to dress up the fishing agreements in the colours of development.

The EU position, which considers the fishing agreements as a support to the development of the partner countries, while it subjects their national fleets (both industrial and small-scale) to unfair competition by subsidising its vessels and jeopardising the priority granted for access to certain resources to the fishermen from the countries of the Sub-Region, is increasingly indefensible in the eyes of national and international public opinion. But the position of the countries of the Sub-Region -- which, regardless of scientific advice relating to overexploitation of resources and the deterioration of the national fleets, renew fishing agreements with the EU, other countries and other long-distance fleets -- is equally indefensible. It is therefore necessary to believe, and, as shown by the study-countries, that the conservation of resources has not yet been integrated into the financial considerations of the decision-makers, either Sub-Regional or European.

The notion of development is becoming central to the new Community fishing agreements. Since December 2002, a new format of agreements has been created. Long discussed and disputed by several Community instances (DG-Development, DG-Commerce, Parliament), the new fishing agreements, re-christened "partnership fishing agreements", are gradually entering the international scene, including West Africa, upon expiration of the protocols of agreement already in force at the present time. While the present agreements were slightly ambiguous as to the display of their vocation (commercial or development), the new ones are even more so. These agreements are in fact nothing more nor less than partnership agreements intended to promote responsible fishing in the signatory country! And that can only be achieved on the basis of a privileged relationship⁽¹⁰⁾ In other words, the signatory coastal State must be much more exclusive than at the present time vis-a-vis its commitments with the EU: no agreements with other countries or armaments coming into conflict with the interests of Community ship-owners), long term, to encourage cooperation and move towards a better allocation of responsibilities (on the part of the coastal countries and the EU).

Still with a view to doing a better job, the idea underlying these new agreements is to link the negotiations to the management of marine resources of the coastal country, as well as to the supervision and control of the activity of vessels (all vessels) in the national EEZ. Here, we find two major characteristics of the Common fishery policy: 1) the illusion of rational management and 2) the illusion of control. The first illusion consisted of creating a fisheries management system based on theoretical models, efficient from the didactic point of view, but totally inapplicable to reality: this is confirmed by the recent closures of fisheries in the North Sea. The second, which is a generalised syndrome on the scale of planetary management bodies, consists of believing that control measures are a safeguard which will, on the one hand, ensure that the selected management model is applied unambiguously; and, on the other hand, that the control is sufficient to counter the phenomena of over-fishing, rejections, accessory captures, fraud, etc.

On another level, the new fishing agreements are a good way to escape from the WTO trap relating to subsidies. The EU holds an interesting position on defining categories of subsidies: subsidies are called "red", if they help increase over-capacity in fishing; "green", if they contribute to the restructuring of the European fishing sector. In other words, subsidies encouraging the departure of European vessels from Community waters must be considered Green, since they permit a restructuring of the Community fishing sector. Nevertheless, these vessels, located in the waters

of non-EU countries, such as those of the Sub-Region, cause an increase in the fishing effort, thus participating de facto in fishing over-capacity. In short, fishing agreements are “green” subsidies from the European point of view, but “red” from the point of view of the vessel’s host country. The geographical scale is therefore a key variable in the dread of subsidies.

THE WEAKNESS OF SUB-REGIONAL COOPERATION

Within the framework of the 1993 agreement relating to the determination of conditions of access and exploitation of halieutic resources along the coasts of the Member States of the Sub-Regional Fishing Commission, the States were engaged in negotiating fishing agreements with duration of two years or less. The concern for the preservation of resources and the absence of contingency protocols in the event of a drop in stocks were elements moving in the direction short-term, renewable agreements: a form of precautionary principle. Unfortunately, this principle, this clause of the agreement, has not been respected, since the States have alternately signed agreements for 3 years, 4 years and now 5 years. Recent and present attempts to unite the States of the Sub-Region around the definition of minimum conditions of access are nevertheless retriggering a process of sub-regional consultation on regulated access. Nevertheless, these attempts, upon the instigation of the new Programme Regional de Conservation de la Zone côtière et Marine (PRCM) and more precisely its component on fishing agreement negotiation, are still on the dialogue level, and seem far from practical implementation: all the States of the Sub-Region have agreed to adopt a common policy, but each acts differently during negotiations rendering vague sub-regional desires obsolete (the example of the Forum of the Pacific is often cited as a pluri-States mechanism for the negotiation and follow-up of agreements).

In addition to the weakness of the sub-regional position faced with the fishing agreements, each of the presentations of the study-countries has stressed the necessity of dealing with the problem of migrant fishermen with greater sub-regional consistency. Increasingly sustained migration of Senegalese fishermen to the waters of Mauritania, the Cape Verde Islands, Gambia, Guinea-Bissau and Guinea-Conakry (if not even further away) does not always occur in a spirit of respect for the health of the sub-regional ecosystems, not to mention the quasi-violation of national regulations. In other words, the countries of the Sub-Region are, today, suffering from the postponement of the fishing effort (or fishing overcapacity) of the Senegalese fleets. The species targeted by the migrant units in the waters of neighbouring countries are intended for export, reinforcing the opportunistic nature of these fishing campaigns while increasing the risks of conflict between fishing communities.

