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**SEVENTH MEETING OF REGIONAL FISHERY BODY SECRETARIATS'
NETWORK**

Rome, 7 and 13 July 2018

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PREPARATION OF THIS DOCUMENT

This is the final version of the report of the Seventh Meeting of Regional Fishery Body Secretariats' Network (RSN-7), held in Rome, Italy, on 7 and 13 July 2018. The Report was prepared by the RSN Secretariat.

The material in the appendixes is reproduced as submitted.

ABSTRACT

Forty-three secretaries of regional fisheries bodies, with diverse mandates and from all geographic regions, including FAO and non-FAO regional fisheries bodies, marine and inland fishery advisory and management bodies, the UNDOALOS and invited organizations, participated in the Seventh Meeting of the Regional Fishery Body Secretariats' Network. Discussions covered major subjects of regional concern, comprising the activities and outcomes from UNGA and UNDOALOS, the UN discussion process on Biodiversity in Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction, the implementation of activities in delivering the 2030 Agenda, the experience of RFBs initiatives, the cooperation of regional bodies and Fisheries and Resources Monitoring Systems, the 33rd Session of the Committee on Fisheries (COFI 33) related matters and global processes and subjects relevant to RFBs and RFMOs, and the state of progress to strengthen the RSN, including current needs and challenges. The RSN Chair's Statement, delivered at the COFI 33, is annexed to this report. The meeting had a high level of participation that underlined the role of the Network as a unique forum to foster cooperation, facilitate discussion and exchange of experiences. It noted the increased interest in the international agenda on the role of RFBs as key players in translating international and global policies into practice at the regional and local levels.

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

| | |
|------------|---|
| ABNJ | areas beyond national jurisdiction |
| ACAP | Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels |
| APFIC | Asia-Pacific Fishery Commission |
| ATLAFCO | Ministerial Conference on Fisheries Cooperation among African States Bordering the Atlantic |
| BBNJ | biological diversity beyond areas of national jurisdiction |
| BOBP-IGO | Bay of Bengal Programme – Intergovernmental Organization |
| CACFish | Central Asian and Caucasus Regional Fisheries and Aquaculture Commission |
| CBD | Convention on Biological Diversity |
| CCAMLR | Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources |
| CCSBT | Commission for the Conservation of Southern Bluefin Tuna |
| CECAF | Fishery Committee for the Eastern Central Atlantic |
| CIFAA | Committee for Inland Fisheries and Aquaculture of Africa |
| CITES | Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Fauna and Flora |
| COFI | Committee on Fisheries (FAO) |
| COPPESCALC | Commission for Small-Scale and Artisanal Fisheries and Aquaculture of Latin America and the Caribbean |
| CPPS | Permanent Commission for the South Pacific |
| CRFM | Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism |
| CSOs | civil society organizations |
| CTMFM | Joint Technical Commission for the Argentina/Uruguay Maritime Front |
| CWP | Coordinating Working Party on Fishery Statistics |
| DSF | deep-sea fisheries |
| EIFAAC | European Inland Fisheries and Aquaculture Advisory Commission |
| FAOSFS | FAO Sub-Regional Office for Southern Africa |
| FCWC | Fishery Committee for the West Central Gulf of Guinea |
| FFA | Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency |
| FIAF | Marine and Inland Fisheries Branch (FAO) |
| FIAO | Fishing Operations and Technology Branch (FAO) |
| FIAP | Policy, Economics and Institutions Branch (FAO) |
| FIAS | Statistics and Information Branch (FAO) |
| FIRMS | Fisheries Resources Monitoring System |
| GFCM | General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean |
| IATTC | Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission |
| ICCAT | International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas |
| ICES | International Council for the Exploration of the Sea |
| IGO | intergovernmental organization |
| IMO | International Maritime Organization |
| IOTC | Indian Ocean Tuna Commission |
| IPHC | International Pacific Halibut Commission |
| IUU | illegal, unreported and unregulated (fishing) |
| IWC | International Whaling Commission |
| LCBC | Lake Chad Basin Commission |
| LDCs | Least Developed Countries |
| LTA | Lake Tanganyika Authority |
| LVFO | Lake Victoria Fisheries Organization |
| MCS | monitoring, control and surveillance |
| NAFO | Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization |
| NAMMCO | North Atlantic Marine Mammal Commission |
| NASCO | North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organization |
| NEAFC | Northeast Atlantic Fisheries Commission |
| NPAFC | North Pacific Anadromous Fish Commission |
| NPFC | North Pacific Fisheries Commission |
| OSPESCA | Central America Fisheries and Aquaculture Organization |

| | |
|----------|--|
| PSC | Pacific Salmon Commission |
| PICES | North Pacific Marine Science Organization |
| PSMA | Agreement on Port State Measures to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing |
| RECOFI | Regional Commission for Fisheries |
| RFAB | regional fisheries advisory body |
| RFB | regional fishery body |
| RFMO | regional fisheries management organisation |
| RoP | rules of procedure |
| ROPME | Regional Organisation for the Protection of the Marine Environment |
| RSN | Regional Fisheries Body Secretariats' Network |
| RSO | Regional Seas Organization |
| SDG | sustainable development goal |
| SEAFDEC | Southeast Asian Fisheries Development Center |
| SEAFO | South East Atlantic Fisheries Organisation |
| SIDs | Small Island Developing States |
| SIOFA | Southern Indian Ocean Fisheries Agreement |
| SOFIA | The State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture (biennial FAO publication) |
| SPRFMO | South Pacific Regional Fisheries Management Organisation |
| SRFC | Subregional Fisheries Commission |
| SWIOFC | South West Indian Ocean Fisheries Commission |
| UN | United Nations |
| UNCLOS | United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea |
| UNDOALOS | United Nations Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea |
| UNEP | United Nations Environment Programme |
| UNFSA | United Nations Fish Stocks Agreement |
| UNGA | United Nations General Assembly |
| VMS | vessel monitoring system |
| WCPFC | Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission |
| WECAFC | Western and Central Atlantic Fishery Commission |
| WMO | World Meteorological Organization |
| WWF | World Wide Fund for Nature |
| WTO | World Trade Organization |

OPENING OF THE MEETING¹

1. The Chairperson, Mr Driss Meski, former Executive Secretary of the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT), opened the Seventh Meeting of the Regional Fishery Body Secretariats' Network (RSN-7). He welcomed the secretaries of Regional Fishery Advisory Bodies (RFABs) and Regional Fishery Management Organizations (RFMOs), and thanked the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the RSN Secretariat for their support in providing intersessional activities and organizing the RSN meeting.

MEETING ARRANGEMENTS

2 The Chairperson invited participants to introduce themselves. Forty-three RFB Secretaries participated, as well as the United Nations Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea (UNDOALOS), the World Trade Organization (WTO), and representatives from the International Affairs Division of the Fisheries Agency of Japan. The Chairperson noted that the Government of Japan is participating as an observer to the First Session of the RSN-7 meeting, having provided funding to support the RSN Secretariat and following a request opportunely addressed. The Chairperson further noted that the Secretariat has received multiple requests by other actors to participate as observers in the meetings, and that RSN members may consider the need for developing a formal procedure in this regard. Apologies for not attending the meeting were received from Mr Cherdsak Virapat, Secretary of the Network of Aquaculture Centres in Asia-Pacific (NACA) and Mr Bob Lambe, Executive Secretary Great Lakes Fishery Commission (GLFC).

3 The Chairperson announced that a corporate video has been produced by the FAO RSN Secretariat, to introduce the RSN and RFBs to the public and communicate their contribution to multiple targets of SDG14 and right across the 2030 Agenda ('RSN corporate video'), based on the main message that global achievements are built upon regional efforts. The Chairperson invited the meeting to participate at the special presentation of this video, to be held during the meeting break in the FAO Sheikh Zayed Centre.

4 The RSN Secretary, Mr Piero Mannini, Senior Liaison Officer, Fisheries and Aquaculture Policy, Economics and Institutions Branch (FIAP), FAO, Rome, Italy, welcomed the participants and provided a brief overview of the agenda. The Secretary also noted the increasing emphasis given by the international agenda to the regional dimension and its protagonist role in global challenges, and noted the important contribution of RFABs and RFMOs in this context. The Secretary mentioned that the RSN has limited resources to carry out its work and expressed gratitude to the government of Japan for contributing with funding to the RSN activities.

REPORT OF THE CHAIRPERSON

5 The Chairperson provided a brief update of the intersessional RSN activities supported by FAO since the 2016 RSN-6 Meeting.

6 **Communications.** The Chairperson especially welcomed and congratulated the new secretaries present for the first time: Mr David Agnew, Secretary of the Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR); Ms Rebecca Lent, Secretary of the International Whaling Commission (IWC); Mr Chris O'Brien, Secretary of the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC); Mr Camille Jean Pierre Manel, Secretary of the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT); Ms Emma Hatfield, Secretary of the North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organization (NASCO); Mr Darius Campbell, Secretary of the Northeast Atlantic Fisheries Commission (NEAFC); Ms Yvette Diedi Ouadi, Secretary of the Western and Central Atlantic Fishery Commission (WECAFC); Ms Elizabeth Voges, Secretary of the South East Atlantic Fisheries Organisation (SEAFO); Mr Sebastian Rodriguez Alfaro, Secretary of the South Pacific Regional Fisheries Management Organisation (SPRFMO); Mr Jon Lansley, Secretary of the Southern Indian Ocean Fisheries Agreement (SIOFA); Mr Reinaldo Morales Rodriguez, Secretary of the Central America

¹ Throughout this document, the name of RFBs is used only in reference to their "Secretaries" attending the meeting and not to the respective Commission.

Fisheries and Aquaculture Organization (OSPESCA); Mr Daniel Gilardoni, Secretary of the Joint Technical Commission for the Argentina/Uruguay Maritime Front (CTMFM); Mr Mentor Patricio Villagomez Merino, Secretary of the Permanent Commission for the South Pacific (CPPS)); and Ms Victoria Chomo, Secretary of the European Inland Fisheries and Aquaculture Advisory Commission (EIFAAC) and Secretary of the Central Asian and Caucasus Regional Fisheries and Aquaculture Commission (CACFish).

7 **Activities and role of RFBs in global processes.** The Chairperson noted the presence of RSN members at the First Meeting of the Parties of the FAO Port State Measures Agreement (PSMA) held in Oslo, Norway (29 May 2017 – 31 May 2017) and their participation to the intersessional RSN meeting held in this occasion, on Sunday 28 May. While attendance could have been greater, the Chairperson encouraged similar RSN meetings to be held in the future, to further strengthen the work of the Network on relevant matters. He underlined the engagement of the RSN Secretary, as FAO liaison, in the World Trade Organization (WTO) discussions on fisheries subsidies, and the important role of RFMOs in the related agenda.

