



# FCWC

Fisheries Committee for  
the West Central Gulf of Guinea



## DEVELOPING RESPONSIBLE FISHERIES

West Africa is endowed with abundant fisheries resources. The fishery sector provides key food and nutrition to coastal populations and supports employment of more than three million people. It provides revenue to governments through royalties and other fees collected through fisheries licences and access agreements. However, this valuable resource is under threat due to various political, economic and environmental factors, including illegal fishing.

**The Fisheries Committee for the West Central Gulf of Guinea (FCWC) is working sub regionally. Our focus is on:**

### ENDING ILLEGAL, UNREPORTED AND UNREGULATED FISHING

- Working together as a region
- Developing national cooperation
- Supporting the Port State Measures Agreement
- Increasing vessel identification

### IMPROVING FISHERIES MANAGEMENT

- Understanding what is happening
- Harmonizing regional legal and policy frameworks
- Ensuring sustainable fisheries
- Driving change



## Ending illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing

Illegal fishing and fisheries crime form a serious threat to fish stocks and the marine environment whilst also undermining fisheries management and depriving people in developing countries of food and income. The damaging consequences of illegal fishing have been recognized by the United Nations who set an ambitious target to end illegal fishing by 2020 under Sustainable Development Goal 14.

The Gulf of Guinea is home to some of the highest levels of illegal fishing globally with an estimated 40-60% of the fish caught illegally. The region is a significant importer, exporter and processor of fish, so stopping illegal fishing requires an additional focus on the processing, trade and transportation of fish in and out of the region.

### WORKING TOGETHER AS A REGION

The response from the FCWC region has been the formation of the West Africa Task Force (WATF) to tackle illegal fishing, stop the trade in illegally caught fish and combat fisheries crime. Established in 2015 with funding from Norad, the WATF has brought together the six member countries of the FCWC to share information and intelligence, to cooperate and collaborate on common issues and to take action against vessel operators involved in illegal fishing.

A shared communications platform has led to the real time exchange of information between countries, and 'as and when' support from a technical team of experts. Routine sharing and cross checking of information combined with analysis of vessel tracking information has led to the increased identification of vessels operating illegally and provides risk assessment to better target inspection and enforcement capacity.

Capacity building has been central to the WATF with trainings provided, suitable resources developed, equipment provided and experiences shared. NOAA has also supported capacity building in the WATF through regional trainings. Targeted support for national level activity is planned for 2018.

2018 sees the launch of the EU Funded PESCAO Project, designed to strengthen Institutions and fisheries governance in the West Africa region. An Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) wide project, it will complement and support existing initiatives offering real opportunity to develop effective monitoring, control and surveillance (MCS) capacity in the region. Legal support to draft national legislation and support investigations and enforcement action as well as targeted joint patrols informed by enhanced risk assessment are amongst the planned activities of PESCAO. A dedicated MCS expert is already in position at FCWC and an FCWC wide regional vessel monitoring system (VMS) centre is under development and expected to be operational in mid 2019. This will greatly enhance monitoring capacity in the region as at present only three of the six members are able to track vessels on VMS.



## A REGIONAL PLAN OF ACTION

The FCWC Regional Plan of Action to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing (RPOA-IUU) for 2019-2024, developed with the support of AU-IBAR, was validated by the FCWC member states in May 2018. Reflecting the significant progress made in building cooperation and collaboration between FCWC member states the RPOA-IUU will build on recent achievements such as the adoption of a Regional Strategy on Transshipment and an Additional Protocol on the Protection of Shared Information under the WATF, both of which were approved by the 2017 FCWC Conference of Ministers.

The new plan will also focus on development and implementation of a regional vessel inspection programme and regional observer programme as well as strengthening of investigation and dissemination of findings; port control measures and export control measures through the improvement of traceability systems and implementation of catch certification schemes.

## DEVELOPING NATIONAL COOPERATION

Cooperation between national agencies is vital to address the complexity of crimes and illegality in the fisheries sector and has led to the development of National Working Groups (NWG) in each country. Building on existing cooperation and mechanisms each NWG is developing to fit the needs and circumstances of its country. Formalisation of these processes will be a priority for the future of the WATF to ensure that personnel and regime changes don't undermine the progress made to date.

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**The WATF has built on the existing commitments, structure and cooperation provided by the FCWC. By providing an active platform to operationalize existing information sharing agreements stronger connections and relationships have been built between members and consequently more effective enforcement action is resulting.**

Seraphin Dedi Nadj  
Secretary General of the FCWC

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# Supporting the Port State Measures Agreement

The FAO Agreement on Port State Measures (PSMA) is the first binding international agreement to specifically target illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing. Its objective is to prevent, deter and eliminate IUU fishing by preventing vessels engaged in IUU fishing from using ports and landing their catches.

