

CONFERENCE MINISTERIELLE SUR LA
COOPERATION HALIEUTIQUE ENTRE LES
ETATS AFRICAINS RIVERAINS DE
L'OCEAN ATLANTIQUE



COMHAFAT/ATLAFCO

MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE ON
FISHERIES COOPERATION AMONG
AFRICAN STATES BORDERING THE
ATLANTIC OCEAN

REPORT

WORKSHOP

“TO ACCELERATE THE ELIMINATION OF CHILD LABOR IN THE
FISHING SECTOR IN AFRICA”



27-28 FEBRUARY 2024, CASABLANCA
MOROCCO

I. INTRODUCTION

Context :

The fisheries sector, as an economic pillar for many communities in Africa, is of critical importance to the livelihood and well-being of thousands of families. Rivers, lakes and coasts abound in aquatic resources, providing a vital source of food, income and livelihoods. However, this economic dependence on fishing exposes these communities to complex and often overlooked challenges related to children's participation in this sector.

The reality of child labor in fisheries highlights the profound impact of this activity on the daily lives of these young people. Although fishery is a central part of economic life, it can also lead to increased vulnerability of children, exposing them to precarious working conditions, health risks and educational barriers. These challenges raise crucial questions regarding the protection of children's human rights and the need to build a sustainable future for these communities.

Children's participation in the fisheries sector is often rooted in difficult economic realities. Families often rely heavily on income generated from fisheries to meet their basic needs, and this dependence can lead to the need for children to actively contribute to these activities. Economic pressures, combined with limited access to other opportunities, create a context where child labor becomes a pragmatic, although not ideal, solution.

The protection of children's rights in this context then becomes an essential challenge. It is imperative to reconcile economic necessity with the responsibility to guarantee a safe and conducive environment for the development of children. The question of the sustainability of these communities dependent on fishing also arises acutely. Practices that compromise the well-being of children also risk compromising the long-term social and economic stability of these regions.

Thus, understanding these complex dynamics in the fisheries sector in Africa requires a holistic approach. Implementing policies and practices that balance economic necessity with respect for children's rights is essential. Initiatives aimed at diversifying sources of income, improving access to education and raising awareness among communities of the importance of protecting their children are key elements in building a sustainable and balanced future for these communities.

Causes of Child Labor in Fisheries :

Poverty, as a driving force, puts crushing pressure on many families in Africa, often forcing them to make difficult decisions to secure their daily livelihood. When financial resources are limited and alternative employment prospects are rare, families frequently turn to the fishery sector as a way to supplement their income. This difficult reality highlights the complex and often desperate nature of the choices these communities face.

Lack of access to education significantly aggravates this situation. In many regions, barriers to education, such as the lack of adequate schools, the costs associated with education, and sometimes the social norms prevalent in certain communities, make education a luxury that is difficult to afford for many children. This deprivation of education creates a vicious circle where opportunities to improve living conditions are

limited, because access to education is often the essential lever to break the cycle of poverty.

Economic pressures exacerbate this dynamic by forcing families to make pragmatic decisions to survive on a daily basis. In this context, the fisheries sector appears to be an immediate solution, offering regular income opportunities, even if this sometimes means involving children in work. Children thus become essential actors in contributing to family livelihoods, a situation often accepted out of necessity rather than choice.

However, this pragmatic solution has long-term consequences. Depriving children of a formal education limits their future opportunities and perpetuates the cycle of poverty in the community. Lack of education can also make them more vulnerable to exploitation and abuse, creating a vicious cycle that is difficult to break without targeted interventions.

To break this vicious cycle, holistic approaches are needed. This includes establishing accessible education programs, raising awareness in communities about the importance of education, as well as creating alternative economic opportunities for families. It is imperative to adopt a balanced approach that simultaneously addresses educational and economic aspects in order to break the link between poverty and child labor in the fishing sector, thereby paving the way for a brighter future for these communities.

Consequences on Children and Society :

The consequences of child labor in fisheries are multidimensional. On an individual level, this compromises children's health, education and psychosocial development. On a societal level, this can contribute to the perpetuation of the cycle of poverty, resulting in a less educated and more vulnerable population.

Mitigation Approaches :

To address the complex problem of child labor in the fisheries sector in Africa, integrated and coherent measures are essential. These measures must encompass various aspects of the problem and address the deep roots that fuel it.

First, it is imperative to strengthen and implement strict national and international regulations to prohibit child labor in the fisheries sector. This requires close collaboration between governments, international agencies and local stakeholders. Strengthening existing laws, or creating new legislation where they are lacking, must be supported by effective enforcement mechanisms. This will ensure that companies and individuals involved in child labor are held accountable for their actions. Harmonizing regulations internationally is also crucial to prevent exploitative practices that could simply move from one region to another.

Alongside strict regulations, initiatives to improve access to education are of paramount importance. This includes the creation and financial support of schools adapted to local needs, the provision of educational materials, and the establishment of incentive programs to encourage school attendance. It is essential to recognize that education is a powerful tool to break the cycle of poverty and empower future generations. Investing in education provides children with the opportunity to develop their skills and aspire to opportunities that go beyond immediate economic constraints.

Community awareness is another essential part of this integrated approach. Informing families about the harmful consequences of child labor and the alternatives available can change mentalities. Awareness campaigns can also play a crucial role in highlighting children's rights and promoting a culture where education is valued alongside work. Actively involving community members in these campaigns strengthens the sense of ownership and commitment to more ethical practices.

