



West Africa Task Force
Working together to stop illegal fishing



RECORD OF THE 9TH WEST AFRICA TASK FORCE MEETING

Monrovia, Liberia
24-26 September 2019





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1. Introduction and opening

1.1 Introduction

The West Africa Task Force (WATF) is the Fisheries Committee for the West Central Gulf of Guinea (FCWC) Working Group for monitoring, control and surveillance (MCS). It's key task is to operationalise important MCS agreements of the FCWC, including the 2014 Convention on the Pooling and Sharing of Information and Data on Fisheries in the Zone of the FCWC and the 2009 FCWC Regional Plan of Action on Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing (RPOA-IUU) revised in 2018.

The WATF was formally established in 2015, when the FCWC Conference of Ministers endorsed it and adopted its Terms of Reference (ToR). Since its formation, the WATF has helped to:

- Improve regional information sharing through a regional communications platform;
- Increase MCS cooperation between countries;
- Strengthen national interagency cooperation, through National Working Groups (NWG); and
- Support the sharing of intelligence to spur enforcement actions.

The WATF was initially established through a collaboration between the FCWC Secretariat and member countries, Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Liberia, Nigeria and Togo, in cooperation with a Technical Team (TT) which includes Trygg Mat Tracking (TMT) and Stop Illegal Fishing (SIF)¹ under a Norwegian Development Agency (Norad) funded project entitled, 'Fisheries Intelligence and MCS Support in West Africa'.

The first phase of the project supporting the WATF was implemented between 2015 and 2018, and a second four-year phase between 2018 and 2022 is now being implemented. Support from the European Union (EU), through the Economic Organisation of West Africa

States (ECOWAS) PESCAO project is also contributing to the funding and activities of the WATF.

One of the key implementing structures of the Task Force (TF) are the bi-annual TF meetings. The ninth WATF (TF9) meeting was held in Monrovia, Liberia on the 24 to 26 September 2019. The meeting was attended by representatives of the six FCWC countries, the FCWC Secretariat, and the TT, together with observers representing Cameroon, Sierra Leone, ECOWAS, the Environmental Justice Foundation (EJF), the European Fisheries Control Agency (EFCA), and the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA).

THE FIRST PHASE OF THE PROJECT SUPPORTING THE WATF WAS IMPLEMENTED BETWEEN 2015 AND 2018, AND A SECOND FOUR-YEAR PHASE BETWEEN 2018 AND 2022 IS NOW BEING IMPLEMENTED.



1.2 Opening session

The FCWC Secretary General, Mr Seraphin Dedi Nadjé, welcomed participants and thanked the National Fisheries and Aquaculture Authority of Liberia (NaFAA) and the Government of Liberia for hosting the meeting. He noted that West Africa has a high incidence of IUU fishing and associated activities. Foreign vessels use these waters not only for fishing but also for transport of other illicit goods, including narcotics. The WATF unites the efforts of Member States, allowing them to participate actively in the fight against such activities. The successful approach of the WATF was noted, which has demonstrated that collaboration, cooperation and communication can be effective at combating IUU fishing and associated activities.

Mr Duncan Copeland, Executive Director of TMT, recalled that the WATF had made great progress in the last three years, having identified that fighting IUU fishing in the sub-region requires cooperation with coastal, port, flag and market States outside of the region and

that fisheries MCS needs to be integrated into broader maritime security approaches and operations. The months preceding this meeting saw the highest level of communication and cooperation within the TF since its founding in 2015. The participation of Cameroon and Sierra Leone at TF9 was welcomed; wider cooperation outside of the FCWC sub-region is among the objectives of the WATF.

Dr Aboubacar Sidibe, representing the ECOWAS Secretariat, noted that improving coordination and governance of fisheries is among ECOWAS's ambitions. To that effect, the WATF is an excellent platform for cooperation and it is important that this be encouraged and built upon.

The Director General of NaFAA, Emma Glassco, extended a warm welcome to all participants and thanked the FCWC for granting Liberia the opportunity to host the meeting, and the organisations supporting the process, namely Norad and the EU through the PESCAO project. The Director General recalled the adage 'in unity, success is sure', noting that

synergy between agencies as well as States is needed in order to combat IUU fishing in the sub-region, echoing the need for an integrated approach. Member States must collaborate in formulating a regional observers' program, conducting regional joint patrols, and harmonizing vessel monitoring systems (VMSs) as well as establishing a regional fishing vessel record. A special thanks was extended to international partners who support the WATF, including the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the African Union (AU), the ECOWAS, the TT and others. With these remarks, the meeting was declared open.

¹ Initially Nordenfeldtske Development Services (NFDS) were also a technical partner in the TT.



2. Presentations, discussions and plenary

2.1 Recap of the West Africa Task Force initiative

Mr Copeland gave a recap of the WATF initiative. The main objectives of the TF are to operationalise key regional and international agreements and processes, and to strengthen national interagency cooperation as well as broader communication and cooperation with relevant States and partners. In that vein, the TT provides operational and training support as well as project coordination.