8 **Publications and communication products.** The Chairperson reported on the activities of the RSN Secretariat, including the launch of a restyled newsletter, a new publication entitled ‘Regional Fishery Body Secretariats’ Network – Membership, FAO 2018, (‘RSN Membership publication’) on RSN Membership and the aforementioned RSN corporate video. The Chairperson expressed the view that the RSN is on good track as a network, but that it needs financial support in order to be further strengthened. The Chairperson also thanked the government of Japan for its financial contribution to the RSN Secretariat activities.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

9 The Chairperson invited participants to provide comments on the suggested agenda and thanked those secretaries as well as invited organizations and partners who proposed items to be included in the agenda, and highlighted that the two-day meeting unfortunately would not allow the discussion of all suggested topics and referred to potential intersessional meetings in order to address the interest of participants in having a forum for sharing knowledge and experience.

10 The agenda of the meeting was adopted. It is attached in Appendix 1.

11 The meeting agreed to prepare a statement that the Chairperson will deliver at the 33rd Session of the Committee of Fisheries (COFI 33), which will stress the work of the regional fisheries and aquaculture bodies, the role and increasing importance of the Network, the level of discussions during its first session as well as the subjects of greatest concern to the RFBs and their members. The statement as delivered is attached in Appendix 4.

COMMUNICATION FROM THE UNITED NATIONS DIVISION FOR OCEAN AFFAIRS AND THE LAW OF THE SEA

12 Mr Marco Boccia, Programme Management Officer, UNDOALOS, gave a presentation to update on developments relevant to the work of the RSN arising out of the work of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), as well as on the Review Conference on the United Nations Fish Stocks Agreement (UNFSA). Mr Boccia drew attention to the recommendations of the Review Conference. With regard to the Informal Consultations of States Parties to the UNFSA (ICSP), he noted that several RFABs and RFMOs participated as panellists during previous rounds of such consultations, and that the RSN members may be invited to provide additional input and be recommended as panellists for the upcoming 14th round of Informal Consultations of States Parties to the UNFSA (ICSP-14), to be held in New York from 2 to 3 May 2019, which will focus on the topic of “Performance reviews of regional fisheries management organizations and arrangements”.

13 Mr Boccia informed RSN participants that the United Nations Open-ended Informal Consultative Process on Oceans and the Law of the Sea (ICP), has recently considered topics ranging from marine debris,

plastics and microplastics (in 2016), the effects of climate change on oceans (in 2017), and, most recently, anthropogenic underwater noise (in 2018). He noted that the Regular Process for Global Reporting and Assessment of the State of the Marine Environment, including Socioeconomic Aspects (Regular Process), which is currently in its second cycle (2016-2020), will produce the second world ocean assessment. He also noted that a Pool of Experts for the second cycle has been established to support the preparation of the assessment and that the nomination process for experts to the Pool of Experts is still open. In this regard, he recalled that Intergovernmental Organizations (IGOs) can recommend experts to the Pool of Experts and encouraged all RFABs and RFMOs to provide UNDOALOS, as the secretariat of the Regular Process, with a list of recommended experts.

14 Mr Boccia, while noting that the first cycle of the Regular Process culminated in the production of the first World Ocean Assessment (WOAI), detailed that the second cycle of the Regular Process will extend to evaluating trends and identify gaps. He expressed that, according to its 2017–2020 programme of work, a series of regional workshops would be held in 2018, so as to, inter alia, inform the collection of regional-level information and data for the preparation of the second world ocean assessment, with the first workshop to be held in Koror, Palau, from 8 to 9 August 2018.

15 He added that the first substantive session of the Intergovernmental Conference, under the auspices of the United Nations, to consider the recommendations of the Preparatory Committee on the elements and to elaborate the text of an international legally binding instrument under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction (BBNJ negotiations) would be held from 4 to 17 September 2018. Mr Boccia encouraged all RFABs and RFMOs to participate in the upcoming sessions.

16 The Chairperson thanked Mr Boccia for the presentation provided and noted that many RFMOs do not attend some of the mentioned UN meetings, including those of the Review Conference on the UNSFA and those related to the BBNJ. The Chairperson stressed that BBNJ negotiations are very important for the RFMOs, and encouraged the secretaries present in this session to attend these meetings in the future. He highlighted that the role of RFMOs and their contribution to fisheries management, and the numerous performance reviews that have been undertaken in recent years for improving their functioning, should be noted at the BBNJ meetings.

17 The International Whaling Commission (IWC) further emphasised the importance of participating in these meetings by noting, from direct experience, having participated in the UNGA meeting on anthropogenic ocean noise, that marine noise not only impacts whales but also the status of fish stocks.

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN THE FISHERIES AND RESOURCES MONITORING SYSTEM

18 Mr Marc Taconet, Head, Statistics and Information Branch (FIAS), FAO, Rome, Italy, gave a presentation on recent achievements of the Fisheries and Resources Monitoring System (FIRMS). Mr Taconet noted that 19 RFABs and RFMOs are currently contributing by providing information to FIRMS and that the information has reached a high level, following nine steering meetings. The objective of FIRMS, which is seeking to expand, is to reach complete global coverage. Mr Taconet also mentioned the current lack of information on the Pacific and the South West Atlantic.

19 Mr Taconet informed participants that the Global Record of Stocks and Fisheries (GRSF) will be officially launched in 2019. The GRSF contains unique identifiers for fish stocks and fisheries gathered from several existing databases, including FIRMS, the RAM legacy database and FishSource, provided by the Sustainable Fisheries Partnership (SFP).

20 Mr Taconet noted that there is a draft proposal to enable joining FIRMS with lighter rights and responsibilities, while still being compliant with FIRMS' mandate and scope, by contributing with relevant data and expertise. This proposal, he said, is a response to discussions with RSN members carried out at the last RSN meeting, in 2016. Mr Taconet encouraged RSN members to join FIRMS.

21 The Chairperson emphasized the importance of strengthening the collaboration between RNS members and FIRMS.

22 The Joint Technical Commission of the Maritime Front (CTMFM) shared information on its recent efforts to publish fact sheets of stock data and evaluation data of the ten species, or groups of species, that have a Total Allowance Catch (TAC) fixed by the Commission, noting that it enables everyone to learn about the Commission's activities.

23 The Fishery Committee for the West Central Gulf of Guinea (FCWC) expressed its interest in the FIRMS partnerships and informed that discussions are being carried out with FIRMS and, furthermore, that a regional data centre has been set up with the assistance of FAO.

24 The Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism (CRFM) reaffirmed the value of the FIRMS partnerships and expressed its full endorsement of the initiative of easing the FIRMS partnership obligations and simplifying the process of joining.

25 The South Pacific Regional Fisheries Management Organization (SPRFMO) informed that its members will be made aware of the lack of available FIRMS data related to the Pacific Ocean. The SPRFMO also requested increased focus on transparency, by making all data available and public if possible, and noted that the data collected by SPRFMO is public and easily accessible on its website.

26 The Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC) enquired about the types of users who access and utilise the information made available by FIRMS. Mr Taconet noted that there are different modes of users at national level, depending on the status of the data, and added that this information is relevant for supporting and monitoring progress on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and related targets.

27 The North East Atlantic Fisheries Commission (NEAFC) raised the question as to whether the information managed by FIRMS is being integrated within the State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture (SOFIA) report. Mr Taconet informed that the GRSF will provide a backbone for a more systematic and transparent assembly of indicators on the status of fish stocks, which are being reported in SOFIA.

THE BYCATCH MITIGATION INITIATIVE OF THE INTERNATIONAL WHALING COMMISSION

28 Ms Marguerite Tarzia, Bycatch Coordinator at IWC, gave a presentation of the IWCs Bycatch Mitigation Initiative (BMI). She explained that the IWC established the BMI in 2016, in recognition of the need for coordinated global action to tackle cetacean bycatch. Bycatch of cetaceans is considered the most significant conservation threat to cetacean populations globally, with the accidental capture in fisheries responsible for driving species such as the vaquita and North Atlantic right whale towards extinction.

29 According to the presentation provided, a coarse estimate suggests that over 300,000 cetaceans are accidentally caught and killed in fishing gear each year. The lack of data on cetacean distribution, bycatch events, fishing efforts and gear types has hampered efforts to understand which locations might be experiencing the highest intensity of cetacean bycatch. This has also made it challenging to develop and test solutions for specific fisheries and local conditions. Unlike for other marine megafauna, such as seabirds, there are few technical solutions which have been found to be effective in reducing cetacean bycatch. Ms Tarzia noted that the IWC has been examining the effectiveness of other management solutions, including temporal and spatial measures, or the potential for incentives and socio/economic drivers to play a role in reducing cetacean bycatch.

30 Ms Tarzia added that the BMI aims to contribute to global coordination efforts to raise awareness of this issue, both at national and international level, bringing together experts and collaborators to drive progress towards the development and adaptation of mitigation and management solutions. Formed by a governance body (a Standing Working Group on Bycatch), a Bycatch Coordinator and a multidisciplinary expert panel,

the BMI is developing a two-year workplan and a 10-year strategic plan for endorsement by the IWC's Commission in September 2018.

31 Ms Tarzia informed that the BMI includes plans to work on the ground, alongside governments and fishing communities, and at the international level, in order to bring about change in how the issue of cetacean bycatch is addressed. She mentioned that a series of pilot projects will be developed, in which innovation and testing of mitigation, management and incentive-based approaches will be undertaken. The initiative will scale this up over time to develop a technical advisory and capacity development programme, providing advice to governments and different groups looking for assistance in reducing cetacean bycatch. In order to implement the identified priority work areas, the IWC is looking for partnerships and collaborations, particularly with fisheries management bodies and other international organisations with shared interest in the ecosystem approach to fishery management. Some suggested areas of collaboration outlined in the presentation included the potential to collaborate on the follow up to the FAO marine mammal technical report, on the compilation, evaluation and streamlining of national reporting data on cetacean bycatch, and through direct joint efforts in pilot projects and capacity development.

32 The Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels (ACAP) expressed its gratitude to the IWC for mentioning seabird mitigation efforts in the presentation, and its interest in strengthening the collaboration that has already been established between the two bodies. ACAP also noted that there may be a variety of effective solutions to bycatch for different taxa, but also referred to the importance of data gathering and data reporting as a tool to monitor progress in reducing bycatch.

33 The Bay of Bengal Programme Inter-Governmental Organization (BOBP-IGO) shared information about its work in raising awareness on cetacean bycatch mitigation in its region, through posters informing fishers on how to act in the case of cetaceans being caught in their nets.

