

Recommendation WECAFC/17/2019/15

“ON THE MONITORING AND CONTROL OF TRANSSHIPMENT AT SEA”

The Western Central Atlantic Fishery Commission (WECAFC):

RECALLING that the objective of the Commission is to promote the effective conservation, management and development of the living marine resources within the area of competence of the Commission, in accordance with the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries, the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication and to address common problems of fisheries management and development faced by members of the Commission;

NOTING with concern that Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing in the WECAFC area is estimated between 20 and 30 percent of total reported harvests, representing a value of 450 to 750 million USD annually, that IUU fishing has dire implications for millions of peoples' livelihoods and brings about among others, adverse impact on national economies, food security, and the environment, and on labour standards, given the linkage of some IUU vessels with slavery and other labour and human rights abuses, drug trafficking, etc.¹

RECALLING that The FAO Committee on Fisheries (COFI) on its Thirty-Second Session from 11-15 July 2016, expressed the need to “initiate work on transshipments”, believed to be a major issue in IUU fishing;

ACKNOWLEDGING the increased interest of the international community to improve regulatory control over transshipment operations to support sound fisheries management and prevent, deter and eliminate IUU fishing.

RECOGNIZING that transshipment operations particularly those undertaken at sea are frequently critical to the economic viability of some fisheries, and that if properly monitored and controlled, they should not pose a threat to sound fisheries management

ACKNOWLEDGING that drivers of transshipment at sea are not exclusively economics/logistics in nature, given the fact that operators involved in IUU activities may seek the best opportunity for transshipment to avoid official scrutiny/regulatory controls, thus enabling eventual detrimental impact on economic development, the marine environment and sustainability of stocks

MINDFUL of the commitment by the WECAFC members to improve their legal and institutional framework required for the exercise of responsible fisheries and in the formulation and implementation of appropriate measures, consistently with the global efforts through the UN, its specialized organizations as well as Regional Fisheries Management Organizations (RFMO);

DEDICATED to support the continued efforts by the members to increase Monitoring, Control and Surveillance (MCS) in their EEZs and beyond;

COMMITTED to implementing the International Plan of Action to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing (IPOA-IUU);

RECALLING the outcomes of the third meeting of the Regional Working Group on IUU Fishing

¹ <https://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0004570> . Consulted 24 07 2019

(RWG-IUU), held in Barbados in September 2018, supported by the European Union, UNDP/GEF/ CLME project and FAO;

PENDING the delivery of additional information by the RWG-IUU;

ADOPTS in conformity with Article 6 of the WECAFC Revised Statutes this RECOMMENDATION that:

- WECAFC Members with common interests meet to initiate development of arrangements, including binding agreements if possible, among these countries for an effective system for enhanced surveillance of transshipment operations and enforcement of relevant legislation, which may include among other things, obtaining, exchanging and transmitting information between WECAFC members, with other States and international organizations. To promote that all WECAFC members to be part of the “International Monitoring, Control and Surveillance (MCS) Network for Fisheries-related Activities”.