

The Republic of Senegal

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Women make significant contributions across the fisheries value chain of Senegal. They play particularly key roles in the subsistence fishery sector and account for the vast majority of those engaged in processing and trading activities. Several traditional artisanal fish products developed by women, such as Kétiakh, Guédj, Méthorah, and Tambadjang, are destined for exports across other countries in West Africa, as well as to the European Union and Asia. Despite women's key socio-economic contributions, they face several challenges. Prevailing socio-cultural and religious norms as well as traditional values represent a substantial barrier to achieving gender equality.

As a result of women's movements and lobbying, the Government of Senegal has put in place several policies to support women's rights and empowerment and made progress towards passing laws to promote women's participation in political life. However, entrenched socio-cultural norms and customary practices create a gap between discourse and practice.

This fact sheet provides an overview of the role of seafood production in Senegal, with a focus on gender dimensions, highlighting opportunities to strengthen gender equity and women's empowerment in the sector and beyond. It is part of a series meant to offer development agency employees, government agencies, NGOs, funders, and researchers with a snapshot of gender and fisheries to inform the planning and delivery of relevant activities these actors might be involved in or are in the process of developing.

Fisheries production

National statistics estimated total annual capture production of marine fish (domestic and foreign fleets) at 558,081 tonnes in 2019. Landings by artisanal fisheries amounted to 451,964 tonnes; 106,118 tonnes were landed by industrial fleets.¹ Artisanal catches were landed by an estimated 12,851 'pirogues' (long wooden canoes) and consisted mostly of fish.¹ Industrial fleets were estimated to consist of 118 domestic and 19 foreign vessels, which were mostly trawlers (65%) and boats targeting tuna (34%) and sardines (1%). Most industrial catches are for fishmeal and fish oil production and constitute an important part of fisheries exports.

National statistics estimate capture production of freshwater fish at 33,000 tonnes in 2019², while aquaculture production was estimated at 1,010 tonnes for the same year.¹

The Sea Around Us estimated total annual fish production (excluding aquaculture) by Senegalese fleets as follows:³

- ▶ Marine subsistence (2019) – 10,191 tonnes
- ▶ Marine commercial (2019) – 320,982 tonnes (artisanal) all caught within Senegal's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) and 908,860 tonnes (industrial), of which 121,292 tonnes, were caught within Senegal's EEZ, 3,574 tonnes on the High Seas and the remainder in neighboring EEZs. Senegalese industrial fleets captured 39% and 33% of industrial catches in Mauritania and Guinea-Bissau, respectively, while 8% were sourced from The Gambia.

In 2019, foreign fleets were responsible for capturing 87,883 tonnes of marine resources within Senegal's EEZ, with the majority harvested by Russia (68%) followed by France (22%) and Spain (10%).

Fish consumption

Fish consumption per capita has declined rapidly in recent years, from 30 kg per capita per year in 2008 to 16 kg per capita per year in 2019⁴.

Aquatic foods provide up to 75% of animal protein consumed domestically⁵ and account for 47% of total food protein intake nationwide.⁶ Small pelagic fish, in particular, play an important role in food and nutrition security as the most accessible source of protein for low-income segments of the population.

Economic contribution to GDP

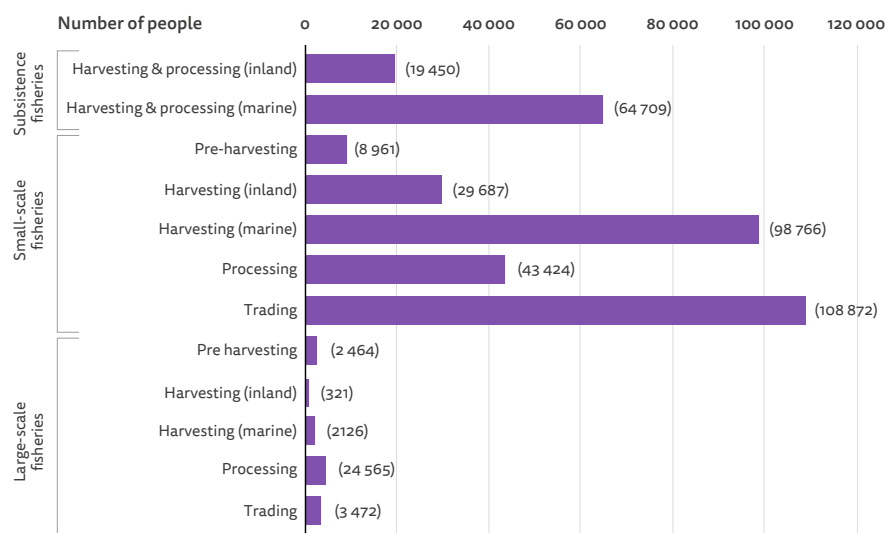
The marine fishery sector contributed to 2.3% of GDP in 2019, with capture fisheries accounting for 1.5% and fish processing 0.8%, respectively.¹

