

**FAO INPUTS IN RELATION TO RESOLUTION A/RES/73/124
CONCERNING “OCEANS AND THE LAW OF THE SEA”
FOR THE REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL TO THE SEVENTY-FOURTH SESSION OF THE UNITED
NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

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**SECTION I - IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONVENTION AND RELATED AGREEMENTS AND
INSTRUMENTS**

OPERATIVE PARAGRAPH 4 – *Harmonizing national legislation with the Convention*

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) continues to provide legislative assistance to Member States including, in the development of fisheries and aquaculture legislation, as well as related legislation. In the provision of legislative advice and assistance, congruity of national legislation with the provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea of 10 December 1982 (the Convention), is paramount. Certain aspects that particular attention is placed upon include: the rights, jurisdiction and duties of States within waters under national jurisdiction, monitoring, control and surveillance (MCS) and enforcement rights and duties within the exclusive economic zone (EEZ), territorial sea, archipelagic waters and internal waters, jurisdiction over flagged vessels, navigation on the high seas and in waters under the jurisdiction of a coastal State, the implementation of rights and obligations related to fishing, and the implications of binding decisions of Regional Fisheries Management Organizations and arrangements (RFMOs).

FAO’s legislative assistance to Member States also takes into account international fisheries treaties and other instruments. Provisions of the Agreement for the Implementation of the Provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea of 10 December 1982 relating to the Conservation and Management of Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks (UNFSA), the FAO Agreement to Promote Compliance with International Conservation and Management Measures by Fishing Vessels on the High Seas (Compliance Agreement), and the FAO 2009 Agreement on Port State Measures to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing (PSMA) are examples of treaties applied. Instruments such as the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries (CCRF) and its supplementary instruments, the Voluntary Guidelines on Flag State Performance (VGFSP), the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication (SSF Guidelines), and the FAO International Guidelines for the Management of Deep-sea Fisheries in the High Seas are examples of soft law instruments referenced, at the very least, in the formulation of principles for decision-making. Although such soft law instruments are non-binding by nature, they are based upon provisions of the Convention, and are binding to the extent that they restate or reflect the Convention or when incorporated in binding measures adopted by RFMOs or national legislation.

RFMOs are established and recognized within the framework of the Convention. In accordance with their functions and management competence, RFMOs elaborate upon provisions of the Convention, including but not limited to provisions relating to straddling fish stocks, highly migratory fish stocks, discrete high seas fish stocks, anadromous fish stocks, and catadromous fish stocks. Specific binding decisions of RFMOs build upon the provisions of the Convention and are to be implemented by States Parties or cooperating non-parties within national legislative frameworks. In the provision of legislative assistance, FAO also ensures that obligations and requirements of relevant RFMOs are incorporated in national legislation, in particular the obligations and requirements of RFMOs established within the framework of FAO.

Since 2018, FAO has provided legal assistance for implementation of the Convention and international fisheries instruments to a number of Member States, including: Bahamas, Cambodia, Chile, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ghana, Grenada, Guyana, Indonesia, Madagascar, Malaysia, Marshall Islands, Namibia, Papua New Guinea, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Solomon Islands, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago and Vanuatu. The legal assistance provided by FAO included reviewing and developing improved national legislation for sustainable fisheries; coordinating and supervising research and providing technical support for the publication of international legal and policy instruments; assessing gaps and developing strategies to address these gaps in policy, legislation as well institutional and operational frameworks.

SECTION II - CAPACITY-BUILDING

OPERATIVE PARAGRAPH 32 - *Capacity-building for the conservation and sustainable use of marine resources*

Development of technical legal skills at national level for the implementation of the UNCLOS

FAO develops technical skills in support of the implementation of the Convention at the national level through capacity building activities under technical cooperation programmes. Such capacity building activities include: increasing awareness of the rights and obligations under the Convention and the related international fisheries instruments; developing legislative measures to implement the Convention and international fisheries instruments; and facilitating the implementation of international and regional commitments to combat illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing and related activities in support of such fishing.

With respect to capacity development in the implementation of international fisheries instruments, FAO is actively working to strengthen national institutions, through among others, the FAO Global Development Programme to support the implementation of the PSMA and complementary international instruments to combat IUU fishing (Global Programme) by: (i) ascertaining the need to strengthen national legislation, institutional set up, and MCS systems and operations consistent with the provisions of the PSMA and related instruments and tools; (ii) formulating and/or revising relevant fisheries policies, laws and by-laws or regulations; (iii) strengthening MCS, compliance and enforcement institutions and systems, including through South-South Cooperation and mechanisms for regional harmonization, coordination and cooperation; (iv) enhancing capacity to improve flag State performance in line with the VGFSP, and; (v) as appropriate, implementing market access measures, such as catch documentation and traceability schemes.

Enhancing national capacity on the Law of the Sea and fisheries law is also supported through training workshops on the obligations of States under the Convention and international fisheries treaties. For example, FAO conducted training in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines on its rights and obligations as a coastal State, flag State, chartering State, port State and market State, as well as rights and obligations under RFMOs. The training covered fundamental provisions of the Convention, the UN Fish Stocks Agreement, the Compliance Agreement, and the PSMA. Soft law instruments such as the CCRF and the VGSFP were also covered.

Since 2017, FAO has assisted its Member States with training and capacity building in support of the implementation of the Convention and related fisheries instruments, specifically: Bahamas, Cambodia, Chile, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Gabon, Ghana, Grenada, Guinea, Guyana, Indonesia, Madagascar, Malaysia, Marshall Islands, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Somalia, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Sudan Thailand, Tonga, Trinidad and Tobago and Vanuatu.

FAO and the International Maritime Law Institute (IMLI) of the International Maritime Organization (IMO) have designed and delivered a competency-based Fisheries Law Training Course to provide government officials. The course, conducted in June/July 2018, enabled participants to, *inter alia*: (i) be more engaged in the management of living marine resources; (ii) implement relevant international instruments in national laws and practice; (iii) identify the elements of offences in fisheries legislation; (iv) develop an understanding of evidentiary requirements for the purposes of prosecutions; (v) apply best practices in the detection, investigation, and prosecution of fisheries offences and violations. A similar course specifically aimed at the Asia Pacific region was delivered by FAO in collaboration with the Australian National Centre for Ocean Resources and Security in September 2018.

Capacity development for implementation of the PSMA

FAO has continued to expand its efforts to support the implementation of the PSMA, consistent with the call made at the May 2017 Meeting of the Parties in Oslo. The activities undertaken by FAO not only facilitate the implementation of the PSMA but also contribute to the development of national and regional capacity to maximize the benefits available through the effective use of the PSMA and promote bilateral, sub regional and/or regional coordination. FAO has continued to conduct regional capacity development workshops,

country-specific training and to take initiatives to further assist States in building their capacity to effectively implement the PSMA, including through the FAO Technical Cooperation Programmes (TCP) and the Global Programme at national, regional and inter-regional levels. The Global Programme and its projects – supported by funding from Norway, Sweden, Republic of Korea, the European Union, Iceland, Spain and the United States of America – provide technical and capacity building assistance through FAO and other parties to strengthen policy, legal, institutional and operational frameworks to help States be better prepared to implement the PSMA, as well as to discharge their responsibilities as flag, coastal and market States. To date, over 38 countries from Africa, Asia and Pacific, and Latin America and the Caribbean have received FAO assistance on the adoption and implementation of the PSMA or related to the broader context of combatting IUU fishing. The Programme additionally supports the development and implementation of global information systems which facilitate the implementation of the PSMA, as well as the Global Record of Fishing Vessels, Refrigerated Transport Vessels and Supply Vessels.

Capacity development for small-scale fisheries (SSF)

The SSF Guidelines are a globally agreed framework for small-scale fisheries development and governance. The following key milestones to support capacity development in the context of the implementation of the SSF Guidelines have been achieved in 2018/19:

Awareness raising events:

- **2018 WTO Public Forum, 3 October 2018, Geneva:** Working session 37 on *FAO Instruments Supporting the Sustainability of Trade in Fish and Fishery Products* highlighted the SSF Guidelines. Speakers included representatives from the Too Big to Ignore (TBTI) and the Fisheries Transparency Initiative (FiTI).
- **45th Session of the Global Committee on World Food Security (CFS45), 15 October 2018, Rome:** FAO held a side event *with* co-organizers: ECOWAS, UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food, Duke University, WorldFish and Michigan State University entitled *Realizing the Right to Food from Oceans and Inland Waters*.
- **NGOs, researchers and journalists from around Asia team up to understand small-scale fisheries better Malaysia, 18-23 February 2019:** Through a one-week workshop, NGOs with connections to small-scale fishers and fisheries issues came together with researchers from government institutes as well as development journalists to learn more about small-scale fisheries. The week-long workshop was co-hosted by FAO and WorldFish.
- **GAF7 – the 7th Global Symposium on Gender in Aquaculture and Fisheries 18-20 October 2018, Asian Institute of Technology, Bangkok, Thailand:** The symposium focused on "Gender in Aquaculture and Fisheries: Expanding the Horizons" through the work of the Gender in Aquaculture and Fisheries network (GAF). The GAF network has grown over 20 years and has partnered with the Asian Fisheries Societies Triennial Forum throughout its evolution. The themes of the sessions included the implementation of the SSF Guidelines, gender and fisheries & aquaculture governance.
- **Small-scale fisheries make big splash at Sustainable Blue Economy Conference, 26-28 November 2018, Nairobi, Kenya:** FAO promoted sustainable small-scale fisheries with its partners: Community Action for Nature Conservation (CANCO), Swedish Society for Nature Conservation (SSNC), African Confederation of Artisanal Fishing (CAOPA), and Coalition for Fair Fisheries Agreements (CFFA). The partners hosted a side-event titled, "Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries, Coastal Communities Livelihoods and Blue Economy," underlining that the key stakeholders in blue growth are the thousands of men and women engaged in small-scale and subsistence fisheries and fish trade. The sector of blue economy is vital to coastal communities' culture and social economic development, as well as food security and nutrition.
- **Small-scale fisheries contribution to reaching the SDGs highlighted at Seafood Expo, 17-19 March 2019, Boston, USA:** At the Seafood Expo North America in Boston, FAO joined a panel session, hosted by the International Pole and Line Foundation (IPNLF), to discuss small-scale fisheries and their contributions to the global sustainable development agenda.
- **Strengthening social protection for fishers and fish-farmers in Latin America and the Caribbean, 19-20 September 2018, Panama City, Panama:** Parliamentarians from 17 countries met in Panama for the V Foro de Parlamentarios de la Pesca y la Agricultura de América Latina y el Caribe. The forum was organized by FAO in coordination with the Latin American Parliament (PARLATINO), the Parliamentary Front Against Hunger (PFH) and the Panama National Assembly.