The regional communications platform, which has four to five representatives from each Member State, allows for real time information sharing and translation. The WATF meetings bolster the communication and have been important for strengthening relationships and networks. A strong capacity building component has been at the heart of the TF, with a focus on strengthening and harmonising capacity, resulting in discrepancies in capacity between Member States decreasing since 2015. Support to NWGs as well as exchanges of personnel between States have aided in achieving this change.

The TF model, itself modelled on the FISH-i Africa Task Force of the South West Indian Ocean (SWIO), is being pursued in other regions such as South East Asia, where the potential to establish an Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) regional cooperation is being explored. Increasing cooperation with UN agencies, regional fisheries management organisations (RFMOs) and relevant States and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) has also expanded the reach of the WATF. In addition to the Norad and EU funding the TF is also resourced from national commitments such as attending meetings and trainings.



2.1.1 PESCOAO support to improving regional fisheries governance

Ms Viviane Koutob, TMT West Africa Coordinator, presented some information on the PESCOAO project. This included the recent completion of a legal review of national fisheries legislation for the WATF, which included field visits by a legal expert. A draft National Plan of Action (NPOA-IUU) has been developed for Togo, Nigeria and Benin. In addition, a review and assessment of Benin's previous NPOA-IUU will be conducted. In respect to the Regional Vessel Monitoring Centre (RVMC) a tender process was completed towards a regional VMS that it is hoped will be installed by mid-2020. For capacity building there was a follow up and evaluation for the training of trainers, training for inspectors in Nigeria and a regional training of fisheries monitoring centre (FMC) operators. Moving forward, there is a need to approve the updated and developed NPOA-IUUs and to adopt standard operating procedures (SOPs) to implement these.

2.1.2 Technical Team report on TF8 outcomes

Ms Koutob presented the progress in implementing requests from TF8 by the TT, including:

- Development of training material such as a manual on document verification.
- The procurement of basic equipment for inspectors.
- Implementation of the Transshipment Strategy through the analysis of reefer operations.
- Communication and awareness raising material to gain political support.
- Preparations for establishing the RVMC.
- Support for TF participation in international meetings.
- Provision of intelligence and analytical support.

DISCUSSION:

Ghana are working on extending the office space available to the FCWC Secretariat and a decision to allocate an additional office wing to the Secretariat has been made and will be communicated in writing.



2.1.3 Document Verification Manual for Fisheries Enforcement

Mr Copeland presented the Document Verification Manual for Fisheries Enforcement: Vessel Identity, which has been developed by Stop Illegal Fishing and TMT to support the WATF, FISH-i Africa and the African Ports Network. It informs readers of why, when and how to go about vessel document verification. The Manual follows the same format as the Photo Manual for Fisheries Enforcement, published in 2017, which provides practical guidance on what type of images are useful, how to take photographs, and how images can be used for enforcement purposes. Targeted training will be provided to assist the TF in understanding and using the Document Verification Manual.

DISCUSSION:

ECOWAS noted that new training materials should be reviewed to ensure complementarity with existing training literature, for example on Port State Measures. EFCA welcomed the publication and noted that it would be useful for future training courses, they also noted the importance of coordination when providing training support.

2.1.4 Update on equipment support to the WATF

Ms Viviane Koutob provided an update on the equipment support initiated by the TT. A list of pre-identified items has been shared so that countries can specify needs and quantities, most countries have sent their forms and the procurement of equipment will follow. Mr Copeland presented the “tough pad” – a shockproof and waterproof tablet that will be provided to inspectors in each country. The tablet will allow inspectors to access documents and files on-the-go, when conducting dock side inspections. Elements of the WATF toolbox will be readily accessible (manuals, language cards, INTREPs, etc.) and inspectors will be able to load relevant information prior to inspections (vessel tracks, vessel documents, etc.). Being 4G-enabled, the tablet will also allow inspectors to access key websites and platforms such as the WATF Basecamp, the Combined IUU list outside of their offices.

DISCUSSION:

While welcoming the opportunity to equip inspectors with tablets, Côte d’Ivoire stressed that they are struggling with connectivity costs for their smartphone-based data collection system for artisanal fishing landing sites. Mr Copeland responded that SIM cards and data cost is a national responsibility, however that connectivity is optional as the tablets will be preloaded with relevant files. Liberia asked whether tablets would be made available to other agencies than fisheries – Mr Copeland responded that initially they are for fisheries authorities for them to understand their strengths and weaknesses, as well as giving a period of time to assess their use and impact, before going to other administrations.

2.1.5 Update on regional cases

Mr Yann Yvergniaux, TMT Fisheries Analyst, gave an overview of cases, due diligence processes and related information exchanges since May 2018. This included 13 support and information requests many of which stemmed from country licensing due diligence requests, but also included several risk or wanted vessels notices.