Fisheries exports represent one of Senegal's main sources of foreign exchange. In 2019, Senegal exported 318,485 tonnes of fisheries products (mostly fish), generating FCFA 330,7 million (~USD 536 million), which equated to 10% of generated revenue.¹ The greatest quantity of exports (73%) is destined for other countries across Africa (Ivory Coast, Burkina Faso, Mali, and Cameroon), followed by the European Union (14%). However, the European Union (Spain, Italy, and France) accounted for the most important destination in terms of revenue generated.¹

Employment contribution (all)

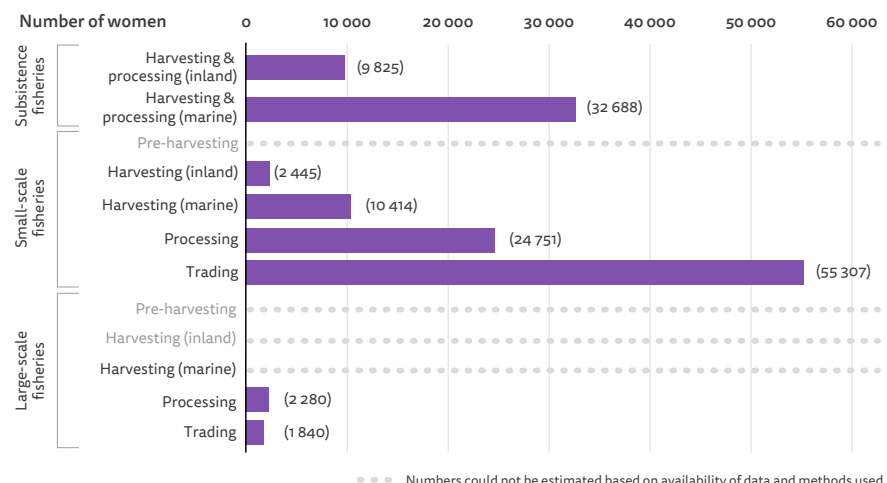
The latest government statistics indicate that fisheries provided employment opportunities for 97,444 people in 2019.¹

The Illuminating Hidden Harvests (IHH)⁷ Initiative estimated that 386,817 individuals engage in the fisheries sector (2022), including pre-and post-harvest as well as subsistence fishing activities, with most individuals involved in the marine small-scale fisheries sub-sector (see graph below)⁸, representing about 15% of the Senegalese active population⁶. However, fishing is estimated to generate income for far more individuals.⁹ In fact, the IHH estimates approximately 1.75 million people depend, at least partly, on fisheries or subsistence fishing: 1,383,310 in small-scale fisheries, 318,156 in subsistence fisheries and 49,071 in large-scale fisheries.¹⁰



Employment contribution (women)

The IHH estimated that a total of 139,549 women are actively engaged across fisheries in Senegal, and play important roles in the country's artisanal fisheries sector. Women represent approximately 50% of individuals engaged in the marine and freshwater subsistence sectors. Overall, the majority of women are involved in the post-production segments of the industry, undertaking the majority of the processing, as well as selling and marketing of catches¹¹. According to IHH estimates, women represent 57% and 51% of total individuals engaged in processing and trading, respectively.



