

To: SPRFMO Members and CNCs

Subject: Fourteenth round of Informal Consultations of States Parties to the Agreement (ICSP-14), focusing on the topic “Performance reviews of regional fisheries management organizations and arrangements”

1. INTRO

The fourteenth round of Informal Consultations¹ was convened to focus on the topic “Performance reviews of regional fisheries management organizations and arrangements”.

The SPRFMO Executive Secretary was invited to participate as a panellist giving a presentation on “*Structure and conduct of the SPRFMO performance reviews: experiences, best practices, challenges and opportunities*” in the ICSP-14 and in the FAO side event “*Regional fishery advisory bodies and management organizations: the path to positive change*”.

This report is structured following the Agenda of ICSP-14 (Annex 1) focusing on the relevant issues for SPRFMO. Annex 2 contains the agenda and background note of the FAO side event.

2. ICSP-14

2.1. *Opening of the meeting and General statements*

The Assistant Secretary-General for Legal Affairs, Mr. Stephen Mathias, opened the meeting stressing the importance of cooperation by States, including through regional fisheries management organizations and arrangements (RFMO/As).

The role of RFMO/As in the implementation of the Agreement and in sustainable fisheries management more generally (ocean science, fight against IUU fishing and ocean governance) including BBNJ² was stressed by delegations. Some delegations highlighted specific areas where the performance reviews could still be strengthened (fishing allocation, timeframe, terms of reference, follow up of performance reviews, etc).

2.2. *Discussion panel on “Performance reviews of RFMO/As”*

The major milestones in the development of performance reviews over the last two decades, the standards and criteria for assessing the performance of RFMO/As, resulting in the institutionalization of regular performance reviews, and the common key criteria on the performance review processes (independence, transparency and inclusivity) were underlined during the presentations and discussions.

The experiences in the performance reviews from NAFO and SPRFMO together with the views of two performance review panellists and the perspective of a stakeholder (LDAC³) were presented. In the ensuing discussion the topics addressed were: the ideal balance in the composition of the review panels, methods of gathering information (transparency vs confidentiality), timelines to implement the recommendations and the scope of subsequent performance reviews.

¹ The ICSP-14 took place in New York, USA 2-3 May 2019.

² Intergovernmental Conference on an international legally binding instrument under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction (“BBNJ Conference”).

³ The Long-Distance Fleet Advisory Council <https://www.ldac.eu/en/>



2.3. Mechanism for follow-up to performance reviews

Representatives from three RFMOs (IATTC, ICCAT and NEAFC) and three stakeholders (ICFA⁴, ISSF⁵ and Pew Charitable Trust) elaborated on the experiences, best practices, challenges and opportunities on the performance reviews follow up.

The global concern over the deterioration of fish stocks as a trigger for performance review processes, the established of an action plan to implement the recommendations and the political will to implement them, the improvement of RFMO/As funding to reinforce scientific capacity and how the recommendations should be specific and measurable were addressed.

2.4. Enhancing the effectiveness of performance reviews

The key opportunities for improvement in subsequent reviews such as: broader participation, focusing on specific key areas, including the integration of external drivers (climate change impact) and how UNCLOS could enhance the effectiveness of performance reviews were presented and discussed by representatives from Canada, Sri Lanka, WCPFC and IUCN.

2.5. Other issues

The next round of Informal Consultations of State Parties in 2020 would focus on “Implementation of an ecosystem approach to fisheries management”.

3. ASSESSMENT OF THE ICSP-14

ICSP-14 participation was sponsored by New Zealand (Ref: G19-2019) providing an opportunity to show the positive developments in SPRFMO (through the presentations given both for ICSP-14 and the FAO side event) and assessing how the performance review carried out in SPRFMO compares with those in other RFMO/As.

Furthermore, it was an opportunity to assess the potential way forward on the implementation of the recommendations and how the next SPRFMO Performance Review could be shaped according to practices in other RFMO/As.

How other regional processes such as BBNJ, the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Convention on the International Trade of Endangered Species of Wild Animals, expanding their mandates to include fisheries, the Sustainable Development Goal 14⁶, in particular, indicator 14.6.1 entitled “Progress by countries in the degree of implementation of international instruments aiming to combat illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing”, the developments on the Informal Consultations of States Parties to the Agreement...all of these processes are related with the conservation and management of high seas fisheries resources and therefore the Secretariat will be looking for guidance from the Commission on how to approach these regional processes.

The [report of the ICSP-14](#) has been published on the UN Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea, Office of Legal Affairs, United Nations web site.

