



Press release



National awareness-raising workshops on the advisory opinion delivered by the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea (ITLOS) to member states of the Sub-Regional Fisheries Commission

From 17 August to 16 September 2015, the Sub-Regional Fisheries Commission (SRFC) and the Regional Partnership for Coastal and Marine Conservation in West Africa (PRCM) will organize, for the benefit of member states, i.e. Cape Verde, the Gambia, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Mauritania, Senegal and Sierra Leone, a series of **national awareness-raising workshops on the advisory opinion** rendered by the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea (ITLOS) on 2 April 2015 following a request from SRFC, referred to as Case n°21.

These workshops aim to promote a better understanding of the advisory opinion among stakeholders at the country level, strengthen stakeholders' legal capacities in order for them to become more familiar with international legal fishery instruments and assess the relevance of national laws against the international legal environment in the fishery sector.

On 2 April 2015, the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea, sitting in plenary session following a request from SRFC, rendered for the first time since its creation an advisory opinion. The purpose of that request was to advise member states on the best institutional and legal means for eliminating IUU fishing and ensuring the sustainable management of shared stocks and stocks of common interest in SRFC's intervention area. The request came within the framework of the effective implementation of the Abidjan Convention, as revised in 2012, and also aimed at clarifying the international legal regime applicable to IUU fishing.

The workshops are expected to be attended by legal counsels from Ministries in charge of Fisheries, fishery managers, counsellors from Ministries of Foreign Affairs, lawyers, constituted bodies, Parliamentarians and fishery professionals. Central to deliberations will be a feedback from the advisory opinion rendered by the Tribunal and a presentation on the draft regional action plan for the implementation of the advisory opinion. Sessions will be interactive and allow discussions on mechanisms of cooperation between pavilion states, port states and coastal states in the collection, identification and submission of evidence in the event of IUU fishing.

For more information:

Sub-Regional Fisheries Commission (SRFC)

The Sub-Regional Fisheries Commission (SRFC) is an intergovernmental organisation for fishery cooperation established by the Convention of 29 March 1985, as amended on 14 July 1993 in Praia, Cape Verde. It comprises seven member states as follows: Cape Verde, the Gambia, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Mauritania, Senegal and Sierra Leone.

The mandate of SRFC is to harmonise member states' policies pertaining to the preservation, conservation and sustainable use of their fishery resources and to strengthen their collaboration with a view to the well-being of their respective peoples. The purpose, therefore, is to enhance regional cooperation so as to improve the sustainable management of fisheries within waters under the jurisdiction of member states.

- Website: <http://www.spcsrp.org>

Regional Partnership for Coastal and Marine Conservation in West Africa (PRCM)

The Regional Partnership for Coastal and Marine Conservation in West Africa is a coalition of national and international stakeholders committed to preserving the coastline of seven countries in West Africa, being Cape Verde, the Gambia, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Mauritania, Senegal and Sierra Leone. The Partnership established in 2004 by 4 major international organizations (IUCN, Wetlands, FIBA and WWF). Its stakeholders, who operate across the sub-region, fall into various categories, including national civil society, governmental institutions, research and education organizations, regional and sub-regional networks and organizations, Parliamentarians and local elected officials, administrative agencies, international NGOs and financial partners.

- Website: www.prcmarine.org

International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea

The International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea (ITLOS) is an independent judicial body set up by the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea to deal with disputes that may arise from the interpretation and enforcement of the Convention. The Tribunal comprises 21 independent members chosen from among people with the highest reputation for fairness and integrity and with a recognized competence in matters related to the law of the sea.

- Website: <https://www.itlos.org/fr/le-tribunal/>
- Full text of the advisory opinion:
https://www.itlos.org/fileadmin/itlos/documents/cases/case_no.21/advisory_opinion/A21_AvisCons_02.04.pdf