Finally, providing support to vulnerable families is essential. This can take the form of economic development programs aimed at diversifying family income sources, thereby reducing the pressure on children to work. Social protection initiatives, such as social safety nets, can also play a crucial role in providing direct financial support to the poorest families.

By combining these different approaches, it is possible to create positive momentum towards the elimination of child labor in the fisheries sector in Africa. This integrated approach recognizes the complexity of the problem and strives to address its multi-faceted to ensure lasting change within these vulnerable communities.

In this sense, ATLAFCO is organizing a workshop dedicated to this issue entitled: “ *To accelerate the elimination of child labor in the fishing sector in Africa* ”

The objective of this workshop is to bring together representatives of member countries, international and regional organizations, NGOs, civil society as well as experts and resource people to debate in a rich and relevant manner on the means of combating child labor and promote decent work in supply chains, particularly in Africa, by adopting a systemic approach to eliminate child labor at its roots by strengthening existing mechanisms at several levels of governance including:

1. Improving awareness-raising activities and communication products intended for stakeholders in the fisheries sector for better governance;
2. Capacity building and learning opportunities for fisheries stakeholders on the prevention of child labor and the promotion of youth employment;
3. The development of information and guidance documents for selected fishery stakeholders in order to reinforce good practices in the fight against child labor;
4. The organization of regional consultations between agricultural stakeholders on the theme of child labor in fisheries;
6. The development of knowledge products on specific themes related to child labor in the fishing sector.

By implementing this action commitment, more stakeholders in the fisheries and aquaculture sector will be aware, informed, able and committed to taking advantage of opportunities to contribute to the reduction of child labor in fisheries .

The workshop will take place around the following sessions:

Session I: Overview of the prevalence of child labor in the fisheries and aquaculture sectors in Africa

The prevalence of child labor in Africa has historically been high, hovering around 20% of all child labor worldwide. However, according to the latest data, sub-Saharan Africa

is the region with the highest prevalence of child labor and the largest number of working children, at 23.9% or 86.6 million children. children aged 5 to 17.

Indeed, there are now more children working in sub-Saharan Africa than in the rest of the world combined. It is obvious that the goals on child labor will not be met without a breakthrough in this region

Session II: Causes, characteristics and consequences of child labor in the fisheries and aquaculture sectors

Although many challenges can be attributed to root causes such as poverty, socio-cultural factors and lack of awareness about this issue, these root causes are complex and require all available resources from governments, civil society and the private sector to tackle child labor in the fisheries sector

Session III: International and regional efforts and initiatives to combat child labor in the fisheries and aquaculture sector

- Joint FAO and ILO guidance for combating child labor in the fisheries and aquaculture sector
- The International Year for the Elimination of Child Labor, 2021
- The African Union's commitment to eradicate child labor

Session IV: State of play of national legislation in ATLAFCO countries in the fight against child labor in the fisheries and aquaculture sector

Governments are at the forefront of ending child labor in agriculture, starting with strengthening social protection. By protecting households from extreme poverty, parents could refrain from sending their children to work for economic reasons and, in doing so, increase children's chances of continuing their educational journey (OHCHR, 2022).

Session V: Towards promoting visibility of children's rights at all levels of society

Addressing child labor in Africa's fisheries sector is a complex undertaking that requires close and coordinated collaboration among various stakeholders. Each of these parties has a crucial role to play in ensuring meaningful and lasting change.

Governments occupy a central position in this struggle. They are responsible for developing, implementing and enforcing effective policies that prohibit child labor in the fisheries sector. It also involves creating monitoring and sanctioning mechanisms to ensure compliance. Governments also have a crucial role in promoting education by facilitating access to quality educational programs and providing incentives to encourage children's schooling.

Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) play a vital role as defenders of children's rights and as drivers of social change. NGOs can provide support on the ground by identifying cases of child labor, providing community awareness services and advocating in favor of more robust policies at the national and international level. Their ability to mobilize resources and operate in an agile manner allows them to quickly respond to the specific needs of affected communities.

Businesses also have an important responsibility in combating child labor. This starts with implementing ethical business practices that reject all forms of child labor in their

supply chains. Businesses can also contribute financially to educational and social development initiatives in the communities where they operate, creating a long-term positive impact.

Unions can play a key role in defending the rights of workers, including children. They can work in partnership with businesses to ensure that working conditions meet ethical and legal standards. Unions can also advocate for fair wages and better working conditions, reducing economic pressure on families that can lead to child labor.

Finally, the involvement of local communities is fundamental. Communities are often best placed to understand local dynamics, specific challenges and solutions adapted to their context. Empowering communities through awareness, education and economic development programs strengthens their capacity to protect their children and reject child labor as an accepted social norm.

In short, the fight against child labor in the fisheries sector in Africa requires harmonious and coherent collaboration between governments, NGOs, businesses, unions and local communities. Each of these actors has a distinct but interconnected role, and it is by joining forces that they can create sustainable solutions adapted to each context.

Conclusion :

In conclusion, the adoption of integrated approaches is imperative to make significant progress in combating child labor in the fisheries sector in Africa. This need arises from the inherent complexity of this problem, which is intrinsically linked to deeply rooted socio-economic, educational and cultural factors. By combining various strategies, it becomes possible to address these multiple dimensions and build a more promising future for children and affected communities.

