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REGIONAL COMMISSION FOR FISHERIES

Fourth meeting of the Working Group on Fisheries Management

Muscat, Oman, 3-5 October 2010

REVIEW OF THE OUTCOMES OF THE TRIPARTITE MEETING ON FISHERIES MANAGEMENT COOPERATION IN THE NORTHERN AREA OF RECOFI AND FAO/INFOSAMAK SEMINAR ON FISH TRADE AND ILLEGAL, UNREPORTED AND UNREGULATED FISHING IN THE NEAR EAST AND NORTH AFRICA: IMPLICATION OF CERTIFICATION FOR THE REGION

PURPOSE

1. The purpose of this paper is provide information to the Working Group on Fisheries Management (WGFM) concerning two important meeting relevant to the Group's work that were held in 2010. The meetings were the:

- Tripartite Meeting on Fisheries Management Cooperation in the Northern Area of RECOFI (Rome, Italy, 13 May 2010), and
- FAO/INFOSAMAK Seminar on Fish Trade and Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing in the Near East and North Africa: Implications of Certification and Traceability Schemes for the Region (Agadir, Morocco, 22 - 24 June 2010).

Short summaries of the meetings and their outcomes are provided below.

TRIPARTITE MEETING ON FISHERIES MANAGEMENT COOPERATION IN THE NORTHERN AREA OF RECOFI (ROME, ITALY, 13 MAY 2010)

BACKGROUND

2. At the third meeting of the RECOFI Working Group on Fisheries Management (Doha, Qatar 20-22 October 2009), the RECOFI Secretariat convened a second meeting to advance the FAO/RECOFI Initiative to Promote Fisheries Management Cooperation in the Northern Area of RECOFI (henceforth "the initiative"). The initiative is supported by a temporary Secretariat.¹ The

¹ Members of the Secretariat include Messrs Ali Asghar Mojahedi Director General, Fishing and Fisher Affairs, Iran Fisheries Organization (Iran, I.R.); Mr Ali Musaddak, Director General, General Board for Fish Resources

FAO/RECOFI Secretariat assists in coordination and provides backstopping as necessary and feasible.

3. At the Doha meeting the status of the implementation of a survey questionnaire that had been agreed previously was deemed satisfactory and it was decided that the completed questionnaires should be returned to Mr Haider Murad. He had designed the questionnaire and had offered to carry out the data analysis and reporting.

4. The survey questionnaire was agreed to support certain issues central to the initiative with quantitative information. It was recognized that this information would create a solid base for discussion and analysis. The completed questionnaires were shared among the parties concerned with a copy forwarded to the FAO Senior Fishery Officer at the Regional Office for the Near East and North Africa. These developments represented a positive step forward and, as a consequence, the FAO/RECOFI Secretariat convened a third meeting in Rome to take the initiative further.

ACTIVITIES AND RESULTS

5. The third meeting of the initiative to convened at the time of the Special Meeting on RECOFI Consolidation and Development (Rome, Italy, 11-12 May 2010). The countries participating in the initiative met on 13 May 2010 at FAO headquarters in Rome, Italy.²

6. It was unfortunate that some of the members of the Secretariat supporting the initiative could not attend the meeting and no properly informed and technically knowledgeable replacements were available. In the absence of the members of the Secretariat and technical representatives from Iraq and Kuwait, the proposed Agenda (Appendix 1) could not be adopted, nor could Agenda items 2 and 3 be discussed. As a result, a modified agenda was adopted based on past accomplishments (e.g. data sharing and completion of questionnaire), the good will shown so far on everybody's part, the positive and factual implementation of the initial phase, and on the need to define the way forward on how to proceed with the initiative.

7. The Secretariat informed participants at the meeting that the survey questionnaire had been completed and that as previously pointed out, Mr Haider Murad had carried out a thorough analysis of the survey data. He had prepared also a PowerPoint presentation to display and discuss the survey findings. The meeting participants reiterated their respective countries commitments to foster and implement Fisheries Management Cooperation in the Northern Area of the RECOFI.