DISCUSSION:

The need for cooperation with States neighbouring the FCWC region was discussed and there was consensus among participants that greater regional cooperation is necessary. The presence of Cameroon and Sierra Leone as observers in the meeting was noted as positive and continued future cooperation and communication were hoped for.

The need for increased information sharing within the TF and with the TT was stressed and the FCWC noted that after requesting information countries should share the outcomes of their investigations with the TF. Participants were reminded that the aim of presenting cases is to draw lessons and to receive updates from countries, follow-ups are vital, and members were urged to provide information on ongoing or concluded cases as soon as possible.

2.2 National activities

The FCWC Secretary General chaired the session. The WATF Member States presented progress on national MCS activities as well as recent experiences and challenges in combatting IUU fishing.

2.2.1 Benin

Two industrial trawlers were arrested due to entering the zone exclusively for artisanal fishers. After being encircled by small scale vessels, whose nets the industrial trawlers had destroyed, the vessels were arrested and admitted to having fished in the restricted area. Compounded fines are yet to be paid.

The Port State Measures Agreement (PSMA) was ratified on the 2 July 2019. The next step is to sensitise other agencies potentially through an information session and to continue to formalise interagency cooperation. A review of the Fisheries Law, to integrate provisions to comply with international instruments, is currently underway.

There have been difficulties experienced in a number of areas: the complexity of reefer monitoring and inspection; the traceability of imported frozen fish; the lack of fisheries patrol vessels (recent patrols relied on external support); security concerns for observers on fishing vessels; the financing of an observer programme to ensure independence of observers; and the lack of a sufficient port infrastructure to allow for larger vessels to enter for inspection.

DISCUSSION:

The discussion focused on addressing clashes between resource users – industrial and artisanal. Various approaches exist in the region. Benin has increased applicable penalties and relies on compounding of fines to get admissions from industrial vessels when they fish in restricted areas and damage the equipment of artisanal fishers – however most cases remain unresolved or are closed with no follow-up. Nigeria established a committee specifically to address clashes between industrial and artisanal fishers. The committee receives reports from artisanal fishers, including time and location of the incident, vessel identifiers, etc. and requests industrial vessel operators to provide their logbooks for cross-checking purposes. Cameroon are experiencing similar issues, with the main challenge being trawler incursions at night, making it difficult to document. Participatory surveillance has been trialled, but the fear is that it becomes a way for artisanal fishers to settle their scores, with incidents being staged or made up.

Benin's capacity to monitor the licensed Ghanaian tuna fleet has been challenging, and the fishing vessels do not report their catches to the fisheries administration as they are obliged to, resulting in Benin not knowing the catch taken from their waters. The application of a landing obligation is being explored to boost the local processing sector. It is hoped that through a future regional VMS Benin will be able to systematically receive catch data as they will be able to see when vessels are operating in their exclusive economic zone (EEZ). It was also noted that as observers are paid by vessel operators this does not ensure their neutrality, and that the monitoring would improve if an independent regional observer programme existed, possibly like the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tuna (ICCAT) programme.



2.2.2 Côte d'Ivoire

The case of an Ivorian-flagged vessel that left the country almost a year ago and subsequently ceased transmitting its positions to the FMC was presented. The authorities' attempts to contact the vessel owners in Europe have been unsuccessful and Côte d'Ivoire is now requesting support to attain further information on this matter.

Ratification of the PSMA is in progress and the draft bill was passed to the National Assembly in July 2019. With around 500 vessels visiting Abidjan fishing port every year it is an important instrument. The operational procedures for port inspections were presented with a focus on pre-entry requests sent to the port authority and how vessels are prioritised for inspection. Collaboration with port authorities is not formal however it is good and being formalised.

An EU delegation assessed the MCS mechanisms and tools and concluded that improvements are needed in terms of interagency cooperation, the legal framework and VMS.

An interagency protocol to formalise operational information exchange between the members of the NWG, is under consideration. The process has been delayed following the appointment of a new Minister and a technical briefing paper is required to explain the NWG to the Minister.

Ivorian fisheries MCS personnel underwent an exchange with counterparts from Ghana with a focus on VMS operations, which helped with sharing lessons, establishing procedures for information exchange and reinforced collaboration between the two States with regards to licensing conditions.

DISCUSSION:

Ghana welcomed the recent personnel exchange conducted with Côte d'Ivoire and it provided an opportunity to address in detail issues brought up through the TF. The exchange was funded by the Norad support and there are funds available for similar activities with other Member States. Togo suggested an exchange with Côte d'Ivoire on the inspection of reefers, which Côte d'Ivoire welcomed.

It was noted that there are two observers monitoring the recently increased domestic tuna longline fleet.





THE PORTS TASK FORCE GHANA (PTFG) WAS ESTABLISHED IN JUNE 2019 TO SUPPORT IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PSMA.

2.2.3 Ghana

There has been a case of a fishing vessel dumping fish at sea, an incident recorded and reported by the observer and validated by VMS data, the police are handling the prosecution process. A second case involved 10 artisanal vessels which were arrested for engaging in light fishing in July 2019. The arrest was made during an at-sea patrol led by the Fisheries Enforcement Unit (FEU), the investigations are ongoing.

The Ports Task Force Ghana (PTFG) was established in June 2019 to support implementation of the PSMA. This took place during a meeting of the national interagency MCS working group in cooperation with the WATF, FCWC and SIF. It complements the work of the NWG and the WATF and a Basecamp communication platform has been established for matters related to PSMA. The difficulties encountered with implementing PSMA include insufficient legislation, slow responses to requests for information made to other agencies which delays cases and increases costs incurred, and the absence or unavailability of focal persons in partner agencies.

Other recent MCS operations and areas of work include: implementation of the first small-scale fisheries closed season (May to June 2019); implementation of the yearly trawl closure (August to September 2019); working towards 100% human observer coverage on industrial vessels; training for at sea operations such as the OBANGAME EXPRESS maritime exercise; patrols in cooperation with the Navy; container tracking to detect drugs in fish carrying containers; community sensitization to various issues around IUU fishing.

Participants were reminded that a Ghanaian observer was reported missing during a fishing trip on a trawler in early July 2019. The vessel concerned was recalled to port and detained for investigation. The vessel did not follow international standards following the discovery that the observer was missing – it left the area instead of starting a search operation and calling for assistance. Ghanaian law provides that assumption of death occurs after seven years, which makes any prosecution difficult at present. It is not clear how the case will be resolved.

Ghana took the opportunity to raise the issue of single use plastic, which desperately needs attention, calling for TF meetings to become single use plastic free.

DISCUSSION:

The need to safeguard personnel such as observers was acknowledged as vitally important.

Ghana noted that sensitisation of fishers was key to implementing the closed season as it creates the possibility for buy-in by fishers, resulting in voluntary-compliance. Overall compliance during the closure is estimated to be at 70-75%. Once compliance to the closed season is improved, the focus will shift to the participatory collection and analysis of data to inform decisions on the appropriate time of year for closure.

The national interagency mechanism, the FEU, only comprises of a few agencies but at the June interagency meeting, more agencies were included and the PTFG was formed. The PTFG was established under the Port State Measures to Stop Illegal Fishing (PSM-SIF) initiative funded by the German development agency (GIZ) implemented by SIF and with strong links to the WATF. The PTFG communications platform is focussed specifically on national communication around pre-port entry checks, inspections and follow on action against vessel owners and operators. Ghana further clarified that information shared on the PTFG Basecamp will not necessarily be shared on the WATF Basecamp, but WATF focal persons will have the possibility to share the information as needed from national to regional level. The potential for communication to be shared from the WATF to the PTFG and vice versa will enhance efforts to identify and stop illegal fishing.



2.2.4 Liberia

Two previous cases were presented: one from 2017 and one from 2018. In the first, the LABIKO 2 was arrested, fined and ordered to retrieve gillnets which it had been using in violation of its hook and line licensing requirements. In the second, GUO JI 808 and GUO JI 809 were warned after they left the EEZ without observing the notification requirements under Liberian fisheries legislation.

Liberia became a party to the PSMA in June 2019 and is developing the necessary interagency cooperation. Recently established interagency procedures will contribute to its implementation, including joint boarding parties through which NaFAA is collaborating with various agencies including customs, port health and immigration. Challenges encountered include a lack of staff coupled with a high workload.

Other MCS activities and work areas include a limit to the number of licensed trawlers (currently six in total); monitoring of Liberia flagged vessels operating in distant waters through the FMC; community surveillance; patrols in collaboration with the Coast Guard; reviewing the MCS strategy and plan; intending to ratify the Cape Town Agreement; and launching the NPOA-IUU and NPOA on rays and sharks.

DISCUSSION:

Challenges faced in Liberia include an inability to patrol beyond 12 nautical miles, the size and mobility of the artisanal fleet in the region which cross maritime borders, and limited human, infrastructure and institutional capacity. There are several vessels available for patrols, but they lack fuel and supplies, something that should be discussed in the NWG to combine resources for multi-agency patrols. A dedicated fisheries patrol vessel was provided by the Government of Wales which will be operated in cooperation with the Coast Guard with an operational budget.

LIBERIA BECAME A PARTY TO THE PSMA IN JUNE 2019 AND IS DEVELOPING THE NECESSARY INTERAGENCY COOPERATION.



2.2.5 Nigeria

Two vessels were arrested by the Navy – the BANARLY V and the OLOKUN V – in September 2019 for allegedly fishing in a restricted area and catching non-licence species. Investigations by fisheries inspectors revealed no illegalities, highlighting the need for greater cooperation with the Navy and increased knowledge of fisheries legislation among Naval officers. In a second case, also in September 2019, the SABREENA III, the CYNTHIA and the ORC V were arrested by the Navy for allegedly fishing in the non-trawling zone (below five nautical miles). These vessels were released to fisheries authorities for investigation, which is ongoing.