The integrated approach starts with establishing and strengthening strong legal frameworks, both nationally and internationally, aimed at strictly prohibiting child labor in the fisheries sector. However, regulation alone is not enough. It is essential to complement these measures with initiatives focused on strengthening education systems. Access to quality education, adapted to local needs, becomes a powerful weapon to break the cycle of poverty and child labor. This not only allows children to develop their skills, but also changes the outlook of the entire community by providing broader horizons.

Community awareness plays a crucial role in this integrated approach. It is imperative to change mentalities and challenge social norms that accept child labor as an inevitable practice. Targeted awareness campaigns can shed light on the harmful consequences of this practice, mobilize local support and strengthen community resistance against child labor.

At the same time, support programs for vulnerable families, focused on economic development and the creation of alternatives to income-generating activities involving children, are essential. These initiatives aim to reduce economic pressure on families, freeing them from the need to resort to child labor to support themselves.

II. Organization of the workshop:

The workshop was organized in person and online on 27-28 February 2024 in Casablanca – Morocco. The work took place in plenary sessions with presentations followed by debates.

Two moderators, **Mr. Amadou TALL** and **Mr. Naji LAAMRICH** , accompanied by two interpreters (French/English), facilitated the smooth running of the work.

The event brought together a wide range of participants (more than 37), including African officials from fisheries administrations, regional fisheries organizations, experts from ATLAFCO member states and international organizations and Civil society.

The full list of participants is attached in (**Appendix I**).

III. WORK PROGRESS

The regional workshop was marked by 4 key moments: The opening ceremony, the presentations and discussions, the presentation and discussion of conclusions and recommendations, and finally, the closing ceremony.

A. Ceremony opening:

In his opening speech **Mr. Abdellah EL ASRI** , Head of the Division of Seafarers on behalf of the Moroccan Minister of Agriculture, Maritime Fisheries, Rural Development and Water and Forests, Mohammed SADIKI, expressed his pleasure in welcoming all participants to the workshop and underlined the importance of this reflection on child labor and its alarming threat.

Speaking in turn , **Mr. NENEBY Galla Jean THIERRY** Head of the fisheries police operations department at the Ministry of Animal and Fisheries Resources of Côte d'Ivoire, after having congratulated **Mr. Taoufik EL KTIRI** for his appointment as Executive Secretary of ATLAFCO, he recalled the scale and dangerousness of child labor in Africa, he expressed the full conviction of **Minister Sidi Tiemoko TOURE**, that the reflections during this workshop will make it possible to create synergy between a variety of key stakeholders, each bringing a unique perspective and specific skills to combat child labor.

In his speech, **Mr. Taoufik ELKTIRI**, Executive Secretary of ATLAFCO, welcomed the participants with deep honor, including the representative of the Minister of Animal and Fisheries Resources of Côte d'Ivoire, delegates from member states, speakers and distinguished guests, emphasizing that this is his first participation, in his capacity as executive secretary of ATLAFCO .

Then, he recalled that the organization of this workshop, which is the 1st for this year 2024, constitutes a contribution to the laudable efforts and initiatives undertaken at the international and regional levels for the eradication of the phenomenon of child labor in the fishing and aquaculture sector and is, as a reminder, part of the strategic objective of promoting and improving the working conditions of seafarers which is supported by ATLAFCO.

B. Presentation summaries

The work of the workshop took place in accordance with the Agenda as adopted (**Annex 2**).

Session I: Overview of the prevalence of child labor in the fishing and aquaculture sectors in Africa

Presentation 01: Introduction to the phenomenon of child labor in the fishing and aquaculture sectors: **Mr. Naji LAAMRICH (ATLAFCO)**

Summary: Child labor is one of the oldest problems in our society and still remains relevant today.

Over time, child labor evolved from working in agriculture or small craft workshops to being forced to work in factories in urban settings following the industrial revolution.

Children were very profitable assets since their wages were very low, were less likely to strike, and they were easy to manipulate.

Socioeconomic disparities and lack of access to education contribute, among other things, to child labor.

Religious and cultural beliefs can be misleading and hidden in defining the boundaries of child labor that prevents children's physical, intellectual and emotional development.

According to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), the most widely accepted international human rights treaty in history, "children have the right to be protected from any work that may cause harm to children." be dangerous or harm their education, health, physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development of the child.

Although child labor constitutes a serious violation of human rights and the right to education, it is important to remember that not all work carried out by children should be considered child labor.

The International Labor Organization (ILO) defines child labor as work that deprives children of their childhood, their potential and their dignity, and harms their physical and mental development. This is work that:

- (i) is mentally, physically, socially or morally dangerous and harmful to children; and or
- (ii) interferes with their schooling

Child labor is a complex issue with deep political and socio-economic roots. To resolve these problems, a holistic and comprehensive approach must be developed, recognizing that child labor is both a cause and a consequence of poverty, inequality, discrimination, social exclusion and lack of opportunity. access to education.

- **Presentation 02 :** Overview of the characteristics of child labor in the fishing and aquaculture sectors in Atlantic Africa : **Mr. Moustapha KEBE (Consultant)**

Summary: According to the FAO, agriculture is the sector responsible for the majority of child workers in the world (70% of working children). Child labor in the agricultural sector is a large-scale phenomenon that affects children around the world. Indeed, many boys and girls aged 5 to 14 work in agricultural production, livestock breeding, forestry,

fishing or aquaculture (nearly 200 million children). Fishing, which is undoubtedly one of the most dangerous professional activities in the world, seems more affected, with children often spending long hours working.

