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THE GLOBAL RECORD OF FISHING VESSELS, REFRIGERATED TRANSPORT VESSELS AND SUPPLY VESSELS (GLOBAL RECORD)

Executive Summary

This informational document provides some additional information in support of document COFI/2014/4.2/Rev.1 on Voluntary Guidelines for Flag State Performance, 2009 PSM Agreement and other instruments combating IUU fishing.

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1. The issue of the Global Record was raised at the 2012 session of COFI, where the Committee (a) reiterated its support for the development of the Global Record by FAO, using a phased approach, with some Members having concern for the need to avoid duplication, to keep it cost-effective and to ensure coordination with other existing initiatives; (b) recognized the necessity of a global Unique Vessel Identifier (UVI), as a key component of the Global Record to identify and track vessels; (c) suggested the UVI, as a first step, be applied to vessels above 100 GRT; (d) noted the necessity for Regional Fisheries Management Organizations (RFMOs) to coordinate their vessel records with the Global Record; and (e) appreciated FAO's work to assist developing States to strengthen their national or regional vessel registries. The following paragraphs provide information on how the above-mentioned issues have been or are being addressed by FAO. Further detailed information is also provided in document COFI/2014/SBD.2 as well as in the Global Record website¹.

2. The Global Record is a global repository (database and associated information system) of vessels which engage in fishing or fishing-related activity. It comprises only certified, up-to-date vessel records provided by the authorities deemed to be responsible for the information. The Global Record development road map has three main pillars; (i) robust and cost-effective system development, (ii) capacity development and (iii) awareness-raising. FAO immediate priority is with the system development and implementation at this initial stage. In carrying out the system development of the Global Record and, in order not to duplicate efforts, FAO is currently working towards a cost-effective solution in coordination with other existing in-house initiatives², in particular the Vessel Record Management Framework (VRMF), as well as external systems.

3. Taking a forward-thinking approach, the Global Record programme has been working in collaboration with the European Commission (DG Mare) to define Business Rules Specifications (BRS) and Requirements Specifications Mapping (RSM) with the aim of standardizing the vessel information module data fields and definitions for use in fishing-related international scenarios.

4. The major strengths of the Global Record are, *inter alia*, that it utilizes the UVI to ensure that each vessel record is unique, thus allowing a vessel's history to be tracked accurately, and makes information available regarding the identification of fishing operation associated with illegal activities. Another key strength of the Global Record is that it will increase transparency of transshipment operations and refuelling at sea since it includes trusted information on refrigerated transport vessels and supply vessels. Information provided by the Global Record system on a vessel-by-vessel basis, arranged according to the user's status, should be free and open access to all users³, for it to be successful and useful. The Global Record has the distinct advantage of providing only unique and certified information for each attribute allowing a rapid and unequivocal ascertainment of vessel information.

5. With regard to the UVI issue, an independent study commissioned by FAO⁴, concluded that the IMO Ship Identification Number Scheme was the most suitable on the basis of efficiency, compatibility (i.e. with the merchant fleet system which already includes many fishing vessels), and technical considerations (i.e. data requirements ensure the integrity of the system can be met by most national registers with small modifications) for Phase 1 of the Global Record, i.e. for vessels of 100 gross tonnage and above. In December 2013, the IMO Assembly agreed to a proposal, co-sponsored

¹ <http://www.fao.org/fishery/global-record/en>

² In a complementary initiative, FAO has developed a database that brings together fishing vessel information available in the public domain (certified and non-certified). The Fishing Vessels Finder (FVF), which is also built on the VRMF, is an online tool to locate information on individual fishing vessels. All the information accessible via the FVF is shown exactly as originally disseminated by its source, with clear identification of data owners and date of retrieval for each detail. It often provides several values for a single data field (from different sources) and can also be used to supplement the content of the Global Record with complementary data.

³ With due regard to confidentiality issues.

⁴ Investigation of Unique Vessel Identifier (UVI) and Phasing Options by MRAG Asia Pacific Pty Ltd (ftp://ftp.fao.org/Fi/DOCUMENT/global_record/2010/inf5e.pdf)