8. Despite of the aforementioned setback, the meeting participants:

- confirmed their respective countries' commitment and availability to support the Initiative and agreed on the convenience to progress toward an higher-level meeting³ to have this initiative formalized and substantiated;
- agreed that the higher-level meeting would be preceded by, and prepared for, through a technical meeting where the current Agenda (Appendix 1) will be resumed and the following items will be dealt with:
 - presentation and discussion of the findings from the survey questionnaire;
 - definition of the area concerned by the Initiative;

Development (Iraq); Mr Haider Murad, Under Secretary, Deputy Director General, Fisheries Public Authority for Agriculture and Fish Resources (Kuwait).

² The meeting was attended by Mr Hassan Al Janabi, Permanent Representative of Iraq to FAO, Rome, Italy; Mr Ali Asghar Mojahedi, Director General, Fishing and Fisher Affairs, Iran Fisheries Organization, Iran I.R.; Mr Mehdi Shirazi, Deputy Director General, Public and International Relations, Iran Fisheries Organization, Iran I.R.; Mr Marzooq Alazemi, Fish Resources Manager, Public Authority for Agriculture and Fish, Kuwait; Mr Faisal Al-Hassawi, Alternate Permanent Representative of Kuwait to FAO, Rome, Italy; Mr Elie Moussalli, FAO Consultant, FAO/SNO, Cairo, Egypt. The Secretariat was represented by staff from the FAO Rome and Cairo offices.

³ At Deputy Minister level

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- individual country review and presentation on Agenda Item 4a, 4b, 4c, and 4d;
 - consolidating the countries' views into elements for a coherent project proposal that would represent a synthesis of the three countries' needs and priorities from an ecosystem approach to fisheries and aquaculture perspective;
 - identification and elaboration of key-topics to be presented for consideration at the higher-level meeting including the necessary financial means and *modus operandi* to implement the Initiative.
- The Kuwait delegation offered to host the technical meeting preparatory to the higher-level meeting tentatively in late July or early August 2010, or in October 2010. The final date will be fixed in consultation with the FAO Secretariat.
 - The Iranian delegation confirmed the offer to host the higher-level meeting in due course.

FOLLOW-UP

9. The meeting agreed on the necessity, practicality and convenience that the three countries request unambiguously FAO to endeavour to technically support this initiative including the establishment of a cooperative framework and sub-regional dialogue for fisheries and aquaculture management and development in the area concerned. It was further agreed that such a request for technical support will be addressed to FAO by each of the countries concerned as the immediate follow-up to the present meeting.

FAO/INFOSAMAK SEMINAR ON FISH TRADE AND ILLEGAL, UNREPORTED AND UNREGULATED FISHING IN THE NEAR EAST AND NORTH AFRICA: IMPLICATIONS OF CERTIFICATION AND TRACEABILITY SCHEMES FOR THE REGION (AGADIR, MOROCCO, 22 - 24 JUNE 2010)

10. The Regional Office for the Near East and North Africa entered into an agreement with the Centre for Marketing Information and Advisory Services for Fishery Products in the Arab Region (INFOSAMAK) to implement a regional seminar entitled *Fish Trade and Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing in the Near East and North Africa: Implication of Certification and Traceability Schemes for the Region*. It was held from 22 to 24 June 2010 in Agadir, Morocco.

BACKGROUND

11. The initiative of holding a regional seminar on the topic for the Near East and North Africa was in line with the concerns expressed at the FAO Committee on Fisheries in March 2009. The Committee reaffirmed that IUU fishing remained one a principal threat to sustainable fisheries and emphasized the value of cooperative efforts in addressing such fishing.

