



*Mundus  
maris*

**Fighting their corner in the value chain - community based  
social protection mechanisms specific to women  
Examples from West African SSF**

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# Women's roles are still poorly known

## They used to be and still often are

- ❑ Main proponents of informal financial markets for pre-financing fishing trips
- ❑ Main actors in postharvest processing and marketing

## They make

- ❑ High contribution to post harvesting loss reduction
- ❑ Key contributions to food security (local, national, sub-regional)
- ❑ Control of the means of production a priority (family status of capital)

## Still they

- ❑ Remain largely still invisible: their numbers under-reported, contributions hidden
- ❑ Are not properly recognized and accounted for in national statistics e.g. on job creation



The fishing site of Guet Ndar, Saint Louis, in the extreme north of Senegal, near the border to Mauritania.  
Photo: Sall, 2019





Another view of Guet Ndar, Saint Louis, Northern region, Senegal,  
near the border to Mauritania

Photo: Sall, 2019





A SSF landing site of Djifer, in the delta area of the Saloum River, Senegal.

Photo: Sall, 2019





The SSF landing site of Joal, Senegal, south of the capital Dakar.  
Photo: Sall, 2019



# Mme Barry at Boulbinet market in Conakry





# Women have even more responsibilities

## They are also

- In charge of the socialization process
- Under conditions of polygamy, responsible for their offspring and social success
- Sentinels in the schooling of their children
- Exclusively in charge of medical care i.e accompaniment to health centers
- In charge of the coverage of their own medical insurance: mutual aid fund





# Major threats to women's livelihoods

- ❑ Subsidies to industrial vessels and overfishing
- ❑ Climate change: Rarefaction of small pelagics as the main species used (Senegal, Gamba)
- ❑ Sea level rise: provokes increasing lack of space for their businesses on the beach
- ❑ Globalization: Hard competition with new investors with deep pockets
- ❑ Structure of ownership in the ongoing transformation changes as a result
- ❑ Gradual loss of female ownership of fishing units as a result
- ❑ Spatial competition with other economic sectors: bath tourism and emerging extractive industries



# More threats to women's livelihoods

- ❑ Low levels of education, literacy
- ❑ Gradual dependency of women in SSF of supplies from industrial freezing vessels
- ❑ Obligation to pay cash and no longer on credit as fishers are not as often pre-financed by women as a result of rising costs and competition also from fishmeal factories
- ❑ Loss of income and as corollary they face the following major effects
  - dysfunctional chains of reciprocal solidarity (formally funded by savings)
  - de-schooling of children
  - difficulties in ensuring necessary medical treatment





Here a group of 3 women met in the fishing community of Yoff, Senegal, near Dakar, for pooling their funds to access raw material in the face of competition from male fishmongers and exporters.

Photo: Sall, 2019





# Women organise in response and diversify adequate social policies needed

- ❑ An unfortunate reaction: more juveniles in the quantities sold fresh or processed
- ❑ Exploitation of mangrove wood and mangrove oysters, where possible
- ❑ A pro-active response is to diversify income: e.g. marketing of agricultural products
- ❑ Development and proliferation of "calabash" systems : newly promoted solidarity chain
- ❑ Development of the group purchase system as an alternative to minimize the effects of competition: pooling individual funds to buy as a group
- ❑ Making extra-efforts to get the children into school as a way to open new opportunities, if at all possible





**Thanks for your attention  
and please share your own experiences**

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