“The Illuminating Hidden Harvest project estimated that 139,549 women are actively engaged across fisheries in Senegal”

In Senegal, women play critical roles across the entire value chain. They act as intermediaries between fishers and wholesalers, make key contributions in the commercialization and resale of fisheries products, and are heavily involved in fish processing activities. Processing often involves different combinations of dressing, smoking, braising, drying, fermenting, and/or salting. This activity preserves aquatic foods, and also fulfills an important social function as knowledge is passed down through generations.^{1,12} Yet, it is not officially recognized in terms of ‘labor’. It is estimated that roughly a third of catches get processed in some way, accounting for 41,201 tonnes in 2019.¹

Important traditional artisanal products prepared by women include *Kétiakh* or braised-salted-dried fish, which is mainly derived from sardinella and ethmalose fish species; *Sali* or dried salted fish, made mostly out of shark, hogfish, and common dentex; *Guédj* or fermented salted fish; *Méthorah* or braised, smoked, dried fish; *Tambadjang*, salted fish¹³; and *Yet*, which consists of dried sea snails. In 2019, *Kétiakh* was the main processed product (58%) followed by *Methorah* (21%), *Guédj* (14%) and *Tambajang* (8%).¹ Most of these artisanal products are destined for export to other countries in West Africa, as well as to the European Union and Asia.

Since these products are widely traded, women processors and traders therefore support critical food and nutrition security needs, especially inland where access to fresh fish is extremely limited.

In the Sine Saloum and Casamance areas, women also play an important role in oyster fisheries, which represent an important source of nutritious food. Oyster fisheries have been identified as promising for economic and social development, through opportunities centered around sustainable and equitable exploitation that contribute to the empowerment of women.¹⁴

Social considerations

Prevalent socio-cultural and religious norms and traditional values represent a substantial barrier to achieving gender equality in Senegal.¹⁵ Women are expected to stay home while men go to work outside the home. In many instances, women are given a secondary role, and there can be pressure to unconditionally accept decisions made by men.¹⁶ This pattern is much more pronounced for illiterate women. In fisheries, gender norms have influenced how men and women engage in fisheries-related activities. For instance, within the key ethnic group, the Lebu, norms prohibit women from touching fish during menstruation.¹⁷ In addition, several existing legal and socio-cultural barriers currently restrict access for women to owning land, such as inheritance rights and limited access to decision-making processes concerning the use of land.¹⁸ In many rural settings, women also face significant barriers in accessing financing mechanisms, extension services, and markets.

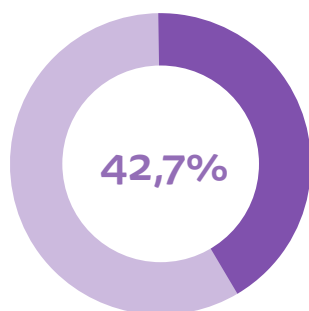
Although they are often restricted from engaging in on-the-water activities, women have worked in informal financial markets, funding fisheries activities at the family level, and underwriting fishing trips or covering social needs through pre-financing arrangements.¹¹ These funds are derived from the sale of fisheries products as well as alternative savings schemes such as ‘tontine’ (groups of individuals pooling funds). Women notably are the core informal credit holders of fishing groups that use gillnets and driftnets to target sharks. This role has afforded them a certain social status within certain fishing communities.¹¹ However, declining catches and difficulties in obtaining fish for processing means that many women face increasingly limited opportunities. Moreover, as most women workers are employed in

the informal sector – including in fisheries – they lack access to basic social services such as social security and health insurance.¹⁹

Illiteracy rates are higher for women than men, further limiting employment opportunities for women and participation in domains such as academia, research, and science, as well as decision-making.

The laws that safeguard women are usually upheld in urban areas, but in rural areas, customary, traditional, and religious practices still prevail, and many women are unaware of the legal rights that exist to protect them. In such areas, the high prevalence of many forms of violence against women, child marriage, unequal rights in marriage and the family, and discriminatory social norms against women represent persistent barriers to gender equality in Senegal.²⁰ Women's right to health is particularly challenged, with harmful practices and customs such as female genital mutilation still being common in some localities.²¹ However, the government and numerous Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) have launched several campaigns to combat female genital mutilation.

