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COMMITTEE ON FISHERIES

Thirtieth Session

Rome, Italy, 9-13 July 2012

Summary of the Review on the Implementation of the International Plan of Action (IPOA) for the Conservation and Management of Sharks

Executive Summary

The FAO International Plan of Action for the Conservation and Management of Sharks (IPOA-Sharks) was adopted in 1999. The IPOA encourages shark fishing nations to develop national plans of actions to conserve sharks by 2001. In 2011, COFI requested FAO to prepare a report on the implementation of the 1999 FAO International Plan of Action for the Conservation and Management of Sharks (IPOA-Sharks) by FAO Member States, and the challenges Members faced when implementing the instrument. This document provides a summary of the comprehensive review by FAO of the shark-related measures and activities by the top shark-fishing nations, entities and Regional Fisheries Management Organizations (RFMOs).

The Committee is invited to:

- note the progress made on the implementation of IPOA-Sharks and provide further guidance on the issues raised in the review.

1. The 1999 FAO International Plan of Action for the Conservation and Management of Sharks (IPOA-Sharks) encourages shark fishing nations to develop National Plans of Actions (NPOAs) for sharks by 2001. At its twenty-ninth session in 2011 the FAO Committee on Fisheries (COFI) requested the Fisheries and Aquaculture Department to prepare a report on the implementation of the IPOA Sharks by FAO Member States, and the challenges Members faced when implementing the instrument. The results of these findings are described in the FAO Circular C1076¹ and summarized in the present document.

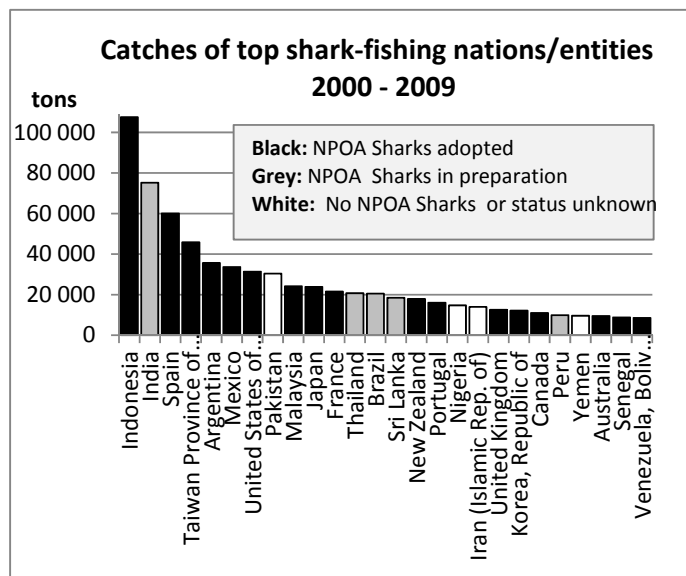
2. The Review concentrates on 26 nations and entities each of which contributed with at least one percent to the global reported shark catches from 2000 to 2009 (together amounting to about 84% of global catches during this period). These countries received a comprehensive questionnaire requesting information on the status of their NPOA Sharks, their shark-related management measures and research, and related subjects. About two thirds of the countries replied² and their responses were considered in the review; for the remaining countries other sources of information were used.

3. 17 (65%) of the top shark-fishing nations have adopted a NPOA Sharks and 5 of the remainder have already developed a sharks plan which is awaiting formal adoption or are in the process of doing so. Four (15%) countries, however, have not yet implemented the IPOA Sharks.

4. Many of the 26 countries or entities have shark measures in place. A shark finning regulation³ has been adopted by 15⁴ and another two intend to introduce such a regulation in the near future⁵. Nine States do not regulate shark finning in their Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ); however, as members of RFMOs they have to comply with regional finning regulations for high seas fisheries.

Moreover, Indonesia, India, Malaysia, Japan and Peru encourage the full utilization of shark bodies through awareness-building and educational programs.

5. Apart from finning regulations, 19 (73%) of the top shark-fishing nations or entities have adopted specific conservation measures for sharks⁶ and another two are in the process of developing such measures⁷. The type and extent of measures applied varies considerably among countries; they include licenses and permits, technical measures, TACs and quotas, reporting and research requirements as well as monitoring, control and surveillance (MCS) schemes. Furthermore, the majority of the 26 nations and entities aim at creating public awareness for shark issues and at educating fishers on the necessity to conserve shark resources.