Nigeria is not party to the PSMA. Support for a preparatory meeting and awareness raising is required, however the Director General is supportive to becoming a party in 2020. There is interagency cooperation in port with an MoU signed between relevant authorities and sensitisation of government agencies on fisheries legislation.

A recent meeting with trawler operators discussed issues affecting their operations and suggested improvements included revamping of reporting requirements and improving automatic identification system (AIS) and VMS requirements. Vessels have transponders onboard, but the government is not able to monitor their activities due to lack of equipment.

Nigeria informed Sierra Leone that there have been attempts to communicate with their Director General concerning one Nigerian-flagged vessel which appears to be operating in Sierra Leone's waters although it has failed to obtain a 2019 distant water fishing authorization from Nigeria.

Other updates provided included the recent re-certification for shrimp export to the US market (looking in particular into the use of Turtle Excluder Devices); the re-registration of vessels operated by company Swan Fisheries Ltd that have returned to Nigeria after fishing in other Member States; and a visit of the TT in August 2019 in preparation for national-level activities.

DISCUSSION:

Participants reflected on how fisheries departments and Navies in their respective countries cooperate around the arrest and detention of fishing vessels, and ensuing investigations. Being in a similar situation Ghana explained that their Navy reports to the fisheries authority in case of a fisheries-related infraction, before taking any steps such as vessel diversion and detention. Sierra Leone noted that vessel owners can sue the State if they feel their vessels have been unduly detained for extended periods. Nigeria explained that the Nigerian Navy does have the power to detain vessels in relation to violations of fisheries legislation, however it is the fisheries authority which is responsible for investigations. Currently however, release of vessels at the conclusion of cases does not fall under fisheries, which is a weakness being addressed through a committee established to deal with this issue.



2.2.6 Togo

A case involving an artisanal vessel and eight crew members arrested for illegal light fishing, in a zone closed to fishing. The owner of the vessel was summoned for conclusion of the investigation, and the crew was released. The vessel was released after the owner paid the fine imposed through an out-of-court settlement, however the gear (generator, etc.) was not released as this is normally auctioned by the authority to recoup some costs.

Togo became a Member of the PSMA in 2016, with focal points designated in July 2019. A new legislation has been adopted, however some implementing regulations are still to be developed. No real time information sharing on arrivals of vessels in port occurs, which is problematic as inspectors do not know when vessels will arrive. To address this, the intention is to have a fisheries official permanently stationed at the port.

The swearing in of inspectors as law enforcement officials is also not yet completed, however fisheries inspectors can still conduct inspections and investigations, but arrests are made by the maritime brigade.

The NWG was formalized by way of inter-ministerial decree. A meeting of the NWG was held in September 2019 to review the draft NPOA-IUU prepared with the support of the PESCAO project. The meeting also served as a consultation on the Cape Town Agreement in preparation for the International Maritime Organization (IMO) 2019 ministerial conference.

THREE GULF OF GUINEA INTER-REGIONAL NETWORK (GOGIN) PATROLS HAVE BEEN CONDUCTED IN FEBRUARY, MAY AND AUGUST 2019, AND A FOURTH IS PLANNED.

Three Gulf of Guinea Inter-Regional Network (GoGIN) patrols have been conducted in February, May and August 2019, and a fourth is planned. An issue arose when a fishing vessel which had not been licensed by Togo was encountered in the area claimed by both Togo and Ghana, the two countries having an unsettled maritime border dispute, the vessel was asked to leave the area and complied.

DISCUSSION:

The question of overlapping claims of jurisdiction and sovereignty was considered, and it was acknowledged that the issue is broader than fisheries. One option is to adopt a precautionary approach whereby “buffer zones” are established around disputed borders for fisheries purposes, and vessel operators are required to avoid such areas as part of their licence conditions. Invoking an incident where an Ivorian vessel was arrested at the border by the Liberia Coast Guard, Côte d’Ivoire stressed that issues arising from fishing activities in disputed areas are sensitive.





2.3 Implementation of the Port State Measures Agreement

2.3.1 Recap on PSMA in the region

Mr Dedi recapped the current status of the PSMA in the region, noting the significant progress made with four of the six FCWC members now party to the Agreement, and the remaining two making progress to becoming parties. The FCWC Secretariat has prepared several documents to raise awareness about the benefits and obligations under the Agreement. With more Member States becoming parties to the Agreement, it will become easier for FCWC to advocate with FAO for a regional project supporting the implementation of the PSMA. In the meantime, focus should be on drawing lessons from current implementation support, in particular in Ghana where a dedicated project is ongoing.

DISCUSSION:

Both Nigeria and Côte d'Ivoire, the two countries who are not party to the Agreement, confirmed that progress towards becoming a Member is underway, and called for FCWC to work towards a regional support project. FCWC agreed, reminding that the process is also in the hands of the countries through bilateral discussions with FAO. Designating ports and focal points as soon as possible is important and it was noted that implementing port State measures does not require a State to be a party to the PSMA.

