

**FAO INPUTS IN RELATION TO RESOLUTION A/RES/74/19
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 legal advice and assistance to Member Nations including, in the development of fisheries and aquaculture legislation and contributing to national efforts towards realising the relevant SDGs. In providing such advice and assistance, emphasis is placed on the need for national legislation to conform with the provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea of 10 December 1982 (the Convention). In this regard, great effort is put into ensuring that national legislation incorporates and effectively implements the provisions of the Convention, the rights and duties of Member Nations within waters under national jurisdiction such as fisheries monitoring, control and surveillance (MCS), and the effective exercise of jurisdiction over flagged (fishing) vessels on the high seas and in waters under the jurisdiction of other States. The development of national fisheries legislation also takes into account the binding decisions of Regional Fisheries Management Organizations and arrangements (RFMOs) which are recognised under the Convention as bodies through which States may cooperate including elaborating upon the provisions of the Convention for the conservation and management of straddling fish stocks, highly migratory fish stocks and discrete high seas fish stocks.

The legislative assistance provided by FAO to Member Nations also takes into account the international treaties related to the conservation and sustainable use of fisheries resources such as 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). Further, the assistance considers, with great emphasis other relevant but non-binding 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. These non-binding instruments refer to and promote certain principles, approaches and tools which are incorporated into national fisheries and aquaculture legislation with the agreement of the concerned government in consultation with stakeholders. Among the principles and approaches and tools that are important to guide the development of legislation are the Human Rights Based Approach to fisheries conservation and management, stakeholder participation in decision making including through co-

management, the application of environment impact assessment in deep sea fisheries, and the ecosystem approach to fisheries and aquaculture.

Since 2019, FAO has provided legal assistance for implementation of the above mentioned Convention and international fisheries instruments to a number of Member Nations, including: Cambodia, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Ghana, Grenada, Indonesia, Jamaica, Liberia, Namibia, Panama, Peru, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Sierra Leone, Sri Lanka and Trinidad and Tobago. The legal assistance provided included reviewing and developing national policy and legislation for sustainable fisheries including gaps analysis of legal and institutional frameworks; coordinating and supervising research and providing technical support for the publication of international legal and policy instruments.

Harmonization of legislation in small scale fisheries

Work on the alignment of legislation with international instruments that implement the Convention, in particular the SSF Guidelines, was carried out under the FAO SSF Umbrella Programme. Such alignment as well as implementation of the SSF through legislation was undertaken in collaboration with other partners, programmes and projects including the following:

- The Coastal Fisheries Initiative [FAO-GEF CFI] project review of fisheries legislation frameworks in West Africa (Cabo Verde, Côte d'Ivoire and Senegal) through a participatory process (including small-scale fisheries communities). The review will come up with recommendations for modifications to reflect an ecosystem approach to fisheries (EAF) and principles of the SSF Guidelines. The project is developing a small-scale fisheries legislative practical guide (SSF Legal Guide) from an EAF perspective including addressing a human rights-based approach, and gender equality. The project is also reviewing existing institutional structures to support amendments necessary for new co-management arrangements, including access rights systems for both men and women in coastal area.
- The Comisión de pesca en pequeña escala, artesanal y acuicultura para América Latina y el Caribe discussed the SSF Guidelines and reported on activities in member states, e.g., technical assistance was provided to national processes in Costa Rica, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua for the adoption of the provisions of the SSF Guidelines within national regulatory frameworks.

SECTION II - CAPACITY-BUILDING

OPERATIVE PARAGRAPH 36 - Capacity-building for the conservation and sustainable use of marine resources

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

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 of Member Nations under the Convention and the related international fisheries instruments. It is actively working to strengthen national institutions, through among others, the FAO Global Capacity Development Programme to support the implementation of the PSMA and complementary international instruments to combat illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing (Global Programme) by:

- 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
- formulating and/or revising relevant fisheries policies, laws and by-laws or regulations;
- strengthening MCS, compliance and enforcement institutions and systems, including through South-South Cooperation and mechanisms for regional harmonization, coordination and cooperation;
- enhancing capacity to improve flag State performance in line with the VGFSP; and,
- as appropriate, implementing market access measures, such as catch documentation and traceability schemes.

This capacity building assistance is also enhanced and supported through workshops. At such workshops, participants receive training on the State's rights and obligations as coastal States, flag States, chartering States, port States and market States, as well as rights and obligations under RFMOs. The training covers 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.

FAO continued to provide assistance in 2019 to its Member States in training and capacity building in support of the implementation of the Convention and related fisheries instruments, including: Cambodia, Chile, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Gabon, Ghana, Grenada, Guinea, Guyana, Indonesia, Madagascar, Malaysia, Marshall Islands, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, 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 Member Nations' government officials. The course, conducted in Spanish in July 2019, 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; and, (v) apply best practices in the detection, investigation, and prosecution of fisheries offences and violations. FAO continues to strengthen its cooperation and collaboration in this regard with numerous international and regional institutions including, CITES, UNEP, UNODC, IMO, ILO, and the Pacific Forum Fisheries Agency.

Capacity development for the implementation of the PSMA

In 2017, FAO launched its *Global Programme to support the implementation of the PSMA and complementary international instruments to combat illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing* (the Global Programme). The Global Programme aims to contribute to national, regional and global efforts to prevent, deter and eliminate IUU fishing, by strengthening countries' capacity to comply with their port, flag, coastal and market State responsibilities. It represents the overall framework within which FAO and its development partners articulate and mobilize coordinated actions in support of the implementation of port State measures and other relevant instruments. As at June 2020, the Programme is comprised of ten projects with funding in excess of USD 16 million from the

European Union, Iceland, Norway, the Republic of Korea, Spain, Sweden and the United States of America.

To date, 42 countries from Africa, Asia and Pacific, and Latin America and the Caribbean have received FAO assistance under the Programme. Activities have included:

- the formulation of national strategies and action plans for the implementation of the Agreement and complementary international instruments to combat IUU fishing for 33 coastal States;
- technical support on domestic policies and legislation to 18 developing States Parties, non-parties and SIDS to ensure alignment with the requirements of the Agreement;
- support on operations and monitoring, control and surveillance (MCS) to 13 developing States Parties, non-parties and SIDS to adopt procedures and systems in line with the Agreement;
- legal training on international fisheries law provided to 54 officials from 16 countries, and training on MCS and port inspection procedures provided to 24 officials from 7 countries;
- national-level, introductory seminars on the Agreement provided to 4 countries;
- training on the Law of the Sea Convention and related international instruments and fisheries law in the context of the implementation of the PSMA provided to judicial officers from 2 countries, including 75% of the judges and magistrates of Sri Lanka.