Child labor in the fishing and aquaculture sector exists in all regions of the world, although it is most problematic in Africa and Asia. It is divided between artisanal and family businesses or is cleverly hidden by employers. But it is especially in artisanal fishing that it is most widespread. Among the operations employing children in Atlantic Africa are active fishing on board boats; preparing meals at sea; diving to capture reef fish or free snagged nets; gathering fish into nets; peeling shrimp or scaling fish and cleaning crabs; maintenance and repair of fishing gear (nets, lines); sorting, unloading, transporting the catch; the construction and repair of boats; artisanal processing and sale of fish.

One of the main characteristics of this problem is that it is the result of many root causes that are interrelated, including poverty which also remains one of the most persistent obstacles to education and deprives children of their needs basics such as food, clean water and health services. Added to this is the lack of access to education in certain areas and cultural, social and demographic factors in rural areas. For example, rural families may view children's involvement in fishing as part of their culture and a way to 'help' and teach children.

Among the recommendations for the eradication of child labor in the fishing and aquaculture sector, we can include the implementation of measures at the international, national and local level. These include legal and enforcement actions on various fronts, such as education, livelihood development and support, and improved data collection to fill information gaps.

Presentation 03: Causes and consequences of child labor in Atlantic Africa : Mr. Amadou TALL (Consultant)

Summary: In the African fisheries and aquaculture sector, children engage in a wide variety of activities, both in capture fishing and aquaculture and in all associated upstream and downstream operations, e.g. example processing, marketing, net making and boat building, thus depriving them of their right to education and a safe environment.

Children also carry out household chores in their fishing and fish farming families and communities. Child labor appears to be particularly prevalent in small and medium-sized sectors of the informal economy.

When child labor is used as cheap labor to reduce fishing costs, not only can it harm children's development, but it can also have a negative effect on the sustainability of fishing activity and the economy.

Session II: International and regional efforts and initiatives to combat child labor in the fishing and aquaculture sector

Presentation 04: The joint guidelines of the FAO and the ILO for the fight against child labor in the fishing and aquaculture sector Ms. Maria Eleonora DANDREA (FAO) & Mr. Smith BENJAMIN (ILO)

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) recognizes that child labor undermines the Organization's efforts to eradicate hunger, malnutrition in all its forms and poverty among current and future generations. .

If the majority of children continue to work in difficult conditions instead of benefiting from an education, it will be impossible to establish sustainable agriculture and food systems to feed the world's population, protect the planet and ensure strong livelihoods for farmers.

FAO recognizes its accountability through its programs and support to its members, and takes responsibility for contributing to the elimination of child labor in agriculture.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and SDG target 8.7, as well as the impetus given by the International Year for the Elimination of Child Labor (2021) proclaimed by the United Nations General Assembly, require broader engagement and more opportunities to make change happen.

The objective of the FAO Framework for the Elimination of Child Labor in Agriculture is to guide the Organization and its staff in integrating measures relating to child labor into FAO's programs and activities. at global, regional and national levels.

It aims to improve compliance with the Organization's operational standards and to strengthen coherence and synergies within it and with partners.

FAO and ILO have developed a guide to address the issue of child labor in fisheries and aquaculture. It is a policy and practice launched at the Global South-South Development Expo 2011 that highlights this issue as well as the nature, scale, causes and consequences of child labor in fisheries and aquaculture.

The guide also provides guidance to governments and development partners to identify and classify child labor in fisheries and aquaculture, to integrate child labor considerations into child labor development and management policies, strategies and programming. fisheries, and to take concrete actions.

The guide is intended for government officials, development partners, employers', workers' and producers' organizations and socio-professional organizations and other actors in the formal and informal sectors.

Summary

Presentation 05: The International Year for the Elimination of Child Labor, 2021 : **Mr. Mohamed SADIKI (ATLAFCO)**

Summary: The International Labor Organization (ILO) has proclaimed 2021 as the International Year for the Elimination of Child Labor, with the aim of encouraging legislative and policy measures that would eradicate this scourge from around the world. One of the main objectives of this initiative is to encourage governments to implement all necessary measures to achieve Goal 8: “ Promote sustained, shared and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all”, and in particular, target 8.7 which calls on Member States to take immediate and effective measures to *eliminate forced labour, end modern slavery and human trafficking, prohibit and eliminate the worst forms of labor children, including the recruitment and use of child soldiers and, by 2025, end child labor in all its forms* .

Among the international initiatives aimed at accelerating the achievement of target 8.7, there is also a declaration by the ILO since 2002 that June 12 of each year is the World Day Against Child Labor.

Furthermore, the speaker highlighted the importance of international cooperation to guarantee the protection of children's rights, through coordinated global action, collective commitment and inclusive initiatives, for financial and technical support, development of common standards and regulations, and promote mutual learning.

To this end, a multi-stakeholder global partnership called Alliance 8.7 was established under the aegis of the ILO, to i) strengthen the collaborative action taken to achieve target 8.7, ii) implement innovative solutions and iii) provide forum for dialogue and exchange of knowledge and information . It should be noted that the vice-presidency of the coordination group of the 8.7 alliance is entrusted to the Ivory Coast in recognition of its efforts to eliminate child labor.

Presentation 06: The African Union's commitment to eradicate child labor: Ms. Nelly ISYAGI (AU/IBAR)

Summary: The African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child is a broad regional instrument that defines the rights of children in Africa. The Charter is an important tool for the promotion and protection of children's rights on the continent. Although efforts have been made by the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child and its partner organizations to ensure the visibility of the Charter, the Committee noted that there is no child-friendly version of the Charter, as the existing Charter uses technical language which may not be easily understood by children.