by FAO to include fishing vessels of 100 gross tonnage and above in the IMO Number Scheme through resolution A.1078(28). Consequently, the preconditions of using the IMO Number as the UVI for Phase 1 of the Global Record have now been met. The IMO Number Scheme is applied voluntarily to vessels of 100 gross tonnage and above, including fishing vessels. It is the prerogative of Flag State Administrations to assign the IMO numbers on a mandatory basis to eligible vessels flying their flag. The UVI, which is a prerequisite for any information to be inserted into the Global Record, should be inserted on a vessel's Certificate of Registry which includes the particulars identifying the vessel, and on all other vessel documentation, such as catch documentation certificates, when and where appropriate. Not only is the IMO Number, as a UVI, useful in identifying and tracking vessels but also in ensuring the traceability of fishery products throughout the market chain. The importance of the IMO Number is that it is associated with the vessel for its entire life, even when it is subject to changes of flag, ownership, name, etc. Several RFMOs, such as the Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR), the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT), the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC) and the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC), have made provisions for the IMO Number to be compulsory for eligible vessels fishing in their convention areas. The use of the IMO number establishes a direct transversal linkage throughout several initiatives to fight IUU fishing such as the PSMA (request in Annex A and C), VG-FSP (vessel registration), Global Record (UVI) and market-related measures such as catch certificates (for traceability of fish products throughout the market chain).

6. Therefore, there is a strong synergy between the recently agreed Voluntary Guidelines for Flag State Performance (VG-FSP), the Port State Measures Agreement (PSMA) and the Global Record. The Global Record, as a major tool in implementing the PSMA, will assist Port States in carrying out inspections and follow-up actions of foreign flag vessels, as called for in the Agreement. Specifically, the Global Record plays a key role in support of the PSMA through dissemination of certified vessel information against which PSM inspectors can compare and validate the information provided through the provisions of the Agreement. Moreover, Flag States are responsible for compliance of vessels flying their flag and therefore it is their duty to keep adequate up-to-date vessel registers, increase transparency, deny registration to vessels already registered with other Flag State and prevent flag hopping in order to fight Illegal, Unregulated and Unreported (IUU) fishing (for example, by exchanging/sharing relevant information through the Global Record).

7. In order to support implementation of the Global Record around the world, a capacity development framework has been initiated based on regional workshops and technical assistance to countries in those regions. This framework has already been applied in Central America (regional workshops in 2010 and 2012) through OSPESCA (Organización del Sector Pesquero y Acuicola del Istmo Centroamericano) and Southeast Asia (regional workshop in 2013) through the Regional Plan of Action (RPOA) to Promote Responsible Fishing Practices including to Combating IUU Fishing in South East Asia and collaboration has been established with the Mediterranean region (2012-2013) through the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM)⁵. These capacity development actions have produced specific work plans and gap analysis to guide the way forward for the regions in integrating the Global Record and enhancing their capacities, particularly on vessel registration and electronic exchange of information. Additional vessel registry capacity building is needed, including awareness-raising on the detrimental effects of IUU fishing and the role of the Global Record in fighting IUU globally. Future actions in this regard depend on availability of funds.

8. A strategy document indicating the way forward for the development and implementation of the Global Record is to be presented at COFI 2014 together with a prototype version of the system focusing on Phase 1 (vessels of 100 gross tonnage and above). The prototype, containing information provided by selected data providers, will be demonstrated in order to show the feasibility of the

⁵ In addition, participation to external workshops (4th Global Fisheries Enforcement Training Workshop and FAO/WECAFC Workshop on Implementing the 2009 FAO Agreement on Port State Measures to Combat Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing) has provided further possibilities for advocacy and capacity development of the Global Record.

approach. Once the conceptual model is advanced, the system development will focus on implementation of Phase 1 of the Global Record. Further guidance, such as an expert meeting, may be needed to address certain issues.

9. All countries and regions with a fleet that classifies for Phase 1 are encouraged to ensure that relevant vessels obtain an IMO Number and to make the relevant data available to the Global Record. After completing development and implementation of Phase 1, the focus will be put on maintenance, enhancements and ensuring sustainability in the long term. Furthermore, the first steps will be taken, in considering expansion to Phases 2 and 3 taking into account the experience gained from implementing Phase 1.

10. The Global Record could become operational in the immediate future, provided that (i) sufficient funds can be secured and (ii) that the countries and RFMOs are committed. Currently, the programme is working on funds on an ad hoc basis from different donors, for which the focus of interest is mainly on capacity development for specific regions, as well as limited regular programme (RP) funds. The Global Record programme and budget have been revised following concerns of cost-effectiveness and substantial readjustments have taken place. Focusing on the initial priority of making the Global Record system operational in the near future (as an urgent need to support a coordinated fight against IUU fishing), FAO proposes to:

- create a funding mechanism based on a consortium of donors for a 5-year project based on system development and implementation;
- and focus on a simple, robust, user-friendly system for Phase 1 in order to make it operational as soon as possible.

A budget of USD500-600 000 annually (through a multi-donor trust fund) would guarantee achievement of these targets and pave the way forward for the expansion to Phases 2 and 3 and inclusion of further information, should it deemed necessary. However, to address capacity development and awareness-raising, separate funding should be considered.