¹ Made available to COFI as an Advanced Copy.

² Argentina, Australia, Canada, EU (for Spain, France, Portugal and UK), India, Islamic Republic of Iran, Republic of Korea, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Peru, Senegal, USA, Sri Lanka.

³ These consist either in a shark finning ban (i.e. all sharks have to be landed with their fins naturally attached) or a prohibition to dump finned carcasses at sea and a fin-to-body ratio for landed sharks.

⁴ EU (for Spain, France, Portugal and UK), Taiwan Province of China, Argentina, Mexico, USA, Brazil, Sri Lanka, New Zealand, Nigeria, Canada, Yemen and Australia.

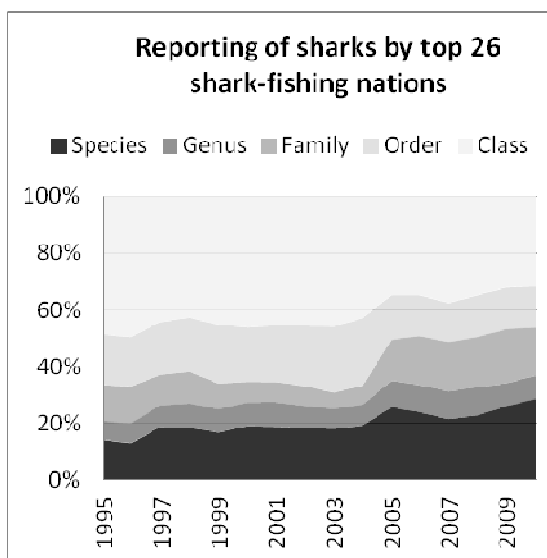
⁵ Senegal and Venezuela

⁶ India, Spain, Taiwan Province of China, Argentina, Mexico, USA, Malaysia, Japan, France, Thailand, Brazil, New Zealand, Portugal, Islamic Republic of Iran, UK, Republic of Korea, Canada, Peru, and Australia.

⁷ Senegal and Venezuela

6. Data collection and research on sharks also varies considerably. Some countries have made enormous efforts to improve the scientific and fishery information on sharks up to regular stock assessments for commercial elasmobranchs. On the other hand, many countries suffer from a lack of scientific and fishery data and this is an important hindrance for sound shark management. In many countries there is a need for more shark experts, better coordination between research institutions and additional funding.

7. Overall, the reporting of shark catches to FAO has improved over the last decade. Shark catches reported at species level doubled since 1995 from 14% to 29% in 2010. Still, our analysis shows a pronounced disparity in the reporting details among the top 26 shark-fishing nations or entities. While in recent years eleven (42%) of the top 26 shark-fishing nations or entities are reporting most or at least about half of their shark catches at genus and species levels⁸, an equal number of them are still reporting most or all of their shark catches at highly aggregated levels (order or class). Four countries (16%) report mainly at family level; it is worth mentioning that among these Indonesia



and Senegal have made noticeable efforts to improve their reporting of shark catches during the last decade. Reporting is still hampered by a lack of taxonomists or trained scientists and officers for the monitoring and assessment of sharks as well as by poor accessibility or lack of basic shark identification tools⁹. A number of respondents reported on recent efforts to improve the shark identification in their waters such as production of identification guides and relevant training, e.g. Indonesia, Mexico, USA, Malaysia, European Union, Peru, and Senegal.

8. All except one of the top 26 shark or entities-fishing nations are members of at least one Regional Fisheries Management Body, in particular tuna bodies, of which most have shark regulations in place, e.g. shark finning measures, catch and gear regulations, prohibited species, area closures, reporting requirements and research programmes. This means that in most areas covered by RFMOs¹⁰ there are internationally binding shark regulations for high seas fisheries in place.

9. Illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing poses a significant threat to vulnerable sharks. Therefore it is a positive sign that most (70%) of the top 26 shark-fishing nations or entities have taken steps to fight IUU fishing, either by signing the 2009 Port State Measures Agreement (46%)¹¹ or at least by adopting an NPOA IUU or similar plan (23%)¹². Nonetheless, in quite a few countries the effective implementation of MCS schemes is problematic, often because of a lack of human and financial resources. Five (20%) of the top 26 shark-fishing nations or entities have neither adopted an NPOA Sharks nor signed the Port State Measures Agreement nor implemented an NPOA IUU¹³. However, two of these have adopted shark finning regulations (Nigeria and Yemen) and India is in the process of adopting an NPOA Sharks.

