



Web story

## **Nations agree to develop instrument to enforce minimum standards of port control to combat illegal fishing by 2009**

*Illegal fishing, trade in fish, the ecosystem approach to fisheries management, marine protected areas, and the strengthening of Regional Fisheries Management Organizations (RFMOs) top COFI agenda*

Gland, Switzerland – March 14, 2007 - Perhaps the most significant decision adopted at **FAO Committee on Fisheries (COFI)**

It was agreed that the **ecosystem approach to fisheries** was an important framework for fisheries management; concern was expressed that more needed to be done to ensure that predator-prey relationships were fully taken into account. It was also agreed to promote technical work to establish standards for the management of deep-seas fisheries on the high seas in support of language adopted by the UN General Assembly resolution on fisheries [see web story December 2006: [http://www.iucn.org/en/news/archive/2006/12/12\\_unga.htm](http://www.iucn.org/en/news/archive/2006/12/12_unga.htm)]. These standards would assist to identify vulnerable marine ecosystems in areas beyond national jurisdiction and the impacts of fishing activities in order to facilitate the adoption and implementation of conservation and management measures to provide necessary protections for these ecosystems. Some delegations called for a moratorium on fishing in these areas until the impacts of fishing activities on these vulnerable marine ecosystems was assessed. Several delegations also spoke of the need to address the consequences of climate change on fisheries.

Also discussed was the important role of **marine protected areas** (MPAs) in the conservation and management of marine biodiversity, including fish stocks. FAO was encouraged to complete its technical guidelines on the design, implementation and testing of MPAs in relation to fishing as soon as possible.

On the **strengthening of RFMOs** and their performances, discussion began with a review of a meeting held in Kobe, Japan in January 2007 of the five tuna RFMOs. Many delegations suggested that in/2006/12nr should also meet jointly. Delegations urged that self-assessment and many delegations supported the self-assessment of

by RFMOs which IUCN has been assisting. Several delegations also spoke of the importance of giving greater prominence to fisheries. It was noted that small-scale fisheries are the most difficult to work and spoke of the importance of giving greater prominence to small-scale fisheries.

## **IUCN Interventions at COFI 27, Rome, 5 – 9 March 2007**

### **Intervention, Agenda Item 9, Combating IUU Fishing**

Thank you, Mr. Chairman

My delegation, IUCN – the World Conservation Union shares the view that IUU fishing remains of grave concern. IUU fishing undermines all attempts to improve the conservation and management of fish stocks. IUU fishing takes resources that would be available to the world's poor.

A key to combating IUU fishing is clearly better flag state control. In this regard, we welcome the address by the Secretary General of the IMO and we encourage further cooperation between FAO and IMO to improve the registration, including with respect to genuine link, and identification of all vessels, including fishing vessels, including below 24 meters.

However, as flag state control has sometimes proved a disappointment, we must also consider additional measures to combat IUU fishing.

We endorse work on a binding agreement on a minimum standard for port state actions to fight IUU fishing.

We urge greater use of tamper-resistant VMS with data sent to a central national authority, and to relevant RFMOs and to the FAO in support of a Global Record that we hope FAO will maintain.

We welcome the work of the International MCS Network.

We urge the withdrawal of subsidies, for example for fuel, because subsidies encourage overcapacity that fosters IUU fishing.

We urge adoption of catch documentation or tracking schemes for individual high-value fish, bluefin tuna for example, using newly developed and relatively cheap radio tagging technology to track this high value inventory – in this case individual fish – from catch to market.

We support the use of vessel lists as a tool to combat IUU fishing and are encouraged by the development of a Global Record of fishing vessels through the FAO. We welcome agreement among the tuna RFMOs to harmonize their vessel lists.

Under the World Bank PROFISH Partnership, we have developed a list of irresponsible vessels drawing from publicly available data on RFMO web sites and we invite states to post data on national web sites about vessels found to be fishing in their Exclusive Economic Zones without a licence. We will talk further about this list at the PROFISH Forum on Friday morning. Fliers about the Forum are available outside.

In conclusion, transparency is one of the most effective tools we have to combat IUU fishing.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman

## **Intervention, Agenda Item 10, Implementing the Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries**

Thank you Mr. Chairman.

The ecosystem approach is indeed a complex topic and IUCN welcomes the high level of discussion in this body. IUCN will focus on two topics here, marine protected areas and deep sea fisheries.

IUCN recalls previous commitments made at the last COFI to assist member states with the implementation of the WSSD's goals of representative networks of marine protected areas by 2012<sup>1</sup> and welcomes the activities within FAO, States and some RFMOs in this regard. MPAs can be a critical component of the ecosystem approach to fisheries by safeguarding biodiversity, habitats and ecosystem services – benefits that conventional input and output controls do not necessarily provide.

IUCN brings to this body's attention two relevant activities with respect to MPAs including in areas beyond national jurisdiction. First, in January 2007, the Mexican government hosted a Scientific Experts' Workshop on Biogeographic Classification Systems in Open Ocean and Deep Seabed Areas. This workshop brought together leading scientists to develop preliminary biogeographic maps to support ecosystem-based management and representative protected area network planning. The workshop was organized by Mexico, UNESCO, the IOC, and IUCN with the support of Australia, Canada and the JM Kaplan Fund. A report from this meeting will be available soon.

Second, in October 2007, Portugal is hosting a scientific expert workshop in cooperation with the Convention on Biological Diversity to advance the development of ecological criteria, biogeographic classification systems and scientific guidelines for representative MPA networks in the open ocean and deep seabed, pursuant to a decision of the 8<sup>th</sup>

