

Northwest Atlantic



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SCIENTIFIC COUNCIL MEETING – JUNE 2001

Report

on

The Second Meeting of FAO and Non-FAO Regional Fishery Bodies or Arrangements

20-21 February 2001

FAO Headquarters, Rome, Italy

and

The Second Technical Consultation on Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) Fishing

22-23 February 2001

FAO Headquarters, Rome, Italy

by

Tissa Amaratunga

Assistant Executive Secretary

In accordance with the June 2000 recommendations of the Scientific Council and the subsequent request by the Scientific Council (Chairman's letter of 2 February 2001 regarding IUU Meeting), Assistant Executive Secretary, attended the two meetings. Presented here are general remarks regarding the two meetings (the Final Reports of each meeting as issued by FAO are available through their routine circulation to member States).

1. Report on the Meeting of FAO and non-FAO Agencies or Arrangements

This was the second meeting of the Regional Fisheries Bodies (RFBs), the first one was held in February 1999. The outcome of that meeting was well received by the FAO Committee on Fisheries (COFI), and this meeting was convened based on the COFI recommendation that such meetings be held on a regular basis, preferably prior to the regular COFI Session.

The meeting elected the following:

Chairperson:	Mr. Robin Allen, Director, Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission;
Vice-Chairperson:	Mr. Estebán de Salas, Executive Secretary, Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources;
Rapporteur:	Mr. Tissa Amaratunga, Assistant Executive Secretary, Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization.

The meeting agreed these officers would hold office till the beginning of the Third Session.

The meeting covered a number of wide ranging issues, with the prime objectives to review actions of RFBs (individually or collectively) and to share experiences and views of the RFBs. The meeting was hosted by Mr. Ichiro Nomura, Assistant Director-General, Fisheries Department, FAO, and many senior FAO Officers were in attendance. FAO Fisheries Department took the usual Secretariat role.

Noting the meeting would generally deal with initiatives and experiences of RFBs in the implementation of international instruments such as the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), UN Fishstock Agreement, Compliance Agreement and Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries, the discussions focused on the following:

- i) *External factors that may impact the work of RFBs and the management of fisheries (the focus was on ecosystem and environmental issues):*

A broad range of agency experiences were mentioned in respect of their mandate within fisheries management. The meeting recognized the rapid development of new information technology and agreed it was essential to strengthen consultation among RFBs, stakeholders and other international bodies such as Regional Seas Conventions.

- ii) *Indicators to assess the performance of RFBs (on criteria with respect to UNCLOS, Code of Conduct, etc.):*

The First Session had seen a need to measure the performance of RFBs in sustainable fisheries and environmental management with respect to benefits of their members. This meeting observed the wide differences in the mandates and roles of RFBs and the wide range of the degree of their evolution. While seeing the value of a checklist provided by FAO, the meeting noted this was a matter for the RFBs themselves, and for self-evaluation if needed.

- iii) *Review of some emerging issues in fisheries of relevance to RFBs:*

- Cooperation in global status and trends (S&T) reporting in fisheries (since the February 1999 Consultation, and subsequent IPOA)

It was noted the draft international plan of action (IPOA) S&T was to provide a framework, strategy and plan at the national, regional (RFBs) and global levels for improving information and knowledge of fishery status and trends. The meeting was concerned about the uncertainties in compilation, interpretation and terminology, but also recognized the increasing demands for transparent processes for analysis and dissemination of information. The meeting recognized the essential need to improve data collection and dissemination. The FAO project "Fisheries Global Information System (FIGIS – software) was a tool to disseminate the public domain information through collaborative partnership involving FAO, RFBs and national centers.

- Illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) Fishing

The meeting acknowledged that IUU was a widespread issue that impacted the work of RFBs. The meeting noted FAO was mandated to develop an IPOA and a paper was presented explaining the process and the high priority placed by the UN. The meeting expressed support for the IPOA, noting that its objective is ultimately to reduce and eventually eliminate the incidence of IUU fishing. The meeting awaited the outcome of the 22-23 February 2001 Second Technical Consultation on IUU.