The Global Programme additionally supports the development of global information systems in support of the implementation of the PSMA, including the PSMA global information exchange system (GIES), the Global Record of Fishing Vessels, Refrigerated Transport Vessels and Supply Vessels and FAO's database on port State measures (Port-Lex); the undertaking of studies and the development of practical field guides and tools (e.g. Magnitude of IUU fishing; Global Study on Transshipment), and; delivers related capacity development assistance is provided on the effective use of these tools. The Global Programme assists concerned States with travel costs to participate in the meetings of the Parties to the PSMA and relevant working groups.

Capacity development for small-scale fisheries (SSF) under the FAO SSF Umbrella Programme

The SSF Guidelines are a globally agreed framework for small-scale fisheries development and governance. "Empowering stakeholders: capacity development and institutional strengthening" is the 3rd component of the FAO SSF Umbrella Programme which supports improved technical and organizational capacities of governments and stakeholders at the local, national and regional levels for implementation of the SSF Guidelines. The following key milestones to support capacity development in the context of the implementation of the SSF Guidelines have been achieved in 2019/20 mainly through the 3rd component:

- Meeting of Indigenous People representatives of Central American countries in San Jose, Costa Rica, in December 2018, to construct mechanics for SSF Guidelines implementation and confirming the establishment of the Alliance of Central American Indigenous Fishers (Alianza de Pescadores Indígenas Centroamericanos) and the development of a regional action plan. The meeting was supported by FAO, OSPESCA, Fondo para el Desarrollo de los Pueblos Indígenas de América Latina et el Caribe (FILAC) and the Central American Indigenous Council (CICA). In September 2019, the Alliance of Central American Indigenous Fishers hosted a workshop on territorial governance in fishing, supported by FAO and the FILAC.

- Several FAO Members have taken the initiative to move towards SSF Guidelines implementation with the support of FAO on request. Within the framework of a new Sida funded project under the FAO SSF Umbrella Programme, a selected number of proposals for SSF Guidelines implementation were accepted taking the number of countries with current or planned support to SSF Guidelines implementation to ten: Cabo Verde, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Madagascar, Myanmar, Namibia, Oman, Philippines, Senegal and Tanzania.
- Within the framework of the GFCM RPOA-SSF, an 'SSF University' has been set up consisting of a variety of training courses directed to in particular small-scale fisheries actors in the Mediterranean and Black Sea region. GFCM is organizing two workshops for the Mediterranean and the Black Sea to strengthen small-scale fisheries organizations in the two sub-regions and to inform on how small-scale fishers and fish workers can engage with the GFCM. Other courses are organized by the FAO and other members of the 'Friends of SSF' network on the implementation of the RPOA-SSF.
- Capacity development in Africa supported by FAO includes strengthening the capacity of small-scale fisheries organizations in Morocco through ad hoc fisheries management trainings to small-scale fishers and addressing access barriers to social protection in Tunisia. A learning exchange trip is being organized for Moroccan and Tunisian representatives to Italy within the framework of the SSF University coordinated by GFCM. The trip will aim at exchanging experiences in the management of professional organizations and in the diversification of incomes.
- A considerable amount of work is being carried out on gender. The FAO SSF Umbrella Programme has supported participation of small-scale fisheries representatives or resource persons in various meetings and conferences that are considered as capacity development. Examples include:
 - In October 2019, the Gender in Aquaculture and Fisheries Section and network of experts of the Asian Fisheries Society organised the seventh symposium on Gender in Aquaculture and Fisheries (GAF7), inviting around 150 participants. This year's theme was Expanding the Horizons. During the symposium, a special workshop was held on the role women fishworker organizations play in implementing, and also monitoring the implementation of, the Small-Scale Fisheries Guidelines. It drew on experiences from the African Women Network of Fish Processors and Traders (AWFISHNET).
 - FAO support to country participants to attend the International Conference of Women in Fisheries, November 2018, Spain. This conference agreed on a declaration: The 'Santiago de Compostela Declaration for Equal Opportunities in the Fishing Sector and Aquaculture'
 - In January 2020, the FAO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific supported the regional workshop on gender integration in fisheries, organized by the Oceans and Fisheries Partnership (USAID) and SEAFDEC in Thailand by providing resource persons on gender-sensitive reporting and communication, as well as on gender equality according to the SSF Guidelines.
- A project funded by South Korea, aims to produce knowledge products and methodologies for evaluating performance of the existing fisheries co-management systems worldwide. The project is expected to contribute to enhancing the effectiveness of fisheries co-management systems around the world and improving knowledge about fisheries co-management that is widely applicable for sustainable fisheries and livelihoods. Besides, a test-bed project of the above co-management project will concurrently start to apply the developed methodology to a country level from the year 2020 onwards.

- Work started in the previous biennium on mapping small-scale fisheries organizations and assessing their needs with a view to provide support by the FAO SSF Umbrella Programme in collaboration with partners. This includes work by the Duke University with support from the Oak Foundation on a small-scale fisheries organizations global inventory.
- In the Pacific, two new initiatives have been started that include support to small-scale (coastal) fishers/fish worker organizations. A regional project provides support to seven Pacific Island countries to develop and strengthen their small-scale tuna fisher associations and cooperatives to enable improved engagement in management and decision-making processes related to the resources on which they depend. In addition, aligned to the latter regional project is a project that focuses on assessing, mapping and characterizing associations of fishers and fish workers from around the Pacific Islands. This project seeks to develop a baseline of information to assist national and regional agencies and organization better engage and support small-scale fisher and fish worker associations and cooperatives.
- In the Caribbean, the FAO-GEF project REBYC-II LAC and StewardFish are collaborating with Duke University and the University of West Indies to diagnose the functionality of fishing organizations in Trinidad and Tobago and Suriname to understand and reinforce areas of action. This project created and strengthened five local fisher and fishworker organizations and one national organization in Suriname to enhance the capacity of small-scale fishers to participate in the decision-making process. Under StewardFish, capacity building is being carried out to empower fisherfolk throughout fisheries value chains to engage in resource management, decision-making processes and sustainable livelihoods, with strengthened institutional support at all levels. Implementation is being guided by the principles of EAF and is seeking to promote women's empowerment through leadership and promote the importance of social protection for sustainable livelihoods. Moreover, FAO is providing support to the Caribbean Network of Fisherfolk Organizations (CNFO) to allow small-scale fisheries actors in the region to better understand the SSF Guidelines and to engage in regional policy processes. In the region, FAO is also providing support to the CNFO and National Fisherfolk Organizations to increase resilience to climate change through the GEF Funded Climate Change of the Eastern Caribbean Fisheries Sector Project (CC4FISH).
- The Learning guide “Putting the Voluntary Guidelines on Tenure into practice: A learning guide for civil society organizations”, co-developed by FAO and the IPC Fisheries Working Group was used to train small-scale fisheries organizations and CSOs in Brazil, Sri Lanka and Tanzania. The overall goal of the training is to enable SSF organizations and their constituents to use the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security (VGGT) and the SSF Guidelines meaningfully and effectively to improve the governance of tenure and ensure sustainable small-scale fisheries.
- Global training programmes initiatives including modules on the SSF Guidelines primarily directed to governments with engagement of FAO include:
 - Wageningen Centre for Development Innovation (Wageningen University and Research – WUR, the Netherlands) on fisheries governance courses;
 - TBTI interdisciplinary training course initiative,

- The Fisheries Training Programme under the auspices of UNESCO in Reykjavik, Iceland.
- A training course entirely dedicated to the SSF Guidelines is currently under development by the International Oceans Institute African Region (IOI-SA).