- **The 33rd Session of the Committee on Fisheries of FAO on 9-13 July (COFI 33), 2018 welcomed the UN declaration of 2022 as the International Year of Artisanal Fisheries and Aquaculture (IYAF 2022):** FAO, as lead agency, will work in close collaboration with relevant partners and bodies of the United Nations system to achieve the objectives of IYAF 2022. A road map is being developed and countries and partners are encouraged to actively engage in and support its observance.

Workshops & Meetings:

- **Tanzania.** The first phase of a project on the development of a National Plan of Action on the Implementation of the SSF Guidelines (NPOA-SSF), with a special focus on women empowerment has closed. The national task team has convened several times and organized stakeholder consultations, conducted mapping of women organizations, reviewed the regulatory framework and prepared a proposal for a second phase.
- **Senegal.** Negotiations for a project to implement the SSF Guidelines are about to conclude and will support the implementation of a national plan of action that was developed through a national multi-stakeholder platform.
- **Costa Rica.** Activities to strengthen collective action through the implementation of the SSF Guidelines for mollusk gatherers in Chomes included: the promotion of Marine Responsible Fishing Areas Network as a model of collaborative governance between government and local communities to improve the livelihoods in coastal and marine communities in Costa Rica; providing information and sharing communication methodologies and efforts towards marine conservation; responsible small scale fishing efforts with a human rights based approach to marine conservation based on past positive results; and consolidating the rights of mollusk-gathering women through the application of an ecosystem approach to fisheries (EAF).
- **SSF Guidelines Global Strategic Framework (SSF-GSF): the Advisory Group met on 18-21 March 2018, Rome, Italy.** A meeting was held to discuss the roles and to identify priorities for engagement in relevant global processes. FAO continues to work with partners on further development of the SSF-GSF.
- **The first general Assembly of the African Women Fish Processors and Traders Network (Awfishnet) took place in Tanzania on 18-19 April 2019.** This network is part of the African Union-led efforts to support the organization of non-state actors to take a more active role in decision-making in fisheries. The newly established Tanzania Women Fish Workers Association (TAWFA) was launched shortly before the Awfishnet meeting.
- **Expert workshop on Guidelines for micro-finance, credit and insurance for small-scale fisheries in Asia, 7-9 May 2019, Bangkok, Thailand.** Thirty-two rural finance and fisheries experts from Bangladesh, China, India, Indonesia, Japan, Philippines, Thailand, UK, Canada and the USA met to discuss ways to improve access to financial services for small-scale fishers in Asia. The expert workshop, organized by the Asia-Pacific Rural and Agricultural Credit Association (APRACA) in close collaboration with FAO, aimed to finalize practical guidelines in support of better access to financial services, and design a capacity building programme for financial services to small-scale fisheries.
- **Figuring out “Other Effective Area-based Conservation Measures” (OECMs) 7-10 May 2019, Rome, Italy.** There is much discussion around the world about Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) – put in place by countries to protect certain areas of the ocean and to meet 'Aichi target 11' of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). This meeting discussed OECMs as another means to achieve biodiversity conservation as envisaged under Aichi Target 11 of the CBD.
- **Regional workshop towards the implementation of the SSF Guidelines in West and Central Africa:** From 23-25 July 2018 in Dakar, Senegal, a workshop was held for the West and Central Africa region to develop an action plan to implement the SSF Guidelines within the African Union policy framework (<http://www.fao.org/3/ca4536en/ca4536en.pdf>).
- **Pacific Regional Workshop on Exploring SDG 14.b and its Indicator 14.b.1. 9-11 April 2019, Nadi, Fiji.** Representatives of 11 Pacific countries, regional organizations, academia and civil society gathered for the event opened by the Minister of Fisheries of Fiji. The purpose of the workshop was to: raise awareness of the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 14.b; related regional and global policy instruments, in particular the Secretariat of the Pacific Community's New Song for the Pacific; the SSF Guidelines; and to strengthen capacities to collect and compile relevant data and report on the indicator SDG 14.b.1.

- **High-level meeting on SSF in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea, 25-26 September 2018, Malta.** The General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean and the Black Sea (GFCM) of FAO organized a "High-level Conference on Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Mediterranean and Black Sea". This event represents the culmination of work carried out in recent years, seeking to elicit political will and concrete action to support small-scale fisheries in the region.
- **Meeting on implementing the Regional Plan of Action for small-scale fisheries in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea (RPOA-SSF) Podgorica, Montenegro, 6-7 March 2019.** Small-scale fisher representatives, scientific experts, NGO representatives and representatives of fisheries administrations met in Podgorica on the occasion of the GFCM permanent working group on small-scale fisheries (WGSSF). This working group is tasked with coordinating technical, scientific and socio-economic activities relating to small-scale fisheries in order to fill the main data gaps in this region, as well as with providing advice to support fisheries management decisions by the GFCM.
- **Tenure and User Rights in Fisheries 2018: Achieving Sustainable Development Goals by 2030, 10-14 September 2018 Yeosu, Republic of Korea.** Marine and inland fisheries provide millions of people around the globe with food security and livelihood opportunities. Advancing knowledge on how the world's marine and inland capture fisheries are accessed, used, and managed using various types of rights-based approaches (RBAs) is a crucial step towards achieving the SDGs and attaining food and nutrition security and livelihood benefits. To share information and practical experiences on tenure and user rights, with emphasis on how they contribute to achieving the SDGs, FAO co-organized with the Republic of Korea the global conference Tenure and User Rights in Fisheries 2018: Achieving Sustainable Development Goals by 2030 (User Rights 2018). The conference took place in Yeosu, Republic of Korea in September 2018. The case studies presented provided comparable information on different types of tenure rights along with a wide geographical coverage.
- **3rd World Small-Scale Fisheries Congress: Transdisciplinarity and Transformation for the Future of Small-Scale Fisheries, 22-26 October 2018, Chiang Mai, Thailand.** Close to 400 participants ranging from researchers and students to young professionals, practitioners, fishers and fishers' organizations, environmental groups, and policymakers came together in Thailand to discuss the sharing of information on small-scale fisheries and to formulate action plans and capacity development programs to support the implementation of the SSF Guidelines.
- **Workshop on Pan-African agenda for sustainable artisanal fisheries, 19-20 November 2018, Banjul, the Gambia.** In this two-day workshop leading up to the celebration of World Fisheries Day, CAOPA with support from FAO, brought together professional maritime and continental artisanal fisheries organizations from several of their 24 member countries to discuss the Pan-African agenda for sustainable artisanal fisheries.
- **Friends of User Rights 2019 (FoUR 2019).** FAO organized the expert meeting of Friends of User Rights 2019 (FoUR 2019), in Fiumicino, Italy, from 12-14 February 2019 to comment and advise on the process and targets of FAO's work on fisheries tenure and user rights. Participants agreed on the need to develop guidance on the options and opportunities for fisheries user rights and tenure. Such guidance will support the implementation of the VGGT and SSF Guidelines. Follow up activities include the organization of a series of regional workshops to identify regional nuances and specificities.

Reports, handbooks and tools:

- **Securing sustainable small-scale fisheries: sharing good practices from around the world:** The study includes eight studies showcasing good practices in support of sustainable small-scale fisheries. FAO commissioned these studies aiming to share experiences and promote the implementation of the SSF Guidelines. The case studies were also intended to promote participatory approaches – in line with the SSF Guidelines principles – and to promote increased interaction between research and fishing communities, including the use of traditional knowledge and participatory research. It is hoped that the case studies will inform policy and policy processes which promote sustainable small-scale fisheries in accordance with the SSF Guidelines and the human rights-based approach to development.
- **Fisheries Learning Exchanges: A short guide to best practice:** This handbook provides guidance on developing, implementing, evaluating and sustaining fisheries learning exchanges. Produced through collaboration between FAO, the NGO Blue Ventures and the research initiative FLExCELL,

it draws on experiences from dozens of learning exchanges over the past decade to provide actionable, accessible advice and best practices.

- The Swahili language version of the SSF Guidelines were voluntarily prepared by partners in East Africa and have been finalized; bring the number of language versions of the SSF Guidelines available to 21. The Croatian version of the SSF Guidelines is being finalized.
- FAO has embarked on the challenge to revise and update the 2012 World Bank, FAO and WorldFish Center report Hidden Harvest: The Global Contribution of Capture Fisheries. The new study is supposed to enhance knowledge, encourage data-sharing on small-scale fisheries and their socio-economic contributions, and make policy and decision makers aware of the sector's importance. An expert workshop will be organized in FAO in July 2019. This initiative is conducted in collaboration with Duke University and WorldFish.

Capacity building for SDG Indicator 14.4.1 'Proportion of fish stocks within biological levels'

SDG14.4.1 requires countries to report on their national indicator and FAO, as custodian agency for the indicator, to provide a framework for consistent and comparable national reporting as well as to estimate regional and global indicators. This is a Tier I indicator currently based on FAO's State of Fisheries and Aquaculture (SOFIA) stock status indicator which covers a time series starting in the 1970s and relies on regional estimates. An e-Learning course aimed at providing guidelines to stakeholders for the reporting of SDG14.4.1 is in development and expected to be published during the summer of 2019. The course addresses various audiences and explains the practical significance of the indicator, reviews the existing assessment methodologies, teaches new methods applicable for situations of limited data, and explains how to calculate the indicator and meet the reporting requirements. The driving principles for the guidelines include transparency, consistency, communication and collaboration with Regional Fishery Bodies (RFBs), timeliness, and adherence to international standards in their data and statistical production. Countries will report through a specific questionnaire. Monitoring will be supported by unique identifiers for stocks through FIRMS/GRSF, which are built upon the standards of the Coordinating Working Party on Fishery Statistics (CWP), a statutory body established under Article XIV of the FAO Constitution. SDG14.4.1 is an opportunity for FAO to improve the granularity of reference stocks upon which the SOFIA regional and global indicator is based.

