As part of the implementation of the PESCAO program "Improving Regional Fisheries Governance in West Africa", the SRFC, in partnership with EFCA, organized a joint sub-regional fisheries operations from 22 to 27 September, 2019 called "Operation TESSITO".

Operation "TESSITO", funded entirely by the European Union, took place in the southern and central zones of Senegal's EEZ and in the EEZs of The Gambia and Guinea Bissau. As part of the activity, the SRFC chartered the high sea patrol boat "PHM FOULADOU" of Senegal to give support to the vessels of The Gambia and Guinea Bissau. The SRFC also helped to cover the running costs of the national vessels. Fisheries inspectors from the three concerned Member States boarded PHM FOULADOU.

EFCA also supported operation "TESSITO" with integrated maritime services (IMS) and Copernicus imagery, which allowed the SRCO to have real time information on fishing activities.

Operation "TESSITO" also benefited from the support of the French Navy, which provided, free of charge to the SRFC, a maritime surveillance aircraft based in Dakar. The aircraft made five (5) flights, with each time on board, a fisheries inspector from the Member State whose EEZ is being flown over/covered.

The operation was conducted by a Sub Regional Coordinating Office (SRCO) located in Banjul, The Gambia, at the premises of the Department of Monitoring, Control and Surveillance of Fisheries Management (DMCSA). The said Coordinating unit was facilitated by the operations officers of the Fisheries Monitoring, Control and Surveillance units of The Gambia, Guinea Bissau and Senegal and two experts from the European Fisheries Control Agency.

An expert from the French Navy of Senegal was also present at the SRCO to coordinate the activities of the maritime surveillance aircraft. In addition, under the synergy between the projects financed by the European Union in the ECOWAS zone; the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) also sent a representative to the SRCO.

The Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Fisheries and Water Resources and the Director of Fisheries of the Republic of The Gambia visited the SRCO.

In terms of results, the fisheries surveillance aircraft identified 93 fishing vessels while the naval vessels inspected 69 fishing vessels including 8 canoes and arrested 03 trawlers and 5 canoes for various reasons. The arrested vessels are following due diligence by the competent national authorities.

The highlight of operation "TESSITO" was the presence at SRCO of the Permanent Secretary of the SRFC throughout the operation. He took the opportunity to encourage participants and underscored the level of sub-regional MCS cooperation. He also took the opportunity to warmly thank the technical and financial partners, especially the EU, for their commitment alongside the SRFC to eradicate IUU fishing in the West African region.