2.3.2 Port State Measures to Stop Illegal Fishing

Richard Yeboah shared Ghana's experience of implementing the PSMA, and the support received through the PSM-SIF initiative. Funded by the government of Germany through GIZ, and implemented by SIF, PSM-SIF is initially being run in Ghana, Madagascar and Mozambique, in collaboration with FAO.

In Ghana, two capacity building missions have helped to identify gaps and training needs, and the interagency collaboration has been formalised under the PTFG. Focal points have been elected for the relevant agencies and a communications platform established. The FAO has conducted a legal review, in which a gap analysis was completed. Ghana has designated Tema and Takoradi as PSMA ports and is beginning to implement Annex A of the PSMA – requiring specific information be provided as part of an advance request for entry to port (AREP) to enable checks and risk analysis to be conducted.

DISCUSSION:

The needs of States may differ in relation to support required for the implementation of the PSMA and States should assess their capacity needs for implementing PSM. The legal gap analysis completed under PESCAO will assist in understanding gaps in national legislation in general and in relation to port State measures. Capacity building support through the WATF can also be focused towards PSM implementation if agreed in NWGs.



2.3.3 Implementing the PSMA

Mr Per Erik Bergh, SIF Coordinator, explained that the PSMA is an international minimum standard that is based on the sovereign right of port States to deny port access to vessels that are suspected of being involved in IUU fishing, and the right to inspect vessels in port. Four aspects for implementation of port State measures are: interagency cooperation; risk assessment; joint inspections and information sharing nationally, regionally and internationally.

Central to the implementation of the PSMA is the AREP – of which a model is annexed to the Agreement for countries to adapt. Through the AREP process, foreign-flagged fishing vessels (including fish carriers and support vessels) are required to provide detailed information about their voyage, operations and fisheries products onboard in order to be granted access to port and related services. Information shared through the AREP is useful for assessing risk of fishing vessels requesting port access. A simplified risk assessment matrix analysing the information contained in the AREP and cross-referencing it with other sources was presented.

Whilst the PSMA was developed to target foreign flagged vessels the procedures and minimum standards set out can be usefully applied to nationally flagged vessels – especially foreign-owned fleets. Challenges to implementation include a lack of political awareness, weak interagency cooperation (e.g. lack of collaboration and trust with key agencies e.g. port authorities), resistance to changing work practices, and limited human and institutional capacity.

DISCUSSION:

The African Ports Network being facilitated by SIF aims to make tools and lesson-learning from the PSM-SIF initiative widely available and to provide a network for support and exchange and to provide an alert system for information on high risk vessels. Capacity building focuses on what to do with the AREP, how to perform risk assessments and how to conduct inspections, with each decision point and agencies involved being defined collaboratively. While, the PSM-SIF project and the WATF are separate lessons learned can be shared and the WATF NWGs provide a platform for interagency cooperation to implement PSM and the regional communication platform provides a tool to share intelligence about vessels of interest and inform risk assessment processes.

2.4 Regional Strategy to Combat Illegal Transhipment at Sea

2.4.1 Overview of recent research into transhipment

Mr Matthew Markides, Legal Officer, SIF presented an overview of five recent studies looking at transhipment on regional and global scales:

- Global Fishing Watch, The Global View of Transhipment: Revised Preliminary Findings, 2017;
- Global Fishing Watch, A Comparative Analysis of 2017 Reported Carrier Vessel Activity and Transhipments in the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC) Convention Area using AIS Data, 2018;
- Global Fishing Watch, Analysis of Possible Transhipment Activity in the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission Convention Area (IOTC) in 2017 through the Use of AIS Data, 2018;
- Pew Charitable Trusts, A Review of the Transhipment Practices within the IATTC Area, 2019;
- Pew Charitable Trusts, Transhipment in the West and Central Pacific, 2019.

These studies utilised AIS data and machine learning to identify encounters and loitering at sea to identify possible at-sea transhipments and gain insight into operational characteristics of fleets in various regions. Legal frameworks of the relevant RFMOs were also reviewed as appropriate. General points were highlighted, and lessons learned that are relevant to the WATF, suggestions for improvement included:

- strong, clear frameworks are required;
- AIS and VMS use for fishing vessels and reefers should be obligatory;
- sharing of VMS regionally and with relevant States can increase oversight;
- improved inter-regional cooperation is necessary; and
- improved port State measures is necessary.

DISCUSSION:

The studies were presented to introduce the issue and share some general lessons learned from other regions. It was also highlighted that most of those studies are based on RFMO systems for monitoring transhipments. In the case of ICCAT and IOTC all transhipments are supposed to be observed and each operation generates a report. This allows for a comparison between tracking data and the reports – a reference point that is mostly non-existent in the FCWC sub-region.