34 The Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC) noted that it is providing the Secretariat of the Agreement on the International Dolphin Conservation Programme to prevent, reduce and eliminate incidental mortalities of dolphins. The IATTC asked for a clarification regarding the mentioning of marked-based approaches in IWC's presentation, and noted that this is a new approach to be used by the IWC. Ms Tarzia agreed with this assertion, and explained that the IWC is exploring opportunities to work with the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) on how bycatch is considered under the MSC standard, as well as with economists, with the aim of developing a toolbox of incentives to mitigate bycatch.

35 Mr Matthew Camilleri, Head, Fisheries Operations and Technologies (FIAO), Fisheries and Aquaculture Department, FAO, Rome, Italy, informed RSN participants that a report of marine mammal bycatch will be launched during COFI 33, and encouraged RSN members to bring it back for consideration within their respective regions.

THE INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF THE SALMON

36 Ms Emma Hatfield, Secretary of NASCO and Mr Vladimir Radchenko, Executive Director of North Pacific Anadromous Fish Commission (NPAFC), gave a joint presentation on the International Year of the Salmon (IYS), which will be held in 2019. Ms Hatfield introduced the IYS, which is an initiative that seeks to protect salmon by bringing people together to share and develop knowledge, raise public awareness and take action.

37 The speakers explained that the IYS will establish partnership and investments to kick-start research and public action across the salmosphere to give salmon the best chance to survive and thrive.

38 The salmosphere, they mentioned, is the current and future range of salmon, including six Pacific salmon species, steelhead trout, and Atlantic salmon, in the North Pacific, North Atlantic and Arctic regions. Salmon are at risk from environmental change and human activities across the Northern Hemisphere. Increasingly uncertain aquatic conditions require more responsive and efficient approaches, in order to

understand their effects. While the challenges are similar across the Northern Hemisphere, there are limited connections among research and management institutions across, and even within, ocean basins.

39 The NPAFC and the NASCO lead a hemispheric partnership with many partners, including the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES), the North Pacific Marine Science Organization (PICES), industries, non-governmental organizations, indigenous groups, government organizations, and academic institutions. Through new partnerships, the IYS seeks to stimulate an investment in research and outreach that will leave a legacy of knowledge, data/information systems, tools and a new generation of scientists and decision-makers better equipped to sustain salmon and the ecosystems they depend on.

40 As explained by the speakers, the IYS's ultimate goal is to build resilience for Salmon and people in a changing world. A series of high-impact projects will allow to achieve six outcomes, as follows:

- Status of Salmon: the present status of salmon and their environments is understood;
- Salmon in a changing salmosphere: the effects of natural environmental variability and human factors affecting salmon distribution and abundance are understood and quantified;
- New frontiers: new technologies, analytical methods, ideas and ways of thinking are advanced and applied to salmon research. Research is carried out to fill gaps in poorly studied regions of the salmosphere;
- Human dimensions: communities, indigenous peoples, youth, harvesters, science and resource managers across the Northern Hemisphere share knowledge and collaborate in the development of new tools and approaches to restoring, managing, and sustaining salmon;
- Information systems: information systems that house and mobilize historic and current data about salmon and their environment are freely available; and
- Outreach and communication: people understand the value of healthy salmon populations and engage to ensure salmon and their varied habitats are conserved and restored against increasing environmental change.

41 Ms Hatfield and Mr Radchenko indicated that examples of high-impact projects include high seas research cruises to study the mortality factors of salmon at sea, a new method for tracking salmon in the high seas, an open-access platform for data sharing, among others. They also invited participants to contact the NASCO and the NPAFC to be involved in the implementation of the IYS, for potential projects and for further information.

42 Following the presentation of the IYS initiative, the Pacific Salmon Commission (PSC) informed of their involvement in the IYS and congratulated Ms Hatfield and Mr Radchenko for the efforts made by their respective bodies. The PSC reiterated the difficulty in dealing with the very different status of diverse salmon species, and expressed its interest in discussing the work of the PSC in dealing with this issue, together with Commissions dedicated to the salmon species.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE WORK OF THE NORTH ATLANTIC MARINE MAMMAL COMMISSION

43 Ms Charlotte Winsnes, Deputy Secretary of the North Atlantic Marine Mammal Commission (NAMMCO) gave a presentation highlighting the recent work of the Commission. Ms Winsnes noted that, given its relatively small size, this RFB, which counts 4 parties, is dependent on external expertise; she also pointed out that this circumstance has favoured an atmosphere of transparency and openness and that NAMMCO will be undertaking its first performance review during the present year. Members of the panel are appointed by FAO, NAFO and the IWC.

44 Ms Winsnes explained that NAMMCO advises its Member Governments on the conservation, management and study of marine mammals in the North Atlantic, that its mandate covers 23 species (both cetaceans and pinnipeds) and focusses on regular assessments of the status of the stocks, defining sustainable removals, taking into account direct catch and by-catch and other anthropogenic pressures; improving hunting

methods, taking into account the efficiency of hunts, hunters' safety and animal welfare, and monitoring of hunting activities.

45 Looking at the ecosystem as a whole, Ms Winsnes referred that with marine mammals as one of many interlinked elements, advice should be based on the most up-to-date scientific findings, local knowledge and technological developments. She added that, acknowledging the broad scope and natural limitation of internal expertise, NAMMCO requires and depends upon the participation of external experts in its deliberations, something which is reflected in the Commission's budget allocations. Involving external expertise ensures access to the most recent information and, at the same time, facilitates transparency and openness in the decision-making processes.

46 Ms Winsnes further explained that from the very inception of NAMMCO, ecosystem-based management has been the ideal to be pursued. The objective is to have sustainable populations and responsible utilization, where hunting represents, by far, the easiest factor to quantify and control. The challenge is to identify, qualify and quantify all human-induced impacts as best as possible, while assessing the cumulative impacts on the resources and, furthermore, to integrate the results into sound management advice. Ms Winsnes also noted that a prerequisite for progression/advancement is strengthened and increased international cooperation.

47 As recalled by the speaker, responsibility in execution requires continued efforts in the improvement of hunting methods, in order to ensure safe hunting operations with minimal animal suffering, while maximizing results. It also reflects on the utilization of resources taking account of the concept of Blue Economy and sustainable development goals as set down by the UN.

48 Ms Winsnes referred to NAMMCO's "Marine Mammals – a multifaceted resource" project, which examines the potential of marine mammals as a food resource in a Blue Economy, as well as from an environmental, dietary and social perspective. The abundance of certain marine mammals allows them to be hunted locally, with a very small ecological footprint: it is thus relevant to ask why these resources, when sustainably managed, are ignored in the context of food security.

49 The Chairperson thanked Ms Winsnes for her informative presentation and invited the participants to consider the next item on the agenda.

STRENGTHENING THE RSN: NEEDS AND CHALLENGES

50 The Chairperson noted the importance and usefulness of the RSN for its members, and highlighted the need for resources to support the strengthening of the Network, in order to meet increased expectations. The Chairperson mentioned that governments would be encouraged to contribute funding to the RSN, and gave the floor to the RSN Secretary.

51 Mr Mannini, the RSN Secretary, gave a presentation to update participants on a selection of activities performed by the RSN Secretariat. He observed that FAO and non-FAO regional fisheries bodies met for the first time 20 years ago, and that since then its role and members have increased, currently counting more than 50 RFBs, RFMOs and partners. He noted the high attendance to the meeting, with the presence of around 80 percent of all members. Mr Mannini referred to the need to better communicate the work of the RSN, both internally and externally. He cited the recently released RSN membership publication, as well as the latest issue of the RSN Newsletter, focussing on the SDGs, and the efforts of RFBs in delivering the 2030 Agenda, as well as the RSN corporate video produced (available at: <https://youtu.be/XR8uBMsvVc0>), to be presented following this session. Mr Mannini emphasized the recognition of the RSN and RFBs in other FAO publications, such as The State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture (SOFIA).

52 Mr Mannini called for participants to express their views on increasing the frequency of meetings, ideas to foster the momentum of this well-attended network in the future, and on the preferred approach towards requests of civil society organizations (CSOs) and other actors wishing to participate as observers in

future meetings. He noted that the regional dimension of fisheries and aquaculture governance is receiving great attention in international fora, and that there is widespread expectation on the RFABs' and RFMOs' contribution to international processes, such as the BBNJ discussions. He also encouraged members to contribute with proposals and comments in relation to these processes.

53 The Chairperson noted that the task of the RSN is complex, and clarified that the Network aims to coordinate efforts, and to provide visibility to the role of RFABs and RFMOs in fisheries and ocean governance. He added that, to fully carry out its work, the RSN needs support. He underlined that, as per previous COFI sessions, a statement from the RSN would be prepared and presented at COFI 33.

54 The CCAMLR congratulated FAO for putting together relevant information for the aforementioned RSN membership publication. The CCAMLR also noted that it is important to consider the sensitivities associated with classifying organizations, and reminded that the CCAMLR is not an RFMO.

55 The Chairperson noted that this discussion had been brought up in previous RSN sessions, and that such differences among RSN members are being certainly considered; furthermore, he emphasized that the purpose of the RSN is to coordinate efforts, constitute a forum for dialogue and sharing experiences, and that the RSN does not and cannot speak on behalf on any organization or provide details that are not directly supplied by organizations whose Secretariat is member of the Network.

56 The NEAFC added that the key benefit of the RSN is the opportunity it offers to meet and identify key common interests, and suggested that RSN members should consider whether they have a common message to present at the BBNJ discussions and in other international processes. The NEAFC also requested further information regarding the RSN communication strategy.

57 The Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC) reiterated that the RSN is a platform for coordination and not a decision-making body. The WCPFC also asked whether the RSN Secretariat could be funded by the contributions of FAO members, given that the members of the RFABs and RFMOs also are members of FAO.

58 The Committee for Inland Fisheries and Aquaculture of Africa (CIFAA) and the Fishery Committee for the Eastern Central Atlantic (CECAF) congratulated FAO on the RSN membership publication, and noted the difficulty for the RSN Secretariat to run the Network with limited resources. The Secretary expressed concerns related to the languages in which the report is available, stressing that it is only in English, and noted that many of its members are not English-speaking countries.

59 In agreement with this last intervention, the Chairperson noted that it was an important issue, and explained that RSN publications are not translated into other languages due to the budgetary constraints.

60 The BOBP-IGO complimented the RSN Secretariat on the RSN membership publication and reiterated Mr Mannini's point that the international governance of fisheries is becoming more complex. RFBs are under increasing obligations from the environmental sphere, in the context of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the WTO and the SDGs; RFBs are required to report not only to national fisheries departments, but also to environment and climate change departments. For small organizations, such as the BOBP-IGO, this situation constitutes a challenge. He underlined that, in this context, the RSN could play an important role, one which should be emphasized at COFI 33.