Capacity building in Fisheries Statistics

FAO has been actively supporting, since the 1970s, efforts by national institutions to improve national data collection systems, through the development of projects, training activities, publications and software; consistent with FAO's mandate regarding statistical services found in the Agreement between the United Nations and the Food and Agriculture Organization. Whenever possible, these activities are conducted in collaboration with RFBs. During the 2016-2019 period and through various projects, 26 countries and 5 RFBs from South Asia, East Africa, West Africa, the Mediterranean, and the Caribbean received capacity building support from FAO, primarily addressing methodologies for data collection in small scale marine fisheries and supporting information systems.

SECTION VIII - MARITIME SAFETY AND SECURITY AND FLAG STATE IMPLEMENTATION

OPERATIVE PARAGRAPH 108 AND 114 - Safety at sea in the fisheries sector

Following the adoption of the Cape Town Agreement of 2012 on the Implementation of the Provisions of the Torremolinos Protocol of 1993 Relating to the Torremolinos International Convention for the Safety of Fishing Vessels (Cape Town Agreement) in 2012, FAO agreed to IMO's request for assistance in developing and conducting sub regional seminars on the implementation and ratification of that Agreement. So far, seminars have been held in Morocco, Peru, Belize, Indonesia, Côte d'Ivoire, the Cook Islands, and South Africa.

The Third Session of the Joint FAO/IMO Ad Hoc Working Group on IUU Fishing and Related Matters (JWG), held at IMO Headquarters in London, United Kingdom, on 16-18 November 2015, recommended that FAO and IMO, and the International Labour Organisation (ILO), as appropriate, enhance their cooperation on a number of subjects related to the fight against IUU fishing, including on actions that would facilitate the entry into force of the Convention concerning work in the fishing sector (ILO Convention 188) and the Cape Town Agreement. At COFI 32 (11-15 July 2016), the body broadly welcomed the work of the JWG,

recommended that meetings should be more frequent and that the ILO formally joins the JWG. The fourth JWG meeting on IUU fishing is planned to be held in 2019.

COFI has repeatedly highlighted the importance of safety at sea in the fisheries sector. COFI 33 reiterated the importance of safety at sea and working conditions in the fisheries sector and welcomed the close cooperation between FAO, the ILO and the IMO.

In 2018, FAO published a global review of safety at sea in the fisheries sector.¹ The document focuses in particular on the small-scale fisheries sector in developing countries. Among other safety issues, it considers existing legislation, fisheries management measures and data recording.

In 2019, FAO initiated various projects, particularly in the Caribbean region and South Asia, for capacity building programmes on safety at sea for small-scale fisheries, as well as to develop and promote an accident and fatality reporting system for fisheries in the Caribbean. The capacity building materials prepared will be disseminated in 2020.

OPERATIVE PARAGRAPH 110 - *Promoting decent working conditions in fisheries and aquaculture*

In 2018, FAO published a legislative study “Regulating Labour and Safety Standards in the Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries Sectors” that provides guidance on the integration of internationally accepted labour and safety standards into national legislation in sectors including fisheries. The study identifies the standards that apply to these sectors and shows how they have been or could be integrated into regulatory frameworks governing fisheries and other sectors.

Small-scale fishers and fish farmers and workers, as well as fish processing workers, are often poor and vulnerable, and generally tend to have little recognized access to resources, credit and loans, productive services and markets; they often lack access to social protection, institutional support and education. Most are self-employed or engaged informally, i.e. often without any formal employment contracts. In addition, despite their contribution to the sector, the role of women tends to be overlooked. Furthermore, international fishery trade policies and practices, such as export-led fishery development and import liberalization, are not always structured in ways that provide equal benefits to small-scale producers and their communities.

The sector is also characterized by cases of human rights violations and labour abuses, including instances of human trafficking, fraudulent and deceptive recruitment, modern-day-slavery, physical, mental and sexual abuse, homicide, child labour, debt bondage, refusal of fair and promised pay, abandonment, discrimination, excessive working hours, poor occupational safety and health, and denial of rights to association and collective bargaining negotiations and labour agreements. Violations take place at different stages of seafood value chains - especially in fish harvesting, farming and processing stages - and across different geographical areas. Women, migrant labourers and youth are exposed to these violations and are particularly vulnerable.

In many seafood value chains, it is difficult to trace fish back to the source and to ensure quality of products and accountability and responsibility of practices. Often illegal transshipment practices allow fishing vessels to avoid port checks, staying excessively long periods out at sea where enforcement of fisheries and labour regulations is often not possible. Human rights violations on fishing vessels occur along with illegal fishing practices and other crimes.

To address these concerns, national and international initiatives supported by Governments, civil society organizations, private sector, auditing and certification schemes, media, consumers, etc., are calling for social sustainability and accountability in fisheries and seafood value chains to be addressed more effectively, and for better understanding of the issues and possible measures to resolve them.

Based on the CCRF and its recent Blue Growth approach, the FAO has been supporting States, regional fisheries bodies (RFBs) and a wide range of actors in establishing sustainable fisheries policies including

¹ FAO. 2018. Global review of safety at sea in the fisheries sector, by Adriana Oliva Remolà and Ari Gudmundsson. FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Circular No. 1153. Rome, Italy.

sustainable small-scale fisheries, promoting decent work and safety at sea, fighting IUU fishing and increasing traceability in fish value chains.

In 2014, COFI adopted the SSF Guidelines which call on Governments and other concerned actors to take actions to promote social development, employment and decent work.

In 2015, the JWG recommended that FAO and IMO in collaboration with ILO's secretary promote International Labour Standards concerning forced labour, including human trafficking, and jointly consider linkages between fisheries governance, seafood industry and forced labour. The 2015 ILO conference on labour exploitation in the fishing sector recognized widespread human and labour rights violations and discussed good practices and innovations to eradicate forced labour and other decent work deficits in the fishing industry. The recommendation for collaboration was endorsed during the 335th session of the ILO Governing Body in March 2019.

In 2018, FAO together with the Apostleship of the Sea (AoS), a charity organization supporting seafarers worldwide, organized a regional technical seminar titled 'Joining forces in the fisheries sector: promoting safety, decent work and the fight to IUU fishing' in Manila, Philippines. The meeting had the objective of promoting labour standards in the fisheries sector and ensure increased cooperation and coordination between FAO, ILO and IMO. As a result of the meeting, a call for action was adopted calling for 1) strengthen national legal frameworks 2) promotion of workers' rights and social protection 3) call for corporate responsibility 4) governance². A similar event was organized in May 2019, in the Seychelles, gathering representatives from the ILO, the IMO, FAO and the UNODC, along with fisheries, labour and safety experts, national human rights institutes, trade unions and representatives from small-scale fishers.

The PSMA which entered into force on 5 June 2016 represents the first binding instrument to fight illegal fishing activities through the implementation of strong port measures and provides a significant tool for Governments to discourage labour violations at sea. FAO's Global Programme provides assistance to develop and strengthen the capacities of port States to set up effective inspections schemes, and, among other activities, helps set up National Interagency Committees including port, fisheries, labour, health and law enforcement authorities.

Supporting the implementation of the SSF Guidelines, FAO is strengthening fishers' organizations and promoting women's empowerment (through better access to markets, reduced food losses) and improved occupational health (through the provision of improved fish processing technologies). In 2016, FAO organized two workshops to discuss how to implement the SSF Guidelines with a view to promote gender equality and explore how to apply the human rights-based approach to the SSF Guidelines implementation.

In 2014, FAO started a consultative multi-stakeholder process, called the Vigo Dialogue, which includes fisheries and aquaculture representatives from government administrations, private sector industries, civil society organizations (small-scale fishers, workers' unions), auditing and certification schemes, and international organizations. In 2015, the meeting recognized that promoting decent working conditions has become a central issue for sustainable business development in fisheries supply chains. The 2016 Dialogue called for ratification of 2007 ILO Work in Fishing Convention (No. 188) and for more effective and coordinated multi-agency labour inspections on board fishing vessels. Some participants suggested the development of an international instrument providing guidance on the implementation of labour standards for the seafood sector, all along the seafood supply chain. The meeting also discussed the challenges of ensuring responsible sourcing of seafood products. A number of multi-stakeholders programs, retail consortia and seafood eco-labelling and certification schemes are including social and labour rights issues into their auditing requirements.

Ongoing relevant processes include the promotion of international instruments emphasizing human rights and due diligence such as the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights and the OECD/FAO Guidance for Responsible Agricultural Supply Chains. It was recognized that buyers will increasingly demand that the seafood industry does apply risk-based due diligence measures throughout seafood supply chains. Overall, there is a general convergence towards the need of ensuring responsible sourcing solutions of seafood products, and the need to ensure social development and human rights for seafood workers.

² FAO, 2019. Joining forces in the fisheries sector: Promoting safety, decent work and the fight against IUU fishing <http://www.fao.org/3/ca2511en/CA2511EN.pdf>

OPERATIVE PARAGRAPH 176 & 182 – *Flag state performance*

FAO Agreement on Port State Measures to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing

On 22 November 2009 the FAO Conference approved the PSMA. The objective of the PSMA is to prevent, deter and eliminate IUU fishing through the implementation of effective port State measures, and thereby to ensure the long-term conservation and sustainable use of living marine resources and marine ecosystems. Pursuant to Article 29, the PSMA entered into force on 5 June 2016. As at June 14, 2019, there are 61 parties to the PSMA, comprising 60 States and the European Union.

The first Meeting of the Parties to the PSMA was held in Oslo, Norway, from 29 to 31 May 2017. The second meeting of the Parties was held in Chile from 3-6 June, 2019. The second meeting took a number of important steps to facilitate the effective implementation of the PSMA including: a) adoption of the Rules of Procedure for the Meetings of the Parties, b) moving forward with the Global Information Exchange System through the Technical Working Group on Information Exchange, c) adopting the Terms of Reference for the Funding Mechanisms under Part 6 of the PSMA, d) adopting the questionnaire to review and assess the effectiveness of the PSMA. The meeting to review and assess the implementation of the Agreement will be hosted by the European Union in late 2020, and the following meeting of the Parties will be held in Indonesia in 2022.

The third Meeting of the Ad Hoc Working Group (Part 6 Working Group), held in Santiago, Chile, 7 June 2019, discussed the priorities for the use of the Part 6 Assistance fund, and, in line with the Terms of Reference for the funding mechanisms to assist developing States Parties adopted by the Parties at their second meeting, elected Norway and Indonesia to the panel to review applications and make recommendations on the assistance to be granted under the Part 6 Assistance Fund.

The second meeting of the PSMA Technical Working Group on Information Exchange (TWG-IE) was held in Seoul, Republic of Korea, from 15-17 May, 2019. The TWG-IE is an informal open-ended technical working group created by the Parties to provide guidance on elaborating information exchange mechanisms and other technical matters, including the need to provide for varying levels of access depending on the nature of the information provided. The TWG-IE made a number of recommendations at its second meeting, notably that the Global Information Exchange System should be operational as soon as possible to satisfy the requirements of the PSMA, and that the Secretariat proceeds with the development of a working prototype, working closely with RFMOs and other regional bodies.

As already reported under Section II, FAO continues to engage in awareness and capacity building at national, regional and global levels to improve implementation of the PSMA in general as well as to increase the numbers of parties to the Agreement through the Global Programme.

Global Record of Fishing Vessels Refrigerated Transport Vessels and Supply Vessels (Global Record)

The Global Record, as a tool that supports the implementation of international instruments such as the PSMA and the UNFSA in the concerted fight against IUU fishing, aims to increase transparency and traceability through the dissemination of official and certified data on the global fishing fleet and its operations. Through the unique vessel identifier (UVI), it is expected that, in synergy with the VGCDs, the Global Record will enhance traceability of fish and fishery products from the sea to the consumer.

The development of the Global Record has progressed in a number of areas. The Global Record Informal Open-Ended Technical and Advisory Working Group (GRWG) was established to provide advisory services, specifically to clarify outstanding issues and to find a solution for the long-term financing. So far, five meetings of the GRWG were convened (23-25 February 2015, 21-23 March 2016, 26-28 June 2017, 11-13 April 2018 and 13-14 May 2019) to review the advancements and provide guidance on the general way forward for the Global Record. To deal with specific technical issues upon request of the GRWG, three Global Record Specialized Core Working Groups (GRCGs) on data requirements, data exchange and third party data were created. The outputs of these groups contributed significantly on the development of the tool, assisting the GRWG on its decisions.

On 21 April 2017, the first working version of the Global Record Information System was launched and made available to all FAO Members to submit their information in the system, with access to data being

password restricted at this initial stage. On 9 July 2018, the Global Record Information System was launched to the general public, allowing for the full transparency of data submitted in the system. The system currently contains 9 183 vessels from 57 States, comprising seven countries from Africa, five from Asia, 26 from Europe, 12 from Latin America and the Caribbean, one from the Near East and North Africa, two from North America and five from South West Pacific. FAO is continuing its development of the system with the aim of improving its functionality and to follow up on the recommendations of the GRWG. To achieve these aims, a new version of the Global Record Information System is under development. This new version will look to improve user experience, integrate new data upload mechanisms and develop new functionalities.

There is a long-standing cooperation between IMO and FAO on subjects related to the fisheries sector. With regard to the Global Record, the IMO number, originally used as the UVI for Phase 1 (($\geq 24\text{m LOA}$ or $\geq 100\text{ GT or GRT}$)Number), has extended its coverage to the rest of the phases ((Phase 2 and 3 that include vessels $\geq 12\text{m but} < 24\text{m LOA}$ or $\geq 10, \text{ but} < 100\text{ GT or GRT}$) number), as a result of discussions during the Third Session of the JWG, held at IMO Headquarters in London, United Kingdom, on 16-18 November 2015. The Third Session of the JWG recommended that FAO and IMO explore the possibility of expanding the application of the IMO number scheme to fishing vessels that were outside its scope. These joint efforts concluded on 6 December 2017 with the adoption of the IMO Resolution A.1117 (30) which extended the IMO Ship Identification Number Scheme to fishing vessels of non-steel hull construction and to all motorized inboard fishing vessels of less than 100GT down to a size limit of 12 metres in length overall authorized to operate outside waters under the national jurisdiction of the flag State. As a result, Members are encouraged to ensure that IMO numbers are assigned to the relevant fishing vessels of their fleets.

SECTION IX – MARINE ENVIRONMENT AND MARINE RESOURCES

OPERATIVE PARAGRAPH 185

Our ocean, our future: call for action

At the high-level United Nations Conference to Support the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14 (SDG 14) - The Ocean Conference - held in June 2017 at UN headquarters in New York, close to 1,400 voluntary commitments for concrete action to advance implementation of SDG 14 were made. To follow-up on the implementation of these voluntary commitments; to catalyse and generate new voluntary commitments; and to facilitate collaboration and networking amongst different actors in support of SDG 14, the United Nations launched nine thematic multi-stakeholder Communities of Ocean Action (COA).

FAO, along with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), are co-focal points of COA #9 – Sustainable Fisheries. In collaboration with the UN DESA, the Secretary-General's Special Envoy for the Ocean, FAO and UNDP are working to:

- Generate multi-stakeholder interest and engagement in the COA and in the follow-up to The Ocean Conference in general;
- Participate in online and in-person meetings as necessary;
- Consult broadly with the relevant community to provide assessments of progress of voluntary commitments, and collect examples of successful implementation of voluntary commitments;
- Consult with the relevant thematic community to identify challenges to implementation of voluntary commitments;
- Help identify gaps in implementation in the Ocean Action area and spur the creation and registration of new voluntary commitments by all stakeholders;
- Collect expertise in areas related to the community of action and help channel best practices and policies to the voluntary commitments follow-up process;
- Contribute to the preparation of materials such as briefing notes and online newsletters;
- Identify experts who could be qualified to participate in expert meetings and panel discussions.

In concert with the Secretary-General's Special Envoy for the Ocean, FAO on behalf of COA # 9 contributed to a meeting of Co-focal points of the Communities of Ocean Action (COAs) in November 2018 to discuss elements of a strategic preparatory process in the lead up to the proposed UN Ocean Conference in 2020.

FAO contributed to a second preparatory meeting convened in May 2019 aimed towards the delivery of voluntary commitments, providing partnership opportunities and engaging with relevant voluntary commitment holders, and to catalyse and generate new voluntary commitments and facilitate collaboration among different actors in support of SDG 14.

Additionally, FAO made a number of voluntary commitments, which are currently underway. For additional information please reference UN Oceans webpage on COA and voluntary commitments.

FAO custodianship of SDG indicators

FAO is the custodian agency for four (4) indicators for SDG 14 – Life Below Water. These include 14.4.1, 14.6.1, 14.7.1 and 14.b.1.

As a custodian agency, FAO is responsible for:

- Collecting data from national sources, validating and harmonizing them, estimating regional and global aggregates and making them available for international reporting.
- Contributing to annual SDG progress reports, feeding into the High-Level Political Forum’s follow-up and review processes. Flagship publications are set to broaden their scope to include both a storyline and statistical annexes on relevant SDG indicators under FAO custodianship.
- Establishing partnerships with other international agencies to monitor the increased number of indicators, crucial to achieving interrelated goals.

COFI 32 convened in July 2016 and agreed that the data submitted through the CCRF questionnaire could be used by Members for reporting on SDG indicators. On that occasion, COFI also highlighted the importance of the ongoing processes related to Agenda 2030 on SDGs and encouraged FAO to support Members in the preparation of national reports on the relevant SDG targets.

Indicators SDG 14.6.1 and 14.b.1 have been upgraded to Tier II. In order to support countries in achieving SDG 14.b and report on indicator 14.b.1, FAO developed an e-learning course which is available online and held an expert workshop on Exploring SDG 14.b and its indicator 14.b.1. in April 2019 in Fiji. FAO is also finalizing an e-learning course on SDG 14.4.1 to help build countries capacities on stock status determination and to provide guidance for the monitoring and reporting on this indicator.

In the last meeting of the Inter-agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators (IAEG-SDGs), FAO presented a methodological proposal for the last Tier III indicator under its custodianship, 14.7.1 on sustainable fisheries as a percentage of Gross Domestic Product (GDP). The delay in developing an internationally agreed methodology is due to the fact that FAO agreed to take responsibility for this indicator only in late 2016. Member countries present at the meeting recognized the effort FAO had invested in developing a feasible and practical approach for measuring the concept of sustainable fisheries, for which no international definition exists, and endorsed the methodology. During the meeting, the indicator was set as a Tier II indicator, but it should soon be reclassified to Tier I, since FAO submitted data for 128 countries, i.e., over the 50% threshold required for Tier I indicators.

The FAO is a contributing agency to SDG indicator 14.c.1 in collaboration with other UN Oceans Members under the leadership of the Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea, United Nations (UN-DOALOS) as the custodian agency, to develop a methodology for collecting data, monitoring the target and measuring progress with a view to ensure the upgrading of the indicator to the next tier.

OPERATIVE PARAGRAPH 186 AND 208

Marine pollution, marine debris, and especially plastics (including abandoned, lost or otherwise discarded fishing gear)

In response to concerns regarding the impacts on fish stocks, marine life and the marine environment of abandoned, lost or otherwise discarded fishing gear (ALDFG), in 2014 COFI requested the development of guidelines on marking of fishing gear. Through an Expert Consultation on the Marking of Fishing Gear, held from 4-7 April 2016, and a Technical Consultation on the Marking of Fishing Gear, which was held from 5-9 February 2018, the requested guidelines were drafted. The 33rd Session of COFI, held from 9-13 July 2018, endorsed the Voluntary Guidelines on the Marking of Fishing Gear (VGMFG). COFI supported the development of a comprehensive global strategy to tackle issues relating to ALDFG and to support

implementation of the VGMFG and encouraged the involvement of small-scale and artisanal fisheries and relevant RFMOs and other relevant international bodies.