IN THE CASE OF ICCAT AND IOTC ALL TRANSHIPMENTS ARE SUPPOSED TO BE OBSERVED AND EACH OPERATION GENERATES A REPORT.



2.4.2 Update on regional reefer study

Mr Yann Yvergniaux presented an update on the ongoing research into refrigerated carrier vessels (reefers) in the sub-region. The results are preliminary, with the current work being a continuation and extension of the pilot study conducted for the port of Abidjan which was presented in TF8. The ongoing work is using 2018 as a reference year and is being done in collaboration with Global Fishing Watch.

The methodology for the study was presented as follows:

- Identification of relevant vessels (cross-referencing of country information, vessel databases and AIS data).
- Preparation of anchorage visits and voyage history for each vessel (using Global Fishing Watch algorithms).
- Identification of key trading routes and sources of fish imported to the region (based on port use and related statistics).
- Analysis of key 'events' at sea (vessel encounters, drift events and AIS gaps).
- Compliance and flagging history analysis (based on country information, databases, etc.).

Initial port use and voyage statistics were presented, providing an overview of reefer traffic in the region, identifying 127 vessels responsible for 1007 port calls in the FCWC area in 2018. IUU risk factors such as loitering events, AIS gaps and encounters at sea are currently being analysed.

The next steps of the study will identify vessels showing similar trade routes to establish groups. Operational patterns will be described based on the analysis of regions visited globally and the identification of likely sources of fish import. Mr Yvergniaux stressed that, going forward, country data on vessels inspected and product landed will be key to supplement the AIS data.

DISCUSSION:

The update and preliminary results were welcomed and the FCWC Secretariat stressed that the figures showing trade flows within the region and with neighbouring African regions were insightful, highlighting the potential for information exchange between countries. There is a need to increase cooperation with non-WATF Member States in order to monitor reefer movements. Benin, noted the challenges faced in getting information from countries of origin, in particular Mauritania and Senegal. The intensity of the trade and importance of the volumes was stressed – it is common to see a reefer landing 2,000 tonnes of small pelagic fish and coming back the next week to land the same volume again.

Discussing AIS-based risk factors, it was reminded that vessels can turn off their AIS unit for different reasons, e.g. for security purposes. It is hoped that the study will shed a light on reefer operations and risk factors associated with them, and it was recommended to summarize key findings in a fact sheet addressed to all Member States.

THE ONGOING WORK IS
USING 2018 AS A REFERENCE
YEAR AND IS BEING DONE IN
COLLABORATION WITH GLOBAL
FISHING WATCH.



2.4.3 The establishment of a reefer control unit in Liberia

Mr Francis Boimah, NaFAA Transhipment Coordinator, explained that in 2015, one of the key issues identified by the EU in its decision to issue a yellow card to Liberia was the lack of oversight of the Liberian reefer fleet operating internationally. To address this, the maritime authority and NaFAA have agreed that MCS responsibilities for transhipments will be transferred to NaFAA, while the registration of reefers remains the responsibility of the maritime authority. An MoU to that effect has been drafted.

Timing for handover of responsibility is not agreed, but in the future NaFAA will be monitoring all fishing and fishing related activities by Liberian flagged vessels, both fishing and reefers. A transhipment unit has been created within NaFAA, with an office space, an official email address, draft reporting and monitoring procedures for reefers developed, and training underway. The unit will be responsible for issuing licences to tranship, as well as prior authorisations. To receive a licence to tranship, relevant RFMO conservation and management measures (CMMs) must be complied with, VMS must be operational and there must be no history of conducting or supporting IUU fishing.

DISCUSSION:

Participants noted the uniqueness of Liberia's situation in the FCWC region as a major international reefer flag State, and the associated risks. Specialized transhipment monitoring skills being developed at NaFAA will be very pertinent for regional lesson learning. Liberia explained that new procedures will include communication with ship-owners and RFMOs around notifications and declarations. Donor vessels are also to be controlled through a prior authorisation process – information on the donor vessel is submitted by the reefer in its application for prior authorisation. If any issues related to the donor vessel are identified, the authorisation to tranship can be denied. A letter introducing the new mandate of NaFAA in relation to transhipment monitoring has been sent to relevant RFMOs, for the purpose of designating focal persons for correspondence and participation in relevant meetings.

TIMING FOR HANDOVER OF RESPONSIBILITY IS NOT AGREED, BUT IN THE FUTURE NAFAA WILL BE MONITORING ALL FISHING AND FISHING RELATED ACTIVITIES BY LIBERIAN FLAGGED VESSELS, BOTH FISHING AND REEFERS.



2.4.4 Developing approaches to combat 'saiko' fishing in Ghana

Mr Socrates Segbor, EJF, explained the term 'saiko fishing', which has been developed in Ghana to refer to the transshipment of catch from industrial vessels to smaller vessels known as 'saiko canoes'. The transshipment of frozen blocks containing demersal and pelagic species is reported to be undermining efforts to rebuild stocks. Most of the fish transhipped is juvenile or below the lower legal-size limit. Small pelagic species in Ghana are the mainstay of artisanal fishers and believed to be overfished.

