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## PAPA-SUD: increased support for artisanal fishing

In Senegal, the fisheries sector is marked by the importance of artisanal or semi-industrial fishing. This sector accounts for almost 80 per cent of catches. Gradually, more and more fish is being caught for export, sometimes at the expense of domestic consumers. In Casamance, artisanal fishing is an important activity, all the more so as many farmers are turning to it as a way of escaping the insecurity of living off the land. While the ocean and the rivers are brimming with fish, catching them is very hard work. Improving working conditions, hygiene and the management of resources is not only vital for the sector but for the entire region.

It is early morning in Ziguinchor, capital of Lower Casamance, and the street leading to the pier is already busy with vehicles of all kinds and pedestrians. They are all headed in the same direction: the artisanal port, where the multicoloured pirogues are beginning to unload their bounty.

“The huge volumes of fish that arrive in Ziguinchor are caught at sea. Fishermen can travel as far as Guinea Bissau or even Guinea Conakry, staying at sea for over a week,” explains Isidor Biagui, head of the Regional Sea Fisheries Department. Smaller catches are unloaded at the pier while the bigger ones go straight to the port of trade. On the whole, the fish is sold right on the pier or sent to markets in Dakar and elsewhere.

“Hygiene conditions have greatly improved since the river bank was rebuilt in 2001. Now the fish is placed on canvas sheets, awaiting wholesalers or local fishmongers. Before, it used to be tipped onto the ground, and the women worked in the mud. But fishing is still a difficult profession – the price of fuel, the demise of some species, the dangers of the sea, and hygiene standards that are not yet fully complied with”, says Mr Biagui, pointing to a vague area just behind the pier where vultures feast on the waste.

### Getting the sector back on its feet

Close on the heels of the Programme for Support of Artisanal Fishing in Casamance (PROPAC) and the experience gained on the country’s Grande Côte (the strip of coastline between Dakar and Saint Louis), a new Programme for Support of Artisanal Fishing (PAPA-SUD) was launched in 2000. PAPA-SUD is financed jointly by the EU (64 per cent), the French Development

Agency, and the government, to the tune of €8,63 million, and focuses on Senegal’s south coast. The aim is to invest in infrastructure with a view to improving access to unloading areas, improving working conditions across the whole sector (catching the fish, processing and distribution), strengthening quality and hygiene controls on fresh and processed products, improving distribution and artisanal processing methods, and, finally, increasing safety at sea.

“The purpose of PAPA-SUD is not to increase the size of catches but to improve the management of resources and the profitability of the work at different points in the chain,” Isidor Biagui emphasises. In Ziguinchor, the effects of the programme will be to develop 60,000 square metres of river bank area, providing unloading sites and processing areas. The pier is due to be completely connected to the electricity network and will house a community building, garages for the motors of the canoes, a warehouse, sanitation blocks and premises for the carpenters who build the boats. In the future, the site will also offer cold chain installations and an ice factory. “We will not limit ourselves to infrastructure work,” adds Mr Biagui. “We are also planning a major information campaign on safety at sea. The men don’t like wearing lifejackets, but many are lost at sea each year. Training is also important and will concentrate in particular on new techniques of processing and smoking the fish, for example.”

An interprofessional consortium of fishermen, wholesalers, processors and porters will manage the quay and collect income. The money made will be used to cover operating costs, development work and the installation of new infrastructures. “PAPA-SUD is getting the ball rolling for the users and beneficiaries to take over.” sums up Mr Biagui. ■