61 The North Pacific Fisheries Commission (NPFC) reiterated that the role of the RSN has significantly changed, and celebrated the high attendance of the RSN-7 meeting. The NPFC also noted that RSN members' representation in the BBNJ process has been very low, and encouraged increased participation in the future, while emphasizing the necessity to present a consolidated view from RSN members in this and similar meetings. Commenting on Mr Mannini's question about the frequency of meetings, the NPFC noted that bodies with common coverage areas may wish to increase coordination. The NPFC congratulated the IOTC for its efforts on the Tuna Compliance Network, bringing compliance and data monitoring together, and noted that tuna RFMOs are slightly ahead of other bodies in coordination and cooperation efforts. The Commission

also mentioned that a second group that may wish to further bolster coordination are bodies managing common fisheries, with possible assistance from the RSN. Furthermore, and regarding Mr Mannini's point about civil society or other actors wishing to assist to the RSN meetings, the NPFC expressed that many CSOs are willing to provide data and information, as well as funding, and welcomed the idea of enabling civil society to contribute to the work of the RSN.

62 Mr Mannini thanked the participants for the fruitful discussion, and concurred with the previous interventions that the RSN is a coordination mechanism and not a decision-making body, that the RSN communication strategy and objective is to increase visibility and awareness, and that the role of the RSN should be brought to the attention of the RFBs' contracting parties, to increase cooperation and encourage financial contributions. He referred to the budget constraints, which currently limit the possibility to translate publications, among other activities, and, finally, observed that the RSN intersessional meetings, such as the meeting held in the margins of the PSMA meeting in Oslo, may provide an opportunity for further coordination and exchange of information.

63 Mr Árne Mathiesen, Assistant Director-General, Fisheries and Aquaculture Department, FAO, Rome, Italy, welcomed the members of the RSN and noted the interesting discussions being carried out within the Network. Mr Mathiesen referred to the previous interventions on the topic of the purpose of the RSN and underlined that the Network should remain inclusive and provide a forum that values the role and recognises the importance of each member. Mr Mathiesen said that the issue, raised by participants, of RSN funding is not the only concern; funding by Member Countries in support of the individual bodies should also be addressed, given the link between the support received at this level and the achievements in the context of sustainable fisheries management and aquaculture development. He highlighted that this message needs to be conveyed to the RFBs' Member Countries.

64 In relation to the BBNJ process, Mr Mathiesen noted that it represents a challenge for the Fisheries and Aquaculture Department, the FAO RSN Secretariat and the regional fishery bodies. He reminded participants that there is an increasing understanding of the difficulties in reaching an agreement, and that the main actors involved in this global process are realizing that RFMOs play a key role within it. He also referred to a suggested option related to the role of RFMOs in a potential coordinating joint platform for fisheries, environment and seabed. Mr Mathiesen emphasized that once the BBNJ agreement is reached, its implementation will require the participation of fisheries bodies, and encouraged RSN members attending the meeting to be engaged in the BBNJ process, together with their Member Countries.

WTO PROGRESS ON FISHERY SUBSIDIES' NEGOTIATIONS

65 Ms Clarisse Morgan, Senior Counsellor, Rules Division of WTO, gave a presentation to update RSN members on the ongoing WTO negotiations for fisheries subsidies. Ms Morgan thanked the RSN members for contributing to the WTO process over the past months, and noted that fisheries subsidies are different from most of the topics dealt with by the WTO. She explained that it is not about fish trade, but about input to access a natural resource, and that the main arguments in the discussion are based on determining and distinguishing harmful subsidies and positive subsidies, which can be used to sustainably develop fisheries at the country level.

66 Ms Morgan shared information about the decision taken at the WTO Ministerial Conference held in Buenos Aires, in December 2017, on fisheries subsidies negotiations. She said that current discussions are focused on preventing subsidies which contribute to Illegal, Unregulated and Unreported (IUU) fishing and to overfished fish stocks. Ms Morgan added that WTO Member Countries have different proposals, some of them based on the identification of vessels in RFMO's IUU vessels lists, for which no subsidies should be allowed; others consider that a due process should be followed in such cases and that the decision of not providing subsidies in those cases should not be automatically taken. In relation to preventing subsidies in case of overfished stocks, Ms Morgan noted the current difficulties in the determination that a stock is overfished, and stressed the concern on whether this should be based on RFMO stock assessments at face value, or should also

include a third-party evaluation. The presentation ended by referring to the WTO's interest in learning more from RSN members about the determination of IUU fishing and overfished stocks.

67 The Permanent Commission for the South Pacific (CPPS) thanked Ms Morgan for the presentation and shared information about its initiative to form a coordinating working group on fisheries subsidies, which could take into account the information on WTO negotiations.

68 The Southeast Asian Fisheries Development Center (SEAFDEC) queried whether FAO could contribute to WTO negotiations from a technical perspective, and noted that SEAFDEC Member Countries have significant interest in the related negotiations.

69 The NEAFC informed of its participation in the technical working sessions at the WTO and asked whether other RFMOs will take part or contribute to the related technical discussions.

70 The SIOFA drew attention to a relevant aspect of fisheries subsidies by noting that efforts against IUU fishing require more than the identification of vessels, highlighting the role of the owners of vessels involved in IUU fishing activities.

71 In relation to the 'due process', the WCPFC assured that this principle is being applied in its related procedures, and that tuna RFMOs have elaborated regulations for listing IUU fishing vessels appropriately. Furthermore, the CCAMLR stated that its regulations on IUU fishing vessels lists respect the due process, and provide actions against national parties identified in these lists, and highlighted that the referred process comprises information on owners.

72 The Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA) praised the contribution provided by FAO to the WTO discussions on fisheries subsidies, a collaboration which it encouraged to continue. The FFA also noted that many RFBs have not been engaged in the aforementioned WTO negotiations and, considering the negotiations' aim to achieve sustainable fisheries, it underlined their significance to all RFBs.

73 Ms Morgan highlighted the fruitful collaboration between the WTO and FAO over the years, as well as the relevant technical support provided by FAO, which was most appreciated by WTO members. In addition, she confirmed that the issues raised by participants in relation to IUU fishing vessels lists and the importance of involving owners are part of the ongoing discussion within the negotiations, and will be taken into consideration in this context. She further informed that a workshop focusing on due process in listing IUU fishing vessels by RFMOs, would be held on 23 July, and noted that the case of countries engaged in IUU fishing, and who are not parties to an RFMO, constitutes a point for discussion. Finally, Ms Morgan assured participants she will provide information on RFMOs participating in the working sessions, and invited the RSN members to contact her, should they have questions on the ongoing negotiations.

2018 SUSTAINABLE OCEAN INITIATIVE GLOBAL CONFERENCE

74 Mr Mannini informed the meeting about the 2018 global conference on the Sustainable Ocean Initiative (SOI), which included the participation of RFBs and RFMOs. He explained that the initiative is led by the CBD, in partnership with FAO and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), and promotes cooperation between RFBs and Regional Sea Organizations (RSOs) and that the first meeting of the SOI Global Dialogue with RSOs and RFBs on Accelerating Progress towards the Aichi Biodiversity Targets was convened by the Secretariat of the CBD in Seoul in September 2016. The meeting was organized in collaboration with UNEP and FAO.

75 Mr Mannini added that the first meeting aimed to facilitate the exchange of experiences and discussed specific tools and guidelines in order to enhance science-based, cross-sectoral and ecosystem-based approaches for addressing biodiversity and fisheries issues, and identified options and opportunities to enhance collaboration among regional RSOs and RFBs, with a view to further strengthen their complementary roles in

supporting national implementation of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011–2020 towards achieving the Aichi Biodiversity Targets and the relevant Sustainable Development Goals.

76 He further explained that the first SOI Global Dialogue confirmed the essential role played by regional organizations in supporting and facilitating actions by national governments for the conservation and sustainable use of marine and coastal biodiversity and ecosystems, and in supporting and assessing progress towards global-level goals, including the Aichi Biodiversity Targets and the Sustainable Development Goals.

77 Mr Mannini added that the 2nd Meeting of the Sustainable Ocean Initiative Global Dialogue with Regional Seas Organizations and Regional Fisheries Bodies was held in Seoul in April 2018. The meeting provided an overview of the evolving global ocean policy-scape, in particular regarding developments since the first meeting of the SOI Global Dialogue. He noted the relevant outcomes of the UN Biodiversity Conference 2016, UN Ocean Conference, the 71st Session of United Nations General Assembly, the 2016/2017 Sessions of the UN Environment Assembly (UNEA), the 32nd Session of the FAO Committee on Fisheries, and the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development. Mr Mannini observed that both the UN Environment Assembly and the FAO Committee on Fisheries encouraged cooperation between regional seas organisations and regional fisheries bodies.

78 Progress in such regional cooperation was reported, particularly from the Northeast Atlantic, Mediterranean, Black Sea, Caribbean, the region (Arabian Sea) relevant to the Regional Organisation for Protection of the Marine Environment (ROPME) and the Regional Commission for Fisheries (RECOFI), the Western Indian Ocean, West and Central Africa, and the Pacific. Efforts to promote cooperation between RSOs and RFBs, including the Large Marine Ecosystem projects and regional science organizations, are ongoing, with many new examples emerging since the first SOI Global Dialogue. Mr Mannini added that an important immediate task could be to link the resources available for organizations and regions most in need of support, such as capacity development and institutional strengthening.

ILLEGAL, UNREPORTED AND UNREGULATED FISHING AND THE PORT STATE MEASURES AGREEMENT IMPLEMENTATION

79 Mr Matthew Camilleri gave a presentation on the work to combat IUU fishing and the implementation of the PSMA. Mr Camilleri noted that the PSMA currently comprises 55 parties (including the EU and its 28 Member States) and that several RFMOs have had port state measures in place since before the entry into force of the Agreement. Mr Camilleri pointed out the important role of RFMOs in the implementation of the PSMA, in promoting the minimum standards of the agreement and in sharing information, remarking that this aspect was one of the main topics of discussion at the first PSMA meeting, held in Oslo, Norway (29 May 2017 – 31 May 2017). He further noted that current IUU fishing vessels lists contain very few vessels, and that illegal fishing is only a part of the problem, stating that unreported and unregulated fishing also represent significant causes for concern.

80 Mr Camilleri shared details on the FAO Global Capacity Development Umbrella Programme, and noted the need for cooperation with entities, RFBs, IGOs, and civil society in its implementation. He further informed participants about a new database which includes details of all country capacity development projects.

81 In addition, he mentioned that FAO is currently drafting the Technical Guidelines on methodologies and indicators for estimating the magnitude and impact of IUU fishing; Mr Camilleri also referred to a study conducted on transshipment practices, as well as to the information available on the new dedicated PSMA website, concerning the PSMA itself, IUU fishing and the Global Record of Fishing Vessels, Refrigerated Transport Vessels and Supply Vessels.

82 The Chairperson noted the importance of the PSMA for combatting IUU fishing and the role of RSN members in encouraging Member Countries to become parties to the Agreement. The Chairperson emphasized that regional trainings are needed to support the implementation of the PSMA.