Women's rights and political empowerment

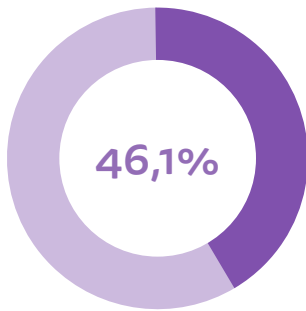


Percentage of women holding seats in parliament in 2017

"In 2017, women held 70 seats out of 164 (42.7%) in parliament, ranking Senegal 19th in the world for number of women parliamentarians."

The Government of Senegal has put several policies in place to support the promotion and protection of women's rights and gender equality. Examples include the 1999 law suppressing several forms of gender-based violence and the 2020 law criminalizing rape, the 2008 Law on Equal Tax Treatment, the 2013 Nationality Law, and the validation of the new National Strategy on Gender Equality and Equity.²² These laws specify that women are allowed to own property and manage that property; pregnant workers can benefit from social protections; and married women are allowed to work without their husband's consent.¹⁹ Adopted in 2014, the "Plan Senegal Emergent" is the country's new development strategy and economic policy reference framework.¹⁵ It also cites the equitable promotion and protection of the human rights of men and women as key principles to accompany development opportunities and aspirations. It further recognizes the differentiated needs of women, children, and other vulnerable groups, as well as the importance of offering them equitable opportunities, and eradicating violence against women and children. It also specifically highlights integrating gender dimensions into public policy, to improve legal frameworks to protect women, and to support women in leadership and their entrepreneurial opportunities and interests.

Senegal has also made significant progress in women's participation in political life. In 2010, the government passed a groundbreaking Law on Parity, instituting full gender parity in all fully or partially elected bodies.¹⁵ Two female candidates ran for presidential election in 2012 (Diouma Dieng Diakhaté and Amsatou Sow Sidibé).²³ In 2017, women held 70 seats out of 164 (42.7%) in parliament, ranking Senegal 19th in the world for number of women parliamentarians.²⁴ As of January 1st 2023, Senegal ranked 14th out of 186 ranked countries with women holding 46.1% of seats (76 out of 165) in Parliament²⁵, a dramatic increase from 19.2% in 2001.¹⁵ This increase is in part the result of women fighting for years for their rights with the support of networks at national, continental and international scales, as well as several international partners making funding or other supports conditional on delivery partners meeting gender equality compliance requirements. Eight women are currently ministers (out of 40 members) under the current government, including, Madame Aïssata Tall Sall as Minister for Foreign Affairs (Ministre des Affaires étrangères et des Sénégalais de l'Extérieur), Madame Oulimata Sarr as Minister for the Economy and Cooperation (Ministre de l'Economie, du Plan et de la Coopération), Madame Mariama Sarr as Minister for vocational training, apprenticeship and integration (Ministre de la Formation professionnelle, de l'Apprentissage et de



Percentage of women holding seats in parliament in 2023

"As of January 1st 2023, Senegal ranked 14th out of 186 ranked countries with women holding 46.1% of seats (76 out of 165) in Parliament."

l'Insertion), Dr. Marie Khémesse Ngom Ndiaye as Health Minister (Ministre de la Santé et de l'Action sociale), and Madame Sophie Gladima as Energy Minister (Ministre du Pétrole et des Energies).²⁶

However, despite national and international legal and institutional frameworks meant to reduce gender-based inequalities, entrenched socio-cultural norms and customary practices often contribute to a gap between discourse and practice. The strong preponderance of traditional values means it remains difficult to engage men in issues of gender equity, and gender bias in fisheries ministries, management agencies, and financial institutions represent key challenges for women in fisheries. In addition, national laws have yet to align with some of the key provisions of the conventions and protocols Senegal has ratified. Thus, while most of Senegal's fundamental laws, such as the Senegalese Constitution, recognize the critical importance of adopting gender equity processes, the various implementing laws, such as the Fisheries Code and its implementing Decree and Orders, do not contain any provisions or mechanisms that make it possible to implement or dutifully consider 'gender' in decision-making processes. In several instances, the implementation and enforcement of these texts, budget lines to support gender equality, as well as training for relevant stakeholders remain inadequate, and deep inequalities persist. Women also still face obstruction and discrimination from religious groups, politicians, and the public, hampering women's equal access to decision-making bodies.¹⁵

