amounts of fish above the agreed quota. In addition, negotiated access agreements, when they do exist, tend to award a paltry 5 percent or less of the landed value of the fish that is caught.

China’s distant-water fleets, which began their build-up around 1985, are no exception to this. Also, they are huge, operate largely without access agreements (or under access agreements that are secret, thus we don’t even know if their catch is legal or not), and they are completely undocumented, i.e., Chinese authorities are not publishing catch statistics or evaluations of the stocks exploited by their fleets.

Thus, there are good reasons to think that China’s distant-water fleets, legally or not, catch well above the surplus in the countries where they operate. This is particularly acute in Africa where Chinese distant-water fleets are highly active, and where they directly compete with local artisanal fisheries, causing unemployment and endangering the long-term food security of the local populations.