83 In the discussion that followed, some RSN members pondered the role of RFBs in assisting contracting parties in the implementation of the PSMA, and what could be expected in terms of support from FAO. In this context, the secretariat of the CECAF and the CIFAA expressed concerns regarding its role, in terms of assistance to Member Countries in implementing the PSMA.

84 The OSPESCA pointed to the difficulties of implementing the PSMA, a process which should also include support for non-parties, with a view to encourage them to join the Agreement.

85 The SEAFDEC informed that some Member Countries are about to ratify the Agreement, and requested technical expertise from FAO to assist them with the consequent implementation.

86 The CRFM observed that 17 of its Member Countries are parties to the PSMA, and emphasized the need for capacity building and financial support to assist countries in implementing the Agreement. Furthermore, the CRFM noted that a significant number of countries expressed concern about signing the Agreement without being able to fulfil its obligations.

87 The FCWC highlighted the relevance of the PSMA to the respective region, and informed that following a proactive approach of this body and encouraging members to join the Agreement, two countries have already signed. It shared the need for support expressed by countries in implementing the Agreement, as well as the requested information on the process for applications to the available support. The FCWC emphasized that support at regional level is necessary to ensure that no one is left behind and the whole region is able to implement the Agreement, even if the program is being executed at country level.

88 Mr Camilleri thanked the RSN participants for the discussion and the questions raised. He clarified that the PSMA assistance fund is only available for parties to the Agreement and added that the FAO Global Capacity Development Program provides support for non-parties. Mr Camilleri explained that, in practice, many projects receiving support will involve both parties and non-parties. In terms of the selection process for support, Mr Camilleri informed that up to 50 developing countries will be supported and that Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and Small Island Developing States (SIDSs) are being prioritized, together with parties and countries with key fisheries. He also mentioned that donors may wish to support specific countries.

89 Mr Camilleri called RFBs to promote the benefits of the PSMA among their Member Countries, to align regional measures with the minimum standards of the PSMA, to help members in its implementation, and to collaborate in developing a global information-sharing system about vessels' activity. Mr Camilleri reiterated that the regional component is key to the PSMA implementation, and shared information about regional training workshops.

90 Ms Alicia Mosteiro Cabanelas, Global Record Programme Coordinator, Fisheries Operations and Technologies (FIAO), Fisheries and Aquaculture Department, FAO, Rome, Italy, complemented the presentation of Mr Camilleri by providing details on the Global Record of Fishing Vessels, Refrigerated Transport Vessels and Supply Vessels (Global Record), a global information system to fight IUU fishing, through transparency and traceability which, so far, includes about one-third of the global eligible fleet: vessels with International Maritime Organization (IMO) numbers. Ms Mosteiro Cabanelas invited the RSN members to participate in the next working group meeting of the Global Record.

91 She also emphasized that the Global Record has received widespread support from the Committee on Fisheries (COFI) as an important global tool to fight IUU fishing and support the implementation of international instruments such as the PSMA. She added that the key component is the Unique Vessel Identifier (UVI) for which COFI agreed that the IMO number should be used as the UVI for Phase 1 (vessels of 100 gross tonnage or 24 m LOA – length overall – and above). The UVI ensures correct vessel identity, as well as linkages across modules of information and different information systems and instruments (PSMA, CDS, UNFSA, etc.). Together with the IMO number, other four data fields are essential for submitting data to the Global Record: flag State, vessel name, LOA (in meters) and gross tonnage (GT or GRT).

92 Ms Mosteiro Cabanelas further informed that the Global Record Informal Open-Ended Technical and Advisory Working Group (GRWG) agreed to several mechanisms to upload information to the global information system, including the possibility for States to upload data to the Global Record from regional record initiatives under the RFMOs and RFABs. She added that, given the importance of disseminating up-to-date information, the GRWG recognized the need to consider automatic information exchange mechanisms and supported the use of the United Nations Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business Fisheries' Language for Universal Exchange (UN/CEFACT FLUX standard), to which FAO has been contributing since 2012 as a key partner. The Global Record, she mentioned, will initiate implementation of FLUX standards in the last quarter of 2018 and the first quarter of 2019, and will run the first tests with States. She encouraged RFMOs and RFABs with regional vessel records to consider implementing FLUX to connect with the Global Record as a way to facilitate participation of their contracting parties with the aim of not increasing the burden of reporting. States would always be in control of the data and frequency of submissions through the Global Record portal. The mechanism would facilitate automatic connection/reporting, which might represent a challenge for certain States to develop and maintain; this, Ms Mosteiro observed, should therefore be seen as a service to the contracting parties.

93 Ms Mosteiro Cabanelas referred that RFMOs and RFBs are encouraged to be in contact with the Global Record Programme (FI-Global-Record@fao.org) and highlighted that, according to the COFI, States are responsible for the data and its submission, and that this could be possibly done through RFMOs' systems.

94 The Chairperson highlighted that cooperation between RSN members and the PSMA Secretariat is key for coordinating the related work, as well as to facilitate participation and support to the implementation process.

UN PROCESSES, INCLUDING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

95 Mr Uwe Barg, Aquaculture Officer, Focal Point for the 2030 Agenda and SDGs in the Fisheries and Aquaculture Policy and Resources Division, FAO, Rome, Italy, gave a presentation on the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and in particular on SDG 14. He updated the RSN members on the FAO Common Vision for Sustainable Food and Agriculture and FAO's efforts of assisting Members in delivering the 2030 Agenda. Mr Barg focused on the need for multi-stakeholder partnerships, remarking the very important role of the RFABs and the RFMOs in contributing to the implementation process of SDG 14.

96 Mr Barg detailed that the 2030 Agenda offers a vision of a fairer, more prosperous, peaceful and sustainable world in which no one is left behind, as it strives for a world that is just, rights-based, equitable and inclusive. The SDGs demand comprehensive, evidence-based, integrated and participatory approaches to problem-solving and policy-making. In addition, he referred to FAO's main messages in relation to the SDGs, mentioning that food and agriculture are key in achieving the entire set of SDGs; investment in food and agriculture will drive change across the SDGs; that to leave no one behind, we must address the needs of rural people; and that we can reach zero hunger if we work together. In particular, he gave an overview of the FAO Guidance² on "Transforming Food and Agriculture to achieve the SDGs which details 20 interconnected actions to guide decision-makers".

97 He emphasized that FAO's strategic framework is broadly aligned with the SDGs, promoting an integrated approach to poverty and hunger eradication, and sustainable management of natural resources. He explained that challenges for fisheries and aquaculture include: i.e.: mainstreaming the 2030 Agenda in fisheries and aquaculture, poverty in fisheries, over-fishing, IUU fishing, contributions of aquaculture development to the SDGs, strengths and weakness of existing aquaculture guidance to support the 2030 Agenda, the Code of Conduct of Responsible Fisheries, the ecosystem approach, blue growth, enabling

² FAO. 2018. *Transforming Food and Agriculture to Achieve the SDGs: 20 interconnected actions to guide decision-makers*. Rome, 71 pp. www.fao.org/3/I9900EN/i9900en.pdf

FAO. 2018. *Transforming Food and Agriculture to Achieve the SDGs: 20 interconnected actions to guide decision-makers. Technical Reference Document*. Rome. 132 pp; www.fao.org/3/CA1647EN/ca1647en.pdf

environment, good planning and policy, poverty, hunger, health and well-being, decent work, equity, human rights, resource-use efficiency, waste, water management, biosecurity, genetic resources, resilient aquaculture systems and fair and productive value chains.

98 Mr Barg cited SDG 14 as the ‘blue goal’, and noted its main messages, such as the notion of healthy oceans for food security, nutrition and resilient communities, a sea of opportunity to end poverty, achieve zero hunger and feed the future. To leave no one behind, we must promote fishing communities and manage the oceans sustainably. He further illustrated the importance of four SDG 14 targets (14.4, 14.6, 14.7 and 14.b covering sustainable fish stocks, fisheries subsidies, IUU fishing, economic contributions of fisheries, SIDS and small-scale fisheries) and related indicators that are under FAO’s custodianship, highlighting the role that RFABs and RFMOs may play in their promotion. FAO is providing technical and policy guidance and capacity development advice to Member Countries on the implementation of actions to achieve these SDG 14 targets.

99 Following this explanatory presentation, the Chairperson invited Ms Margherita Sessa, Liaison Officer, General Fisheries Commission of Mediterranean and Black Sea (GFCM), to inform the RSN members about the GFCM’s mid-term strategies for sustainable fisheries and for sustainable aquaculture.

THE GENERAL FISHERIES COMMISSION FOR THE MEDITERRANEAN AND THE BLACK SEA MID-TERM STRATEGY AND SDG 14

100 Ms Margherita Sessa gave a presentation informing RSN members of the GFCM’s mid-term strategies for sustainable fisheries and for sustainable aquaculture. She also provided information on the collaboration and the joint working group on European eels, and mentioned that the GFCM’s second performance review is expected to be carried out in 2019.

101 Ms Sessa explained that the GFCM, in response to SDG 14 and in line with the FAO Strategic Objective 2, devised a fisheries strategy for the Mediterranean and the Black Sea aimed at reverting the alarming trend in the status of commercially exploited stocks and an aquaculture strategy promoting the sustainable development of aquaculture, adopted as Resolution GFCM/40/2016/2 and GFCM/41/2017/1, respectively.

102 As exposed, the mid-term (2017-2020) strategy towards the sustainability of Mediterranean and Black Sea fisheries, defines a course of instrumental action to further progress in the sustainable development of fisheries at the regional level, by means of the following targets, selected outputs and proposed actions relating thereto: 1) reverse the declining trend of fish stocks through strengthened scientific advice in support of management; 2) support livelihoods for coastal communities through sustainable small-scale fisheries; 3) curb Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated fishing, through a regional plan of action; 4) minimize and mitigate unwanted interactions between fisheries and marine ecosystems and environment; and 5) enhance capacity-building and cooperation.

103 Ms Sessa added that the majority of activities foreseen by the mid-term strategy have been launched, and it is expected that increased data and information related to priority matters will be available in the next few years, as a regional contribution to global processes. In the meantime, substantial progress is already observed in relation to: 1) improved knowledge on stock status, with an increased number of stocks assessed and multi-annual management plans in place and/or being discussed for multiple species across the GFCM area of competence; 2) the fight against IUU fishing, through the deployment of regional vessel monitoring and control systems as well as the adoption of a regional plan of action, in line with PSMA provisions; 3) small-scale fisheries, where advantage was taken of the political momentum, culminating in the adoption of a regional plan of action for small-scale fisheries expected in September 2018; and 4) spatial management measures, as the GFCM has managed to adopt several fisheries restricted areas in recent years, and has been developing encounter reporting protocols for vulnerable marine ecosystems, and is also discussing the definition of deep-sea fisheries in the Mediterranean and the determination of the fishing footprint.