Moreover, the Family Code in particular is the basis of serious discrimination against women, including in aspects related to their work, education, health, and security.¹⁵ For instance, as the recognized head of the household, the husband exercises parental authority over the children, with women only exercising parental authority when the father cannot.²⁷ In addition, polygamy and repudiation are customary, and in northern Senegal, forced marriages are still commonplace. Research by Human Rights Watch also points to inadequate progress in the retention of girls in school, lack of free basic education, exposure of girls to sexual and gender-based exploitation and violence by teachers and school staff, particularly among Talibé children as part of Quranic schools, and lack of adequate confidential reporting systems.²⁸

There is currently no law on violence against women, domestic violence, or sexual harassment in Senegal, with clauses within the Penal Code used to criminalize various forms of violence, but with no recognition of the violence as being gender-based.²⁷ In the absence of such a law, the Criminal Code addresses violence against a spouse with applicable criminal penalties, yet in some localities it is still seen as socially acceptable.²⁷

Key frameworks promoting gender equality and their ratification status²⁹

- ✓ Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) ratified in 1985 and its optional Protocol ratified in 2000. Senegal submitted its eighth periodic report to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women in 2019.³⁰
- ✓ Beijing Platform for Action (1995) (national review submitted in 2019).³¹
- ✓ Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women (Maputo Protocol) ratified in 2004.³²

Social Institutions and Gender Index (SIGI)

Higher SIGI values indicate higher inequality and range from 0 for no discrimination to 1 for very high discrimination. With an aggregated index value of 0.418 in 2023, representing an increase from 0.37 in 2019, Senegal was ranked as having medium levels of gender discrimination in social institutions.

Year	Total aggregate index value (Category) ³³	Discrimination in the family	Restricted physical integrity	Restricted access to productive & financial resources	Restricted civil liberties
2014 ³⁴	0.1985 (Med.)	0.5931 (v. High)	0.6337 (High)	0.4076 (Med.)	0.2554 (Low)
2019 ³⁵	0.37 (Med.)	0.649 (High)	0.419 (Med.)	0.276 (Med.)	0.036 (v. Low)
2023 ³⁶	0.418	0.749	0.379	0.363	0.061

Africa Gender Index (AGI)

Value (2019)³⁷

0.504

(on a scale from 0 to 1, with a score of 1 representing parity between women and men)

Rank (2019)

22

(out of 51 countries)

Gender Inequality Index (GII)

Value (2019)³⁸

0.530

(on a scale from 0, where women and men fare equally, to 1, where one gender fares as poorly as possible in all measured dimensions)

Global Rank (2019)

131

(out of 170 countries)

Women in fisheries governance

While there is recognition of women’s significant contributions to the fishing sector, little attention is paid to the values, concerns, priorities, needs and interests of women working in the fisheries sector. For example, some of the main challenges raised in fishing (e.g., fishing effort, capacity, fishing licenses, etc.) are concerns that generally apply to ‘fishermen’ as they tend to focus on production, but rarely key issues that pertain to ‘women’, as they tend to not focus on segments of the industry in which women play a key role. In addition, debates around key issues related to fishing do not include women in the discussion. As a result, the solutions, management plans, and strategies put in place to address these challenges fail to consider important socio-economic dimensions such as family management, health and family welfare, and improvements to women’s working conditions.

At provincial and local levels, few women hold important decision-making positions and women are also vastly under-represented (less than five percent) in fisheries governing bodies . Indeed, at the local level, each college or fishing profession is represented in the decision-making body of the Conseil Locaux de la Pêche Artisanale (CLPA) by two members. CLPAs are aimed at establishing local rules and co-manage marine resources. In a CLPA, there can be more than 18 colleges (depending on the type of

“Violence against women, unequal rights in marriage, and discriminatory social norms are recognized as major challenges to gender equality.”

