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NEWS FROM FAO HQ

This is clearly the winning letterhead. We are still waiting on the efforts from BOBP-IGO. And speaking of BOBP-IGO, Yugraj Yadava has recently been in town to attend the Technical Consultation on Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries. Milton Haughton (CRFM) and Haydar Fersoy (CacFish) were also here. Have I missed anyone? This is the news:

Technical Consultation on International Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries

Acting on to the recommendations of the 29th and 30th sessions of the Committee on Fisheries, from 20-24 May 2013, FAO hosted a technical consultation to develop voluntary guidelines for securing sustainable small-scale fisheries. The meeting was attended by 66 member states, 36 Civil Society Representatives and numerous international organizations, as well as representatives of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, and the UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food.

The occasion marked a significant step in recognising the contributions of small-scale fisheries to food security and poverty alleviation and exemplified the efforts to undertake a global exercise to collaboratively improve the sustainability of the sector. While the Technical Consultation did not complete negotiations on the draft text, several key issues were agreed upon. Among other results, the meeting marked the first occasion where social aspects are given prominence in an international fisheries instrument. In addition, member states, international organizations and civil society organizations all sought to establish small-scale fisheries policy as a key element in the progressive realization of the right to adequate food and they promoted a holistic, and integrated approach to the subsector.

The Technical Consultation will gather again on a date to be confirmed during the 31st session of the Committee on Fisheries, in order to resume the session and complete the Guidelines. These guidelines have been developed through a widespread comprehensive and participatory process that saw the participation of more than 4000 stakeholders and a fruitful collaboration with Civil Society and other developmental partners.

NEWS FROM THE INTERNATIONAL WHALING COMMISSION (IWC)



Humpback whale entangled in discarded trawl net, Plettenberg Bay, South Africa.
Picture courtesy of South African Whale Disentanglement Network

The IWC has held a number of conferences and workshops this spring. Topics included marine debris, sustainable whale watching and conservation management plans. In May, scientists from around the world gathered at Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution, USA to better understand the effect of marine debris on cetaceans. Ingestion and entanglement can cause horrific suffering to marine mammals and the IWC is co-ordinating efforts to understand its impact at the first of two workshops. The second workshop is due to take place early in 2014 and aims to translate these findings into action plans.

Later the same month in Brisbane Australia, whale watch operators, scientists, and government officials from over 20 countries met. On the agenda was a 5 year Strategic Plan for Whale Watching and the development of a web-based 'Living' Handbook. The 5 year plan aims to develop and convey best practice, and the Living Handbook will become an evolving repository for all aspects of advice including training, governance, capacity building and compliance. The aim of the Brisbane meeting was to get valuable input directly from the industry.

Still in Brisbane, another IWC group met to take forward the Conservation Management Plan (CMP) initiative. CMPs were introduced to the IWC in 2008. Their purpose is to improve conservation outcomes for the world's most endangered cetacean populations. CMPs are tailored, flexible tools designed to manage human activity and complement existing international conventions and agreements, national legislation and management regimes. An essential component is the involvement of stakeholders, including those whose actions contribute to the threats. Three CMPs are already underway and the Brisbane meeting looked at where the initiative might next be directed.

STOP PRESS: Simon Brockington has just written from Korea where the IWC Scientific Committee meeting is currently being held. Simon notes that the issue of whale entanglement in fishing gear is becoming increasingly serious for a number of IWC member states. Further, recent scientific work on whale scarring suggests that the problem of whale entanglement in fishing gear is more widespread than was first thought

and occurs in populations ranging from temperate to arctic waters. A group of FAO staff are now examining how to bring this issue to the attention of COFI in 2014.

NEWS FROM THE SUB-REGIONAL FISHERIES COMMISSION (SRFC)



INTERNATIONAL TRIBUNAL FOR THE LAW OF THE SEA

On 28 March 2013, the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea received a request from the Sub-Regional Fisheries Commission (SRFC) to render an Advisory Opinion. The SRFC is located in Dakar, Senegal and comprises seven member states: Cape Verde, the Gambia, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Mauritania, Senegal and Sierra Leone.