104 Ms Sessa referred to the strategy for the sustainable development of Mediterranean and Black Sea aquaculture (the aquaculture strategy), and noted that it has been developed as part of an extensive consultation process and is focused on helping countries to accomplish their national production plans, in order to enable the sector to efficiently reach its potential by 2030, towards a more competitive, sustainable, productive, profitable and equitable aquaculture sector. The aquaculture strategy is structured around three main targets addressing key transboundary vulnerabilities and cross-cutting issues, based on the pillars of sustainable development: 1) build an efficient regulatory and administrative framework to secure sustainable aquaculture development; 2) enhance interactions between aquaculture and the environment while ensuring animal health and welfare; 3) facilitate market-oriented aquaculture and enhance public perception. Amongst recent achievements, the GFCM has been providing technical assistance to countries in relation to allocated zones for aquaculture and overall capacity building in aquaculture development and establishing aquaculture demonstrative centres in the Black Sea to promote training opportunities and develop sustainable aquaculture practices.

ANALYTICAL OVERVIEW OF THE ACTIVITIES AND DEVELOPMENT OF RFBs AND RFMOs FROM 2000 TO 2017: TWO UPCOMING FAO PUBLICATIONS

105 Mr Terje Løbach, International Legal Expert, gave an outline of the FAO study titled ‘Overview of the activities and development of RFABs and RFMOs from 2000 to 2017’ (the Overview). The Overview will consist of two sections on RFMOs and on RFABs, respectively. Mr Løbach explained that this is a factual overview, not a performance appraisal, and neither is it an assessment of RFMOs’ and RFABs’ work. He reported that the Overview is based on information provided by Commissions through a specific survey, as well as on details publicly available on their respective websites. Mr Løbach also added that the chapters mentioned in his outline will cover information and trends related to the adoption of conservation and management measures (for the RFMOs), fish stocks assessed and managed, data collection systems, data shared, measures and activities on Monitoring, Control, and Surveillance (MCS), such as IUU vessels lists, port state measures, Vessel Monitoring Systems (VMS) and transshipment regulations, as well as details concerning membership, performance reviews undertaken and international cooperation established.

106 The meeting concurred on the relevance of such study to the enhancement of regional cooperation for sustainable fisheries management and aquaculture development.

THE RSN STATEMENT AT THE 33rd COMMITTEE ON FISHERIES

107 The Chairperson noted that the discussion concerning the frequency of RSN meetings should be a subject for continued discussion at the Second Session of the RSN-7, to be held on Friday 13, July 2018.

108 The Chairperson informed the RSN members that, as per previous sessions of the Committee on Fisheries (COFI), a statement will be presented at COFI 33. The statement will emphasize the main topics discussed at this First Session of the RSN-7, including how the RSN is evolving as a network, the high participative and relevant session carried out, and referring to the ongoing processes at the WTO, the UN, such as the sessions 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 (BBNJ Conference sessions), the status of the implementation of the PSMA and the SDGs, as well as updates shared by RSN members. The Chairperson further informed that the statement would focus on the importance of the regional dimension in international fisheries governance, where RFMOs and RFABs play a key role. Afterwards, he invited the meeting to provide comments and suggestions on the mentioned statement and its content.

109 The discussion stressed the issue associated with the limited time dedicated to the RSN statement at the COFI session, given the need for RFMOs and RFABs to increase participation in UN processes, as well as on different subjects relevant at regional level and which require increasing RFBs support to countries. The meeting suggested that the speech might be circulated among COFI members.

110 In closing the First Session, the meeting agreed that the RSN Chairperson and the RSN Secretariat would prepare and circulate the RSN statement to be delivered at COFI 33 among members for comments, and that this statement might provide relevant information on the RSN-7 meeting and related discussions. The statement is included in Appendix 4.

RSN RULES OF PROCEDURE

111 The Chairperson recalled that the RSN-6 meeting agreed on a drafted document establishing the RSN Rules of Procedure (RoP), which would be applied *ad interim*, and further considered at the present session.

112 The Chairperson expressed that among the most relevant aspects, previously indicated by the RSN-6 meeting, there was a specific intention to maintain an informal structure for the Network, and that the RoP might provide the minimum basis for functioning, such as the criteria for membership approvals, aspects on main meetings, procedures for accepting non-members to the meetings, and the elaboration of the agenda and related documents, including reports, as well as the procedure for amendments. He emphasized that the RSN is not a decision-making body, nor has any authority to speak on behalf of commissions: it is a forum of secretaries to exchange information and facilitate discussion on emerging issues of common interest, providing a space for coordinating multilateral efforts. The Chairperson also conveyed that the RoP must reflect this informal character and function. Subsequently, he opened the floor to participants for comments.

113 The SIOFA thanked the Chairperson for his introduction, and while pointing to the issue of the necessary procedure for other organizations to become members of the RSN (RoP 1.2), it asked for some specific clarifications in this regard.

114 The GFCM summarised the preliminary words of the Chairperson, particularly in relation to the character and nature of the Network and emphasized that neither the secretaries – who are members of the RSN - nor the RSN Secretariat and its Chairperson, can speak on behalf of the RFABs and RFMOs. In addition, the GFCM suggested that a ToR document could clarify the purpose, objectives and specific mandate of the RSN. Referring to the members of the Network, it noted that the RoP should refer to ‘secretariats’ instead of ‘organizations’, and clarified that, should the meeting prefer for the RSN to have a formal status, its members should consult the executive bodies of their respective organizations.

115 The NPAFC mentioned its support for the text provided under RoP 3.2, limiting the meetings of the RSN to those held in Rome. It adhered to the previous intervention related to the need for avoiding confusion and supported the use of the wording ‘secretaries of RFBs’, rather than ‘organizations’. The IWC also noted its support for the wording proposed.

116 The NEAFC concurred with the aforementioned issue of maintaining an informal network and further underlined that the RSN is not a decision-making body. However, it considered the RoP necessary in view of regulating key aspects, such as membership request criteria.

117 The Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization (NAFO) agreed with the preferred reference to ‘secretaries’ and on keeping the informal character of the Network, while pointing out that a certain level of formality would perhaps be needed for processes related to funding, given the specific criteria of transparency, monitoring and reporting that could be required by potential donors. The NAFO also suggested the use of more flexible rules in regards to RSN meetings and their coordination, for example organising them in the context other activities, which could facilitate the presence of secretaries, as was the case for the meeting held in Oslo, in the margins of the PSMA meeting, in May 2018. The NAFO proposed the intersessional organization of regional meetings that could provide an occasion for discussions on specific issues, as needed.

118 The RECOFI stressed the importance of the use of specific terminology in the RoP, and the need to be consistent throughout the text.

119 The SPRFMO referred to the intersessional meetings and suggested, in addition to other members' proposals, the use of criteria to decide the organization of meetings during the intersessional period, possibly by using commonalities such as the species of fisheries, the region or covered areas.

120 The EIFAAC mentioned that the inclusion of 'fisheries management' and 'advisory bodies' to the wording of the RoP and the ToRs might be appropriate.

121 The Chairperson considered that a criterion for membership applications could refer to the kind of bodies recognized by FAO or the UN. Regarding the intersessional meetings, he emphasized that these are opportunities for dialogue and the exchange of experiences and views, in the context of a unique network where members have the chance to seek discussion of common critical regional issues. The Chairperson invited the RSN Secretary to share the Network's views.

122 In regard to membership requests, Mr Mannini recalled a set of criteria employed by COFI, which recognizes the participation to its sessions to RFBs with specific characteristics, including: the existence of a commission and a secretary, the continuity in its sessions or meetings, the membership of two or more countries. He added that similar criteria could be considered in order to address the issue of membership requests. He further noted that the definition and consequent identification of bodies as RFBs and RFMOs is not a clear process, given the ambiguity of some regional bodies' mandate and constitutive conventions.

123 Continuing the discussion on memberships and the criteria for their definition and acceptance to the RSN, the UNDOALOS raised the issue of its status as RSN member, noting that it has participated in the work of the RSN since its inception, and contributed to its activities, such as main meetings and the RSN Newsletter. UNDOALOS further pointed out that, according to Article 1 of the draft RoP, members include "intergovernmental organisations with an international mandate that is directly related to the work of regional fisheries bodies and arrangements and regional fisheries management organisations or arrangements", while Article 4 covers non-members invited to participate in the work of the RSN.

124 The GFCM reiterated its support for the activities of the RSN, including its newsletter and meetings. In reference to the RoP, the GFCM expressed its preference of calling the intersessional meetings "technical meetings", and suggested that they could be based on selected subjects or target specific regions. It also agreed with the UNDOALOS intervention on the RoP 4, and considered 'members' and 'observers' as potential categories of participants to RSN meetings. Regarding the election of the Chair, it wondered whether the meeting must consult the relevant FAO offices, to gather information regarding applicable recruitment processes.

125 The NPFC referred to the criteria for accepting non-members as participants to the RSN meetings, specifying that technical or expert staff could be invited (RoP 4). In line with this suggestion, the International Pacific Halibut Commission (IPHC) also concurred that technical experts could be valuable for RSN discussions during its sessions.

126 The RECOFI indicated that the RoP 5, in providing a procedure to prepare the agenda, might be reviewed.

127 The Chairperson thanked members for the suggestions provided. In regard to the amendments proposed to the RoP, given that the RSN is an informal body, he mentioned that there is no need to follow a formal recruitment process external to the platform, and that consultations with FAO on legal or institutional issues, if needed, can be informal in character. He added that flexibility and transparency are priorities to be considered in the final RoP text, and that the period provided in reference to the mandate of the Chair could be reduced from four to two years. The Chairperson concurred with the issue raised by the UNDOALOS regarding its membership status, and reaffirmed that the UNDOALOS, as well as FAO and other UN Agencies, are relevant to the RSN functioning, despite not being explicitly mentioned in the rules. The Chairperson recognized the importance of the activities carried out by UNDOALOS, as Secretariat of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) and UNFSA, in relation to the role of RFABs and RFMOs, as well as the relevance of the wide context of interagency collaboration (FAO and DOALOS).

128 The RSN Secretary underlined that the Network is not an FAO entity, although it is primarily supported by the Organization. The Secretary noted the heterogeneity of the RSN, which is reflected in the difficulties to define the agenda of the biennial meetings, given the numerous topics of interest expressed by members.

129 The NEAFC recalled the proposal made by several delegations at COFI 33, which suggested the creation of a fisheries subcommittee, and envisaged a potential role for the RSN in liaising with RFBs to supply them with timely updates and information.