As a result, African children who are the holders of these rights are not necessarily aware of the rights to which they are entitled. The result is a limited ability of children to claim their rights and participate meaningfully in issues that concern them.

Regarding child labor, Article 15 of the charter states:

1. The child is protected from any form of economic exploitation and from the exercise of work which probably involves dangers or which risks disrupting the child's education or compromising his health or physical development, mental, spiritual, moral and social.
2. The States Parties to this Charter shall take all appropriate legislative and administrative measures to ensure the full application of this article which covers both the official and informal sectors as well as the parallel sector of employment, taking into account the relevant provisions of the instruments of the International Labor Organization affecting children. The parties undertake in particular:
 - a) to fix, by law to this effect, the minimum age required to be admitted to a particular job,
 - b) to adopt appropriate regulations regarding hours of work and conditions of employment,
 - c) to provide for appropriate penalties or other sanctions to ensure the effective application of this article,

- d) to encourage the dissemination to all sectors of the community of information on the risks involved in the employment of child labor.

Session III: State of play of national legislation in Comhafat countries in the fight against child labor in the fishing and aquaculture sector

Presentation 07: Fight against child labor: what progress has been made in the Kingdom of Morocco : **Mr. Abdellah ELASRI(Morocco)**

Summary

June 12, 2023 marked the celebration of World Day Against Child Labor, a large-scale event aimed at raising awareness of this phenomenon and mobilizing the necessary resources to ensure a better future for children.

The theme of World Day Against Child Labor 2023 is “Universal Social Protection to End Child Labor” highlights the role of social protection systems and schemes in preventing and eliminating child labor

In Morocco, statistics reveal a significant decrease in the number of working children. Although remarkable progress has been made, additional efforts are still needed to end this scourge.

Access to the profession of seafarer is strongly regulated to work, as a seaman on board fishing vessels, the minimum age is 18 years. However, at the level of fishing ports, fishing villages and developed landing points, 30% of the active population on land are minors.

In the fishing sector several actions have been undertaken:

1. Ratification of several international conventions
2. Updating its national legal corpus (strict conditions for access to the profession, minimum age of 18 years, basic training in first aid, fire fighting and survival, physical fitness, six-month internship on board a fishing vessel before the issuance of the Professional Maritime Fishing Booklet)
3. Carrying out information and awareness campaigns
4. Adoption of the integrated action plan of the national roadmap to eliminate child labor by 2030

The adopted action plan is structured around three strategic axes, namely the acceleration of the prevention of child labor, through the fight against poverty, school dropouts, the acquisition of professional skills and information and awareness, consolidation of national regulations, strengthening of control, removal and care of working children and strengthening of governance as well as monitoring/evaluation.

Presentation 08: Ghana's Efforts to Eradicate Child Labor and Trafficking in Ghanaian Fishing Communities. **Mr. Michael Arthur- Dadzie (Consultant)**

Summary: In recent times, Ghana has prioritized the issue of child labor and trafficking as a major socio-economic and socio-political concern.

Despite these efforts, the US State Department's TIP report indicates that Ghana does not fully meet minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking.

This is because the government has not sufficiently demonstrated its efforts to combat trafficking; thereby placing Ghana on the Tier 2 Watch List for the second consecutive year.

Even though several reports attest to the realities of child labor and trafficking, the problem is that to date, empirical data is still lacking. Given that fishing is one of the most dangerous professions in the world, it is imperative to put in place policies that will regulate the role of children throughout the fishing value chain.

It is therefore absolutely necessary to develop a comprehensive national strategy to combat child labor and trafficking for the fishing sector, as a key tool to complement poverty reduction strategies, achieve education for all and improve social protection efforts.

Regarding compliance with international/regional legislation, Ghana has ratified most international conventions on child labor including ILO C. 138, minimum age, ILO C. 182, Worst Forms of Child Labour, the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), the UN CRC Optional Protocol on Armed Conflict, Child Prostitution and the Palermo Protocol on Child Pornography on human trafficking.

On the national side, the adoption of the Children Act 1998 (Act 560)

According to this law, children under the age of 15 are supposed to go to school and therefore cannot engage in any form of employment.

The National Strategy to Combat Child Labor and Trafficking in the Fishing Sector takes into account national and international plans and programs in all sectors, aimed at combating child labor and trafficking, with particular reference to the fisheries sector, by adopting multidisciplinary cooperation and coordination between all actors and stakeholders involved including government, labor market organizations (employers and unions), civil society, communities, families and children themselves.

Session IV: Towards promoting visibility of children's rights at all levels of society

Presentation 09: Mechanisms for implementing the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the role of non-governmental organizations in raising awareness of the convention and its objectives : **Dr Banja BAMBA (Consultant)**

Summary: The Convention on the Rights of the Child should serve as a point of reference and a main source of inspiration in everything governments do regarding children. By ratifying the convention, States undertake to take “all legislative, administrative and other appropriate measures” to guarantee the full exercise of the rights it sets out .

Non-governmental organizations also play a key role in raising awareness of the convention and its objectives, as well as in supporting its implementation.

The convention recognizes the value of their contribution by expressly inviting them to participate in the reporting and monitoring process, which is a first for a human rights treaty.

Governments are strongly encouraged to include all sectors of society in their reporting. Some governments consult extensively with non-governmental organizations in the accountability process and incorporate their views in reports presented to the committee;

however, individual non-governmental organizations or coalitions may also prepare alternative reports and submit them for consideration by the committee.

Presentation 10 The Media and their key role to play in the collective effort to eliminate child labor: **Mr. Noël TADEGNON (OMPDA)**

Summary: Child labor in the fishing sector in Africa is a complex and worrying problem and an alarming and persistent reality, affecting thousands of children each year. Children working in this sector are often exposed to dangerous, physically exhausting and psychologically demanding conditions.

Due to the hidden nature of this activity, it is essential to raise public awareness and take collective action to eliminate this scourge.

Role of media in public awareness revolves around:

The dissemination of information of which the media must play a crucial role in disseminating information on child labor in the fishing sector. This makes it possible to raise awareness among a wide audience of the realities of this problem.

The creation of awareness because thanks to the media, awareness on the harmful consequences of child labor in fishing can reach a global audience and mobilize concrete actions to fight against this scourge.

Journalistic reports and investigations into child labor conditions, In-depth journalistic reports and investigations expose the true nature of child labor in fishing, thus raising international awareness.

Public education through media coverage of child labor conditions in the fishing sector which helps educate the public and highlight the urgency of combating this exploitation. In order to achieve these objectives, collaboration must be encouraged between the media, governments and international organizations through:

1. Strategic Partnerships: Collaboration strengthens the reach and impact of campaigns to eliminate child labor in fishing.
2. Transmission of accurate information: This partnership ensures the dissemination of accurate data and information, thus strengthening the credibility and effectiveness of anti-child labor campaigns.
3. Coordination of actions: Coordination between media and international organizations allows collective and coordinated action, essential for a significant impact against child labor in fishing.

Finally, we must strengthen the dissemination of information on the laws and regulations in force through:

1. Legal transparency where the media relay information on the laws and regulations in force, thus enlightening the public on the legal issues surrounding child labor in fishing in Africa.
2. Education of stakeholders because this dissemination makes it possible to educate stakeholders involved in the fishing sector, encouraging them to operate in compliance with the laws to eliminate child labor.

Presentation 11: Emerging good practices in the fight against the worst forms of child labor in the fishing and aquaculture sectors: **Mr. Naji LAAMRICH (ATLAFCO)**

Summary

While many of the child labor challenges can be attributed to root causes such as poverty, lack of knowledge and awareness, and socio-cultural factors, these root causes are complex and require all available resources from governments, the civil society and the private sector to be addressed (Gaffar , Kämpfer, 2023).

To do this, it is important to establish and strengthen partnerships and initiatives between governments and business stakeholders, aligning with international conventions, standards, guidelines and national policies.

Governments are at the forefront of ending child labor in agriculture, starting with strengthening social protection. By protecting households from extreme poverty, parents could refrain from sending their children to work for economic reasons and, in doing so, increase children's chances of continuing their educational journey (OHCHR, 2022).

In terms of practical solutions, conditional financial aid in education is also a good option to consider. It is a widely used social policy tool that aims to facilitate schooling and regular school attendance. In exchange for their children's regular attendance at school, families receive payment (Gaffar , Kämpfer, 2023).

On the other hand, it is essential to implement communications aimed at changing social behavior on the elimination of child labor and to raise awareness of the harmful effects of child labor (ILO, 2023). As noted previously, the phenomenon of child workers in the agricultural sector is also determined by socio-cultural factors.

It is therefore important to increase the visibility of children's rights and promote them at all levels of society. In this sense, it is essential to promote a space for dialogue and discussion at the local level to understand and promote local knowledge, attitudes and practices on child labor in agriculture (FAO, 2022).

All presentations are available in the original language on the COMHAFAT website.

<https://comhafat.org/en/actualites.php?id=110>

IV. CONCLUSION AND CLOSING OF THE WORKSHOP

At the end of the presentations and discussions that followed, a lively debate ensued and the conference participants issued recommendations (**Appendix 3**)

Technical Committee for the formulation of recommendations:

Mr. Banja BAMBA
Mr. Michael Arthur DADZIE
Mr. Moustapha KEBE
Mr. Naji LAAMRICH
Mr. Mohamed SADIKI
Mr. Amado TALL

THE works of the workshop are declared **closed at 5:30 p.m.**

Appendix 1: List of participants

No .	Countries/Organizations	LAST NAMES	TITLE
1	Angola	Ms. Juelma Maria Vandúnem Jaime	Represent/ the Fisheries and Marine Resources Sector
2	AU/IBAR	Mr. Nelly Isyagi	Project manager/AU-IBAR
3	Benin	Mr. AGUEMON Dossa	Director of Cabinet of the Minister of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries
4	ATLAFCO	Mr. Taoufik EL KTIRI	Executive Secretary
5		Mr. Atsushi ISHIKAWA	Expert/OFCF
6		Mr. Abdennaji LAAMRICH	Head of the Cooperation and Information System Department
7		Mr. Mohamed SADIKI	Head of the Programs and Projects Department
8		Ms. Hayat ASSARA	Executive Officer
9		Mr. Mohammed HADDAD	Financial officer
10		Mr. OUJEDDOU Lhoussaine	Financial Assistant
11		Mr. Abdelkrim MRABTI	Webmaster
12	Consultant/ Côte d'Ivoire	Mr. Amadou TALL	Fisheries consultant
13	Consultant/ Gambia	Mr. BAMBA Banja	Fisheries consultant
14	Consultant/ Ghana	Mr. Michael Arthur-DADZIE ,	Chief Executive Officer Legal Consult
15	Consultant/ Senegal	Mr. Mustapha KEBE	Fisheries consultant
16	COREP	Ms Flore WORA	Administrator for human, financial and logistics resources

