

COVID-19 and the Fisheries Value Chain in The Gambia

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Covid-19: new challenge or new opportunity to enhance sustainability of agricultural and fisheries value chains in EU partner countries?

Disruptions in the VC pathways

The fish VC in The Gambia is dependent on a set of conditions

- ❖ free movement of professionals (fishermen, fish merchants, banabanas)
- ❖ access to the drop-off centers at any time
- ❖ fluidity of transport systems (interregional, interterritorial and airport)

Measures to mitigate health shock

- ❖ border closures
- ❖ market opening from 7 a.m. to 2 p.m.
- ❖ halving the number of passengers in transportation
- ❖ social distancing

have disrupted the value chain



Solutions and effectiveness

Mainly concerned the authorization

- ❖ opening of stores that sell foodstuffs
- ❖ circulation of vehicles transporting these foodstuffs

These measures have not limited the disruptions

- ❖ Decrease in demand for fishery products because exporters, inland wholesalers, restaurants, hotels and other companies in the sector have been forced to reduce their activities and some consumers were reluctant to frequent the landing sites
- ❖ Collapse of seafood prices in the landing centers (especially for noble fish for export such as *merou* fish)
- ❖ Easier access to fish for populations located near landing centers as opposed to inland populations due to transport difficulties



New challenge or new opportunity?

COVID-19 highlighted the major challenges faced by fisheries value chain in The Gambia. These include, among others :

- ❖ dependence on exports to Europe, China and in the sub-region countries
- ❖ vulnerability of artisanal fishing professionals with precarious incomes who have no social security coverage in the event of a crisis
- ❖ lack of infrastructure and logistical means, especially in the conservation of fish during periods of overabundant landings
- ❖ difficulties in limiting post-capture losses and wastage
- ❖ weaknesses in the supply to the Gambian populations (slumping and discarding of fish in the landing sites at a time when the inland populations do not have access to fish)



COVID 19 also provides opportunity to identify priority for investment in the fisheries value chain in The Gambia, which are among others:

- ❖ support to professionals in the packaging, conservation, processing and marketing (distribution) of fishery products
- ❖ developing regional markets



Concluding remarks: lesson learned

- ❖ vulnerability of professionals who depend on the sector
- ❖ poverty and hunger continue to concern fisheries workers in The Gambia
- ❖ weakness of professional organizations that have not been able to organize the sale of products