130 The IWC raised a question on the definition and relevance of resources needed by the RSN, and suggested the identification of volunteers among participants to prepare a questionnaire, in order to identify RSN activities or subjects to be supported as well as potential costs and donors, which could be addressed to all members through an online survey. This proposal was supported by the PSC, which offered its voluntary participation to this initiative and considered the option of potential voluntary contributions by members. It further suggested the opening of an online venue for sharing opinions or views in the context of the dedicated RSN website.

131 The GFCM reinforced the IWC initiative, adding that it will explore the possibility of providing financial resources for RSN activities among its members. The PSC added that financial needs can be further considered in a subsequent intersessional or main session meeting of the Network, once the results of the survey are available.

132 The NPFC referred to the creation of the fisheries subcommittee, as suggested by delegations at COFI 33, and noted that, should this proposal be considered viable, its links to the work of RFBs and RFMOs will be significant, and require immediate reaction from the RSN and its members.

133 Turning to the initiative of the development of ToRs, the GFCM underlined that the related document might provide the main rules on the mandate, scope, and objective of this important RFB platform. Several members joined the initiative, considering the importance of clarity to the purpose and function of the RSN. Among them, the Asia-Pacific Fishery Commission (APFIC), IWC, PSC and the IPHC expressed strong support.

134 The Chairperson thanked members for the valuable interventions, and highlighted that the ToRs will represent an appropriate tool in setting a clear basis for the work of the RSN. He invited the meeting to express interest in preparing this document, by forming a drafting committee with the coordination of the FAO RSN Secretariat. The GFCM, NEAFC, PSC, ICCAT and FCWC volunteered to be part of the committee.

135 The Chairperson expressed his appreciation for the initiatives by participants, and agreed with the suggestion of preparing a questionnaire to define financial needs and potential donors. He added that the inclusion of a dedicated area within the RSN website for the exchange of views would be viable. He also confirmed that, if the COFI confirms the creation of the fisheries subcommittee, the RSN must take on a relevant role within it. He further reaffirmed the need to draft the RSN ToRs by a drafting committee, which will be set up by those who volunteered during this session. The Chairperson added that the amendment of the RoP must be coherent with the ToRs, and noted his doubts about the sufficiency of holding just one RSN biennial meeting.

136 The RSN Secretary expressed the opinion that the IWC initiative to develop a survey would be possible, and mentioned that this kind of tool has been implemented in the context of restyling the RSN website, which has not yet been reviewed, given the lack of resources.

137 The APFIC underlined the need to clearly define financial needs and, in relation to the proposed ToRs, it mentioned that they do not need to include technical provisions.

138 Following the Chairperson's words of appreciation for the relevant discussions held, the meeting agreed to prepare a draft of the RSN ToRs, including simple and relevant points as referred to during the

session, and that the related document will be developed by a drafting committee consisting of the secretaries of NEAFC, PSC, GFCM, ICCAT and FCWC, with the RSN Secretariat working as the coordinator. The meeting also agreed that, following the development of the ToRs, the RoP will be coherently amended, and that a survey questionnaire will be prepared to define the RSN's financial needs and potential donors.

COFI 33 OUTCOMES AND IMPLICATION FOR RFABs AND RFMOs

139 The Chairperson recognized the positive comments on the work of the RSN and RFBs expressed by delegations at the COFI 33, and the emphasis on the importance of regional cooperation in implementing global policies. In addition, he noted that the need for FAO's continued support of RFBs, and with particular reference to the role of the RSN, emerged strongly during COFI 33 discussions, alongside indications of areas in which a strengthening of regional cooperation is a key need. The Chairperson further appreciated the high level of participation of RFBs to the COFI 33.

140 The RSN Secretary referred to the comments received from RFB Secretaries related to the unexpected and disagreeable situation created by the seating allocation, which differed from the COFI 32 seating arrangements, and from the allocation given to FAO RFBs, which were considered to be better positioned. He commented that this new disposition was completely different from the last COFI celebrated in 2016, and that this was without prior consultation or notification.

141 The RSN Secretary shared the opinions of the Chairperson with regard to the importance of the role of RFABs and RFMOs, as key players in the sustainable management of fisheries and aquaculture development, as expressed by COFI delegations, as well as by the UN Secretary-General's Special Envoy for the Oceans, Mr Peter Thomson.

142 The NAFO noted that the COFI is increasingly emphasizing the role of RFMOs, and that the suggested creation of a fisheries management subcommittee could represent a fruitful opportunity for the RFB community and the RSN. He further noted that a joint financial mechanism, mentioned in the speech by the Special Envoy for the Oceans, to support RFABs and RFMOs, might be explored in view of addressing the needs expressed during the meeting. The NAFO added that global processes, such as the BBNJ Conference sessions, must be followed closely and that RFMOs should participate in them, given the relevance to their mandate.

143 The GFCM referred to its participation in the meetings in New York, and highlighted their importance for RFMOs. It also proposed that side events could be organized in future meetings to advocate and provide visibility to the work of RFMOs. In relation to the issue of financial support, the GFCM added that the organizations could voluntarily contribute (in kind) to some of the RSN activities.

144 The RSN Secretary thanked the GFCM for its excellent and reassuring proposal.

145 The UNDOALOS noted that, next year, its office will organize a meeting focussing on the topic of performance reviews, with a robust policy/science interface, and that it will inform the RSN about the opportunity to organize side events.

146 The NPFC suggested that the RSN must have a coordinating role in the context of the aforementioned events, and provide an agreed statement for cases in which secretaries are unable to participate.

147 The NPAFC referred to the RSN statement delivered by the RSN Chairperson at COFI 33, and expressed the need of having more time during the COFI dedicated to this presentation, perhaps by suggesting to COFI to include this intervention in the related agenda as a separate item.

148 The NEAFC indicated that several RFMOs were participating at the BBNJ Conference sessions, including the NPFC and the NAFO, and that the discussion was and is relevant for several bodies (i.e. tuna RFMOs).

149 The Chairperson noted that having a unified position to be expressed by the RSN at the BBNJ discussions would be challenging and that, in reference to the side event, the possibility of organising it should be verified with the relevant organizers. In relation to the financial support suggested by participants, he suggested that RFBs should have the approval of their members, in order to proceed with this kind of contributions, which could be included in their respective budgets. He thanked the meeting for encouraging support of RSN activities and asked the RSN Secretariat to prepare a draft for a preliminary budget proposal.

150 The NASCO mentioned its absence at the BBNJ Conference session, and informed the meeting about the two performance reviews made so far, and requested further information on the suggested side event to be organized, asking whether participants would be sharing experiences or other aspects.

151 The GFCM explained that only the Executive Secretary of an RFMO can speak on behalf of its organization at the BBNJ Conference session, and should be mandated by the respective Member Countries. Regarding the specificities related to financial contributions, it noted that these could be covered under the coordination targeted activities included in its provided budget for implementing the mid-term strategy. The GFCM kindly invited the secretaries to include the RSN in the agenda of their respective organizations.

152 The NPFC highlighted that the coordination of the RSN, and its role in facilitating participation and awareness-raising at global processes, must be further considered and defined.

153 The IOTC mentioned the difficulties that FAO bodies could encounter in receiving or providing contributions, given the specific process established by FAO for financial contributions.

154 The IWC pointed out that bycatch and sharing experiences could be relevant subjects to be considered for the organization of the mentioned side event.

155 The Chairperson thanked the participants for their proposals and for the fruitful discussions. He indicated that the determination of subjects for the side event, as well as the role of RSN in this context, must be decided under the mandate of the new RSN Chairperson. The Chairperson further considered the discussion about financial contributions, and underlined that each secretary might consult respective Member Countries in relation to the initiative and budget proposal.

ELECTION OF THE CHAIRPERSON

156 Mr Meski introduced agenda item 10, and reminded members that his mandate as Secretary of the ICCAT had come to an end, and that he could not therefore continue in his role as Chairperson of the Network. He praised the work of the FAO RSN Secretariat and recognized the value of working together in the context of the Network, thanking all participants for the excellent collaboration over the past two years. He invited the members to propose options on how to proceed in relation to the appointment of the new Chair.

157 Following the suggestion of secretaries of the tuna RFMOs, and in view of completing the ongoing term of four years started by the Secretary of the ICCAT, Mr Messki, the meeting agreed in nominating Mr Guillermo Compean, Director of the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC), who expressed his availability to serve as the new RSN Chairperson. Mr Yugray Yadava, Director, BOBP-IGO, was confirmed in his role as the First Vice-Chairperson.

158 The RSN members expressed gratitude to the Chairperson for his work with the RSN and the enthusiasm and commitment that characterized his role and support to the Network, which thanks to him was considered by all participants to be in sound shape, with potential to be further developed and strengthened. Members wished Mr Meski all the best in his life and career.

159 The Chairperson expressed words of gratitude to the Network, while mentioning his rewarding experience as secretary of the ICCAT for 14 years; he also noted the challenging role of the RSN and the

excellent framework it has established for bringing parties together and fostering discussion, and its support for RFBs and RFMOS, who can take action at regional level.

160 The RSN Secretariat and all RSN members reiterated the strong appreciation expressed to Mr Meski for his work, and thanked Mr Compean for accepting the role of Chairperson of the Regional Fishery Body Secretariats' Network.

OTHER MATTERS

161 Following the introduction of the Chairperson, Mr William Emerson, Senior Fishery Officer, Fish Code Programme (FIDF), and technical advisor of the project titled "Sustainable Fisheries Management and Biodiversity Conservation of Deep-Sea Living Marine Resources and Ecosystems in the Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction", made a presentation on the project's objective and other relevant matters.

162 Mr Emerson informed the meeting on the relevance of Deep-Sea Fisheries (DSF) and the related project component, 'Improved planning and adaptive management for DSF in the ABNJ', including the planning and management processes for achieving sustainable DSF and biodiversity conservation to be improved, tested, and disseminated to all competent authorities. He emphasized the links between the deep-sea and BBNJ, as well as the role of deep-sea RFMOs, and mentioned that several of them are working on the implementation of the project. Mr Emerson indicated his interest in the potential side events to be organized in September at the first session of the BBNJ Conference.

163 The Chairperson reminded the group of the importance, for RFMOs, of being active in international fora, and participating at related meetings, such as the BBNJ Conference sessions.