17	Côte d'Ivoire	Mr. NENEBY Galla Jean THIERRY	Head of Fisheries Police Operations Department
18	FCWC	Mr. DJIHINTO Antoine Gaston	General secretary
19	SRFC	Mr. Mouhamadou Makhtar SECK	Head of Financial and Accounting
20	DPM/Morocco	Mr. Abdellah EL ASRI	Head of the Seafarers Division DFMGMS/DPM
21	FAO	Ms. Maria Eleonora D'ANDREA	Child Labor Specialist Decent Rural Employment Team (DRET) Inclusive Rural Transformation and Gender Equality Division (ESP)
22	Gambia	Mr. Juma JALLOW	Representative of the Ministry of Fisheries, Water Resources and National Assembly Matters
23	Guinea	Mr. Abdoul SOW	Head of section at the National Directorate of Maritime Fisheries
24	Equatorial Guinea	Mr. Nso Edo Abegue RUBEN DARIO	Chief of staff of the Minister of Fisheries
25	ILO	Mr. Benjamin Smith	Senior Officer, Child Labor Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work Branch International Labor Organization
26	Liberia	Mr. Urias BARCLAY	NaFAA Representative -Liberia
27	Mauritania	Mr. Lamine CAMARA	Director of Resource Planning and Studies
28	Nigeria	Mr. Malchus TRACEY EWEMADE	Representative/Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development Federal Department of Fisheries,
29	MOSFA	Mr. Noël TADEGNON	Journalist
30	RAFEP	Ms. Victoire GOMEZ	President
31		Ms. Maassouda RACHID	Vice President
32		Ms. Beyene ATEBA EPSE BALIABA	Member
33	DRC	Mr. Casimir KOFFI MULUMBA	Director of Fisheries and Fisheries Resources

34	Sao Tome and Principe	Mr. João Gomes PESSOA LIMA	Director of Fish and Aquaculture
35	Senegal	Mr. Amadou Lamine DIAGNE	Fisheries and aquaculture engineer
36	Sierra Leone	Ms. Géraldine Labour- Sesay	Representative / Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources
37	Togo	Mr. AGBODJAN- TONOU Lassévi	Human resources manager at the Fisheries and Aquaculture Directorate

Annex 2 : Agenda

Day 1: February 27, 2024

OPENING AND INTRODUCTION OF THE WORKSHOP	
09:00 - 09:30	- Registration
09:30-10:30	- Official opening - Workshop presentation - Group photo - Break
SESSION I: OVERVIEW OF THE PREVALENCE OF CHILD LABOR IN THE FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE SECTORS IN AFRICA	
10:30-12:00	- Introduction to the phenomenon of child labor in the fishing and aquaculture sectors: Mr. Naji LAAMRICH (ATLAFCO) - Overview of the characteristics of child labor in the fishing and aquaculture sectors in Atlantic Africa : Mr. Moustapha KEBE (Consultant) - Causes and consequences of child labor in Atlantic Africa : Mr. Amadou TALL (Consultant) - Discussions
SESSION II- INTERNATIONAL AND REGIONAL EFFORTS AND INITIATIVES TO COMBAT CHILD LABOR IN THE FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE SECTOR	
12:00-13:30	- Joint FAO and ILO guidance for combating child labor in the fisheries and aquaculture sector Mrs. Dandrea Maria Eleonora (FAO) - The International Year for the Elimination of Child Labor, 2021 : Mr. Mohamed SADIKI (ATLAFCO) - The African Union's commitment to eradicate child labor: Ms. Nelly ISYAGI (AU/IBAR) - Discussions
13:30-14:30	Lunch
SESSION III - STATUS OF NATIONAL LEGISLATION OF COMHAFAT COUNTRIES REGARDING THE FIGHT AGAINST CHILD LABOR IN THE FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE SECTOR	
14:30-16:00	- Fight against child labor: what progress has been made in the Kingdom of Morocco : Mr. Abdellah ELASRI(Morocco) - National action plan to combat child trafficking, exploitation and labor in Côte d'Ivoire Mr. NENEY Galla Jean THIERRY (Côte d'Ivoire) - Ghana's Efforts to Eradicate Child Labor and Trafficking in Ghanaian Fishing Communities . Mr. Michael Arthur- Dadzie (Consultant) - Other member countries
16:00-16:30	Coffee break
16:30 -17:30	- Discussions - Formation of a select committee to formulate recommendations

Day 2: February 28, 2024

SESSION IV- TOWARDS PROMOTING VISIBILITY OF CHILDREN’S RIGHTS AT ALL LEVELS OF SOCIETY	
09:30 -12:00	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Implementation mechanisms of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the role of non-governmental organizations in raising awareness of the convention and its objectives: Dr Banja BAMBA (Consultant)- The Media and their key role to play in the collective effort to eliminate child labor: Mr. Noël TADEGNON (OMPDA)- Emerging good practices in the fight against the worst forms of child labor in the fishing and aquaculture sectors: Mr. Naji LAAMRICH (ATLAFCO)- Discussions
RECOMMENDATIONS BY THE RESTRICTED COMMITTEE	
12:00-13 :30	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Projection of videos- Formulation of recommendations
13:30 -14:30	Lunch
RECOMMENDATIONS- (continued)	
14:30 - 16:30	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Presentation of the recommendations and conclusions of the workshop- Closing of the workshop
16:30 p.m. Coffee break	

Appendix 3: Recommendations

The participants were unanimous as to the relevance of the theme and actively contributed to the debates initiated during the workshop. They believe that the workshop was a success and achieved its objectives.