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 Regional Fishery Bodies (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 PARAGRAPHS 114 to 123

Safety at sea in the fisheries sector

The Fourth Session of the Joint FAO/ILO/IMO Ad Hoc Joint Working Group on IUU Fishing and related Matters (JWG 4) was held on 24-25 November 2019, in Torremolinos, Spain, back to back with the IMO Ministerial Conference. The session recommended that IMO should develop guidance to assist competent authorities in the implementation of the 2012 Cape Town Agreement. The process of developing such guidance should allow for further discussion on its content and scope and be informed by FAO, ILO, other relevant Organizations and stakeholders.

In 2019 -2020, FAO conducted various safety at sea capacity building projects, particularly in the Caribbean and South-Pacific regions and in South Asia. Capacity building materials¹ were developed in close collaboration with the Bay of Bengal Programme – Intergovernmental Organization (BOBP-IGO) for trainers on safety at sea and for small-scale fishers, and training workshops were organized. An on-line environment for safety at sea professionals with training resources was introduced. FAO also developed and promoted an accident and fatality reporting system for fisheries in the Caribbean.

Less than five percent of the world's fishing fleet and the fishers working on the fleet are presently covered by insurance. Many fishers who get an accident during their working life, cannot work for some time or end up disabled. This creates financial and social hardship for these fishers and their families. Insurance services have shown to be able to reduce the vulnerability of fishers and their families to shocks caused by accidents in fishing, and to contribute to sustainable fisheries livelihoods.

Therefore FAO has been technically assisting States with the introduction and promotion of insurance services for small-scale fishers in particular. Together with the Asia-Pacific Rural and Agricultural Credit Association (APRACA) FAO developed Guidelines for increasing access of small-

¹ FAO 2019/2020. Safety at sea for small-scale fishers. Rome. Italy. Available on line in Chinese, English, French, Portuguese, Spanish, Singhalese and Tamil languages.

scale fishers to insurance services in Asia², which were endorsed by APRACA membership in 2019 and are being implemented in the Asian region. In the Caribbean region FAO assessed the possibility of introducing third-party liability insurance in fisheries, on request of fishers' organizations in the region, and is advising States on the related legal requirements and capacity building to be conducted.

Safety at sea in small scale fisheries

A Train the Trainer workshop on safety at sea for small-scale fisheries in the Caribbean, was conducted on 20-24 January 2020 in Castries, Saint Lucia. The regional workshop was attended by 30 safety at sea professionals, trainers from the coast guards, defense forces, maritime and fisheries departments, as well as training institutes from Antigua and Barbuda, Grenada, Saint Lucia, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Trinidad and Tobago. The objective of the workshop was to provide those directly involved in the training of fishers on safety at sea, with the knowledge and tools to carry out this critically important educational task. The regional training included modules such as emergency preparation, outboard engine repair and maintenance, safety risk management, boat handling and basic marine traffic as well as First Aid and communication. In addition, nearly 600 fishers have received specific ICT trainings focusing on the three ICT devices most important to safety at sea for small-scale fishers: the VHF radio, Global Positioning System (GPS) and cellphone. FAO taught instrumental, technical and procedural skills while also performing drills on the radio, GPS and cellphone in a classroom environment as well as at sea.

OPERATIVE PARAGRAPH 116

Promoting decent working conditions in fisheries and aquaculture

At recent sessions of the FAO Sub-Committee on Fish Trade (COFI:FT) (2016 and 2017), FAO Members highlighted the increasing concern about social and labour conditions in the industry and underlined the importance of recognizing the protection of human and labour rights in the fisheries and aquaculture value chains at both levels, national and international. In 2018, during the FAO Committee on Fisheries (COFI), Members recommended the development of guidance on social responsibility in fisheries and aquaculture value chains in order to promote decent work and the recognition of human and labour rights in the sector.

During 2019, FAO conducted a number of dialogues globally and held a public consultation and received feedback from trade unions, governments, NGOs, academia, civil society, industry, and international organizations, among others. A draft guidance was submitted to the COFI:FT meeting in November 2019, where it was recommended to develop a scoping paper to further contextualise the specific issues of fisheries sectors and to present this to the next COFI FT meeting, planned for 2021. This process is now underway

Social protection and decent work in small scale fisheries

The need to put social protection and occupational safety and health in fisheries and aquaculture, as called for in the SSF Guidelines, on the political agenda was discussed by parliamentarians from 17 countries who met in Panama in September 2018 for the V Foro de Parlamentarios de la Pesca y la Acuicultura de América Latina y el Caribe (FOPPAALC). The forum was organized by FAO in

² FAO 2019. Guidelines for increasing access of small-scale fishers to insurance services in Asia, by Uwe Tietze and Raymon van Anrooy. Rome. Italy.

coordination with the Latin American parliament (PARLATINO), the Parliamentary Front Against Hunger (PFH) and the Panama National Assembly Also, at the VI FOPPAALC, held in Colombia in November, 2019, an agreement was made to foster social protection and occupational safety in labour and fisheries national legal frameworks of member countries.

The Joint FAO/ILO/IMO Ad Hoc Working Group on Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing and Related Matter (JWG) and safety, security and working conditions of at sea

In 2019, ILO became a formal member of the Joint FAO/ILO/IMO Ad Hoc Working Group on Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing and Related Matters. At the fourth session of the JWG, FAO, ILO and IMO Secretariats worked together to increase understanding of the relations between IUU fishing, safety at sea and severe human rights abuses and exploitation in the fisheries and seafood sector, taking into account lessons learned from existing projects and initiatives. JWG4 further recommended that the work of ILO and IMO with respect to the issues of abandonment and fair treatment of seafarers, be extended to include fishers and that FAO considers how to promote fisheries observers safety, through review of available information and existing national and regional measures on the safety, security and working and living conditions of fisheries observers, and be informed by IMO, ILO, other relevant Organizations and stakeholders.

Following the recommendations of JWG3 in 2018, FAO together with the Apostleship of the Sea (AoS), a charity organization supporting seafarers and fishers worldwide, started a collaborative process to promote regional dialogues on safety, decent work and IUU fishing. The first regional technical seminar titled 'Joining forces in the fisheries sector: promoting safety, decent work and the fight to IUU fishing' was organized in 2018, 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 and national institutions. 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) governance³. The second regional technical seminar 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.

A third seminar was held, in October 2019, with the collaboration of the Fishery Commission for the West Central Gulf of Guinea (FCWC), in Accra, Ghana. The regional seminars produced calls for action to increase cooperation and improvements in the areas of 1) Decent work and labour rights, 2) Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, 3) Safety at sea 4) Small-scale fishers and security and 5) an increase in coordination, collaboration and information exchange.

The Vigo Dialogue on Decent Work

Since 2014 annually, FAO has led multi-stakeholder consultations "The Vigo Dialogue on Decent Work", focusing on the benefits of promoting decent employment in fisheries and aquaculture. The Dialogue aims to identify pertinent labour issues and to suggest priority actions, including relevant international and national legal frameworks, guidelines and codes among stakeholders (i.e. governments, international organizations, NGOs, civil society, industry).

³ 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>

In 2015, the Dialogue recognized that promoting decent working conditions has become a central issue for sustainable business development in fisheries supply chains. In 2016, the Vigo Dialogue called for the ratification of 2007 ILO Work in Fishing Convention (No. 188), and for more effective and coordinated multi-agency labour inspections on board fishing vessels. It was also discussed the challenges of ensuring responsible sourcing of seafood products. In 2017, the Dialogue focused on the implementation of available recent international fisheries and labour instruments as strategic approaches to combat abuses of human and labour rights in fish value chains. Approximately seventy-five participants took part of the event, presenting current conditions, challenges, perceptions, processes and best practices from the perspective of the seafood industry, civil society and fish workers' unions, governments, international and intergovernmental organizations. In 2018, the Dialogue focused on the mandate from the FAO Committee of Fisheries (COFI) on developing a guidance on social responsibility in fisheries value chains. The overall objective was to facilitate an open discussion to enable feedback and inputs from stakeholders in order to address the challenges and complexity of this topic. In 2019, the Vigo Dialogue did not take place as the Conxemar and FAO International Congress was on Social Sustainability and the annual event organized jointly by FAO and Conxemar became the Dialogue. The Congress aimed to promote the recognition and protection of human and labour rights worldwide in the fisheries and aquaculture sector, in order to improve better practices on social responsibility in the whole value chain. It was attended by approximately 350 participants from the industry, governments institutions, NGOs, association, unions, civil society, and academics.

The Vigo Dialogue has been also present in the workshops organized by FAO on Blue Growth Ports, where social sustainability is one of the pillars. Promoting decent work along the fisheries value chains has become an important task for several stakeholders, who have requested to continue with the dialogue in different platforms.

Other activities

Other 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 is 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.

FAO in collaboration with the University of Stirling and the International Union of Food, Agriculture, Tobacco and Allied Workers (IUF) conducted global and regional reviews on the main occupational hazards and injuries in the aquaculture industry. The publication of such a reviews is under preparation.

FAO is also supporting Members through a process of developing Guidelines for Sustainable Aquaculture (GSA) that identify relevant themes at global and regional levels, describe successful case studies, and promote pathways suitable for supporting the long-term development of aquaculture (from species and farmed environments to value chains) at a landscape, country and region level. To this end, GSA is aimed at helping the countries achieve a better implementation of the CCRF, while engaging and enabling their aquaculture sector to effectively participate in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

SECTION IX – MARINE ENVIRONMENT AND MARINE RESOURCES

OPERATIVE PARAGRAPHS 192 to 196

Sustainable Development Goal 14

SDG Indicator 14.4.1 - Proportion of fish stocks within biological levels and related capacity building

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 has been published. 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 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.

SDG Indicator 14.6.1

SDG Target 14.6 calls for an end to IUU fishing, while another calls to eliminate subsidies which contribute to IUU fishing by 2020. To measure the progress of States in this context, an indicator was developed, namely indicator 14.6.1 - "Progress by countries in the degree of implementation of international instruments aiming to combat illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing". The methodology for this indicator was approved in April 2018 by the Inter-agency and Expert Group on SDG Indicators. It is based upon responses by States to the biennial FAO Questionnaire on the Implementation of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries and Related Instruments. The indicator is comprised of five variables, each of which has been assigned a weighting depending on its importance in eliminating IUU fishing, while taking into consideration areas of overlap between certain instruments. The five variables are:

- adherence and implementation of UNCLOS (10 percent);
- adherence and implementation of the United Nations Fish Stocks Agreement (10 percent);
- development and implementation of a national plan of action to combat IUU fishing in line with the International Plan of Action to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing (30 percent);
- adherence and implementation of the PSMA (30 percent);
- implementation of flag State responsibilities in the context of the Compliance Agreement and the Voluntary Guidelines for Flag State Performance (20 percent).

The indicator assesses the level of implementation for each variable with regard to policy, legislation, institutional framework, and operations and procedures. Responses by countries to questions

relevant to each variable within the questionnaire are used to calculate a score for this indicator. These scores are then converted into bands, assigning the States a level of implementation from 1, the lowest level of implementation, to 5, the highest.

According to self-reporting from States on this indicator, countries have made good progress overall in carrying out the recommended measures to combat IUU fishing, with close to 75 percent scoring highly in their degree of implementation of relevant international instruments in 2020 compared to 70 percent in 2018.

SDG 14.b.

FAO, as custodian agency for SDG indicator 14.b.1 (Progress by countries in adopting and implementing a legal/regulatory/policy /institutional framework which recognizes and protects access rights for small-scale fisheries) supports countries in working towards achieving SDG 14.b and reporting on its progress. The indicator is a composite indicator and its reporting is based on three questions of the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries (CCRF) questionnaire. FAO encourages and supports countries in ensuring participatory and meaningful reporting processes in this context.

FAO continues to support the implementation of the SSF Guidelines and the achievement of SDG Target 14.b in North Africa. In Tunisia and Algeria, a technical cooperation project entitled “Blue Hope Initiative in the Mediterranean Sea” is assisting stakeholders in the development of investment plans, aiming at facilitating the inclusion of local small-scale fisheries communities in the Blue Growth process. In order to support the management of marine small-scale fisheries in the sub-region, FAO is working with its partners on improved data collection. A sub-regional initiative for an SSF inventory has been initiated to complement previous and ongoing activities like the MedSudMed qualitative mapping of small-scale fisheries in Libya and Tunisia. The overall scope of the inventory is to obtain a clear picture of the status of the small-scale fisheries sector and to identify fishing grounds and the most sustainable and economic viable fishing methods.

In the Pacific, a workshop on the methodology for reporting on indicator SDG 14b1 was held. Representatives of 11 Pacific countries, regional organizations, academia and civil society gathered for the event. The purpose of the workshop was to raise awareness of the SDG 14.b, as well as of related regional and global policy instruments, in particular SPC's New Song for the Pacific and the SSF Guidelines, and to strengthen capacities to collect and compile relevant data and report on the indicator SDG 14.b.1.

SDG 14.c.1

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. Indicator 14.c.1 was upgraded to Tier II in December 2019.

Our ocean, our future: call for action

In light of the global coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic and growing public health concerns, the 2020 United Nations Ocean Conference, which was scheduled to take place from 2 to 6 June in Lisbon, Portugal, has been postponed per decision 74/548 adopted by the General Assembly. Co-hosts of the

Conference Kenya and Portugal in consultation with the General Assembly will decide on possible future dates for the Conference, including timelines for the preparatory process.

A global online series, the Virtual Ocean Dialogues: connecting communities for ocean action, organized by the Friends of Ocean Action, will instead take place on 1-5 June 2020, to maintain the momentum of the UNOC. FAO is supporting several of the panels, including Nourishing Billions, as well as organizing some of the breakout sessions.

The PSMA and its implementation to ensure the long-term conservation and sustainable use of marine living resources and marine ecosystems

The PSMA, since its adoption On 22 November 2009 by the FAO Conference, continue to serve its objective to prevent, deter and eliminate IUU fishing through the implementation of effective port State measures to ensure the long-term conservation and sustainable use of marine living resources and marine ecosystems. Currently, there are 64 parties to the PSMA, including the European Union. Since its inception, the parties to the PSMA held two meetings in 2017 and 2019 respectively, to improve on the effective implementation of the PSMA. Two other meetings are slated to take place in 2020 and 2022 to be hosted by the European Union and the Republic of Indonesia. That said, FAO continues to garner support for the effective implementation of the PSMA through capacity building and awareness at national, regional and global levels. This approach continues to yield results as more States become parties to the Agreement.

FAO's *Global Programme to support the implementation of the PSMA and complementary international instruments to combat illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing* aims to strengthen countries' capacity to comply with their port, flag, coastal and market State responsibilities (for more information, see Section "Capacity Development for the implementation of the PSMA"). The first intervention of this Programme at national level is always the formulation of a national strategy and action plan, based upon the results of a five-day participatory, interagency workshop. The strategy and action plan includes specific recommendations to improve flag state performance, including inter alia, improving procedures for the registration of, and authorizing the right to fish to, fishing vessels; improving MCS procedures; and sharing of relevant information at national, regional and global level, including through the Global Record of Fishing Vessels, Refrigerated Transport Vessels and Supply Vessels (see below). Further follow-up activities are currently being elaborated by FAO, with the plan to deliver these in the coming months/years, including regional workshops on flag State performance, and specific, tailored national level training on MSC procedures.

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

The Global Record of Fishing Vessels, Refrigerated Transport Vessels and Supply Vessels⁴ (Global Record) is a global initiative to fight IUU fishing that primarily involves State authorities and, to some extent, RFMOs in compiling an online up-to-dated repository of vessels engaged in fishing and fishing-related operations. It has become an essential tool in support of the implementation to deter and eliminate illegal, unregulated and unreported (IUU) fishing activities, within the framework of the Port State Measures Agreement (PSMA) and other related international instruments as it has been designed to include all information requirements and standards required by the PSMA, the UN Fish Stocks Agreement and the FAO Compliance Agreement among others. It is thus the ultimate global information tool on certified flag state fleet information becoming the backbone of any global

system relying on vessel identity and relative information. Additionally, the global record would strongly support and enhancing the traceability of fish and fishery products from the sea to the plate through the inclusion of the Unique Vessel Identifier (UVI), as the IMO number, in all vessel and fish products related documentation such as in the catch certificates. This would ensure that traceability is not lost at the landing point, but kept throughout the value chain to assert the legality of the product. Consequently, the global record contributes significantly to achieving the Agenda 2030 Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 14.

Following guidance provided by the Global Record Informal Open-Ended Technical and Advisory Working Group⁵ (GRWG) held annually, FAO launched the first version⁶ of the Global Record back in April 2017 and since then 63 countries have uploaded their fleets summing up to over 40% of the global eligible fleet, i.e., vessels with IMO numbers. Some of the latest countries having uploaded information include Panama, Argentina, Republic of Korea, China, and Indonesia. This global information system includes primarily information on vessel identity, characteristics, ownership, and historical data, together with licensing and a brief history of compliance, all of which essential to determine whether IUU fishing activities are suspected or not. Transport and supply vessels involved in fishing operations are also reported becoming a key tool in the management of transshipment operations.

The Global Record is a tool developed to assist States in combatting illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing by effectively closing the global information gap on fishing vessels conducting fishing and fishing-related activities. Currently, the Global Record contains information on more than one-third of the world's fishing vessels and vessels engaged in fishing activities that possess IMO numbers (in total, 10 411 units), from 58 participating States.

FAO is developing a second version of the system to be launched in late 2020 which will include advanced features such as summary descriptive information of the global fleet, direct automatic links with selected national registries and Regional Fisheries Management Organizations and Arrangements (RFMO/As) records to facilitate real-time data submission to the system, which is essential to fight IUU fishing, and an functional link with the first version of the PSMA Global Information Exchange System (GIES) to be launched at the same time.

These two global systems working together will deliver indispensable information about the global fleet and compliance record of individual vessels to support risk analysis for MCS authorities to be effective in conducting their duties.

PSMA Global Information Exchange System (GIES)

Information exchange is a key element for a successful implementation of the 2009 FAO Agreement on Port State Measures. After becoming a Party, any state initiates implementation of the provisions of the Agreement by conducting inspections in their ports following at least the minimum requirements set in the Agreement. The results of these inspections are to be shared with all those involved, including the flag state of the vessel, the state of the master of the vessel, the coastal state or RFMO in whose EEZ or convention area fishing may have occurred, and FAO. This information will constitute the record of history of compliance of a vessel, which feeds into the risk analysis conducted after request of entry into port. The risk analysis will determine which vessels have highest risk and should be inspected to maximize efficiency in detecting IUU fishing products. Consequently,

information exchange is the third pillar for Port State Measures to be effective: from becoming a Party, implementing the provisions to sharing inspection information.

Following guidance by the Meetings of the Parties (MOP) and the PSMA Technical Working Group on Information Exchange (TWG-IE) FAO has initiated development of the global information exchange system in support of the PSMA (GIES). The first pilot version of the GIES will be ready towards the end of 2020 for testing with selected states and RFMOs. Inspection information to be shared through the system would be adequately referred to vessel details certified through the Global Record. The GIES will also contain inspections conducted to vessels having conducted transshipment operations prior to landing the fish product, thus also supporting implementation of responsible transshipment management measures.

During the fifth meeting of the Global Record Informal Open-Ended Technical and Advisory Working Group (GRWG) in the Republic of Korea in 2019, participants from 56 countries discuss the progress and state affairs of the Global Record and address challenges around data exchange mechanisms and the international standards to be used in the Global Record,

Transparency is one of such international standards which greatly facilitates the curbing of illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing, by allowing coordinated action among national agencies in their different roles such as fisheries, coastguard or port authorities all over the world among others would be able to identify and verify information on vessels involved in fishing activities in their waters, or landing fisheries products in their ports. Since the meeting in 2019, some of the world's most significant long-distance fishing fleets have joined the Global Record of Fishing Vessels, Refrigerated Transport Vessels and Supply Vessels (Global Record) initiative. Recently, Australia, China, Indonesia and New Zealand have uploaded information on their fleets into the system to increase transparency on the identity of the vessels that are legitimately licensed to operate in distant waters under their flags. Interagency cooperation is to be reinforced through the FAO/ILO/IMO Joint Working Group on IUU fishing and related matters, which will also addresses information sharing as a key element in strengthening the implementation of the various instruments under the three organizations through an enhanced cooperation.

Transshipment

The international community has expressed concern regarding the risks that transshipment⁷ could pose to the introduction of products derived from IUU fishing into the value chain. Following the request of the 32nd Session of the FAO Committee on Fisheries (COFI), FAO conducted a global study on transshipment to better understand this practice in support of fishing operations and the implications of poor transshipment management in sustainable fisheries management and thus, levels of IUU fishing. The study, qualitative in nature shed light on regulations, practices and control, and paved the way for an in-depth global study, to be published during the third quarter of 2020. The in-depth study analysed the drivers, the risks, the emerging areas of concern, and exposed the diverse nature and extent of transshipment practices that need a closer look to ensure sustainable fisheries. The study sets basic principles and considerations for the development of International Guidelines on the Management of Transshipment, subject of discussion for the 34th Session of COFI.

This increase in the commitment by States to the Global Record, which is recognized as one of the most important tools to support the implementation of the Agreement on Port State Measures

(PSMA), is a significant step towards ending IUU fishing, and thus contributes significantly to achieving the Agenda 2020 SDG 14.

An essential element of the programme is the assignment of a Unique Vessel Identifier (UVI) to each vessel worldwide, which remains constant throughout the vessel's lifetime regardless of change of name, ownership or flag. This requires the continuation of the cooperation between the IMO and FAO.

FAO/ILO/IMO collaboration through the Joint Working Group on IUU fishing and related matters

FAO has been engaging with other UN Agencies such as the IMO and the International Labour Organization (ILO) through, among other means, the FAO/ILO/IMO Joint Working Group on IUU fishing and related matters. Thus far, this collaboration has included participation in workshops, seminars, training courses and the like to enhance the understanding of fisheries authorities of safety and labour issues and vice versa. This coordination is to be further strengthened to ensure that guidance and support provided to countries on matters related to IUU fishing, unsafe and indecent working conditions and labour rights are concerted and complementary. The JWG aims at strengthening its role in coming years through renewed terms of reference and rules of procedure to adapt to current times and evolving interactions among the fisheries, maritime and labour sectors, for the benefit of all.

FAO is in the planning phase to design activities that will contribute to joint and coordinated actions as foreseen by the 4th FAO/ILO/IMO Joint Working Group meeting (Torremolinos, Spain, 23-25 October 2019). These activities include: i) strengthened coordination prior to the next JWG; ii) the preparation and convening of the 5th session of the JWG (around 2023); and iii) support to regional coordination between at least one RFMO and one regional Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on Port State Control (PSC) and consider opportunities to share information about various inspections under FAO/ILO/IMO instruments; development of coordinated procedures for activities of both organizations and support its implementation. Transshipment might come up as another important area of collaboration among the three agencies in a very near future, as next COFI session will provide guidance on the development of International Guidelines for the Management of Transshipment which implementation would benefit from the collaboration of IMO and ILO. Transport vessels fall under IMO's PSC scheme for safety matters and relevant information is gathered about these through the IMO information systems. Additionally, it is important to highlight that, given the fact that transshipment operations make it possible for fishing vessels to spend long periods of time at sea without touching port, this can create situations that might sustain human right abuses and needs proper attention. The JWG offers the right framework for such cooperation among the three agencies involved to coordinate actions.

OPERATIVE PARAGRAPHS 192, 195, 196 and 218

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

In 2018, COFI33 endorsed the *Voluntary Guidelines for the Marking of Fishing Gear (VGMFG)*. The Voluntary Guidelines complement FAO's *Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries* and are an important tool to guide States in preventing and reducing Abandoned, Lost and otherwise Discarded Fishing Gear (ALDFG) and its impact such as ghost fishing, and in combatting Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing.

In 2019, FAO in collaboration with the Global Ghost Gear Initiative (GGGI) convened four regional workshops around the globe on best practices to prevent and reduce ALDFG. The aim of these workshops was to raise awareness and understanding of the VGMFG and GGGI's Best Practice Framework for the Management of Fishing Gears (BPF). Each workshop produced a set of recommendations on actions that need to be taken up in the respective regions⁸.

COFI 33 mandated FAO to develop a comprehensive global strategy to tackle issues relating to ALDFG and to support implementation of the VGMFG involving relevant international bodies and other stakeholders. In response, FAO has developed an umbrella programme on responsible fishing operations including action on ALDFG, bycatch, marine litter and discards and has also signed a UN to UN Agreement with the IMO to assist developing countries to address the issue of marine plastic litter from sea-based sources (GloLitter Partnerships Programme) with the support of Norway⁹.

The Group of Experts on the Scientific Aspects of Marine Environmental Protection (GESAMP) established The Working Group 43¹⁰ (WG43) on sea based sources of marine litter including fishing gear and other shipping related litter in April 2019, sponsored by FAO and IMO, in partnership with UNEP. The WG43 developed a work plan and timeline of deliverables in line with its Terms of Reference and held a face-to-face meeting in October 2019 to report and discuss findings on the sources, level and impact of marine litter, their relative contributions, the impacts of different sea-based sources of marine litter and data gaps.

Following the recommendations contained in the Manila Declaration¹¹, the Global Partnership on Marine Litter (GPML) was launched in June 2012 at Rio + 20 in Brazil. The GPML supports the Global Partnership on Waste Management and its main goal is to protect human health and the global environment by the reduction and management of marine litter. The GPML is a global partnership gathering international agencies, Governments, NGOs, academia, private sector, civil society and individuals. Participants contribute to the development and implementation of GPML activities. Contributions may be in the form of financial support, in-kind contributions and/or technical expertise. FAO was elected as the co-chair of the Steering Group of the Global Partnership of Marine Litter in March 2018 at the 6th International Marine Debris Conference (6IMDC) for a 2-year term alongside the Government of the Seychelles.

At the fourth session of the UN Environment Assembly, the UN Environment Management Group (EMG) was invited to engage in and contribute to the Ad Hoc Open-ended Expert Group on Marine Litter and Microplastics by providing inter alia a mapping of all relevant United Nations agencies, programmes, initiatives and expertise with relevance to marine litter including plastic litter and microplastics. In response to this call, in May 2019, the EMG Senior Officials decided to establish an Interagency Task Team to prepare the requested system-wide contribution. Two FAO representatives from the Climate and Environment Division and from the Fisheries and Aquaculture Department are operating as FAO focal points for the UN Environmental Management Group Task

⁸ FAO. 2020. Report of 2019 FAO Regional workshops on best practices to prevent and reduce abandoned, lost or discarded fishing gear in collaboration with the Global Ghost Gear Initiative. Fisheries and Aquaculture Report No. 1213. Rome (available online in June 2020).

⁹ <http://www.imo.org/en/MediaCentre/PressBriefings/Pages/32-GloLitter-signing.aspx>

¹⁰ <http://www.gesamp.org/work/groups/wg-43-on-sea-based-sources-of-marine-litter>

¹¹

<http://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/12347/ManillaDeclarationREV.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>

Team on Marine Litter and Microplastics. The group has held a few coordination meetings, has collated all relevant information and work within FAO carried out on this subject matter.

Within the Norway-funded EAF Nansen Programme (2017-2021) a science plan is under implementation by FAO, in close cooperation with the Norwegian Institute of Marine Research (IMR). The science plan includes two themes on occurrence and impacts of marine litter and microplastics on marine ecosystems and on the potential impact of microplastics on seafood safety. The distribution of seafloor marine litter (recovered in demersal trawls), floating microplastics and microplastics in fish is under study off the West and East coasts of Africa and in the Bay of Bengal, off Myanmar. It is expected to contribute to the identification and quantification of the proportion of litter generated by the fisheries sector. As regards microplastics, there is no evidence that they pose a threat to seafood safety.

FAO was invited to join the Plastic Waste Partnership (PWP) launched in November 2019 and operated by the Secretariat of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions¹². The goal of the Partnership is to foster sound management of plastic waste at the global, regional and national levels and prevent and minimize their generation so as to, among other things, reduce significantly and in the long-term eliminate the discharge of plastic waste including microplastics into the environment, in particular the marine environment. The PWP operates through a working group established by the Conference of the Parties to the Basel Convention (Decision BC-14/13). The first meeting of the working group was held from 2 to 5 March in Victoria, Seychelles; the main outcome was an agreement on the establishment of four project groups and their activities on (i) Prevention and minimization; (ii) Plastic waste collection, recycling and other recovery including financing and related markets; (iii) Transboundary movements; and (iv) Outreach, education and awareness raising. FAO will contribute with information and provision of technical advice, as well as the sharing of lessons learned from its ongoing activities within the EAF-Nansen programme (data collection and processing) and the GloLitter Partnerships Programme.

OPERATIVE PARAGRAPHS 195 to 198 and 213 and 244

Ecosystem approach

The FAO has developed or supported the development of numerous normative products under the Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries (EAF) and the 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 Programme.

- The EAF-Nansen Programme, supports the application of the ecosystem approach in to marine fisheries management while considering climate and pollution impacts. The Programme collaborates with 32 countries in Africa and the Bay of Bengal, and with regional organizations. 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

¹² <http://www.basel.int/Implementation/Plasticwaste/PlasticWastePartnership/tabid/8096/Default.aspx>

resources and ecosystems is provided to developing countries. Important data and information are being collected on marine resources, marine environment, habitats and marine pollution in the EEZ of partner countries as well as in Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction.

- Furthermore, the Programme 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 an 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 the EAF. As examples, in partnership with a number of African universities, the previous phase of the Programme developed a university-level training course on the EAF that targets professionals in fisheries research and management institutions, environmental agencies and the private sector. A Handbook is available to complement the resources for the course for the purpose of supporting both trainers and trainees¹³. A Teaching Kit on the EAF for Schools in Africa is available, prepared in collaboration with selected schools in Senegal and the Gambia. Building on these experiences currently an e-learning course is under development on EAF in marine fisheries. The preparation of fisheries management plans is a key element for supporting the implementation of an 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 in earlier phases of the Programme, and currently 7 countries are being supported to either develop or implement management plans consistent with an ecosystem approach.

As a way of monitoring progress and achievements of implementing the EAF in sustainable fisheries management around Africa, a newly developed tool, the EAF Implementation Monitoring Tool (EAF IMT) was launched in 2019. The tool is intended to support each partner country's work towards improving their fisheries management systems and operational planning, by helping the countries identify potential progress and gaps/difficulties. It can also help determine where training and other support can be needed. Several awareness raising and capacity building sessions have been organised on the use of the tool with partner countries.

- As a complement to the How to Guide on legislating for an ecosystem approach to fisheries¹⁴ a practical guide is under finalisation to support analysis, development and drafting of new legislation conform with EAF.

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

- 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 past and now for the EAF-Nansen

¹³ <http://www.fao.org/3/a-i5787e.pdf>

¹⁴ 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>)

Programme 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.

- The Fishery committee for the Eastern Central Atlantic (CECAF) also work to promote and support countries to implement EAF. They also act as a regional steering committee for the EAF-Nansen Programme.

SECTION X – MARINE BIODIVERSITY

OPERATIVE PARAGRAPHS 253 and 270

Biodiversity and Deep-sea Fisheries and Areas beyond national jurisdiction

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. Four science-policy-management roundtables have been organized by FAO to raise awareness on these issues for policy-makers, including a high-level dialogue meeting, which took place with the European Parliament Intergroup on “Climate Change, Biodiversity, and Sustainable Development” in November 2018. Two side events were also organized and supported by FAO: at the first session of the first BBNJ Intergovernmental Conference in New York (September 2018), and the GFCM Fish Forum (FAO HQ, December 2018), SponGES partners informed conference participants of the various research efforts in the ABNJ, provided greater clarity on the marine biodiversity it contains, and highlighted existing efforts of management and cooperation. Finally, specific interventions at meetings of the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Commission (NAFO) and the Northeast Atlantic Fisheries Commission (NEAFC) were organized to share the results of SponGES and discuss management and policy implications. With regards to outputs, FAO has published in 2020 a report on “Technical measures and environmental risk assessments for deep-sea sponge conservation” which provides an overview of technical measures adopted by RFMOs to protect sponges and presents appropriate elements to be included in an ecological risk assessment of deep-sea fisheries stressors.

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

Another survey in the SEAFO area was conducted in 2019 to further improve the data and information to enhance the understanding of the Southeast Atlantic ecosystems, to the benefit for regional science and as the base for fisheries management decisions.

More concrete objectives were, as in 2015, to analyse occurrence and abundance of benthopelagic fish and sessile epibenthos, including indicators of VMEs, in selected 'existing fishing areas' and areas closed to fishing within the SEAFO Convention Area. A particular effort was made to sample target fish resources to obtain more biological data, including tissue samples for genetic studies.

In addition to further mapping of VME taxa and fisheries resources - utilizing the enhanced capabilities of the new research vessel *Dr Fridtjof Nansen* - en route recording of mesopelagics,

seabirds, and mammals, as well as the standard EAF-Nansen sampling regional biological and chemical oceanographic data, microplastics and litter etc. were performed.

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 participated in the First Session (4-17 September 2018), Second Session (25 March to 5 April 2019), and Third Session (19-30 August 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). FAO provided fisheries and other pertinent technical information on issues related to FAO's mandate, and organized or directly contributed to several events held during the Intergovernmental Conferences.