In a resolution adopted during its fourteenth extraordinary session (25-29 March 2013), the Conference of Ministers of the SRFC authorized the Permanent Secretary of the SRFC "to seize the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea [...] in order to obtain its advisory opinion on the following matters:

1. What are the obligations of the flag State in cases where illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing activities are conducted within the Exclusive Economic Zone of third party States?
2. To what extent shall the flag State be held liable for IUU fishing activities conducted by vessels sailing under its flag?
3. Where a fishing license is issued to a vessel within the framework of an international agreement with the flag State or with an international agency, shall the State or international agency be held liable for the violation of the fisheries legislation of the coastal State by the vessel in question?
4. What are the rights and obligations of the coastal State in ensuring the sustainable management of shared stocks and stocks of common interest, especially the small pelagic species and tuna?"

The Advisory Opinion has been entered in the List of cases of the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea as Case No. 21.

NORTH ATLANTIC MARINE MAMMAL COMMISSION (NAMMCO)

A new Scientific Secretary has commenced work at the NAMMCO Secretariat. Her name is Jill Prewitt and you can read all about Jill and her appointment at:

http://www.nammco.no/Nammco/Mainpage/Secretariat/scientific_secretary.html

and

http://www.nammco.no/Nammco/Mainpage/News/appointment_of_the_new_scientific_secretary.html

Welcome Jill!

NEWS FROM THE INDIAN OCEAN TUNA COMMISSION (IOTC)

The Seventeenth Session of the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission was held in Grand Baie, Mauritius from 6-10 May 2013. This was the first meeting for the new executive secretary of the Commission: Mr. Rondolph Payet and the transition from Mr. Anganuzzi to Mr. Payet was handled with professionalism and good grace. Our best wishes go with Alejandro who finished work at IOTC last Friday, and to Rondolph who is brilliantly taking up the challenges of his new role.

Other than Albacore, the status of other major tuna stocks in the Indian Ocean is in a reasonably healthy condition. There has been a decrease of longline fishing effort, and (to a lesser extent) the purse seine fleet fishing effort, in the western tropical Indian Ocean in recent years. The development of Somali Piracy in the tropical western Indian Ocean in 2007 and its expansion in the following years has led to a redistribution of fishing effort to other areas. This includes shifts of a large component of the Indian Ocean longline fleet to the Pacific and Atlantic Oceans, as well as increases in fishing effort in southern waters of the Indian Ocean, which represent the main fishing grounds for albacore. While effort levels from purse seiners in the western tropical Indian Ocean have also decreased in recent years, by approximately 30%, following the departure of some purse seiners to other oceans, the remaining purse seiners (with increased security on board), have maintained levels of activity in the area. In the eastern Indian Ocean the main fishing fleets are Indonesia, Taiwan Province of China, and Sri Lanka, and the quality of the catch data for Sri Lanka and Indonesia remains uncertain. In particular, the status of some stocks of large pelagic sharks remains a concern, and several conservation and management measures were presented for adoption throughout the meeting.

The meeting succeeded in adopting several important proposals including:

- On Interim Target and Limit Reference Points;
- On the Removal of Obsolete Conservation and Management Measures;
- Procedures on a Fish Aggregating Devices (FADs) Management Plan, Including more detailed specifications of Catch Reporting from FAD sets, and the Development of Improved FAD Designs to reduce the Incidence of Entanglement of Non-Target Species;
- On the Conservation of Whale Sharks;
- On the Conservation of Cetaceans;
- On the Conservation of Oceanic White Tip Sharks;
- On the Conservation of Albacore caught in the IOTC area of competence; and
- Proposal Concerning the IOTC Record of Vessels Authorised to Operate in the IOTC area of competence.

The IOTC meeting rates for me as the most exciting that I have ever attended. The onus is now on other RFBs to ensure that their annual sessions are just as productive and enthralling!

NEWS FROM UNITED NATIONS DIVISION FOR OCEAN AFFAIRS AND THE LAW OF THE SEA (UNDOALOS):

Celebration of World Oceans Day 2013

In 2008, the General Assembly decided that the 8th of June of every year would be designated as "World Oceans Day". The occasion provides an opportunity to reflect on the importance of the oceans for the humankind and for the planet. This year marked the fifth "World Oceans Day" and the theme was "Oceans and People".