CLPA: terroir or trade). Of the 18 colleges, only one represents women: the "processing college". However, the "processing" profession includes several sub-professions, such as scaling, piling, braised fish processing, salting, fish mongering etc., that are as important as processing. Because these sub-professions are grouped together in the "processing college", only one or two women generally represent all women in the decision-making bodies of the CLPA out of 34 men. This lack of representation negatively impacts women's active and effective participation and severely hampers their ability to contribute to fisheries development and management.³⁹

Within the **Plan Senegal Emergent**, women are recognized for representing more than half the population and 65% of the working population and as such, “constitute a decisive segment in the revitalization of the economy.” Violence against women, unequal rights in marriage, and discriminatory social norms are recognized as major challenges to gender equality. The Plan includes three strategic axes, the second of which is human capital, social protection, and sustainable development. Women and girls are mentioned in this axis regarding quality education for all, care for the health of mothers and children specifically, access to improved living environments, reduction of environmental degradation, and making vocation training more accessible. Specific strategies are to ensure effective public health services, including access to care for women in rural areas, promotion of family planning, and improving the nutritional status of mothers and children. This strategy aligns with the National Framework Plan on the Prevention and Abolition of Child Labor and the National Strategy for Social Protection, which promotes gender equity and equality.

The third axis of the Plan Senegal Emergent is governance, institutions, peace, and security, of which one of its key components is, “promoting gender equity and equality.” To accomplish this, one strategy is “gender mainstreaming in public policies... to combat all forms of inequality and ensure equal participation for all in the development process.” This is recognized as a cross-cutting issue and has led to calls to ensure greater coordination in the implementation of gender-related policies and the protection of human rights and eradication of violence against women. The fisheries sector is also mentioned in the third axis, and it is recognized as a major source of foreign currency and as having “a knock-on effect on other sectors of the economy and promoting a high rate of employment of women in downstream segments (marketing and processing).” Identifying development opportunities and implementing more sustainable management in fisheries and aquaculture is stated as an objective, with the aim of strengthening contributions to food security and job generation. Cited strategies include promotion of co-management, conservation and protection, establishment of production infrastructure, establishment of incubators for artisanal and modern processing units, and the reduction of post-harvest losses.

Legislative Text	Year
<i>Decree No.246</i>	2013
<i>Agreement on a sustainable fisheries partnership between European Union and Senegal</i>	2014
<i>Plan Senegal Emergent</i>	2014
<i>Law No.18</i>	2015
<i>Decree No.90</i>	2016
<i>Protocol on the implementation of the Agreement on Sustainable Fisheries, between European Union and Senegal</i>	2019

Threats and drivers of change in fisheries

The marine fishing sector is facing several challenges including overexploitation, non-compliance with regulations, overcapacity, climate change, destruction of marine habitats, and pollution. While threats and drivers of change to fisheries may have specific gender dimensions associated with them, gender integration is necessary in efforts to improve adaptation and foster resilience in the face of change.

