

**WORKSHOP ON KNOWLEDGE AND DATA ON DEEP-SEA FISHERIES IN  
THE HIGH SEAS**

**PROSPECTUS**

**FAO HQ, ROME, ITALY**

**NOVEMBER 5-7, 2007**

## **Context**

In light of the expansion of deep-seas fisheries from coastal waters under national jurisdiction towards high seas areas, and their potential impact on fish stocks, biodiversity and habitat, the management of deep-sea fisheries in the high seas has become an issue of international concern.

The FAO Committee on Fisheries (COFI) first discussed deep-sea fisheries at its 25<sup>th</sup> session in 2003 and supported the proposal for an international conference on the topic (DEEP SEA 2003, Wellington and Kingston, NZ). In addition, FAO held an Expert Consultation on Deep-sea Fisheries in the High Seas in November 2006 that addressed management issues. The management of deep-sea fisheries in the high seas has also been a major source of concern at United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) meetings over the past few years.

Lack of knowledge and poor monitoring of the fishing activities associated with deep-sea fisheries in the high seas have been constantly reported by these international meetings. Improvement of collection, exchange and dissemination of information regarding these fisheries is recognised as a required step toward their effective and sustainable management. In 2005, the 26<sup>th</sup> Session of COFI “requested Members and RFMOs, as appropriate, to submit information on deepsea fish catches by species and size composition and fishing effort, noting that reporting would need to be on a relatively fine spatial scale to address the association of fishing activities with vulnerable marine ecosystems, as well as information on any conservation and management measure that may be in place for such fisheries.” (paragraph 88 of the Report of the 26<sup>th</sup> Session of COFI). The conclusions and recommendations of the 2006 FAO Expert Consultation also included these issues. The most recent UNGA Resolution (61/105) called on, “FAO...to establish a time table of relevant work with respect to the management of the deep sea fisheries in the high seas, including enhancing data collection and dissemination, promoting information exchange and increased knowledge on deep sea fishing activities, such as through convening a meeting of States engaged in such fisheries...”. In addition, the resolution commended FAO on its work regarding deep-sea fisheries and invited the organization to further its work on the topic.

## **The International Guidelines Process**

The 27<sup>th</sup> session of COFI in 2007 resulted in recommendations that FAO continue to address deep-sea fisheries issues and develop international guidelines on the management of deep-sea fisheries in the high seas. A Workshop on Vulnerable Marine Ecosystems and Destructive Fishing (Rome, 26-29 June, 2007) and an Expert Consultation (Bangkok, September 11-14, 2007) have been organized, and will contribute, together with the Workshop presented in this prospectus, to a preliminary version of the guidelines. A Technical Consultation in early 2008 will discuss the guidelines on a policy level and finalize the document. Finally, the guidelines will be submitted to COFI in 2009 for discussion and endorsement.

## **The Objectives**

This workshop will:

- discuss and validate a draft global review of deepwater fisheries in the high seas. This review aims at identifying the main current fisheries, region by region, and quantifying their activity in terms of catch and fishing effort ; and
- review and complement recommendations on reporting obligations proposed for the FAO guidelines for the management of deep-water fisheries in the high seas. This reporting framework should guide countries and RFMOs in the establishment of data reporting requirements and protocols for data exchange and information dissemination.

## **Working documents**

The main working documents will be:

- the draft of the International Guidelines on the Management of Deep-sea Fisheries in the High Seas, as reviewed by the FAO Expert Consultation (Bangkok 11-14 September 2007); and
- the draft Global Review of High Seas Deepwater Bottom Fisheries (WWR) prepared by FAO.

## **Participants**

Participation is by invitation only, following FAO relevant procedures. Nationals from countries involved in deep-water bottom fisheries in the high seas, as well as representative from Regional Fisheries Management Organizations with a mandates covering this type of fisheries will be invited. Participants will be selected for their expertise in the monitoring of these fisheries. Some fishery scientists with experience in the analysis of the information collected about the fisheries will be also invited.

## **Language**

Based on the concurrence of the participants, the workshop will be conducted in English. Experts must agree in advance of the meeting that they are prepared and able to work only in English.

## **Date and Venue**

The Workshop will take place from 5 to 7 November 2007 in Rome, FAO Head-Quarters, Italy.

## **For further information contact**

Alexis Bensch  
Fisheries Information Officer  
Fisheries and Aquaculture Economics and  
Policy Division  
Fisheries and Aquaculture Department  
FAO  
Rome, Italy  
Phone: (+39) 06 570 56505  
Fax: (+39) 06 570 56500  
Email: Alexis.Bensch@fao.org

Jessica Sanders  
Fisheries Planning Consultant  
Fisheries and Aquaculture Economics and  
Policy Division  
Fisheries and Aquaculture Department  
FAO  
Rome, Italy  
Phone: (+39) 06 570 54610  
Fax: (+39) 06 570 56500  
E-mail: Jessica.Sanders@fao.org