The FCWC has promoted the uptake and implementation of the PSMA within the region as an essential framework to reduce the incentive to operate illegally and to block fishery products derived from IUU fishing from reaching national and international markets. With support from the African Development Bank (AfDB) FCWC has undertaken an assessment of country needs and readiness for PSMA.

## LIBERIA



**Imports:** whole frozen fish, including small pelagic species and tunas, from Europe, North West Africa and Guinea-Bissau.

**Export:** negligible.

### PORT

**Monrovia** is the only port that offloads local industrial fishing vessels with foreign vessels using other ports in the region, or transshipping at sea.

**PSMA status:** under consideration.

## INCREASING VESSEL IDENTIFICATION

### LICENSED VESSELS OPERATING IN THE FCWC REGION

BY GEAR TYPE:

#### TRAWLERS

246



#### PURSE SEINE

77



#### POLE-AND-LINE

12



The Global Record of Fishing Vessels, Refrigerated Transport Vessels and Supply Vessels (Global Record) is a global initiative that primarily involves State authorities and regional fisheries management organizations (RFMOs) in compiling an online comprehensive and updated repository of vessels involved in fishing operations.

The main objective is to provide a useful and powerful tool to contribute to the fight to stop illegal fishing activities and to make it more difficult for vessels to operate outside the law. An essential element of the programme is the assignment of a Unique Vessel Identifier (UVI) to each fishing vessel worldwide, which remains constant throughout the vessel's lifetime regardless of change of name, ownership or flag.

Commitment within the FCWC region to have IMO numbers assigned to all industrial fishing vessels is resulting in mandatory requirements through flagging and licensing conditions. Significant progress has been made, already over 90% of licensed vessels have an IMO number. A combined list of licensed vessels has been compiled under the WATF since 2017 and will provide the basis for an FCWC database of vessels.

MONROVIA

LIBERIA

CÔTE D'IVOIRE

ABIDJAN

## CÔTE D'IVOIRE

**Imports:** mainly whole frozen fish, from West Africa, Europe and Asia, including small pelagic species and tunas.

**Export:** is mainly processed tuna to Europe.

### PORT

**Abidjan** is the largest tuna handling port in Africa.

**PSMA status:** in progress nationally, anticipated to become a party in 2018.

## BENIN

**Imports:** mainly whole fresh and frozen fish from West Africa, Europe and Asia.

**Export:** No significant exports.

### PORT

**Cotonou** serves as a sea outlet for the Republic of Niger and as a secondary port for Nigeria.

**PSMA status:** in progress nationally, anticipated to become a party in 2018.

## NIGERIA

**Imports:** whole frozen small pelagic species and smoked fish from Europe.

**Export:** main export is shrimps to Europe.

### PORTS

**Lagos** is the major import route to the massive Nigerian market.

**Port Harcourt** is also a significant import route servicing Nigeria and additional landlocked countries.

**PSMA status:** under consideration.

## GHANA

**Imports:** whole frozen fish, including tunas and small pelagic species, from Asia, West Africa, and Europe.

**Export:** is mainly processed tuna to Europe.

### PORTS

**Tema** is an important port for the EU fleet.

**Takoradi** the main export port for Ghana, also services trade for landlocked countries such as Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger.

**PSMA status:** party.

## TOGO

**Imports:** whole frozen fish from West Africa, Europe and China.

**Export:** a significant portion of imports goes on to be exported to Nigeria and landlocked West African States.

### PORT

**Lomé** acts as an important transit point for landlocked countries such as Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso.

**PSMA status:** party.



# Improving fisheries management

The FCWC Regional Fisheries Management Plan (RFMP) 2019-2024, approved by the FCWC member States in 2018, validates the long-term fisheries management objectives of the region.

Our RFMP focuses on supporting the principles of the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries, by addressing the following areas:

- Understanding what is happening
- Creating a regional approach
- Ensuring sustainable fisheries
- Driving change

## UNDERSTANDING WHAT IS HAPPENING

The absence of reliable fisheries data and information hinders effective and sustainable fisheries management. This can result in declining fisheries resources, degradation of fisheries-based livelihoods, increasing poverty and general decline in the contribution of the sector to overall country GDP growth. The lack of reliable fisheries statistical data and information is an obstacle to effective decision making on marketing, investment and the sustainable management and exploitation of fisheries resources.

