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# Apostolat de la Mer

## APOSTOLESHIP OF THE SEA

### *Summary of Proposals to support the Small Scale Fisheries, [artisanal] Fishermen in Mauritius.*

#### **A- Presentation of the Apostleship of the Sea**

The Apostleship of the sea [AOS] , being a platform free from any controversy and working for the common benefit of one and all , regardless of religion, culture, sex and political opinion, has been requested by various Fishermen Organizations across the country intercede with the Government on their behalf for assistance in the 2012/ 2012 budget. In that context, AOS in full consultation with the representatives of fishermen associations has worked out these proposals for submission to the Government for consideration in the preparation of 2020/2021 national budget. The fishing community has been seriously impacted by the Covid 19 pandemic which has worsen their vulnerability. The proposals aim at bringing some short term remedy to their precarious condition and pave the way for a sustainable fisheries development.

#### **B. Proposals for a sustainable artisanal fisheries development.**

The small scale fisheries are bound to get modernized to meet the economic, ecologic and sociocultural challenges. This reorganization consists of the judicious use and management of resources, protection of the marine ecosystem, empowerment of Fishers, value addition to fish and marine produce and a sound risk management of natural calamities and climate change. Sustainable development of the artisanal fisheries should take into account the following issues:

##### **1. Social dialogue.**

The setting up of a structured platform for constructive and effective consultation, with Fishers Organizations to hear and consider the views of Fishers and other stakeholders so as to avoid unwarranted conflicts, to harmonize relationship among partners of the fisheries sector and the designation of a desk officer responsible for relations with Fishermen is highly recommended.

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## **2. The setting up of a Scheme for the development of small scale fisheries**

The setting up of a Scheme for the development of small scale fisheries is proposed. That scheme should act as an incubator for planning, monitoring, providing financial & technical support and disseminating all facilities available for Fishers.

### **3. Phasing out of net fishing.**

The existing measure of “buy back license “has not convinced many net licensees and fishermen. A more attractive scheme in the best interest of Fishermen and the country is recommended. Meaningful dialogue and consultation among parties should take place.

### **4. Training of Fishers’ households for value addition**

Besides, the existing training course which needs to be reengineered, there is urgency to train Fishers households in good hygiene & best fishing practice, processing and marketing so as to add value to their product and earn additional revenue for their families. Additional jobs also will be created for the households.

### **5. Semi-industrial and off-lagoon fisheries.**

The existing schemes for the purchase of canoes and semi industrial fishing vessels should be extended to all willing and able fishermen and Fishermen organizations. Support and monitoring should be provided so that Fishers do operate of sound economic bases. Furthermore, the number of fish aggregate devices around the country needs to be increased and control be exercised so that only fishers exploit this available resource. This fisheries will bring more fish on the local market and will help to reduce the import of fish.

### **6. Registration of new Fishers.**

The Fishers’ population is an ageing one and that the authorities has freeze the registration of new Fishers since some time back. It is high time to review the process of registration and see to it that genuine persons get registered and that they do conduct fishing as a profession.

### **7. PAYMENT OF BAD WEATHER ALLOWNCE**

Those operating in the lagoon are equally affected by rough sea and unfavourable condition prevailing in the outer lagoon. It is proposed that all fishers have the same and equal treatment and that the rate of bad weather allowance be aligned with minimum wage rate.

### **8. Sports and Amateur Fishing.**

It is the considered view of the fishing community that such an attractive leisure cannot be denied to our citizens and tourists. However, regulations should be made and enforced to avoid stock depletion and unfair competition with Fishermen.

## 9. Small Scale Aquaculture.

The attempt to encourage some Fishermen to engage in small aquaculture has not been successful for various reasons. It is therefore recommended that the project be reviewed in full consultation with all parties.

## 10. Financial implication.

	Measures	Estimated cost
1	Registration of new Fishermen. Those active bonafide persons engaged in net fishing could also be considered. Registration of 100 new Fishers annually is recommended.	3,000,000
2	Grant to Fishers organizations for the acquisition of equipment to conduct value addition	30,000,000
3	Alignment of bad weather allowance with minimum wage rate.	6,000,000
4	Grant for the purchase of canoes and off lagoon semi-industrial fishing vessels	40,000,000
5	Compensation to net fishermen surrendering their fishermen registration cards. Spread over 5 years	6,000,000
6	Training and professional exchange program	15,000,000
Total		Rs 100,000,000

## 11. Conclusion.

The above proposed measures aim at;

- 1- Alleviating the impact of Covid 19 pandemic on the fishing community.
- 2- Creating, an enabling environment for sustainable development of small scale fisheries in Mauritius.
- 3- Safeguarding the livelihood of fisher households
- 4- . Participating in food security and safety by supplying fresh fish regularly.
- 5- Combating exclusion in the fisher's milieu.
- 6- Creating employment for households.
- 7- Paving the way for an effective participation of fishers in the economic and social development of the country.