

Notes on the International Parliamentary Day of the Oceans

"Protect fish workers, empower fishing communities, and protect the right to food". Special attention will be given to sustainable small-scale fishing practices and communities in Mozambique.

By: Catarina Mário Dimande

First, I want to thank Parliamentarians for Global Action for the invitation. It is a great honor to be here representing Mozambique on this panel.

And I want to especially thank the organizers for having included Mozambique as part of that reflection, and in particular the Province of Cabo Delgado.

Those artisanal fisher workers that we are going to talk about in this forum are still quite affected by the action of terrorists and are slowly trying to get back on their feet, as a result of the action of the Mozambican Defense and Security Forces, which have the support of the SADC and Rwanda Forces. So, thank you all for this gesture of solidarity!

Going directly to the topic, it is necessary to consider that today all development action in Mozambique must be based, among other structuring instruments, as in the assumptions of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, in a process that aims to promote sustainable human development, also integrating environmental protection and sustainable resource management.

And when we talk about fishing, it has to be sustainable fishing, which takes into account resources, but also people, partnerships, the planet, etc.

The data show that landings of artisanal origin are responsible for about 90% of the total national fishery production. Of these, around 60% of these catches are of maritime origin and are carried out along the 2,700 km of the country's coast.

This means that this sector has a high social importance, as it is the main source of food and employment for coastal communities, which represent more than two thirds of the country's population. And among fisher workers, we also find a significant female participation.

It means that fish represents about 50% of protein consumption in Mozambique. There are challenges here: first, there may be overexploitation of almost all fishing grounds, including in Cabo

Delgado, which could lead to a decline in production and an increase in operating costs.

On the other hand, fishing can also be at other risks, due to the impacts of climate change on species and the marine environment.

There are questions for reflection here:

1. How to reconcile the issue of sustainable fishing that we want with unsustainable and harmful practices in the fields of fishing methods, fish sizes, species caught, closed seasons, etc. in order to avoid putting vital coastal and marine habitats at risk?
2. To what extent are these deficient fish-catching techniques, destructive fishing gear and other exploitation activities (such as mangrove wood, algae and seagrass harvesting), urban development, industry, tourism and the extraction of oil and gas, can they also affect the sustainable fishing of communities?
3. How to strengthen and develop public policies that take these challenges into account, while looking at the specific localities or regions that the geographic diversity of Mozambique offers us?
4. How to ensure monitoring of fishing activity, considering the issue of insufficient institutional capacity to respond?
5. To what extent does our legislation respond to the challenges we have that aim to ensure sustainable fishing for our fishing communities in a context such as Cabo Delgado?

We want to thank you for the contributions made here. It was recorded here that: