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## COMMITTEE ON FISHERIES

### Thirty-second Session

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### THE GLOBAL RECORD OF FISHING VESSELS, REFRIGERATED TRANSPORT VESSELS AND SUPPLY VESSELS (GLOBAL RECORD)

#### Executive Summary

This document provides additional information on the Global Record to complement document COFI/2016/5 on Combatting Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing.

The requested action by the Committee is set out in a dedicated section on page 5.

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## I. Rationale

1. The Global Record of Fishing Vessels, Refrigerated Transport Vessels and Supply Vessels (Global Record) is a global information system dedicated to the fight against Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing. It supports other international instruments in combating IUU fishing, in particular the effective implementation of the Port States Measures Agreement (PSMA), through its role as a tool that promotes information sharing and increased transparency and traceability. The Global Record gathers and disseminates certified, unequivocal information about vessels used for fishing and fishing-related activities provided by the official State authorities responsible for it. In this way, it contributes to the information necessary to verify and validate the documentation exchanged in the PSMA processes, and to make decisions according to the provisions of the Agreement. By making data on vessels and their history publicly available, the Global Record may raise awareness of instances of double flagging and flag hopping, which are often used by IUU fishers. In addition, the Global Record directly supports port State administrations in their decision on whether to allow foreign-flagged vessels to land their catches in their ports, and facilitates port inspectors' risk analysis in determining which vessels should be inspected. The Global Record aims to close the global information gap on vessels involved in IUU fishing through enhanced communication between a wide range of stakeholders, especially flag States, port States, coastal States and market States.

## II. Progress to date

2. In line with the requests of the Committee on Fisheries (COFI) at its 31st Session (June 2014), and building on the foundations laid by the Global Record Strategy document<sup>1</sup> and prototype, work on the Global Record has progressed in a number of areas.

### The Working Group

3. 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. The GRWG, comprising representatives from Members and Observers to COFI, convened its first meeting<sup>2</sup> (23-25 February 2015) and its second meeting<sup>3</sup> (21-23 March 2016), and provided guidance on the general way forward for the Global Record. The meetings were attended by a total of 23 Members and 6 Observers, collectively, thus ensuring adequate regional representation and participation of developed and developing countries. After examining the scope, system development and funding situation, among other issues, the GRWG concluded the following:

- (i) the Global Record fulfils a crucial role as a tool to fight IUU fishing in support of various existing binding and voluntary fisheries instruments, with particular importance in the context of the implementation of the PSMA;
- (ii) the function of the Global Record is not restricted to that of an authorized list of vessels but also includes data on vessels not currently holding any fishing-related authorization;
- (iii) apart from vessel details, the Global Record should also include historical data, authorizations (fishing and transshipping), inspection and surveillance, port entry denials and inclusion in IUU lists, most of which should be in the public domain, with external links to third parties for additional or complementary information;
- (iv) five data fields (UVI, vessel name, flag, LOA and GT) comprise the minimum requirements for a record to be included in the system, with the Unique Vessel Identifier (UVI) being the key component as it is necessary for linking the vessel details with other information modules;

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<sup>1</sup> See COFI/2014/SBD.2 at [www.fao.org/cofi/33133-01d7de5488a77180759efacea7c39dbb7.pdf](http://www.fao.org/cofi/33133-01d7de5488a77180759efacea7c39dbb7.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> See COFI/2016/SBD.12 for the report of the GRWG1.

<sup>3</sup> See COFI/2016/SBD.14 for the report of the GRWG2.

- (v) pre-defined standards for data and data exchange are required, and these should consider international standards;
- (vi) States are responsible for providing information to the Global Record, possibly through RFMOs (in line with the recommendation from COFI 31), and maintaining an optimal level of data quality;
- (vii) there may be value in using third party data, in particular that of Information Handling Services Maritime and Trade (IHSM) in its role as the manager of the IMO number, to counter the immediate difficulties with obtaining information from all States, or for data verification purposes;
- (viii) the continued development of a publicly-available, operational pilot system should be prioritized, and participation and commitment from Members is essential to its success;
- (iv) development of the system should focus on Phase 1 (i.e. vessels of 100 gross tonnage and above) and any expansion beyond Phase 1 of the Global Record should depend on the successful implementation of that phase, in agreement with the recommendation from the Third Session of the Joint FAO/IMO Ad Hoc Working Group on IUU Fishing and Related Matters (JWG3)<sup>4</sup>, and a future feasibility study on expansion to Phases 2 and 3 (i.e. vessels of less than 100 gross tonnage);
- (x) detailed guidelines to consolidate the technical specifications for the implementation of the Global Record would be useful to Members in aligning their data, systems and processes to the Global Record requirements;
- (xi) Global Record Core Specialized Working Groups (GRCGs) should be established to deal with particular matters, mainly at the technical level;
- (xii) for the time being, the Global Record should remain a voluntary initiative;
- (xiii) continued cooperation with RFMOs and the IMO is encouraged;
- (xiv) there is an urgent need for medium to long-term funding to guarantee the sustainability of the Global Record and support member States through the provision of technical assistance.

#### The Three Core Groups

4. Three Global Record Specialized Core Working Groups (GRCGs) were set up to deal with Data Requirements (GRCG-DR), Data Exchange (GRCG-DE) and Third Party Data (GRCG-TP). The work of these groups, composed of experts in the specific areas of work, takes place through virtual platforms, and occasionally meetings are held in order to reach conclusions to be put forward to the GRWG. Taking the proposals included in the Strategy document as a baseline for discussions, the GRCGs have advanced and refined the technical specifications for the design of the Global Record system, as well as its contents and relationships to other systems<sup>5</sup>. A detailed list of data requirements<sup>6</sup> has been produced; data formats and transmission mechanisms for data submission are being defined, following international standards whilst catering for the different situations in the administrations of Member States; and other reliable (third party) sources of data are being considered to expedite efforts in making the first version of the system operational, or to provide additional or complementary information. The GRWG generally endorsed the conclusions of the GRCGs, with some minor amendments, and the outputs of these groups are being consolidated in the form of draft guidelines that define the technical specifications for Members to contribute to the Global Record programme.

5. To assess difficulties that some States may face in providing information to the Global Record, the GRWG has considered vessel data from independent and reputable sources, specifically

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<sup>4</sup> See COFI/2016/SBD.8 for the report of the JWG3.

<sup>5</sup> See COFI/2016/SBD.13 for the report of the meeting of the GRCGs.

<sup>6</sup> Comprising data fields, inclusion levels, definitions and references.

the IHSM, in its role as the manager of the IMO number that is being used as the UVI for the Global Record. The legal and financial implications of such a solution, whether interim or permanent, require due examination (see Annex I).

### The Pilot Project

6. With regards to system development and implementation, collaboration with both developed and developing countries is underway to implement an operational Global Record pilot project with broad regional coverage. Some Members, such as Colombia, Comoros, Ghana, Iceland, Indonesia, Mauritius, Mozambique, Philippines, Seychelles, Spain and Uruguay have given their commitment to participate in the pilot project and have also encouraged others to do so, to take advantage of the great opportunity that COFI presents to show positive results, in order to build on existing momentum. The Global Record programme is supporting these partner countries in coordinating the submission of data and, when necessary, in building their capacities. Wider participation would secure the successful implementation of the Global Record. Members are encouraged to submit data across as many of the five information modules as possible (vessel details, historical details, authorization details, inspection and surveillance and port entry denials), even though the data might be limited initially<sup>7</sup>, in order to show demonstrative value. This has now become very timely to support the implementation of the PSMA, which will enter into force shortly. Hence, flag States would provide data for the national fleet on any information module; coastal States could also submit foreign-flag vessel data related to the authorization module; port States would provide details on port entry denials; any coastal, port or market States would share inspection and surveillance information; and RFMOs would be responsible for communicating listing/delisting on IUU lists.

7. The benefits that Partners could expect when participating in the pilot project include, apart from the targeted assistance detailed above, the reassurance that their needs and preferences are given priority and the guarantee of visibility as States taking an active role in the fight against IUU fishing.

### Funding

8. FAO has set up a multi-donor trust fund to support the Global Record programme. So far, contributions have been received from the European Commission, Iceland, Spain and the United States of America, covering the first two years of the project. If compared to the minimum required funds as presented in the Strategy document<sup>8</sup>, this funding has been short of USD 116,000 annually. The programme experienced a one-year delay in some funding, resulting in repercussion on other co-funding for which it was conditional. Further constraints to annual funding concern its hindrance to medium-term planning, which affects efficiency in achieving planned results, because it is costly in terms of bureaucratic necessities involving the yearly drafting of proposals, as well as annual programme and financial reporting. Such an arrangement is also costly in terms of staffing, since staff spend considerable effort raising funds and attending to annual bureaucracy. Therefore, and in line with the principles of results-based management, members are encouraged to become medium-term, e.g. five-year, donors.

9. Furthermore, dedicated funds for capacity development are also critical at this point, in order to facilitate the alignment of national, and possibly regional, systems and processes to the technical specifications of the Global Record.

## **III. Additional Information**

10. Further information is also provided in documents COFI/2016/SBD.12, COFI/2016/SBD.13 and COFI/2016/SBD.14, as well as on the Global Record website ([www.fao.org/fishery/global-record/en](http://www.fao.org/fishery/global-record/en)).

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<sup>7</sup> It would be the States' prerogative to avoid submitting any non-essential data that invokes sensitivity concerns.

<sup>8</sup> See document COFI/2014/SBD.2.

**At its second meeting, on 21-23 March 2016,**

**the GRWG agreed on the following advice to COFI:**

- 1) Note the continued progress concerning the development of the Global Record as a supporting tool in the implementation of the PSMA and other international instruments to fight IUU fishing, in particular through the formation and work of the Global Record Informal Open-Ended Technical and Advisory Working Group and three Specialized Core Working Groups in the provision of specific technical guidance, and recognize the importance of formulating guidelines for the implementation of the Global Record.
- 2) Acknowledge the efforts of several Members advancing the implementation of the Global Record and urge further commitment and participation from all Members.
- 3) Reaffirm the responsibility of States for the data and its provision to the Global Record, possibly through RFMOs, and to provide guidance that data from independent and reputable sources be utilized to support the data from flag States.
- 4) Emphasize the critical importance of the sustainability of the Global Record and encourage Members to support its progress through provision of medium-term extra-budgetary contributions.
- 5) Encourage the relevant Member administrations to support the implementation of the IMO ship identification number scheme at the national level in the context of the Global Record, and to commend the ongoing cooperation between FAO and IMO in the implementation of the scheme.

### Annex I: IHSM Pricing Options

The GRWG-TP, at its meeting in September 2015, requested that the Global Record Secretariat approach IHSM to study a few options for the potential use of IHSM data relevant to the Global Record (vessel details and historical details), and report to the next meeting of the GRWG in March 2016.

Whilst reaffirming the responsibility of States in the provision of information to the Global Record, there was general agreement at GRWG2 that there are immediate difficulties with obtaining information from all States and it may be strategic to populate the Global Record Vessel information module with data from reputable third parties, specifically IHSM in its role as the manager of the IMO number. However, the legal and financial implications need to be considered in depth. In this regard, the GRWG decided to seek guidance from COFI32.

The options below represent the possibilities available to:

- 1) Establish an external link to Sea-web, the IHSM information system: to visualise additional information and possibly to allow cross-checking against Member information by the user.
- 2) Integrate five IHSM data fields (UVI/IMO number, vessel name, flag, LOA and GT) within the Global Record: to expedite efforts in putting together the first version of the system and to facilitate the linkage of other information modules (e.g.: inspection details submitted by a port State on foreign-flagged vessels could be linked to the vessel details through the UVI). However, since States are responsible for data and its provision to the Global Record, there might be a need for flag States acceptance, either explicit or tacit, that IHSM data on their vessels be included in the Global Record.
- 3) Same as above but integrating 45 data fields available (related to full Global Record vessel details and history).
- 4) Use the data internally for verification purposes only (cross-check against data submitted by Members).

The cost of each of the above-mentioned options depends on the permitted number of users of the Global Record and is indicated in the table below. With regard to the access to the Global Record, the 2010 Technical Consultation recommended, as a general principle, that vessel characteristics information be in the public domain. Should COFI consider that data from IHSM be utilized to support flag States' data, the Committee is invited to consider the options outlined below and to provide guidance on FAO's future work in this regard, as well as on the funding, of the preferred option.

Option	Description	1-5 users (Pilot Partners / verification)	200 users (Members)	Unlimited (Public access)
1	External link to Sea-web (IHSM online information system)	€6,794	€67,940	
2	Integration of minimum vessel details (5 fields)	€14,796	€28,785	€46,000
3	Integration of full details (45 fields) and historical details		€53,416	
4	Data for verification purposes (5 fields)	€34,299		

N.B.: All costs represent an annual subscription fee.

