

Secretary-General's Report on 'Oceans and the law of the sea'
Input from the UNU-FTP on the role of seafood in global food security

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1. "Information relating to our organization's activities related to the role of seafood in global food security"

The United Nations University Fisheries Training Programme (UNU-FTP) aims to strengthen institutional capacity to support the sustainable use of living aquatic resources in developing countries. The focus is on assisting partner countries to achieve their own development goals through international educational cooperation. The activities of UNU-FTP have a special focus on Africa and Small Island Development States (SIDS) and consider the importance of cultural diversity and gender equality.

Each year roughly 20 graduate students complete UNU-FTP's 6-month multi-disciplinary training course in Iceland. To date 264 fisheries professionals from 47 countries have completed this programme. UNU-FTP has also run 34 short training courses in 14 countries, training 1,000 people. UNU-FTP has provided 23 scholarships to former fellows who have completed the course, for further training: 10 for master's studies, 13 for doctoral studies. And UNU-FTP is also involved in coordinating conferences and sponsoring participation of former fellows in international conferences and workshops in various areas of fisheries.

2. "Relevant matters which may require further consideration by the international community with an emphasis on areas where coordination and cooperation at the intergovernmental and inter-agency levels could be enhanced"

Since 2000, some 35-40% of the global fish catch has come from small scale and artisanal fisheries. Artisanal fisheries suffer from high post-harvest losses, because of low investment, low-level technology, variability in supply and contamination, especially during rainy periods. Spoiling and contamination of artisanal fisheries catch can create a significant source of food insecurity or even a public health hazard, particularly as fish often provides more than 25% of animal protein in the diets of people in LIFDCs. Coordinated international efforts to provide training and infrastructural investment for improved fish handling and processing may assist.

Beyond capture fisheries, development cooperation is also increasingly important in the area of aquaculture. Globally, almost half of table fish come from aquaculture. Of this, 90% is produced in developing countries, primarily from small scale aquaculture. The small scale of this aquaculture poses challenges for development cooperation. Additional research and investment in adapting modalities of international cooperation to take into account the limited fisheries administration capacity of recipient countries may be useful.

Increasing production in developing countries is also stimulating fisheries exports. In 2009, net export of fish from developing countries reached USD 25 billion – more than the combined export revenues from traditional commodities such as coffee, cocoa, bananas and rubber. This places pressure on fisheries, and creates a need for improved fisheries management capabilities in developing countries. Data management and human resources all require investment, development cooperation and south-south cooperation. The cross-border nature of many fisheries also suggests a need for more regional approaches to the development of fisheries management systems.