- **Climate change** is having numerous impacts on fisheries such as coastal erosion due to sea level rise, which causes the destruction of coastal key ecosystems and infrastructure that supports fisheries.⁴⁰ Increasing temperatures have also led to changes in species composition and the decline of species critical to local food and nutrition security. Climate change modelling research shows that warming ocean temperatures along the Senegalese coast may significantly reduce sardine fisheries^{41,42}, which could have severe socio-economic consequences for local communities. The decrease in sardine stocks is linked to a reduction in plankton, their main source of food. Fishers have reported several changes that they associate with climate change, including changes in fish behavior and distribution (e.g., timing, abundance, and distribution of fish stocks), changes in weather patterns (e.g., changes in wind patterns and ocean currents), and changes in ecosystem structure (e.g., some species becoming more dominant or disappearing entirely). As a result of these changes, fishers have had to adapt their fishing practices, such as using different gear, targeting different species, or changing their fishing location or timing.⁴³ Inland fisheries have also suffered from droughts in recent decades, compounded by changes to hydrological regimes of major rivers. The Government of Senegal has taken steps to mitigate and adapt to these impacts, including developing a National Adaptation Plan and investing in renewable energy. Community-based adaptation initiatives are also playing an important role in building resilience and enhancing local capacity to cope with the impacts of climate change.⁴⁴
- **Conflict** between small-scale and industrial fishers, between fishing communities, and between fishers and other resource users, especially oil and gas exploitation, continues to be a source of concern. These conflicts stem partly from the redeployment of fleets – in accordance with reciprocity agreements – across countries of the sub-region, such as Mauritania, Guinea Bissau, Sierra Leone, and Cabo Verde. Together with other drivers of change, such as globalisation, climate change, and poor governance for instance, these conflicts are expected to worsen both over the short and long term.
- **Overcapacity and overexploitation** of key stocks by local fleets, but particularly by distant water fishing nations, present a major challenge and are exacerbated by issues of corruption and a weak governance system.⁴⁵ Small pelagics, which represent key species for local food consumption, traditional culinary practices, and local livelihoods, are considered either fully exploited or overexploited.⁴⁶ Limited capacity to collect scientific data and monitor stocks have resulted in resource exploitation decisions that are not evidence-based on the status of the stocks, perpetuating further overfishing.⁴⁷ **Illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing** also contributes significantly to resource depletion and has been estimated at USD2.3 billion across the region⁴⁸ and at IUU catches, accounting for an estimated USD300 million loss for Senegal annually.⁴⁹
- Bilateral trade agreements have given foreign fleets access to a variety of resources, creating **uneven power relations** between industrial fleets and local fishers, and further limiting local fishers' access to ocean resources. In July 2019, a five-year extension to an agreement with the EU provided for fishing for up to 28 freezer tuna seiners, 10 pole-and-line

“Illegal, unreported and unregulated catches represent a loss of USD300 million annually for Senegal”

vessels and 5 longliners from Spain, Portugal, and France, equivalent to 10,000 tonnes of tuna per year, plus an additional 1,750 tonnes of black hake per year for two Spanish trawlers.⁵⁰

- Overexploitation and the EU’s fishing agreements with the Senegalese government have also intensified the **migration of small-scale fishers** to neighboring nations, contributing to depletion of fish stocks across the region.⁵¹ It has also led and continues to lead to the economic migration of fishers in perilous conditions to Europe and the Canary Islands in search of alternative livelihoods.^{49,50,52} Nearly 20,000 people were reported to have reached the Canary Islands between January to November 2020.⁵³
- Subsidies to the fishing industry in Senegal are almost entirely capacity enhancing (also known as **‘harmful’ subsidies** as they contribute to overcapacity), these include boat construction and renovation, fisheries development projects, tax exemptions and fuel subsidies.⁵⁴
- **Weak control** and regulation of post-harvest activities for artisanal and industrial catches and **lack of institutional and legal frameworks** for artisanal and industrial processing has a disproportionate impact on women who represent most of the post-harvest sector workforce.
- The **increasing number of fishmeal factories** (both foreign and local owned) are in direct competition with women fish vendors as these factories pay more for the fish, thus jeopardizing women’s livelihoods, while also decreasing the supply of fish that contribute to food and nutrition security throughout the region, as much of what is processed in these factories is exported.^{55,56} An increase in fishmeal production based on edible fish is already having adverse effects on the accessibility and affordability of local fish products, a situation that is only likely to worsen. Recent work indicates that based on global consumption projections, there is likely to be a deficit of approximately 150,000 tonnes per year in the supply of fish needed to meet the demand in Senegal in the 2020s.⁵⁷ In addition, fish processors, artisanal fishers, and local inhabitants have been complaining about the factories polluting the air and local drinking water sources, with the town of Cayar filing legal proceedings against the local fishmeal plant.⁵⁸
- While **increasing opportunities for export** represent important sources of revenue, they have led to changes in target species and the disruption of supplies to local markets, undermining women’s livelihood activities and local food and nutrition security.
- **The COVID-19** pandemic caused major disruptions to the informal sector with restrictions placed on gatherings, preventing women from collectively processing fish, and at times being banned from accessing their processing sites.