COFI further encouraged FAO to conduct further work on quantifying the impacts of ALDFG and developing and documenting good practices for addressing ALDFG, including the recovery and recycling of gear, the use of biodegradable gear to minimize its contribution to marine plastic pollution, as well as the reduction of ghost fishing. In 2019, FAO started conducting regional capacity building workshops on the good practices to prevent and reduce ALDFG in close collaboration with the Global Ghost Gear Initiative (GGGI), a cross stakeholder alliance of fishing industry, private sector, corporates, NGOs, academia and governments focused on solving the problem of lost and abandoned fishing gear worldwide. In close collaboration with the IMO, FAO supported the establishment of the GESAMP Working Group No. 43 on Sea-based sources of marine litter including fishing gear and other shipping related litter, which is scheduled to meet in the 2nd semester of 2019.

OPERATIVE PARAGRAPH 232-234

Ecosystem approach

The FAO has developed or supported the development of numerous normative products under the EAF and ecosystem approach to aquaculture (EAA) framework to improve the understanding and furthering its implementation, in line with the CCRF and the relevant technical guidelines. Online support is available through the EAF-net (<http://www.fao.org/fishery/eaf-net/toolbox/en>).

FAO continues to support the implementation of an ecosystem approach in a number of countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America, through projects funded by extra budgetary resources.

An example of FAO's activities with respect to EAF is the EAF Nansen Project.

- The EAF Nansen project supports the implementation of the ecosystem approach in the management of marine fisheries, mainly in Africa. To date, the project collaborates with more than 30 African coastal countries. Thanks to the availability of the Research Vessel "Dr. Fridtjof Nansen", deployed in collaboration with the Institute of Marine Research (IMR) of Bergen, Norway, knowledge on the state of resources and ecosystems is provided to developing countries. Important data and information are being collected on marine resources and the marine environment in the EEZ of partner countries in Africa. In addition, two ecosystem surveys and one for habitat studies have been completed in Myanmar in Asia.
- Furthermore, the project supports capacity development on various aspects of fisheries research and management (institutional strengthening) in partner countries for them to be able to generate and use the knowledge required for EAF and to manage their fisheries following the EAF principles and methodologies. Training packages have been designed to address different target audiences, and "on the ground" capacity development support is provided to support the development of fisheries management plans in accordance with EAF. As examples, in partnership with a number of African universities, the EAF-Nansen Project has developed university-level training course on the EAF that targets professionals in fisheries research and management institutions, environmental agencies and the private sector. A Handbook has been developed to complement the resources for the course for the purpose of supporting both trainers and trainees³. A Teaching Kit on the EAF for Schools in Africa has been prepared in collaboration with selected schools in Senegal and the Gambia. The preparation of fisheries management plans is a key element for supporting the implementation of EAF and the improvement of the fisheries management process in partner countries, including the use of best available knowledge and risk assessment to address ecological social and economic sustainability issues. Sixteen countries in Africa have been assisted to prepare fisheries management plans coherent with the EAF principles.

³ <http://www.fao.org/3/a-i5787e.pdf>

- The EAF Nansen project carried out a review on the implementation of EAF in national legislation in Africa (Legislating for an ecosystem approach to fisheries – A review of trends and options in Africa). A follow-up document (How to Guide on legislating for an ecosystem approach to fisheries⁴) is now available to support development and drafting of new legislation and fisheries managers to implement EAF through national legislation.
- In May 2017, a new phase of the programme, called the EAF-Nansen Programme started with the new research vessel also called R/V Dr Fridtjof Nansen. The long term objective of the new programme is that “Sustainable fisheries improve food and nutrition security for people in partner countries”. This new five-year phase is intended to further strengthen the knowledge base and the overall institutional capacity for the implementation of the EAF in developing countries with additional effort on the impact of climate variability and change, pollution and other anthropogenic stressors. The programme continues to be implemented in close collaboration with IMR.

FAO is also supporting countries with the implementation of EAF and its integration in cross sectoral discussions through work under several Large Marine Ecosystem projects, as outlined in some highlights below:

- In collaboration with the FAO-executed project “Protection of the Canary Current Large Marine Ecosystem (CCLME)” and the Sub-Regional Fisheries Commission, the EAF-Nansen Project has also assisted four countries in Northwest Africa (Morocco, Mauritania, Senegal and The Gambia) to prepare a sub-regional management framework for the Shared Small Pelagic Fishery of Northwest Africa. This document is the output of three stakeholder workshops that identified overall sustainability objectives and the key issues to be addressed in order to achieve them.
- Through the Caribbean Large Marine Ecosystem (CLME) project a case study was implemented on the shared stocks of shrimp and ground fish fishery of the Guianas-Brazil shelf aimed at mainstreaming EAF in the management of the shrimp and ground fish resources. Further support to fisheries administrations will be provided by FAO through the CLME+ which is the next phase of the CLME project launched in 2016. Within this second phase, FAO will support the development and implementation of EAF sub-regional management plan.
- In collaboration with UNIDO and NOAA, FAO is providing technical assistance to the project “Implementation of the Strategic Action Program of the Gulf of Mexico Large Marine Ecosystem” (GEF ID 6952; 2016-2020 – GoM SAP Implementation Project). This is a 5-year project specifically aimed at facilitating the implementation of the Mexico/U.S. endorsed Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis (TDA – 2011) and Strategic Action Plan (SAP – 2013) for the integrated management of the GoM-LME. FAO is providing technical assistance to the national executing agency (INAPESCA) for the execution of two interlinked Outputs. One to support the implementation of existing fisheries management plans for the red grouper fishery from Yucatan and the brown shrimp fishery from Tamaulipas and the other to implement the SSF Guidelines.
- Through the FAO component of the Mediterranean Sea LME (MEDLME), three main activity areas were carried out including (a) mainstreaming EAF into fisheries management and research, under which a number of trainings on EAF have been carried out, (b) increasing fishers’ participation in fishery monitoring, thus simultaneously increasing the knowledge base, stakeholder participation and the legitimacy of management, and (c) addressing by-catch and discards in the Tunisian bottom trawl fishery in the Gulf of Gabes. The whole FAO component addressed the improvement of fisheries management through increased and improved implementation of the EAF in its multiple dimensions. Following the closure of the MEDLME project in 2015, FAO continues to support the mainstreaming of EAF into fisheries management in the region, with the support of the FAO Mediterranean Regional Projects (AdriaMed, CopeMed, EastMed and MedSudMed) and in close collaboration with the GFCM. The approach has been applied in the development of sub regional management plans for shared resources by the GFCM and also in the development of national management plans for fisheries in Turkey, Egypt, Tunisia and Lebanon.

⁴ FAO EAF-Nansen Project. 2016. A How-to Guide on legislating for an ecosystem approach to fisheries. FAO EAF-Nansen Project Report No 27. Rome, Italy. (see <http://www.fao.org/3/a-i5966e.pdf>)

- The Indonesian Sea LME, also includes the adoption of the EAF as part of their work. The implementation of EAF is also a key element under the FAO led projects under the ABNJ Programme.
- The Bay of Bengal Large Marine Ecosystem (BOBLME) Project, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), through the U.S. Coral Triangle Initiative (USCTI) and the Coral Triangle Support Program (CTSP) developed an EAF Management training course.⁵ Training of trainers has taken place in the Asia-Pacific with Malaysia, Philippines, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, and Indonesia undertaking national training courses using the course already developed.

FAO has supported RFBs (e.g. GFCM, APFIC, SWIOFC, CECAF) to formally adopt the EAF and its integrated principles as part of their mandate.

- For example, APFIC endorsed EAF as an approach at its 32nd Session⁶ and provided an overview of the way that APFIC/FAO member countries have embraced EAF and moved forward with it. Countries that explicitly embrace EAF include Malaysia, Australia, Indonesia, Philippines.
- The SWIOFC has created a dedicated EAF Regional Task Group for the EAF under its Scientific Committee, that assists countries in putting in place EAF-compliant management and assessment. It also regularly supports member countries in assessing the compatibility of their national fisheries management with EAF, and has served as the Steering Committee for all regional activities of the EAF-Nansen project in the South-West Indian Ocean region. Several member countries of the SWIOFC have adopted the EAF as the main guiding principle of their fisheries regulatory system.
- A Review of current fisheries management performance and conservation measures in the WECAFC area included the implementation of EAF and integrated decision-making in the review.

FAO has provided extensive support to the member countries of both the Southwest Indian Ocean Fisheries Commission (SWIOFC) and the Fisheries Committee for the Central Eastern Atlantic (CECAF) for the development and implementation of EAF fisheries management plans. Examples include the Banks line fishery of Mauritius, the Mozambican deep-sea shrimp as well as line fish fisheries and the shrimp fisheries in Gabon, Congo and Nigeria.

FAO has issued “A How-to Guide on Legislating for an Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries” and a step-wise guide for legal gaps assessment. At the national level, FAO has carried out reviews and supported the development of draft fisheries legislation in a number of countries and regions, in which the implementation of the EAF is particularly emphasized including in Bahamas, Cambodia, Chile, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ghana, Grenada, Guyana, Indonesia, Madagascar, Malaysia, Marshall Islands, Namibia, Papua New Guinea, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Solomon Islands, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago and Vanuatu. In the SWIOFC region, countries that have revised their fisheries laws (e.g. Mauritius, Mozambique and Seychelles) have explicitly included EAF as a key management approach.

SECTION X – MARINE BIODIVERSITY

OPERATIVE PARAGRAPH 245

Deep-sea Fisheries and Areas beyond national jurisdiction

The FAO programme on deep-sea fisheries in areas beyond national jurisdiction focuses both on applying an ecosystems approach to fisheries and protecting marine biodiversity in the deep seas and has been ongoing since the adoption of the *FAO International Guidelines for the Management of Deep-sea Fisheries in the High Seas* (Deep Sea Fisheries Guidelines) in 2008.