The FCWC have been involved in a number of initiatives to increase knowledge of the fisheries sector in order to support evidence-based decisions, break the gaps between fisheries scientists and fisheries management, develop policies and implement them. These include:

- **Capturing trade data as part of the WorldFish FishTrade initiative**, in cooperation with AU-IBAR, ATLAFCO and NEPAD, to facilitate intra-regional trade in Africa. With a manual developed to support the process of data collection, this initiative provides the first cross-border trade data collection in the region. Funds are now being sought to analyse data collected.
- **'Strengthening routine fisheries data collection'** as part of a FAO TCP project. The FCWC countries worked to develop fisheries data collection and estimate the commercial value of the catch data and to fisheries industry contribution to GDP. Attempts were made to harmonise the varied fisheries data collection systems and levels of technical expertise for designing and updating of the fisheries statistical data collection and analysis instruments, methodologies and tools.

- **Establishing a regional database of fisheries data**, pooling all the data from the FCWC countries. Mobile data collection is improving the speed of national data collection, transmission and reception. This aids the analysis, accuracy and verification of data collected.
- **Bringing together fisheries scientists and managers** to improve research on fisheries management as well as update on fisheries statistics through a regional working group. This group enables close collaboration with the Fishery Committee for the Central Eastern Atlantic (CECAF) and Fisheries and Resources Monitoring System (FIRMS) expertise. The working group will meet regularly and provide information on the current state of resources and guidance for fisheries management decisions.

## CREATING A REGIONAL APPROACH

The shared fish stocks of the region support shared fisheries, and small scale and industrial fishing vessels migrate through the EEZs of different countries and off-load their catch in a range of ports. The resultant fish, fishing, off-loading, processing, importing and exporting are all linked and require regional approaches to ensure that benefits are maximized and shared. In response the region is:

- **Implementing minimum conditions of access**, with initial support from ATLAFCO, this will lead to harmonizing regional legal and policy frameworks.
- **Agreeing regional strategies for transshipment**, one of the major challenges for stopping illegal fishing, and for information sharing within the region.
- **Establishing an FCWC Regional Information Centre**, under the FAO TCP project 3512 Initiative, with an initial focus on data collection but with plans to broaden the scope to include shared data on e.g. licensed vessels, incidents of IUU and flagged vessels.
- **Facilitating the FAO Blue Growth Initiative development** within the region for sustainable and economic value addition of the fisheries resources for the benefit of coastal communities and States revenue increase.



## DRIVING CHANGE

Change is urgently needed to create a fair and equitable society, a healthy environment and sustainable development. The FCWC is fully committed to supporting the global sustainable development agenda and has a focus on furthering the United Nations sustainable development goals (SDGs):

- **SDG 14** — Life below water: to conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development.
- **SDG 02** — Zero hunger: to achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture.
- **SDG 12** — Responsible production and consumption: to ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns.

## ENSURING SUSTAINABLE FISHERIES

Sustainable fisheries are key to secure food security and poverty alleviation and this is focused on the small-scale fisheries that provide 80% of the fish locally consumed in the region. The need to implement the precautionary approach when in doubt and to improve the information provided to decision makers is key. The ecosystem approach to fisheries (EAF) is being promoted throughout the region to help tackle the lack of information through developing fisheries management plans and following the fisheries management cycle. Our activities include:

- Working to reduce fishing effort through support to the Ghana National Plan of Action to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing (NPOA-IUU) and the aim to reduce the national fishing effort by 50%.
- Supporting the beach seine plans developed by the FAO EAF-Nansen project. Four countries are currently committed and there are hopes to further expand this work.
- Developing opportunities for aquaculture in the FCWC region to support the high demand for fish in West Africa and to reduce exploitation of marine resources. Part of the FCWC mandate we are hoping to develop initiatives in this area in 2018/19.





# FCWC

Fisheries Committee for  
the West Central Gulf of Guinea

The Fisheries Committee for the West Central Gulf of Guinea (FCWC) was established in 2007 to facilitate cooperation in fisheries management between the member countries: Liberia, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Togo, Benin, and Nigeria. The countries have several shared fish stocks and identified a need for cooperation and guidance in the management of these resources.

Sub regional and regional cooperation was identified as a strategic policy objective for enhanced governance capacity particularly for shared fish stocks in Africa in the Policy Framework and Reform Strategy for Fisheries and Aquaculture in Africa, agreed by the Summit of African Heads of States and Governments in 2014. The FCWC process focuses on the coordination, development and support to implementation of national and regional fisheries plans that are coherent with the African Union's integration agenda and support the objectives of the United Nations sustainable development goals.

The FCWC countries have made significant progress towards regional cooperation and harmonization in the fisheries sector, and in developing responsible fisheries in the West Central Gulf of Guinea. We look forward to creating new partnerships and initiatives to support and grow this important work, and to meet the urgent need to create sustainable fisheries and end illegal fishing.



The Fisheries Committee for the West Central Gulf of Guinea (FCWC) facilitates cooperation in fisheries management between the member countries: Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Liberia, Nigeria and Togo.

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