12. In addition, the seminar sought to address the concerns expressed by the Working Group on Fisheries Management (WGFM) of the Regional Commission for Fisheries (RECOFI) at its third meeting (Doha, 20-22 October 2009). The WGFM recognized that IUU fishing was a concern for RECOFI Members and that the problem should be kept under active consideration. RECOFI Members recognized that there were clear linkages between IUU fishing and the need to restrict the trade of IUU-caught fish, and that to reduce flows of such fish into international trade, certification requirements and catch documentation schemes were required. These requirements had implications for RECOFI Members and the Near East and North Africa region as a whole. There was a general consensus in the WGFM that there would be merit in investigating the implications of certification and related schemes, and the relationship between IUU fishing and trade for the region.

13. In addition, the European Community (EC) Council Regulation No 1005/2008 of 29 September 2008 established an EC-wide system to prevent, deter and eliminate IUU fishing. The Regulation's aim was to halt the import of IUU fishery products into the EC. Some RNE Members have expressed concern about the introduction of this EC Regulation, noting that exports of fish from their countries could be interrupted.

ACTIVITIES AND RESULTS

14. Seventy-five participants from 22 countries, various international organizations including the EC, RFMOs and INGOs, and private sector representatives attended the Seminar. The Secretariat presented one of the three key-note papers entitled *Brief overview of capture fisheries in the Near East and North Africa region: trends and emerging issues*.⁴ Two other key-note papers were presented by the Secretariat on an *Overview on IUU fishing activities worldwide* and the *Importance of IUU fishing in international fish trade*.

15. Selected national reviews were presented encompassing the main fisheries systems of the Near East and North Africa region: i.e., Eastern Central Atlantic (Northern Coastal sub-area), south-eastern Mediterranean Sea, and Western Indian Ocean (Red Sea, Gulf, and Western Arabian Sea sub-areas). The private sector and other participants including NGOs took an active part in the Seminar and contributed significantly.

16. The Seminar was instrumental in providing FAO Members with:

- practical information on catch documentation schemes in fisheries
- an introduction to the use of traceability schemes;
- an understanding of the implications of certification and related schemes;
- knowledge about the relationship between IUU fishing and trade for the region; and
- information about the the role and function of fishery products certification and related schemes as means to combat and deter, prevent, and eliminate IUU fishing.

The Seminar proceedings will be considered for publication.

17. The Seminar proved that the national responses and abilities to deal with IUU fishing and related activities in the region were very diverse. Some Members have been able to implement targeted approaches to traceability and reduce trade in illegal fisheries products (e.g., Morocco) but others were having difficulty with weak enforcement and low capacity (e.g., Yemen). In particular, the Seminar debate focused, among the others, on the priority needs for Members to:

- harmonize fisheries laws to combat IUU fishing;
- to ratify and implement international instruments, and
- enforce MCS including establishing VMS.

Furthermore, the Seminar that the organization of fishers' cooperatives and associations, which were not represented at the Seminar, could contribute significantly to combatting IUU fishing if cooperation was improved with national management authorities.

18. The role of RFMOs was acknowledged and the establishment of a RFMO/A in the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden was considered an important initiative that should be undertaken without delay.

19. Compliance with EC Regulation 1005/2008 (in force since 1st January 2010) will require additional human resources, new technical regulations and capacity development in catch

⁴ The paper was prepared jointly with Elie Moussalli (FAO/SNO Consultant), Monica Barone (Centro Inter-universitario di Biologia Marina, Livorno, Italy) and Cherif Touleib (SNE).

certification procedures. Some Near east and North Africa Members already have the capacity and means to implement fully catch certification schemes that are compliant with the EC Regulation. However, other Members lack such capacity and need technical assistance to enhance their capacities. Among the main challenges identified in the Seminar were:

- a lack of capacity in fisheries management institutions;
- how to address catch certification from small scale fisheries;
- control of origin for imported fishery products;
- in some instances, decentralised and fragmented fisheries jurisdiction, and
- corruption.