⁵ Available online as a three volume training course at <http://www.fao.org/3/a-i3778e.pdf>; <http://www.fao.org/3/a-i3779e.pdf>; <http://www.fao.org/3/a-i3780e.pdf>; <http://www.eafmlearn.org/> <http://www.apfic.org/eeafin-materials/viewcategory/44-ecosystem-approach-to-fishery-management-training.html>

⁶ See <http://www.fao.org/docrep/017/i3141e/i3141e00.pdf> See <http://www.fao.org/docrep/017/i3141e/i3141e00.pdf>

Since 2016, the ABNJ Deep Seas project “Sustainable Fisheries Management and Biodiversity Conservation of Deep Sea Living Resources in Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction”, implemented by FAO in collaboration with UN Environment, continue to implement its activities as per the agreed work plan, in close synergies with the other FAO projects related to deep-sea issues, such as the deep-sea fisheries component of the Japan-funded project *Fisheries Management and Marine Conservation within a Changing Ecosystem Context*, and the Horizon 2020 funded project *Deep-sea Sponge Grounds Ecosystems of the North Atlantic: an integrated approach towards their preservation and sustainable exploitation* (SponGES Project). The ABNJ Deep Seas Project, which is part of the ABNJ Common Oceans Programme (funded by the Global Environment Facility - GEF) engages the full range of stakeholders and partners involved with the management of deep-sea fisheries, such as RFMOs, Regional Seas Organizations, the fishing industry, and those groups involved with biodiversity conservation of deep-sea areas in the areas beyond national jurisdiction. A direct output of the ABNJ Deep Seas Project is a study entitled “Review and Analysis of International Legal and Policy Instruments Related to Deep-sea Fisheries and Biodiversity conservation in Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction”⁷. The study provides an overview of the global and regional governance frameworks for deep sea fisheries and biodiversity conservation and management in area beyond national jurisdiction and will lead to a stepwise guide for the implementation of international instruments on deep-sea fisheries to be published in mid-2019. It also reviews global shipping instruments and global environmental instruments relevant to deep-sea fishing and its impact on marine biological diversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction. In October 2018, the ABNJ Deep Seas project conducted a workshop to promote the sustainable use of marine resources in deep-sea fisheries through the integrated implementation at the national level of all relevant international instruments on deep-sea fisheries and marine biodiversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction. The Workshop included participants from the Southern Indian Ocean Fisheries Agreement (SIOFA) and from the South East Atlantic Fisheries Organization (SEAFO). A workshop on MCS was also conducted in December 2018 to evaluate the effectiveness of existing fisheries MCS systems and practices implemented by Angola, Comoros, Mauritius, Namibia, the Seychelles, South Africa, and Thailand. The Workshop identified activities to strengthen MCS and improve compliance with respect to the SEAFO and SIOFA obligations.

The Horizon 2020 SponGES project aims to raise awareness on deep-sea sponge ecosystem function in the North Atlantic, and potential impacts on them that may be caused by extractive activities, including fisheries, by bringing relevant research information on sponges to the attention of policy developers and fisheries managers and to support exchange of knowledge and information. Two policy dialogues have taken place to raise awareness on these issues for policy-makers, and a high-level dialogue meeting took place with the European Parliament Intergroup on “Climate Change, Biodiversity, and Sustainable Development” in November 2018.

Continued support for the implementation of the FAO Deep Sea Fisheries Guidelines encompasses the above-mentioned projects, focusing on sustainable use of deep-sea resources, prevention of significant adverse impacts and conservation of marine biodiversity in the deep-seas. Work has been done on identifying good practices and assisting with capacity development and knowledge sharing in different regions on the protection of vulnerable marine ecosystems (VMEs), including the use of the criteria for identification and appropriate management actions.

Example activities include work associated with: the updating of the World Wide Review of Bottom Fisheries in the High Seas, the improvement of the assessment of orange roughy stocks and other deep-sea species, the use of catch documentation schemes for deep-sea fisheries, and the impact of deep ocean climate change on habitat, fish and fisheries⁸⁹.

Follow up scientific work in 2016 in relation to the 2015 research cruise with the R/V Dr Fridtjof Nansen referred to above in the SEAFO Convention area provided additional scientific knowledge on deep-sea

⁷ Review and Analyses of the International Legal and Policy Instruments Related to Deep-sea Fisheries and Biodiversity conservation in Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction, FAO 2017

⁸ Hosch, G. 2018. Catch documentation schemes for deep-sea fisheries in the ABNJ - Their value, and options for implementation. FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Technical Paper No. 629. Rome, FAO. 94 pp. Licence: CC BY-NC-SA 3.0 IGO.

⁹ FAO. 2019. Deep-ocean climate change impacts on habitat, fish and fisheries, by Lisa Levin, Maria Baker, and Anthony Thompson (eds). FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Technical Paper No. 638. Rome, FAO. 186 pp. Licence: CC BY-NC-SA 3.0 IGO.

species and ecosystems. The survey mapped and identified VMEs and fisheries resources on selected seamounts and seamount complexes in the SEAFO convention area.

The development of tools to support improved identification and reporting of vulnerable species groups such as deep-water sharks, sponges and corals is continuing, as well as associated training continued. Species catalogues and field guides for deep-sea shark in the eastern Pacific were produced and training conducted, and posters on Sponge (Indian Ocean and Mediterranean) and Deep-sea corals (Mediterranean) were produced.

Further information on VME related activities are provided under operative paragraph 259.

OPERATIVE PARAGRAPH 246

Technical support to development of an international legally binding instrument under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction

FAO continues to actively participate in, and contribute to, the on-going discussions taking place in the Preparatory Committee established by General Assembly resolution 69/292: Development of an international legally binding instrument under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction (BBNJ PrepCom). In particular, FAO is providing technical inputs and clarifications to delegations through the delivery of statements under each of the informal working group, providing information on FAO's work with RFMOs on the conservation and management of fisheries in ABNJ, highlighting FAO's experience and work on genetic resources in particular on access and benefit sharing (ABS), area based management tools (ABMT), including marine protect areas (MPAs), marine scientific research (MSR) and capacity building and technology transfer. Technical inputs are also provided through the delivery of side events in the margins of the meeting. FAO participated in the third and fourth session of the Preparatory Committee on Marine Biodiversity Beyond Areas of National Jurisdiction held in 2017, and organised or participated in side events to contribute to the understanding of the international governance framework for fisheries in areas beyond national jurisdiction and FAO's efforts in this regard. FAO also participated in the First Session (4-17 September 2018) and Second Session (25 March to 5 April 2019) of the Intergovernmental Conference on an international legally binding instrument under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction (General Assembly resolution 72/249).

OPERATIVE PARAGRAPH 259

Guidance for the identification of VMEs through the International Guidelines for the Management of Deep-sea Fisheries in the High Seas

FAO continues to support countries and regional organization with the implementation of the FAO Deep Sea Fisheries Guidelines with the support of several projects (see also the input to paragraph 245). With respect to guidance in relation to VMEs, two regional workshops were conducted in 2016 for the Mediterranean (Rome, Italy, July 2016) and the Central Eastern Atlantic (Dakar, Senegal, November 2016) that addressed issues relating to the definition and management of deep-sea fisheries and VMEs in the respective regions. In March 2018, the ABNJ Deep Seas Project co-organized a workshop on the protection of vulnerable marine ecosystems for the North Pacific with the North Pacific Fisheries Commission (NPFC), with the aim of updating the NPFC's understanding of how fishing activities over seamounts impact VMEs in their convention area. A set of recommendations was made to the NPFC Scientific Committee for consideration. Another workshop was conducted in February 2019 in conjunction with SIOFA to present global advances related to the mapping of VMEs, VME indicator taxa, encounter protocols, protected area protocols and the selection of protected areas. The results of the Workshop were presented to the SIOFA Scientific Committee for consideration. Work related to the development of identification tools for deep-sea sponges and corals was finalized in late 2016/early 2017, for the Indian Ocean (Sponges) and the Mediterranean (Sponges and corals).

The Portal and Database on Vulnerable Marine Ecosystems (VME DataBase¹⁰), launched in 2014, is fully operational and is continuously updated in collaboration with the respective RFMOs to include information relating to their recent conservation and management measures on VMEs, including spatial information on VME and other areas. The VME database can be accessed through the VME portal, which contains additional VME-related information. The VME database was developed in collaboration with the regional bodies with mandates to manage deep-sea fisheries in ABNJ and provides interactive maps and factual information on management measures taken to reduce current or potential impacts on areas where VMEs are known or likely to occur.

Complementing the information in the VME database, and contributing to sharing practices and information globally, a FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Technical paper on: “Vulnerable Marine Ecosystems: Processes and Practices in the High Seas” was finalised in 2016 and published in early 2017¹¹.

OPERATIVE PARAGRAPH 257, 260

Other Effective Area-Based Conservation Measures

The majority of FAO Members are also Parties to the CBD and have agreed to help meet global commitments to the sustainable use of fisheries resources (e.g., COFI endorsements, Aichi Biodiversity Target 6) and biodiversity conservation (i.e., Aichi Biodiversity Targets). To date, activities to meet these commitments have been undertaken and reported separately (i.e., via CBD and COFI processes). However, in recent years there has been a convergence between the two types of commitments. The CBD Parties are now promoting a valuable opportunity to acknowledge the role of OECMs in biodiversity conservation beyond protected areas, and to work towards the common goals of biodiversity conservation and sustainable fisheries management. This includes specific approaches to area-based fisheries management that have tangible benefits for biodiversity conservation. FAO has been consistently engaged in the discussions on OECMs and is actively working with the CBD and other partners to develop guidance on how to best operationalize the concept in the fisheries sector.

The CBD’s Aichi Biodiversity Target 11¹² (Target 11) aims to improve the status of biodiversity by safeguarding ecosystems, species and genetic diversity through area-based conservation. In addition to conventional protected areas, the reference to OECMs reflects the CBD Parties’ willingness to include other well-designed and managed area-based measures that can also contribute to biodiversity conservation in Target 11. The recognition of OECMs in the fisheries sector is extremely relevant to COFI as FAO continues to develop a strategy for mainstreaming biodiversity conservation including in the fisheries sector (and as mandated by a number of statutory bodies including COFI).