Dr. Sebastián Rodríguez Alfaro
Executive Secretary

⁴ International Coalition of Fisheries Associations

⁵ International Seafood Sustainability Foundation <https://iss-foundation.org/>

⁶ Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development



ANNEX 1

**Annex III****Fourteenth round of Informal Consultations of States Parties to the Agreement for the Implementation of the Provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea of 10 December 1982 relating to the Conservation and Management of Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks (the Agreement)****Agenda****2-3 May 2019****United Nations, New York**

1. Opening of the fourteenth round of Informal Consultations by a representative of the Secretary-General.
2. Election of the Chairperson.
3. Adoption of the agenda.
4. Organization of work.
5. General statements.
6. Discussion panel on “Performance reviews of regional fisheries management organizations and arrangements”
 - (a) Segment 1: Importance and role of performance reviews;
 - (b) Segment 2: Structure and conduct of performance reviews: experiences, best practices, challenges and opportunities;
 - (c) Segment 3: Recommendations of and mechanisms for follow-up to performance reviews: experiences, best practices, challenges and opportunities;
 - (d) Segment 4: Further enhancing the effectiveness of performance reviews through the resumed Review Conference on the Agreement and other intergovernmental processes.
7. Revision of the Terms of Reference of the Part VII Assistance Fund.
8. Initial preparatory work for the resumption of the Review Conference on the Agreement.
9. Consideration of the next round of Informal Consultations of States Parties to the Agreement.
10. Other matters.



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations

Informal Consultations of States Parties to the UN Fish Stocks Agreement
• Fourteenth round • “Performance reviews of regional fisheries management organizations and arrangements”

FAO side event

Regional fishery advisory bodies and management organizations: the path to positive change

UN HQ - New York
Conference room 3 (CB)
2 May 2019

Background

In recent years, the international community has focused on the need to strengthen regional fishery advisory bodies and management organizations (RFABs and RFMOs), given the importance of their work to ensure the long-term conservation of fishery resources and key role in contributing to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The first regional fishery bodies were established between 1920s and 1960s; since then, the number of RFABs and RFMOs has steadily increased over time, reaching 53 of such bodies. It is through them that Member States and organizations work together towards the conservation, management and development of fisheries and aquaculture, following the United Nations Convention of Law of the Sea, the Fish Stocks Agreement and the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries.

As a forum that brings together RFABs and RFMOs, the Regional Fishery Body Secretariats' Network (RSN) provides an invaluable tool to tackle a number of emerging regional issues linked to, among others, biodiversity and ecosystem approach needs; climate change impact; concerns on stocks and species of mutual interest such as transboundary disease; the illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing affecting sustainability of resources; and the need for performance reviews as a practice to ensure the sustainable use and conservation of fisheries resources. FAO hosts and coordinates the Network and has a well-established collaboration with its members and related bodies, supporting Member States to address fisheries and aquaculture issues through concrete and results oriented approach for delivering Agenda 2030.

Global achievements are built upon regional efforts. That is why the RSN focusses on enhancing regional cooperation as an essential mechanism through which Members States can work together towards the SDGs. The vision of a fairer future for all is one that requires RFABs and RFMOs to lead in their areas of expertise, contributing to global efforts with their unique knowledge of local issues. Their performance and its periodical assessment provide opportunities to improve capacities and functioning, identify good practices and work efficiently for sustainable development. Each RFAB or RFMO operates in a particular geo-political environment, while there is a degree of commonality in the factors affecting their performance, specific circumstances in each regional context might be taken into consideration.

Programme

13:15 - 13:25

Opening remarks

Ms Margo Debye Chair, Permanent Mission of the Republic of Nauru to the UN

13:25 - 13:35

Introduction to the RFABs and RFMOs and the Regional Fishery Bodies Secretariats' Network (RSN) as key instrumental players for sustainable fisheries governance. Video presentation.

Mr Guillermo Compeán RSN Chairperson

13:35 - 13:45

The FAO overview of RFABs and RFMOs activities and developments from 2000 to 2017. RFBs facts and figures.

Mr Piero Mannini Senior Fisheries Liaison Officer, FAO

Ms Eliana Haberkon Fisheries Institutions and Policy Expert, FAO

13:45 - 14:05

The practice of performance reviews: regional experiences and lessons learned.

Mr Sebastian Rodriguez Alfaro Executive Secretary, SPRFMO

Mr Abdellah Srouf Executive Secretary, GFCM

14:05 - 14:15

Effectiveness reviews of Regional Sea Organizations: learning from other regional mechanisms.

Mr Takehiro Nakamura Coordinator, Marine Ecosystems Unit, UNEP

14:15 - 14:25

Discussion with audience

14:25 - 14:30

Closing remarks

Ms Margo Debye Chair, Permanent Mission of the Republic of Nauru to the UN



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