

7. Combatting Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing

1. The EU would like to thank the FAO Fisheries Division, and more specifically its IUU team, for all the good work done intersessionally, despite the COVID, and the progress achieved in this very important area. Efforts must be continued towards strengthened implementation.
2. Based on its “zero-tolerance” approach, the EU is fully engaged in the fight against IUU fishing through its bilateral dialogues, cooperation with third countries, and the implementation of its comprehensive catch certification scheme.
3. We need to pursue the fight against IUU fishing at regional level, through Regional Fisheries Management Organisations. Over the last decade, many of them have adopted effective mechanisms of monitoring, control and surveillance. These developments must be continued, encouraged and supported. We call FAO members and RFMOs to promote strengthened action on:
 - a. Effectively implementing the existing monitoring and control procedures, including through cooperation and sharing best practices to improve their effectiveness;
 - b. Establishing an inspection regime on the high seas, where it does not exist, without prejudice to the applicability of the UNFSA procedures;
 - c. Promoting the traceability of fishery products and, where appropriate, adopting catch certification schemes based on the FAO voluntary Guidelines;
 - d. Promoting “cross-listing” amongst the RFMO’s lists of IUU vessels;
 - e. Generalising the use of electronic catch document on all fishing vessels of 20 meter length and above;
 - f. Generalising the use of VMS equipment on all fishing vessels of 20 meter length and above; and
 - g. Supporting science, and science-based decisions, through the effective collection of data of high quality.
4. At multilateral level, the EU is very happy with the outcome of the FAO Technical Consultation on Transshipment in May-June this year, which, under the skillful chairmanship of Fiji, could reach a meaningful agreement.
5. We are now committed to help promoting the new guidelines and their implementation.

6. The FAO Port State Measures Agreement (PSMA) is another powerful tool at our disposal.
7. We look very much forward to the accession/ratification by countries who have not yet done so.
8. During their Third Meeting, hosted by the EU, important decisions were made to launch the pilot phase of the PSMA Global Information Exchange System; to launch the Global Portal for Capacity Development that will contribute to better meet developing countries' requirements; and to set up a new working group on the PSMA effectiveness. In this respect, the EU welcomes the series of regional coordination meetings that FAO undertakes, which should provide the material to identify challenges and cooperative solutions to improve the PSMA implementation.
9. We now look very much forward to the fourth meeting of the Parties in Indonesia next year.
10. On the Global Record of Fishing Vessels, we reiterate our call to EU Member States, EU partners and RFMOs to strengthen their engagement for broader participation and submission of a wider range of information. We stress again the need to regularly update the data sent. This is essential for this tool to be effective and useful. We would also like to see the system including global data exchange standards to facilitate the updating of data.
11. On compliance, the EU will take a proactive approach in ensuring that countries abide by their international obligations as flag, coastal, port and market States, and, in particular, exercise full sovereign responsibilities over their registers to demonstrate control over the activities of the ships flying their flag. This issue will be included in our sectoral bilateral dialogues with the States concerned.
12. We thank FAO for the release of the study¹ on the Implementation of the FAO Compliance Agreement. It will be a good basis for considering options to strengthen effective implementation and enforcement. This certainly deserves proper discussion among COFI members, which we cannot have today. If the proposal for a new sub-committee on fisheries management is endorsed, we suggest that this study and its implications be placed on its agenda, so that it can make recommendations.
13. We thank Norway for its proposal on vessels tracking and agree with the proposed way forward.

¹ Financed by the EU.

14. We welcomed that the FAO, IMO and ILO have worked together to elaborate rules of procedure and terms of reference for the Joint Working Group meetings, to be agreed by the organisations' members.
 15. We are frustrated that the draft terms of reference were presented to the FAO membership for comment, when there was no room to modify the text already agreed upon by the secretariats of the three organizations. At least informal consultations should have taken place to help resolve the difficulties that arose in 2019.
 16. We call on FAO to provide a clear planning of the work and consultations envisaged by the joined secretariat of the three institutions prior to the next Joint Working Group meeting. We also ask FAO to respect the deadline of nine weeks for circulating the documents to be discussed during the Joint Working Group meeting, so that participants have a chance to coordinate appropriately.
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