FAO’s work on area-based management in the fisheries sector was brought to COFI 33 in July 2018 (COFI/2018/8). In particular in the COFI 33 report, the Committee appreciated the increased cooperation of FAO with relevant entities, notably CBD. The Committee welcomed the support of FAO to the CBD towards achieving the Aichi Biodiversity Targets and FAO participation in the post 2020 vision of CBD. It requested FAO to continue the work concerning area-based management tools and its cooperation with other organizations working on this matter. Following COFI 33, the 14th CBD Conference of the Parties (CBD COP 14) adopted a definition of OECM and provided criteria and guidance for their identification (Decision 14/8). In particular, this Decision:

- *Invites* IUCN, the FAO and other expert bodies to continue to assist Parties in identifying OECMs and in applying the scientific and technical advice;
- *Urges* Parties, and invites other Governments, relevant organizations and donors in a position to do so to provide resources for capacity-building, and to support Parties and indigenous peoples

¹⁰ <http://www.fao.org/in-action/vulnerable-marine-ecosystems/vme-database/en/vme.html>

¹¹ **FAO**. 2016. *Vulnerable Marine Ecosystems: Processes and Practices in the High Seas*, by Anthony Thompson, Jessica Sanders, Merete Tandstad, Fabio Carocci and Jessica Fuller, eds. FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Technical Paper No. 595. Rome, Italy.

¹² Decision X/2: “The Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and the Aichi Biodiversity Targets” from the 10th Conference of the Parties of the Convention on Biological Diversity. <https://www.cbd.int/doc/decisions/cop-10/cop-10-dec-02-en.pdf>

and local communities to identify OECMs and to apply the scientific and technical advice and guidance;

- *Urges* Parties to facilitate mainstreaming of protected areas and OECMs into key sectors, such as, *inter alia*, agriculture, fisheries, forestry, mining, energy, tourism and transportation.

OECMs represent a new opportunity for States to recognize tools that can support biodiversity conservation through a wider range of spatial management measures than ever before. Various international efforts have been pursued to define, operationalize, and provide guidance on OECMs across multiple sectors, but none yet specific to a sector. Area-based fisheries management measures (ABFMs) that likely meet the OECM criteria are widely used in fisheries management plans and processes, making this sector well poised to become a leader in identifying OECMs and show and strengthen the contribution of good fisheries management to the reduction of the collateral impact on biodiversity.

Since COFI 33, FAO has continued to work to support the achievement of Target 11 in particular. Following the CBD COP 14, FAO and CBD, in close collaboration with the Fisheries Expert Group of the IUCN Commission on Ecosystem Management (IUCN-CEM-FEG), and with support from the Nordic Council of Ministers, organized an expert meeting from 7-10 May 2019 at FAO Headquarters in Rome, Italy to begin the process of supporting the fishery sector to engage in identifying OECMs in support of Aichi Target 11. The purpose of the expert meeting was to compile expert advice on the identification, establishment and implementation of OECMs in the fishery sector. Participants represented diverse interests and brought extensive knowledge to the meeting with regards to OECMs in the context of the marine capture fishery sector. FAO will publish a meeting report summarizing this input in fall 2019. FAO's intent is to develop guidance for FAO Members for submission to the 34th session of COFI in 2020.

SECTION XI – MARINE SCIENCE

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UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development

FAO is working with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of UNESCO (IOC-UNESCO), and other partners, to co-design the Decade over a three-year period (2018-2020).

Fishery Resources Monitoring System (FIRMS)

FAO leads the FIRMS partnership which aims to facilitate access to a wide range of high-quality information on the status and trends of global marine fishery resources, fisheries and their management. FIRMS is intended to provide decision-makers with the information necessary to develop effective fisheries policies in accordance with the CCRF. After a decade, 2004-2014, during which the FIRMS concept evolved towards a mature operational stage, the partnership now focuses on expanding its monitoring coverage. With the recent addition of two new IGO Partners (South Pacific Regional Fisheries Management Organisation (SPRFMO) and Fishery Committee of the West Central Gulf of Guinea (FCWC), it now consists of 16 IGO Partners representing 21 RFBs. Five additional IGOs have FIRMS partnerships in their pipeline process.

In May 2019, FIRMS also innovated with the adoption of a new “Collaborative Arrangement” instrument to open the Partnership to collaborative institutions (national public institutions, (i)NGOs) with these providing technical inputs and advice. Four institutions involved in the Blue BRIDGE project were invited to join as collaborative institutions to support FIRMS in contributing to global and regional policy objectives, namely SOFIA and SDG14.4.1 stock status, and traceability schemes. In particular, the changes allowed FIRMS to take the lead on two initiatives which were developed by the Blue BRIDGE project: the Global Record of Stocks and Fisheries (GRSF), with the University of Washington (UW); the Sustainable Fisheries Partnership (SFP), and Foundation for Research and Technology-Hellas (FORTH); and the Global Tuna Atlas, with the Institut Français de Recherche pour le Développement (IRD).

The FIRMS database of marine resources and fisheries holds information on 1470 marine resources and 751 fisheries worldwide, which status are reported in some 850 fact sheets published on the FIRMS website. With GRSF collating sources from alternative databases (UW's RAM Legacy Stock database, SFP's

FishSource) and, in the near future, from SDG Indicator 14.4.1¹³ country reports, the prospective number of inventoried stocks is to double, and that of fisheries to be multiplied by five. Actors involved in seafood traceability and certification also expressed keen interest in using the FIRMS/GRSF standard-based unique identifiers of stocks and fisheries, which they intend to use in traceability schemes as connectors to the best scientific evidence on stock or fishery status.

FIRMS is now equipped to act as the digital companion of SOFIA's stocks status, by providing the evidence-base and transparency tool to assess global or regional statements on status of stocks. As a digital resource disseminating unique identifiers of stocks and fisheries, another unique prospect will be for FIRMS to draw the connection between stock status, catch data, and trade information. FIRMS, together with FAO's Global Capture Production database, should constitute major pillars to support SDG 14.4.1

GRSF and the FIRMS Tuna Atlas are planned to be publicly released on the occasion of the FAO Fishery Symposium in 2019.

On-going efforts also aim at responding to RFBs' regional needs, in particular in developing regions (e.g. CECAF, RECOFI, SEAFDEC, SWIOFC, WECAFC, BOBLME). Towards this goal, FIRMS is currently involved in the following projects with capacity building components:

- Strengthening national data collection and regional data sharing through FIRMS to support priority regional fishery management plans in the WECAFC area (EU funded WECAFC-FIRMS phase 3 project);
- The CLME, the strategic action programme for the sustainable management of the shared living marine resources of the Caribbean large marine ecosystem and adjacent regions (GEF funded);
- Improved regional governance of Marine Resources in the CECAF Area (EU funded PESCAO project);
- Further development of GRSF and FIRMS Tuna Atlas under the EU H2020 BlueCloud and FoodCloud projects.

Revisions of Fishery Statistical standards to meet policy needs

The CWP¹⁴, a FAO Article 14 Body, provides a mechanism to coordinate the statistical programmes of intergovernmental organizations, including regional fishery bodies with a remit for fishery statistics. Following the endorsement by the 25th session of the CWP of a revised International Standard Classification of Fishing Gears (ISSCFV), the 26th session of CWP, Rome, May 2019, endorsed in turn the revision the International Standard Statistical Classification of Fishing Vessels (ISSCFV). ISSCFV is used for Fleet Statistics and by the Global Record (of fishing vessels). CWP also addresses good practices for streamlining statistical workflow among agencies in charge of fishery and aquaculture statistics, and has endorsed a new global standard for reference harmonization for capture fisheries, which goal is to improve data reporting and exchange between national, regional and global organizations. Three data structures were endorsed under this standard (Capture Production, Catch, Catch and Effort), and CWP will further work on a fishing activity standard. It will also work on the revision of fishing effort and catch concepts.

Collaborative platforms on data and information

FAO continues to develop and use data services in EU co-funded iMarine e-infrastructure that will receive funding through H2020 BlueCLOUD. The aim is to enable multidisciplinary, collaborative science for policy development and implementation, towards the goal of the Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries management and conservation of living marine resources. By connecting all actors in related domains (in particular fisheries, biodiversity, environment) around shared data and information, the iMarine initiative fosters the emergence of global partnerships and related community of practices, in support of the SDG challenges that fisheries face such as sustainability and climate change. The iMarine initiative relies on a public partnership between European IT specialized institutions (e.g. CNR-ISTS, CLS-FORTH, University of Athen) and global, regional, and national marine knowledge institutions, such as FAO, EC, Regional Fishery Bodies, IRD, University of Washington, and GRID Arendal.

BlueCLOUD products will include the Global Record of Stocks and Fisheries now placed under FIRMS, an adaptable Regional DataBase for Fisheries Management support (RDB), semi-automated processing of

¹³ SDG Indicator 14.4.1: "Proportion of fish stocks within biologically sustainable levels"

¹⁴ <http://www.fao.org/cwp-on-fishery-statistics/en/>

geospatial data (including remote sensing) to support inventories of aquaculture systems (e.g. cages, ponds), and a dedicated spatial planning environment that can access and share data from all of the above. BlueCLOUD recognizes the need for technology and knowledge transfer to resource poor entities, and dedicates significant efforts to incorporate an educational environment in the fisheries domain. BlueCLOUD can also offer training on Regional DataBase development to define and design solutions that meet specific regional needs.

Automatic Identification System (AIS) - In partnership with Google Earth Engine, Global Fishing Watch, AZTI and the Seychelles Fishing Authority, FAO is coordinating the writing of an Atlas Publication describing the potential, status and limitations regarding use of AIS data to track fishing vessels' activity and footprint. AIS offers the ability to create a global, high-resolution map of fishing footprint. The 'Atlas of AIS-based fishing footprint and effort' will take advantage of this unique dataset to create a more detailed understanding of fishing footprint, fill in gaps in knowledge, and validate existing datasets. The Atlas describes the strengths and limitations of using AIS-based fishing activity as metric of fishing footprint or effort in each FAO region. It reviews each FAO Area focusing on the apparent strengths and limitations of AIS data in different contexts. Two case studies (Seychelles tuna fleet in the Indian Ocean and the Spanish fleet in the Bay of Biscay) compare fishing effort calculated through AIS algorithms with those of VMS and logbooks, which provide advice over how to interpret AIS-derived fishing activity and describe how far AIS can be used for estimates of fishing effort. The publication will be released during fall 2019. AIS shows potential to support the separation of fishing activity by fleet between High Seas and EEZs for the industrial fleet segment which is the one mostly concerned by this issue, and from there to infer estimates for the separation of catches between EEZs and High Seas. AIS has limited use in the developing world and is hardly used by small scale vessels. In certain context, AIS might support improvement of the analysis of certain fish stocks.