CONCLUSION

Signs of the liberalisation of trade are to be attributed just as much to the account of changes in changes in the international context of multilateral or bilateral exchanges as to those of the national institutional environment. The production system of the countries of the Sub-Region 8 is increasingly oriented towards the exterior (in decreasing order of importance, Mauritania, Senegal, Guinea-Bissau, Guinea-Conakry, Gambia, the Cape Verde Islands). The functioning of the national fisheries is therefore particularly sensible to any contextual change and very vulnerable, since it disposes of only very little room to manoeuvre in relation to the redeployment of its means of production (Due to the specificity of the means of production designed for a restricted type of fishing) and diversification of its exterior markets. For example, cephalopods are highly prized on the Japanese market (and European market, but to a lesser extent), while the demersal species are solely unloaded on the European markets, while the small pelagic species of West Africa, plus sharks’ fins, are sold in Asia.

The gradual dismantling of customs barriers helps the countries of the Sub-Region only very little, since the Sub-Region already benefits from privileged conditions of access for its principal exports on both the Japanese and European markets. Nevertheless, the multilateral free trade agreements of the WTO which are gradually marking the end of customs duties on exports and imports seem today to be giving way to technical and health non-tariff measures. Despite major efforts at modernisation and the subjection of its cephalopod packaging and transformation equipment, the countries of the Sub-Region do not yet present, for the totality of their production, all the technical and health conditions required by foreign markets. This in itself constitutes a handicap which annihilates the positive effects of the tariffs measures, and which threatens to counter the national development plans of the fishing sector in the near future if these problems are not remedied.

On the scale of the countries of the Sub-Region, the liberalisation of trade has essentially been reflected in two factors. The first consists of facilitating or encouraging exports (this is particularly true for Senegal and Mauritania). While these measures were intended to develop the fishing industry, today, small-scale fishing seems to be benefiting the most. These measures are nevertheless precariously balanced against management measures which more or less tend to limit fishing efforts with regards to national halieutic resources which are doing badly. The second type of measure consists of opening the national waters to foreign vessels. While in the very early 1980s, during negotiations for the first Community fishing agreements (which are the continuation of numerous bilateral agreements between the coastal States and France, Italy, Spain and Portugal since 1986), the development plans for national industrial fisheries were not yet in contradiction with the presence of Community vessels (except in Mauritania, due to the policy of nationalisation of the means of production and exclusive fishing for noble demersal species accompanied by the national constraints of unloading at Nouadhibou. Which does not permit utilisation of the trawl net), the situation today is quite different due to competition in both the fishing zones (targeting of the same species) and markets. The fishing agreements with the EU have significantly contributed increasingly greater sums to public treasuries and, by the same token, to a reduction in foreign debt and to various investments. They have, on the other hand, sounded the death-knell of the national industrial fishing fleets. More competitive, better access to European markets, the European fleet is increasingly eclipsing the other, smaller, fleets from Senegal, Mauritania, Guinea-Bissau, and Guinea, which no longer know where to go to search for more fish. Small-scale fishing does not appear to suffer from the same misadventures, since today, in both Senegal and Mauritania, it earns a major proportion of its turnover by exporting its captures, compared to only a few hundred tons 10 years before (a large proportion of the noble demersal species for the export markets). The key to this success no doubt lies in the utilisation of fishing methods which are efficient while permitting the live capture of fish or octopus, operating near the unloading zones (which reduces the deterioration of the product), have notably lower unitary production costs than those of the industrial fleets, while responding perfectly to the requirements of the international market, which requires very fresh, high-quality products with very high-quality meat.

The liberalisation of access to resources, in the form of fishing agreements, must be understood in a broader context than that of national or sectoral accounting, expressed in terms of revenues and jobs. The agreements must therefore be understood as forming part of a broader process of relations between each of the Sub-Regional countries with the EU. There is nothing to prevent us, however, from measuring the effects, both economic and social, and, in particular, environmental, of these agreements. The same applies to the effects of the national industrial and small-scale fishing fleets. As such, the environmental effects of trade liberalisation measures in general are seriously harmful to marine ecosystems. All demersal resources are fully or even over-exploited. As mentioned supra, small-scale fishing, due to the utilisation of more selective machinery and the absence of major rejection, presents a profile better adapted to the marine environment. The destruction of populations of sharks and rays along the Mauritanian coasts nevertheless deprives such statements of some of their value, and allows the conclusion that a general change in perception relating to the marine environment is long past due [13], if the countries of the Sub-Region are to continue to enjoy the halieutic resources which Nature so generally made available to them.

In addition to the environmental effects, the presentations of the study-countries, relating to the analysis of the liberalisation of trade, clearly reveal the lack of consistency within the national fishing sectors, as well as a certain incoherence on the level of individual countries. Continued planning of activities in the halieutic sector, while simultaneously failing to take account, not only of the evolution of the international context linked to trade, the environment, ethics and democracy, as well as the national phenomena such as the struggle against poverty, the economic growth of other sectors and the national allocation of wealth, is leading to an increasingly hopeless situation. In other words, the countries of the Sub-Region must move beyond sectoral planning in relation to fisheries, and devise a process of strategic planning, integrating the principal economic and social components of the country [14]. This kind of strategic planning in relation to the fishing sector would then lead directly to an improvement in sectoral and global consistency while limiting damage to the marine environment.

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