ADOPTION OF THE REPORT

164 The meeting agreed that the report would be prepared by the RSN Secretariat and adopted electronically.

CLOSURE OF THE MEETING

165 The meeting closed at 12.00 on 13 July 2018.

**AGENDA OF THE SEVENTH MEETING OF THE REGIONAL FISHERY
BODY SECRETARIATS' NETWORK**

Rome, 7 and 13 July 2018

First Session, Saturday 7-07-2018

Room: Malaysia (B227)

From 09:00 hours to 17:00 hours

- 1) Opening of the meeting
- 2) Report of the Chairperson
- 3) Adoption of the Agenda
- 4) Relevant news and issues from RSN members
 - a. Communication from UNDOALOS
 - b. Recent development in Fisheries and Resources Monitoring System (FIRMS)
 - c. IWC presentation on Bycatch mitigation
 - d. NPAFC/NASCO introduction of the International Year of the Salmon (IYS)
 - e. NAMMCO highlights on its work
- 5) Strengthening the RSN: needs and challenges
- 6) COFI related common matters - Global processes and subjects relevant for RFBs/RFMOs:
 - a. WTO progress on fishery subsidies negotiations
 - b. 2018 SOI Global Conference
 - c. IUU fishing and PSMA implementation, RFBs participation at trainings as well as other capacity activities
 - d. 1. UN processes, including SDGs' implementation
2. GFCM mid-term strategy and SDG 14
- 7) RSN statement at COFI
- 8) Analytical overview of the activities and development of RFABs and RFMOs from 2000 to 2016:
Two FAO publications in preparation

Second Session, Friday 13-07-2018

Room: Philippines (C277)

From 09:30 hours to 11:30 hours

- 9) RSN rules of procedure
- 10) COFI-33 outcomes and implications for RFBs/RFMOs
- 11) Election of the Chairperson
- 12) Other matters

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**COFI 33 – STATEMENT OF THE CHAIRPERSON OF RSN-7
AGENDA ITEM 8.3**

Mr Chair,

Distinguished Delegates,

I am taking the floor as Chair of the Regional Fishery Body Secretariats' Network, also known as the 'RSN'. This network, established in 1999 as an FAO-led initiative, consists of 54 Regional Fishery Bodies (RFBs) Secretariats, of which 11 are FAO statutory bodies. RSN is a coordination mechanism which facilitates sharing experiences, data and information, and provides a forum for discussion on emerging issues of common concern among the RFB Secretariats; it does not engage in policy development, nor take decisions of a binding nature. The Network provides an ever-evolving RFB collaboration framework, and is the focal point between the RSN members and FAO.

It worth recalling that RFBs, which are served by the established respective Secretariats, are intergovernmental organizations constituted by FAO Members, which include both advisory bodies and bodies that adopt legally binding conservation and management measures (also known as Regional Fishery Management Organizations, RFMOs); their focus varies from high seas fisheries to coastal fisheries, inland fisheries and aquaculture.

Chair,

Last Saturday 7 July, prior to COFI, 43 members of the Network participated in the 7th meeting of the RSN (RSN-7), that is more than three quarters of the current RFBs and RFMOs of the world. Crucial topics of the international agenda on fishery and aquaculture governance at both the global and regional scale were discussed. The report of the meeting will be prepared and disseminated by the RSN Secretariat.

At the request of the RSN, I wish to take this opportunity to share some outcomes of the RSN-7 session that are relevant to the Committee of Fisheries (COFI).

First and most importantly, the RSN would like to bring to the attention of COFI Members the key role of the regional dimension, as also strongly emphasized by the UN Special Envoy for the Oceans in his opening statement. Working at the appropriate ecosystem scale requires cooperation at the regional level, as processes related to the exploitation of natural living resources usually involve at least several countries. The regionalization of fisheries and aquaculture governance is a concrete approach and instrumental to address common concerns, create synergies among key stakeholders and to mainstream the UN global objectives into the regional and local agendas, while making them accessible intra-regionally and to the general public.

In an increasingly connected world, RFBs, and particularly RFMOs, are gaining importance in international fora for discussion of issues related to fisheries management and shared living marine and inland resources. Efforts have been made to enhance the visibility of the work of RSN and its members, a newsletter has been circulated since 2011 and a Special edition launched for COFI 33, which shares the RFBs' work on SDGs, and a guidance article of the UN Special Envoy for Oceans. In addition, a video was recently produced together with FAO on the role of RSN and to promote the work of RFBs and RFMOs in achieving SDG and contributing to food security.

The RSN meeting stressed the need for RFBs and RFMOs to consider their participation in the rapidly enhanced UN and other global initiatives, to ensure these fora are fully aware of the work and role of RFBs and RFMOs in coordinating the related global initiative outputs through their members.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable development emphasizes the importance of the regional and sub-regional dimensions, regional economic integration and interconnectivity in sustainable development. The regional level is the most appropriate level for establishing a collaborative framework that encompasses the whole ecosystem

and their efficient preservation and protection, and respects regional diversity while providing opportunities for participating states to sustainably benefit from the services they provide.

The regional dimension is a central milestone of international fisheries management policy as also proved by the rapid expansion of the family of RFBs and RFMOs. Enabling conditions that render this collaboration successful require strong political will of the parties to these regional instruments. In this regard, FAO is actively engaged in strengthening the Regional Fishery Body Secretariats Network (RSN), which has a key instrumental role in this process. RSN is being required by most of its members to further develop its cooperative and coordinated efforts among them, aiming for sustainable fisheries and aquaculture development. To this end, FAO is invited to consider ways to make additional human and financial resources available, consistently with the suggestion made by the UN Special Envoy for the Oceans '*to enable the establishment of a proposed joint financial mechanism*'.

On behalf of all the p Regional Fishery Body Secretariats participating in the Network, I wish to thank you, COFI, the COFI bureau and FAO for the positive consideration given to the RSN that provides visibility and recognition to the work of the Regional Fishery Bodies.

Thank you.

RULES OF PROCEDURE³ –Draft

Rule 1

Membership

1. Members of the Network include regional fisheries bodies and arrangements and regional fisheries management organisations or arrangements, which have been established by formal agreement between two or more States, and intergovernmental organisations with an international mandate that is directly related to the work of regional fisheries bodies and arrangements and regional fisheries management organisations or arrangements.
2. Applications for membership may be considered by Network members inter sessionally by electronic communication circulated by the Chair.
3. Members may be represented at meetings of the Network by the executive of organisations qualifying for Network membership, or their alternate who has been formally notified to the Chair in advance of the meeting.

Rule 2

Officers

1. The Network shall elect a Chair and a Vice-Chair from among the representatives of its Members for a term that includes two formal meetings of the Network. In normal circumstances this will be for a period of four (4) years.
2. If required, the Chair and the Vice-Chair shall be elected by a majority vote.
3. The Chair, or in his/her absence the Vice-Chair, shall preside at meetings of the Network and exercise such other functions as may be required to facilitate its work. In the event of the Chair and the Vice-Chair not being able to preside at a meeting, the Network shall appoint another representative from among its Members to take the Chair for that meeting.
4. In the event of the Chair and the Vice-Chair resigning their position inter sessionally the next meeting of the Network will elect a new officer(s) under the first item on the agenda for that meeting.
5. The Chair shall liaise with the Director-General of FAO regarding the appointment of a secretary, who shall perform such duties as the Network may require. Such duties include, but are not limited to, support to the meetings of the Network, maintenance of the Network's web pages and any inter sessional work.

Rule 3

Meetings

1. The Network shall hold meetings in association with the biennial meeting of the FAO Committee on Fisheries.
2. The meetings of the Network shall be convened in Rome.

³ The present Rules of Procedure were adopted '*ad interim*' during the RSN-6, 2nd Session, held on 15 July 2016. This version reflects the proposed changes to facilitate further analysis at the RSN-7 meeting.

3. Notice of the date and venue of each meeting of the Network shall normally be communicated at least two (2) months in advance of the meeting to all Members and to such non-members as may have been invited to participate in the next meeting of the Network under Rule 4.

4. Each Member of the Network may appoint alternates to its representative in the Network.

~~5. The attendance of a majority of those representatives who are registered to attend the Network meeting shall constitute a quorum for any formal action by the Network.~~

Rule 4

Non-Members

1. Meetings of the Network shall not be open to public participation.

2. Participation by non-members in the meetings of the Network shall be considered by the Chair in consultation with Members, if required.

3. Subject to the provisions of paragraph 4 below, any non-member who is invited to attend a meeting of the Network, may submit information and, subject to the direction of the Chair, participate in discussion at a meeting of the Network.

4. In exceptional circumstances, the Network may decide that particular agenda items at that meeting require meeting attendance to be for Members only.

Rule 5

Agenda and Documents

1. The Chair, in consultation with the secretary, shall prepare a provisional agenda and shall normally circulate it at least two (2) months in advance of the meeting to all Members and non-members invited to attend the meeting.

2. All Members may request the Chair to insert an item in the provisional agenda. The Chair shall thereupon circulate the proposed item to all Members of the Network, together with any accompanying documents.

3. The first item on the provisional agenda shall be the adoption of the agenda. The Network, in its meeting may, by general consent, amend the agenda by the deletion, addition or modification of any item.

4. Documents not already circulated shall be dispatched with the provisional agenda, or as soon as possible thereafter.

Rule 6

Decisions

~~Decisions of the Network during meetings will be taken by consensus of those present at the meeting.~~

~~Decisions of the Network taken inter-sessionally shall be by consensus of members which respond to electronic communications circulated by the Chair.~~

~~Decisions of the Network are non-binding.~~

Rule 7

Reports of Meetings

1. ~~At each meeting, T~~he Network shall approve ~~the~~a report of ~~the~~at meeting electronically.
2. A draft report of the meeting may be circulated electronically for editorial comment after the meeting.
3. The comments of the Network on the report shall, on request and subject to the decision of the Chair, be incorporated into the Network's report.
4. Reports of Meetings of the Network shall be placed on the Network's website.
5. The Network shall determine the procedures in regard to press communiqués.

Rule 8

Amendment of Rules

1. The Network may, by consensus, amend its Rules of Procedure.
2. Proposals to amend the Rules of Procedure must be circulated to Members, through the Chair, at least four (4) weeks in advance of the meeting at which they will be considered.

Forty-three secretaries of regional fisheries bodies, with diverse mandates and from all geographic regions, including FAO and non-FAO regional fisheries bodies, marine and inland fishery advisory and management bodies, the UNDOALOS and invited organizations, participated in the Seventh Meeting of the Regional Fishery Body Secretariats' Network. Discussions covered major subjects of regional concern, comprising the activities and outcomes from UNGA and UNDOALOS, the UN discussion process on Biodiversity in Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction, the implementation of activities in delivering the 2030 Agenda, the experience of RFBs initiatives, the cooperation of regional bodies and Fisheries and Resources Monitoring Systems, the 33rd Session of the Committee on Fisheries (COFI 33) related matters and global processes and subjects relevant to RFBs and RFMOs, and the state of progress to strengthen the RSN, including current needs and challenges. The RSN Chair's Statement, delivered at the COFI 33, is annexed to this report. The meeting had a high level of participation that underlined the role of the Network as a unique forum to foster cooperation, facilitate discussion and exchange of experiences. It noted the increased interest in the international agenda on the role of RFBs as key players in translating international and global policies into practice at the regional and local levels.

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