OPERATIVE PARAGRAPHS 264, 265 and 267

Other Effective Area-Based Conservation Measures (OECMs)

OECMs represent a new opportunity for States to recognize biodiversity conservation potential from 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. Specifically within the fisheries realm, area-based fisheries management measures (ABFMs) that meet the OECM criteria are widely included in fisheries management plans and processes. Although they are often developed for individual fisheries, in order to meet the intent of the OECM criteria, States should take measures to ensure that ABFM efforts are coordinated across fisheries that take place within their exclusive economic zones. If managed through a marine spatial planning process, these formally established, spatially-defined fishery management measures can be integrated across competing sectors in order to reduce conflicts and help stakeholders in achieving a balance between the competing uses of the marine environment.

OECMs represent an important opportunity to facilitate the involvement of people acting on other sectors, as well as of many communities, on biodiversity conservation. In particular, the OECM concept allows for a variety of sustainable use sectors to contribute to meeting global biodiversity targets through their own area-based management initiatives. This can result in two significant steps forward in achieving biodiversity conservation: 1) mainstreaming biodiversity conservation objectives in the management of natural resource use; and 2) ensuring that the objectives of sustainable use sectors are included in biodiversity conservation discussions and decisions. Furthermore, it is important to emphasize that countries should be establishing MPAs and implementing initiatives that meet the OECM criteria in parallel if we are to be successful at conserving marine biodiversity. There are several advantages to such a strategy. First, by creating networks of areas managed for conservation can result in more extensive coverage of conservation efforts. It also makes conservation a multi-sectoral effort. Teamwork from all sectors is the only way to effectively conserve biodiversity. Finally, by acknowledging the role that sustainable use has in conservation, the needs of people are taken into consideration. Together, MPAs and OECMs represent new and exciting opportunities to advance conservation in both the terrestrial and sea environments. Integration between fisheries, sectors, and across networks of MPAs and OECMS are vital in helping to meet global biodiversity goals and needs.

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 OECCMs in support of Aichi Target 11. The purpose of the expert meeting was to compile expert advice on the identification, establishment and implementation of OECCMs in the fishery sector. Participants represented diverse interests and brought extensive knowledge to the meeting with regard to OECCMs in the context of the marine capture fishery sector. FAO published a meeting report summarizing this input in late 2019.

SECTION XI – MARINE SCIENCE

OPERATIVE PARAGRAPH 285

Scientific research

The research vessel “*Dr Fridtjof Nansen*” is the primary tool of the Norad-funded Nansen programme (now EAF-Nansen Programme). For over four decades, three 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. Through the implementation of the Science plan of the EAF-Nansen Programme, collaborative research is being conducted among scientists from partner countries of the Programme, Norway and other international experts. Several species new to science have also been discovered.

SECTION XIII – REGIONAL COOPERATION

OPERATIVE PARAGRAPH 330

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

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development emphasizes the importance of regional and subregional dimensions, regional economic integration and interconnectivity in sustainable development. The regional level is the most appropriate level for establishing a collaborative framework to preserve and protect whole ecosystems efficiently while also providing opportunities for participating States to benefit sustainably from the services they render. Global instruments and normative processes have to be implemented and translated into actions at the country and regional levels, as appropriate. In this regard, regionalization of fisheries and aquaculture governance can provide opportunities not only to address common concerns, create synergies and mainstream the global objectives of relevant United Nations (UN) bodies, but also to broaden outreach on the global fisheries agenda to regional partners that may not be directly concerned with fisheries, as well as to the general public.

RFMOs and Regional Fishery Advisory Bodies (RFABs), collectively referred to as Regional Fishery Bodies (RFBs), have an important role in contributing to fisheries management and scientific research of many important fisheries around the globe. RFMOs have the mandate to adopt legally binding conservation and management measures in relation to the exploitation of fisheries resources and associated activities within their respective convention areas. RFABs provide fora for collaboration and coordination and promote sustainable utilization of fishery resources by recommending specific actions and by providing advice to members on fisheries conservation and management. Some RFBs also have aquaculture included in their mandates.

The regional dimension is key to international fisheries management policy, as demonstrated by the rapid expansion of the family of RFBs. RFMOs and RFABs continue to evolve in response to calls for sustainability, improved management and governance, and as a result of lessons learned and stronger commitment by their members.

FAO has been supporting this evolution by reinforcing the work of individual RFBs through the Organization's technical work on fisheries and aquaculture, providing overview and synopsis of RFBs' developments^{15,16}, 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 fishery related institutions and networks). 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' work¹⁷. This is contributing to rapid development in the capacity of RFBs to support the planning and management of fisheries and aquaculture.

FAO and UNEP are 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 established a cooperation agreement; 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.

Collaboration on shared stocks

FAO is also supporting dialogue between countries that wish to advance on the management of fisheries exploiting the same stocks shared between one or more countries. Examples are work in collaboration with the Benguela Current Commission (BCC) for advancing science and management

¹⁵ Terje Løbach, T., Petersson, M., Haberkon, E. and Mannini, P. 2020. *Regional fisheries management organizations and advisory bodies. Activities and developments, 2000–2017*. FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Technical Paper No. 651. Rome, FAO. <https://doi.org/10.4060/ca7843en>

¹⁶ FAO. 2015. *The implementation of performance review reports by regional fishery bodies, 2004–2014*, by Péter D. Szigeti and Gail L. Lugten. FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Circular No. 1108. Rome, Italy. <http://www.fao.org/3/a-i4869e.pdf>

¹⁷ Website: <http://www.fao.org/fishery/rsn/en> ; Magazine: <http://www.fao.org/documents/card/en/c/I8604EN>

for hake and horse mackerel and with CECAF for the shared sardinella off Northwest Africa, both through the EAF-Nansen Programme

SECTION XV – COORDINATION AND COOPERATION

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Achieving Blue Growth – Building vibrant fisheries and aquaculture communities

The COFI Sub-Committee on Aquaculture¹⁸ provides an important platform for FAO Members to exchange lessons learnt and provide mutual support in the implementation of the Blue Growth Initiative (BGI), promoting coordination and cooperation at the global level when it comes to the sustainable development of aquaculture in line with the provisions of the CCRF.

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UN-Oceans

FAO, together with other UN-Oceans members, continues to actively participate in UN-Oceans' activities and programmes to, promotes coordination and coherence of United Nations system activities related to oceans and coastal areas by assisting in the formulation and delivery of joint statements or side events at major international events relevant to the work of UN-Oceans and its 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 organizations” aimed at strengthening the on-going and planned activities and identifying new areas of intervention in respect of those mandates and priorities. In this regard, FAO developed, hosts and continues to fund the maintenance and further development 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.

FAO continues to provide secretariat services to the UN Atlas of the Oceans, a web portal developed under the auspices 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.

¹⁸ <http://www.fao.org/fishery/about/cofi/aquaculture/en>