⁸ Argentina, Australia, Canada, France, Islamic Republic of Iran, Peru, Portugal, Spain, New Zealand, United Kingdom and USA

⁹ In this context, it should be noted that FAO (through the FishFinder Programme) has produced numerous global, regional and national identification guides that are available online. The global catalogue of sharks is currently in the process of being updated. A regional catalogue and pocket guide of North Atlantic Sharks will become available later this year and a guide to deep-water sharks in the Indian Ocean is in its initial preparatory stages

¹⁰ Except CCSBT that encourages shark conservation but has not yet adopted any binding measures

¹¹ Indonesia, EU (for Spain, France, Portugal and UK), USA, Brazil, Sri Lanka (ratified), New Zealand, Canada, Peru, and Australia

¹² NPOA-IUU: Argentina, Mexico, Japan, Thailand, and Republic of Korea. India has a national MCS plan

¹³ India, Pakistan, Nigeria, Islamic Republic of Iran, Yemen

SUMMARY INFORMATION RELATED TO SHARKS CONSERVATION MEASURES
OF TOP SHARK-FISHING NATIONS (2012)

	IPOA Sharks	Shark Fin Regulations in EEZ	RFMO	Port State Measures Agreement
Indonesia	2010	No	CCSBT, IOTC	Signed
India*	Under development	No	CCAMLR, IOTC	NPOA MCS
Spain**	2009 (EU)	Yes	ICCAT, IOTC, WCPFC, IATTC, CCSBT, NEAFC, NAFO, NASCO, SIOFA, SPRFMO, CCAMLR, GFCM, CCBSP, SEAFO	Signed (EU)
Taiwan Province of China	2006	Yes	CCSBT	No
Argentina*	2009	Yes	CCAMLR, CTMFM	IPOA-IUU
Mexico*	2004	Yes	ICCAT, IATTC	NPOA MCS
United States of America*	2001	Yes	CCAMLR, IATTC, ICCAT, NAFO, WCPFC	Signed
Pakistan, Islam Rep of	No	No	IOTC, APFIC	No
Malaysia*	2006	No	IOTC	No
Japan*	2001 (2009)	No	CCAMLR, CCSBT, GFCM, IATTC, ICCAT, IOTC, NAFO, WCPFC, SEAFO	NPOA IUU
France**	2009 (EU)	Yes	ICCAT, IOTC, WCPFC, IATTC, CCSBT, NEAFC, NAFO, NASCO, SIOFA, SPRFMO, CCAMLR, GFCM, CCBSP, SEAFO	Signed (EU)
Thailand	Draft	No	IOTC	NPOA IUU
Brazil	Draft	Yes	CCAMLR, ICCAT	Signed
Sri Lanka*	Under development	Yes	IOTC	Ratified
New Zealand*	2008 (2012)	Yes	CCAMLR, CCSBT, WCPFC, APFIC	Signed
Portugal**	2009 (EU)	Yes	ICCAT, IOTC, WCPFC, IATTC, CCSBT, NEAFC, NAFO, NASCO, SIOFA, SPRFMO, CCAMLR, GFCM, CCBSP, SEAFO	Signed (EU)
Nigeria	No	Yes	ICCAT, CECAF	No
Iran, Islam Rep of*	No	No	IOTC	No
United Kingdom**	2004 and 2009 (EU)	Yes	ICCAT, IOTC, WCPFC, IATTC, CCSBT, NEAFC, NAFO, NASCO, SIOFA, SPRFMO, CCAMLR, GFCM, CCBSP, SEAFO	Signed (EU)
Korea, Rep of*	2011	No	WCPFC, ICCAT, IATTC, IOTC, CCSBT, SEAFO	NPOA IUU
Canada*	2007	Yes	IATTC, ICATT, NAFO, WCPFC	Signed
Peru*	Draft	No	IATTC	Signed
Yemen	No	Yes		No
Australia*	2004	Yes	CCAMLR, CCSBT, IOTC, WCPFC	Signed
Senegal*	2005	In preparation	ICCAT	No
Venezuela, Boliv Rep of	2006	In preparation	IATTC, ICCAT	No

* Responded to questionnaire / ** Response to questionnaire received from EU