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Trade in Small Fish in Western Africa – Artisanal ‘Fish4Food’ System Entangled in Fishmeal

Small pelagic fish products are vital for livelihoods, poverty alleviation, and food security across Africa. However, climate-induced biological shifts are causing pelagic species to migrate northward toward the Canary Current, threatening catch abundance in the Guinea Currents. This positions artisanal processing and land-based trade networks as key to redistributing fish and addressing regional imbalances. However, these ‘fish4food’ systems in the Canary Current are increasingly entangled in the growing fishmeal and fish oil industries in Senegal and Mauritania. This talk looks at the dynamics of small ‘fish4food’ processing and trade networks, highlighting how these systems have been disrupted and shaped considerably by industrial demand pressures. Small-scale fish transformation sectors remain critical to these regional value chains, but their capacity to sustain, participate in, contribute to and expand face challenges, including access to raw materials, price competition, financing constraints, infrastructure and problems with commercialisation.



Photo Credit: Seynabou Sall, 2023

V2V THEMATIC WEBINAR SERIES 2025



Speaker:
Raymond Ayilu

Dr Raymond Ayilu is a development and political economist with a research focus on the intersection of ocean governance and economic (rural) development. His research includes more than a decade of experience in fisheries value chains development and governance, blue economy and coastal livelihoods, working directly with local communities and grassroots organisations, in addition to meaningful engagement with policymakers. He has been a member of the TBTI global network and a research partner for WorldFish and FAO. He also has practical experience in teaching and supervising undergraduate and graduate students. He completed his PhD at the University of Technology Sydney (UTS). Dr Ayilu has worked with regional fisheries management organisations in West Africa coordinating Fishery Improvement Projects.



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