20. The Seminar was informed that following the first six months of enforcement of EC Regulation 1005/2008, the Commission had started analysing trade data to assess impacts on imports/exports and possible trade diversions. Moreover it was anticipated that the additional costs met by non-EU countries related to compliance with the Regulation could lead to price increase for fishery products in EU markets and that EC consumers would be required to bear the increase in price because the catch documentation scheme's implementation should contribute significantly to enhancing the sustainability of fisheries.

21. The Seminar approved, by consensus, a final statement summarising the basic considerations and priority issues for the region including key-activities aimed at improving cooperation and strengthening the regional response to IUU fishing and related activities. The statement and the identified priority issues for the region are in Attachment 2.

SUGGESTED ACTION BY THE WORKING GROUP

22. The Working Group is invited to consider the outcomes of the two meetings reviewed in this paper and to comment on them, as appropriate. In particular, the Working Group may wish to consider issues arising from:

- the possibility of supporting technically the establishment of a cooperative framework and sub-regional dialogue for fisheries and aquaculture management and development as proposed at the Tripartite Meeting on Fisheries Management Cooperation in the Northern Area of RECOFI, and
- the final statement summarising the basic considerations and priority issues for the region including key-activities aimed at improving cooperation and strengthening the regional response to IUU fishing and related activities.

**INITIATIVE TO PROMOTE FISHERIES MANAGEMENT COOPERATION IN THE
NORTHERN AREA OF THE RECOFI**

(henceforth “the Initiative”)

Rome, 13 May 2010

Agenda

Thursday, 13 May 2010

Morning: 9:00 hours

- 1) Opening of the meeting
- 2) Presentation and discussion of the survey questionnaire results
- 3) Definition of the area concerned by the Initiative
- 4) Review and discussion of the focus topics identified as central elements of the Initiative:
 - a) fisheries management in the northern area of RECOFI including the review of effectiveness of current conservation and management measures to preserve the resources and aquaculture;
 - b) sub regional trade (dynamics, constraints, opportunities);
 - c) promotion of sustainable inland, brackish and marine waters aquaculture, including stock enhancement; and
 - d) establishment of scientific cooperation and implementation of joint activities

Afternoon: 14:30 hours

- 5) Identification of financial means and *modus operandi* to implement the Initiative
- 6) Any other matters

Appendix 2**STATEMENT BY THE PARTICIPANTS IN THE FAO/INFOSAMAK REGIONAL SEMINAR “FISH TRADE AND ILLEGAL, UNREPORTED AND UNREGULATED FISHING IN THE NEAR EAST AND NORTH AFRICA: IMPLICATION OF CERTIFICATION AND TRACEABILITY SCHEMES FOR THE REGION” 22-24 JUNE 2010, AGADIR, MOROCCO**

The Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing presents significant economic, biological and social threats to this region and across the world. While the primary responsibility for addressing many for the IUU problems rests at the national level with the country, there is recognition of the need to increase regional efforts to fight IUU fishing including supporting IPOA-IUU and the NPOA-IUU. Regional cooperation among the countries, through exchange of information, sharing experiences, and working together on many aspects of fighting IUU activities, has been acknowledged as a priority for the region as this cooperation will assist the countries in advancing their shared goal of preventing illegal fishing activities.

To this end, the following items have been identified as priority for the Near east and North Africa fisheries by the participants in the seminar on “Fish Trade and Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing in the Near East and North Africa: Implications of Certification and Traceability Schemes for the Region”:

- Capacity development;
- Further awareness and sensitization of stakeholders or resources users also through the dissemination of relevant information in the Arabic language;
- Involvement of RACs and social component of the fishery systems in the region;
- Develop capacity to establish/improve catch documentation and traceability schemes
- Harmonization and integration of national efforts to fight IUU at sub-regional level;
- Continued exchange of information;
- Support and empowerment of regional commissions and organizations and relevant organizations and institutions in the region;
- Development and establishment of a regional capacity to monitor and appraise IUU in the region.