The research vessel Dr Fridtjof Nansen is the primary tool of the Norad-funded Nansen programme (now EAF-Nansen Project in the current transitional phase). For over four decades two successive vessels (bearing the same name) have worked in tropical and sub-tropical maritime waters, carrying out oceanographic and fisheries surveys. The vessel has become a unique floating platform for research, training and the exchange of knowledge providing, in particular, opportunities for hundreds of scientists from developing countries. The surveys carried out and information collected over the decades constitute an invaluable archive of scientific data and information on fisheries and marine ecosystems.

SECTION XII – REGULAR PROCESS FOR GLOBAL REPORTING AND ASSESSMENT OF THE STATE OF THE MARINE ENVIRONMENT, INCLUDING SOCIOECONOMIC ASPECTS

Assistance to the 2nd cycle of the Regular Process for Global Reporting and Assessment of the State of the Marine Environment

The second cycle of the Regular Integrated Marine Assessment including social economic aspects lasts from 2017 to 2020. The global assessment covers fisheries and aquaculture that are related to FAO's mandate and working areas. As a UN agency specialized in fisheries, FAO has provided the Global Assessment in the first cycle with data support and technical assistance as required on the following chapters: 1) The oceans and seas as sources of food; 2) Capture fisheries; 3) Aquaculture; 4) Fish stock propagation; 5) Social and economic aspects of sea-based food and fisheries, 6) Sharks and other elasmobranchs, and 7) Tunas and billfishes. FAO reviewed its final report and provided comprehensive comments. Through its network, FAO also contributed to the awareness raising and identification of experts for the Pool of Experts during the first cycle and will continue to do so in its second cycle.

SECTION XIII – REGIONAL COOPERATION

Regional fishery bodies are key instrumental actors for regional cooperation towards sustainable development

A growing human population and growing per capita demand for food, nutrition and other goods and services means an expansion of fisheries and aquaculture activities in the oceans and inland water bodies and along the coasts, and increased pressure on the environment and on the use of other resources. As

awareness of this pressure rises, it becomes increasingly evident that sustainability can only be achieved through cooperation.

RFBs and RFMOs, are gaining importance in the international fora for discussion of issues related to fisheries management and sharing of living marine resources. RFBs have been intensifying their work to ensure that all possible mechanisms for cooperation are used in the development and management of fisheries and aquaculture.

FAO has been supporting this evolution by reinforcing the work of individual RFBs through the Organization's technical work on fisheries and aquaculture, and promoting and supporting linkages, exchange and mutual support among RFBs through the Regional Fishery Body Secretariats' Network (RSN). RSN is hosted and supported by FAO and comprises 58 RFBs (including 25 RFMOs). Its purpose is to strengthen information sharing; offer a framework for discussion among RFB secretariats on emerging issues related to fisheries management, research and aquaculture development in their regions and, in the case of RFMOs, regulatory areas; enhance regional cooperation and provide communication services and visibility to the RFBs' work¹⁵. This is contributing to rapid development in the capacity of RFBs to support the planning and management of fisheries and aquaculture.

In the context of regional cooperation, there have been a number of developments.

FAO and UNEP have facilitated discussions between RFBs and the corresponding Regional Seas organizations to strengthen collaboration on issues of common interest, taking into account the different mandates and roles of these bodies. The two organizations also cooperate with CBD, within the framework of its Sustainable Ocean Initiative (SOI), to enhance cross-sectoral collaboration among RFBs and Regional Seas organizations in addressing issues such as the SDGs, the Aichi Biodiversity Targets, and ecologically or biologically significant marine areas (EBSAs) and VMEs.

In the Mediterranean area, the GFCM and the UNEP/Mediterranean Action Plan Secretariat to the Barcelona Convention (UNEP-MAP) are collaborating and already achieved results, including the integration of environmental concerns in the context of social and economic development, especially in relation to fisheries and aquaculture; the harmonization of existing criteria for identifying Specially Protected Areas of Mediterranean Importance and Fisheries Restricted Areas, in particular those located partially or wholly in areas beyond national jurisdiction; a stronger coordination in the implementation of the SDG strategies of the two organizations.

FAO and UNEP are also supporting cooperation agreements in other areas of the world in the Gulf and Sea of Oman, the FAO Regional Commission on Fisheries (RECOFI) and the Regional Organization for the Protection of the Marine Environment (ROPME); in the Southwest Indian Ocean, the SWIOFC and the Nairobi Convention have been discussing modes of cooperation; in the Central Eastern Atlantic, the CECAF and the Abidjan Convention have developed a long-standing cooperative relation for supporting the sustainable use and conservation of marine living resources and their environment in the areas where the mandates of the two bodies overlap; in the Western Central Atlantic, WECAFC cooperates with the UNDP in supporting implementation of the Strategic Action Programme of the Caribbean and North Brazil Shelf Large Marine Ecosystems (CLME+), a five-year project co-financed by GEF.

In addition, RFMOs are playing a leading role in regional and global efforts in the fight against IUU fishing, through integrated conservation and management measures, MCS requirements, as well as information exchange mechanisms, RFMOs are putting up a strong stance against perpetrators of IUU fishing. IUU levels of fishing have been significantly reduced in some RFMO regulatory areas over the years.

As regards the aquaculture sector, regional bodies aim to address issues and practices through a multidisciplinary and integrated approach, based on concerted regional strategies. Currently about one-third of existing RFBs are covering aquaculture, half of which have been established under the FAO framework, including advisory and regulatory bodies. RFBs work together with different constituencies, especially in collaboration with regional aquaculture networks around the world, in Africa (ANAF), Asia (NACA), Central and Eastern Europe (NACEE), Micronesia (MASA), Latin America and the Caribbean (RAA). The mechanism provided by RFBs facilitates knowledge sharing, technical and institutional capacity

¹⁵ Website: <http://www.fao.org/fishery/rsn/en> ; newsletter: <http://www.fao.org/documents/card/en/c/I8604EN>

development, management and governance and, in some cases, monitoring and evaluating of country compliance to the CCRF aquaculture related provisions¹⁶. The work of RFBs in the sector is being increasingly considered by the FAO Regional Conferences to define regional priorities and recommendations.

RFBs are present in all regions, their membership being very diverse in terms of distribution of income groups of countries. In view to achieve equitable development, FAO promotes cooperation among Members, especially by supporting those RFBs in challenging areas, for reasons linked to food security, socio-economic development, resource management and sustainability.

SECTION XV – COORDINATION AND COOPERATION

Achieving Blue Growth – Building vibrant fisheries and aquaculture communities

Like the Green Economy principles that preceded it, FAO's Blue Growth Initiative (BGI) emphasizes the three pillars of sustainable development in order to make fisheries and aquaculture development, within the context of the broader blue economy (tourism, shipping, etc.), achieve maximum socioeconomic benefits while minimizing environmental degradation. The BGI harnesses the power of aquatic resources and ecosystems to improve food security or decent work while preserving life below water and on land, thereby serving as a framework for implementing a number of SDGs.

BGI interventions span three overarching platforms: Blue Production—which is focused on implementing ecosystem-based approaches to responsible fisheries and aquaculture management; Blue Trade—geared at supporting the economic development of countries, with an emphasis on markets and access to trade; and Blue Communities—which aims to strengthen fishing communities by promoting social development by way of decent work and food security.

Across these platforms, the BGI seeks to achieve its objectives through the development of enabling conditions, including: (1) law and policy; (2) public-private institutions; (3) knowledge and capacity development; and (4) innovation. Law and policy is the cornerstone of any blue growth reform and should be constructed so as to prevent the overexploitation of the environment, the mistreatment of people, and corruption of institutions. Public-private institutions are important for coordinated management across ministries and sectors because blue economy reforms are holistic in nature, and the importance of initial public-private investment in blue economy reforms which are costly. Knowledge and capacity development is required for blue economy reforms whether related to farming to farming fish or managing against IUU fishing. Innovation will drive any existing progress forward, by identifying new solutions or additional efficiencies and simultaneously generating socio-economic and environmental benefits.

Globally, there are a number of countries working with FAO that are considering, developing or implementing Blue Growth strategies as they seek to transition towards blue economies that leverage the most from their aquatic resources and ecosystems. Technical agencies such as FAO stand ready to assist countries, in partnership with other relevant organizations, in facilitating blue economy and blue growth transitions.

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UN-Oceans

FAO has been an active participant in UN-Oceans since its establishment. In line with the UN-Oceans Work Programme and, as mandated in the revised terms of reference, FAO, together with the other UN-Oceans members, promotes coordination and coherence of United Nations system activities related to oceans and coastal areas by assisting in the development of joint statements or side events at major events of relevance to the work of UN-Oceans members. FAO also continues to work towards the development of the "inventory of the mandates and priorities approved by the respective governing bodies of UN-Oceans participating

¹⁶ COFI:AQ/IX/2017/3, 'Progress Reporting on the Implementation of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries (CCRF) provisions relevant to the Aquaculture and culture-based fisheries', <http://www.fao.org/cofi/aq/73970/en/>

organizations” aimed at identifying on-going and planned activities in respect of those mandates and priorities.

FAO developed, hosts and continues to fund the maintenance and further refinement of the website of the UN-Oceans, as well as the initial version of the electronic platform for the inventory in the form of a user-friendly online searchable database detailing the mandates and the activities of each of the members of UN-Oceans which will be continuously updated by UN-Oceans Members.

The UN-Oceans mechanism is also used to exchange information and views on events or activities of interest to its members. It is through such an exchange, that UN-Oceans has the advantage of raising awareness of the ongoing activities of its members, which also provide the opportunity for UN-Oceans to “deliver as one” through strengthened cooperation, as done in 2016 during both the twenty-second session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the twelfth session of the Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol and the first session of the Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Paris Agreement, in Marrakech, where UN-Oceans delivered a consolidated side event on “Sustainable Development Goal 14: Oceans – Science-based solutions for achieving adaptation and mitigation goals”.

FAO is the Secretariat of the UN Atlas of the Oceans, a web portal developed under the authority of UN-Oceans which allows UN-Oceans members to provide relevant information on their respective activities with regards to the sustainable development of the oceans.