- Recent developments on criteria for listing commercially exploited fish in CITES

The meeting noted the growing interest within the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) in commercially exploited fish species had led some FAO member countries to request FAO to undertake a review of the CITES criteria. The Technical Consultation in June 2000 agreed that existing criteria and guidelines (e.g. listing and delisting) needed to be reviewed, and these had not been directly addressed by their RFBs. This meeting recognized the need to improve communications, noting RFBs' concerns on for example distinction between taxonomic groups, species and stocks, and criteria for determining abundances, promoting sustainable use and risk of extinction.

iv) *Opportunities and challenges for coordinating the marine RFBs and regional seas conventions:*

Consolidating ecosystems approaches into fisheries management was discussed, and it was recognized such approaches were in early stage of development. The United Nations Environmental Program (UNEP) stressed the importance of strengthening interactions and coordination of activities between RFBs and regional global organization (like UNEP, Global Ocean Observation System (GOOS), Regional Seas Conventions (RSC)) to which the meeting agreed.

In its overall conclusion, it was highlighted that the participants of these meetings were representatives of RFB Secretariats who were not mandated for decision making at the meeting. Accordingly, our comments were only presented as personal or expert advice (although in some instances within the report of the meeting, RFBs were named). A significant step was taken with the Chairman being requested liaise with RFB Secretariats well in advance of the next meeting in order that the RFBs could provide mandated inputs. FAO would continue to provide the Secretariat for these meetings.

It was agreed to change the title of the meeting to "Meeting of the Regional Fishery Bodies", and it was recognized in principle the meeting is for the Secretariats of RFBs. The third Meeting (i.e. of) "Regional Fishery Bodies" will be held immediately after the next COFI Meeting of 2003.

In conclusion, the meeting was well attended with representatives from 24 RFBs, with 9 of them from FAO and 15 from non-FAO bodies. For NAFO, it was an excellent opportunity to look at global issues in respect of RFBs, to make personal contact with similar status representatives of other RFB Secretariats and learn about other RFBs. NAFO was well recognized as one of the oldest and leading RFBs with a rich history of science and management under ICNAF and NAFO.

2. **Report on Technical Consultation on Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing**

This was the Second Technical Consultation on Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) Fishing was held in Rome, Italy, on 22 and 23 February 2001. This was a follow up to the Expert Consultation held in Sydney Australia during 15-19 May 2000, and the First Technical Consultation in Rome during 2-6 October 2000. The meeting was attended by 57 members of FAO and observers from one non-member nation of FAO. Representatives from a specialized agency of the United Nations attended as well as *twelve observers from intergovernmental organizations* and seven international non-government organizations. As a continuation of the previous Consultation, Mr. Andrew Jackson (United Kingdom) continued to Chair the meeting and the Honourable Alvaro Valdéz Fernández-Baca, Vice-Minister for fisheries of Peru and Mr. Mohamed Said Ould Benaouf, Chief of Operations Service, Ministry of Fisheries from Mauritania, served as Vice-Chair of the Consultation and Rapporteur, respectively.

In the context of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries, the Consultations were to address the need to prevent, deter and eliminate IUU fishing with "a global plan of action to deal with all forms of "flags of convenience" through coordinated efforts by States, FAO, relevant regional fisheries management bodies...".

Agenda and Arrangements for the Consultation.

The meeting agreed to, attend to the unfinished work from the first Technical Consultation considering written reservations and any additional comments, and to discuss the draft international plan of action (IPOA) addressing the statements and reservations made by delegation, and to conclude its work so that a draft IPOA to combat IUU fishing could be submitted to the Twentieth-fourth Session of the Committee on Fisheries (COFI) (due to take place immediately after this meeting) for adoption.

Discussions during this meeting were conducted in Plenary, with the Chair receiving interventions from delegations and representatives to draw up the draft text of the IPOA. The report of the Consultation was adopted on 23 February 2001.