“The increasing number of fishmeal factories (both foreign and local owned) are in direct competition with women fish vendors”

Gender in ODA allocation for fisheries

Between 2010 and 2019, Senegal received a total of USD 30.7 million in fisheries Official Development Assistance (ODA) allocations, USD 8.8 million (29%) of which were earmarked to support gender equality focused fisheries projects (i.e., tagged with gender markers 1 or 2⁵⁹).^{60,61} This latter sum represents 10% of gender-focused fisheries allocations to Sub-Saharan Africa and 3% of total fisheries allocation to the subregion. Most gender focused financing was provided by the Netherlands (32%), Italy (20%), Germany (14%), Spain (12%), Japan (10%) and Canada (10%).⁶²

Netherlands

32%

Italy

20%

Programmes or initiatives aiming to advance gender equality in fisheries

“Women in Senegal have a history of collective organizational power, and they have created numerous associations and savings pools to advance their opportunities”

“FISH4ACP will focus on oyster farming and the development of products to improve food security and contribute to women’s economic empowerment”

Women in Senegal have a history of collective organizational power, and they have created numerous associations and savings pools to advance their opportunities and defend their rights.⁶³ The Réseau des Femmes de la Pêche Artisanale du Sénégal (REFEPAS), for instance, represents women fishmongers and processors. Women working at different processing sites (e.g., Khelcom at Bargny) have also joined forces and submitted a number of demands to the government, including signing the Decree legally recognising the status of women processors; supporting better representation and working conditions; halting the expansion of fishmeal and fish oil factories as well as banning the use of whole fish in fishmeal production if they are fit for consumption; freezing the issuance of industrial fishing licenses targeting small pelagics; publicly posting the list of foreign vessels authorised to fish in Senegal’s EEZ; and granting women’s groups access to finance provided to the fisheries sector.

The USAID Collaborative Management for a Sustainable Fisheries Future (COMFISH) project (2011-2016) and its follow-up initiative COMFISH Plus (2016-2018)⁶⁴ placed particular emphasis on empowering women and strengthening their role across fisheries value chains, notably by supporting value adding to processed products. Project support resulted in the strengthening of 19 women’s processor organizations in 12 Local Artisanal Fisheries Councils (CLPAs) and more than 1,464 people with improved economic benefits.⁶⁵ As part of this initiative, fish processors also organized to develop a code of ethics to govern their trade, including around processing techniques, to ensure they comply with environmental regulations. To overcome challenges associated with high illiteracy rates, which meant that many women were unable to read and adopt the code, USAID translated the code into song lyrics, dances, and folklore.⁶⁶ In addition, a workshop held as part of the project resulted in the formulation of a Women’s Declaration for the fisheries sector, which calls on decision-makers to support women’s roles in the fisheries sector, as well as a strategy and action plan to achieve the goals of the declaration.⁶⁷ The latter were handed over to the authorities who have approved it and pledged to act on its recommendations.

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) is implementing a five-year EUR40 million fisheries and aquaculture programme across 12 African, Caribbean, and Pacific nations focused on making value chains more productive and sustainable, with an emphasis on supporting women. Senegal, Côte d’Ivoire, Tanzania, Guyana and the Marshall Islands are the first five out of 12 states in which value chain analyses are being undertaken as part of the global fish value chain development programme, FISH4ACP. In Senegal, FISH4ACP will focus on oyster farming, mainly in the Sine Saloum and Casamance areas, and supporting development of higher value and longer shelf-life products to improve food security and contribute to women’s economic empowerment.^{14,68} FISH4ACP is being implemented with the support of the European Union and the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ).

Acknowledgements

This project was supported by the Ocean Risk and Resilience Action Alliance (ORRAA) and was funded with aid from the UK government. In addition, this publication benefitted from the kind review of Elizabeth Selig and Katie Jewett (Stanford Center for Ocean Solutions).

Layout and graphics: Azote

Cite this fact sheet as: Wabnitz C.C.C., Harper S.J.M., et al. (2023) Gender and Fisheries – The Republic of Senegal. Country Fact Sheet. Ocean Risk and Resilience Action Alliance (ORRAA).



Women selling fish at Marché Soumbedioune, Dakar. Photo : iStock.com/Безродов



Woman selling fish in Kayar. Photo : iStock.com/Безродов

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