To effectively contribute to the elimination of this scourge, they made the following recommendations:

- 1. Situational analysis of child labor in the fishing and aquaculture sector**
 - ✓ Review of the regulatory framework
 - ✓ Causes, factors and consequences of child labor – Social, cultural, environmental and economic
 - ✓ Level of awareness
 - ✓ Gap analysis
 - ✓ Status of ratification, domestication/codification of conventions, treaties and recommendations
 - ✓ Validation....
- 2. Develop an action plan including resource mobilization**
 - ✓ Awareness and Outreach
 - ✓ Advocacy
 - ✓ Meetings with stakeholders (Stakeholders and non-state actors)
 - ✓ Participation in the Conference of Ministers for approval
- 3. Engagement with relevant stakeholders**
 - ✓ Ministries responsible for Fisheries
 - ✓ Competent authorities
 - ✓ Regional Fisheries Organizations (ORP)
 - ✓ Platforms of non-state actors in fishing and aquaculture,
 - ✓ Experts working on child labor issues,
 - ✓ Private sector and consumer
- 4. Communication and visibility**
 - ✓ Media Observatory for Sustainable Fisheries in Africa (MOSFA)
 - ✓ Other relevant media entities.
- 5. Develop synergies and complementary activities, partnerships with**
 - ✓ Relevant programs
 - ✓ Institutions and agencies, such as AU-IBAR, ILO, FAO, IMO, UNICEF, financial institutions such as African Development Bank, World Bank... (At the implementation stage)
- 6. Monitoring and evaluation**

These recommendations constitute a call to action for all stakeholders, whether governments, businesses, non-governmental organizations, researchers or citizens. They aim to produce concrete and immediate results in the fight against child labor.

They require the commitment and cooperation of all actors, from governments to businesses, including non-governmental organizations and citizens, to protect our children, the men of tomorrow.

Appendix 4: Speeches

Introductory speech by Mr. Taoufik El Ktiri Executive Secretary of COMHAFAT

Workshop

“To accelerate the elimination of child labor in the fishing sector in Africa”

February 27-28, 2024 Casablanca (Morocco)

*Mr. Representative of His Excellency Mr. President of COMHAFAT,
Ladies and gentlemen representatives of the Member States,
Dear participants,*

It is with real pleasure that I speak before you on the occasion of the opening ceremony of the work of our workshop organized under the theme "To accelerate the elimination of child labor in the fishing sector in Africa"

On behalf of His Excellency **Mr. Sidi Tiemoko Touré**, Minister of Animal and Fishery Resources of the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire, current President of COMHAFAT, I express my sincere thanks to you for having responded favorably to this invitation and wish you, in This occasion, welcome to Morocco and a pleasant stay in Casablanca.

Delivering the opening remarks of this important workshop gives me the opportunity to share with you the joy I feel at this moment.

Indeed and as you know, this is my first participation, in my capacity as executive secretary of ATLAFCO, in an event organized by our intergovernmental organization in my country.

For me, above all, it is a privilege but also an honor to be among you.

I cannot let this opportunity pass without sending my sincere congratulations to my predecessor, Mr. Abdelouahed BENABBOU, for the work he has accomplished, particularly in revitalizing ATLAFCO, and thanking him on behalf of all of us, for the efforts he has made. has shown throughout his 11 years at the head of the Conference Secretariat, thanks to the influence of our organization through the strengthening of cooperation, the contribution to the sustainable use of living fisheries and marine resources thus of it, a space for the promotion and development of

maritime potential in the service of the socio-economic development of the Region in general, and of the Member States in particular.

I hope, in my turn, to be up to all these challenges and meet the expectations of the member states of our organization. I associate with this tribute the entire staff of the ATLAFCO Executive Secretariat who work with courage and self-sacrifice, and warmly thank them for the valuable assistance provided on a daily basis to bring these projects to fruition.

For my part, I would like to assure all the Representatives of the Member States of my complete availability to work in concert with them in carrying out the mandate entrusted to me and of my firm desire to be, with my alongside, the entire secretariat team, listening to their concerns and expectations.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The organization of this workshop, which is the 1st^{for} this year 2024, constitutes a contribution to the laudable efforts and initiatives undertaken at the international and regional levels for the eradication of the phenomenon of child labor in the fishing sector. and aquaculture and is, as a reminder, part of the strategic objective of promoting and improving the working conditions of seafarers which is supported by our organization.

Indeed, if the fishing sector is, for many countries, of capital importance for the subsistence and well-being of thousands of families, it remains true that these activities expose fishing communities to complex challenges linked in particular to the participation of children in the countless activities that this sector generates.

According to current and available data, child labor throughout the world takes place mainly in the agricultural sector (71%). Today, 108 million boys and girls work in agricultural production, livestock, forestry, fishing or aquaculture, often for long hours and exposed to various risks.

During the workshop entitled "Intensifying efforts to prevent an increase in child labor in agriculture" organized in Libreville, Gabon, on June 15, 2020 on the occasion of the celebration of the World Day Against Child Labor (celebrated on June 12 each year), it was underlined by the FAO the absolute need to intensify efforts in order to prevent an increase in child labor in the areas cited above, a phenomenon which has increased following

the disruptions that the COVID-19 pandemic has wreaked on livelihoods, education, food and health systems globally.