As in the past, numerous events were organized around the world to mark this important day, including at United Nations Headquarters in New York. The Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea (DOALOS) partnered with the American Museum of Natural History to organize a discussion panel on 10 June 2013. A photo exhibition entitled "Oceans" will also be on display in the United Nations Secretariat Building until 16 August 2013.

In keeping with recent tradition, the Empire State Building was lit in the colours white, blue and purple (representing the different layers of the ocean) on 8 June 2013 to mark the occasion of World Oceans Day 2013. In addition, the United Nations Postal Administration issued a commemorative stamp to mark World Oceans Day based on the artwork of the popular children's author Dr. Seuss, which is available for sale (see www.unstamps.org).

The Division would be grateful to receive information on any events or activities undertaken by regional fisheries bodies to mark World Oceans Day 2013. Please send any replies to doalos@un.org

Quote from the Secretary General of the United Nations on the occasion of World Oceans Day 8 June 2013:

From trade to food to climate regulation, the oceans are integral to all of humanity. This is particularly so for coastal dwellers whose income and culture are irrevocably bound to the sea. If we are to fully benefit from the oceans, we must reverse the degradation of the marine environment due to pollution, overexploitation and acidification. I urge all nations to work to this end, including by joining and implementing the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. Let us work together to create new waves of action for ocean sustainability – for people and the planet.

OTHER NEWS:

Attachment One: Attached to this email is a pdf document with the call for applications under the NIPPON FOUNDATION OF JAPAN FELLOWSHIP PROGRAMME 2013.

Attachment Two: Also attached is a pdf document from the South Pacific Regional Fisheries Management Organisation with a call for registration to attend SPRFMO's 1st Meeting of the Scientific Committee.

Attachment Three: Also attached to this email is a background paper from UNDOALOS on the 1995 UN Fish Stocks Agreement. This important Agreement sets out a comprehensive legal regime for the long term conservation and sustainable use of straddling and highly migratory fish stocks. The Agreement is directly relevant to all RFBs that deal with the management of high seas fish stocks. We urge all such RFBs to read the background paper and examine your current and potential role in implementing the Agreement.

INTERPOL AND PROJECT SCALE

INTERPOL and UNEP will jointly host an International Environmental Compliance and Enforcement Conference on 6 November 2013 in Nairobi, Kenya, followed by the first executive-level meeting of the INTERPOL Environmental Compliance and Enforcement Committee (ECEC) on 7 and 8 November 2013. Bringing together senior experts from the global environmental law enforcement community, the meeting aims to address existing and emerging issues of concern with particular focus on fisheries, forestry, pollution and wildlife crimes. INTERPOL have already launched Project Scale (<http://www.interpol.int/Crime-areas/Environmental-crime/Projects/Project-Scale>). Project Scale is an INTERPOL initiative to detect, suppress and combat fisheries crime. The project was launched during the 1st INTERPOL International Fisheries Enforcement Conference on 26 February 2013 at the INTERPOL General Secretariat in Lyon, France. The Conference was followed by a two-day meeting of the INTERPOL Fisheries Crime Working Group on 27 and 28 February 2013, which marked the beginning of the permanent Fisheries Crime Working Group. Project Scale Partners are:

- [Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs](#)
- [NORAD](#)
- [Pew Charitable Trusts](#)

NEWS FROM THE ARCTIC

Discussions concerning marine resource conservation and management in the Arctic are heating up:

<http://www.thearcticinstitute.org/2013/05/moving-mosaic-arctic-governance-debate.html>

See also:

Andrew E. Kramer, "Accord Would Regulate Fishing in Arctic Waters," The New York Times (New York, April 16, 2013), http://www.nytimes.com/2013/04/17/world/agreement-would-regulate-fishing-in-arctic-waters.html?_r=0

NEWS FROM THE EASTERN PACIFIC

The Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC) will meet during the week 10-14 June for its 2013 annual session at Veracruz, Mexico. Issues up for discussion include capacity management, by-catch mitigation measures, management arrangements and data requirements for fish aggregating devices (FADS), shark conservation and reference points and harvest control rules for the tuna fishery.