In terms of landings, a single trip by a Saiko canoe can equate to 450 fishing trips by an artisanal fishing vessel. The artisanal fishing fleet, conservatively estimated at 12 000 vessels, lands approximately 180 000 tonnes of fish per year. By comparison the 80 saiko canoes land an estimated 100 000 tonnes per year. Additionally, catch per unit effort across all sectors is declining, the number of artisanal vessels increases and catch decreasing.

Saiko canoes employ roughly 40 times fewer people per ton landed than artisanal fishing vessels. The competition between saiko canoes and artisanal fishing vessels has reportedly pushed artisanal fishers to resort to illegal practices such as undersized mesh nets and light fishing.

Proposed solutions include requiring trawlers to land bycatch in designated ports while enforcing the ban on transshipment at sea, focusing on the area which EJF has identified as the prime area for saiko transshipments. Increased publicity of investigations and sanctions should also be pursued – currently up to 100 cases involving saiko activities await prosecution. These efforts should be coupled with increased political and community engagement to foster political will and voluntary compliance. National legislation should be strengthened and sanctions for trawlers increased to be effective deterrent.

SAIKO CANOES EMPLOY ROUGHLY 40 TIMES FEWER PEOPLE PER TON LANDED THAN ARTISANAL FISHING VESSELS.

DISCUSSION:

Addressing saiko fishing requires addressing a variety of contributing factors including bunkering at sea, use of unauthorized gear and bycatch, decreasing profitability, and corruption. Ghana is working towards strengthening gear audit capacity, and towards moving the outer limit of the inshore exclusion zone (IEZ) further out to sea in order to protect artisanal fishers. This coupled with closed seasons is intended to decrease pressure on traditionally targeted stocks and increase profitability of artisanal fishing thereby reducing the incentive of saiko fishing and use of illegal gear.

It was noted that other forms of 'saiko-type' transshipments between trawlers and landing canoes or small-scale fishing boats exist in the region. Ghana nationals established in Benin have already attempted to import the practice, and Nigeria also experiences similar incidents. Sierra Leone indicated that similar practices, locally called 'chenji' have been taking place in their waters. In Cameroon, the practice is well established, with transferring of undersized fish to canoes considered more profitable than discarding them at sea. TF members were encouraged to document these practices.





2.5 Towards an FCWC Regional Record of Fishing Vessels

2.5.1 History and legal framework

Mr Dedi introduced the topic, recalling that in 2011 a study on fishing vessel registers in FCWC Member States found that nationally there was no well-established and regularly updated recording system for registered or licensed fishing vessels maintained by any of the FCWC Member States. Additionally, there was no systematic sharing of information between States, no crosschecking by States and no sharing of information with the FCWC. There was also significant confusion regarding the use of terms, exacerbated due to multiple languages.

It was recommended that States create fishing vessel sections within the maritime authorities' registries, with fisheries authorities engaging in the fishing vessels registration process, fisheries authorities were advised to maintain a record of registered fishing vessels and a record of fishing licences/authorisations issued. The FCWC was advised to maintain a regional record of fishing vessels on registered fishing vessels and licences/authorisations issued to all fishing vessels. This regional record would be held in the fisheries information system and not replace national records.

In 2013 the Convention on the Terms of Access to the Fisheries Resources located in the EEZ of the FCWC Member States was adopted. In Article 7 it provides the legal basis for the regional basis, in that each State shall maintain a national register of fishing vessels authorised to operate within the waters under its jurisdiction and that the FCWC shall keep a sub-regional register of fishing vessels.

2.5.2 Potential next steps

Mr Yvergniaux presented the possible next step that the FCWC combined licence lists are used towards the development of the regional record. While the combined licence lists have been useful, such as in increasing awareness and the ability to crosscheck information, this tool is limited such as differing licence durations and hinderances in compiling, updating and sharing information.

Moving to a regional record would change from being a snapshot at a specific time, to a live system containing current and historic licences and authorisations. This would require a database accessible on a secure part of the FCWC website for national licences and authorisations to be entered as soon as they are issued. This system would have benefits for FCWC States including the ability to generate an overview on vessel's licensing/authorisation history and current licences/authorisations.

DISCUSSION:

The benefits gained from sharing licence information regionally was acknowledged, and the FCWC Secretariat stressed that it has contributed to raising the profile of regional fisheries cooperation. The use of terms was discussed, which recommended that the term 'regional record of authorized fishing vessels' would be used and that the record would concern licences/authorisations issued to fishing vessels to operate in the FCWC area. Flagged fishing vessels would not be included on the record unless they were licensed/authorised to fish in the region.



2.6 Task Force technical group

Mr Dedi outlined the WATF structure, which has a Coordination Team and a Technical Team. These support the WATF, including for planned activities and responding to requests. The intention is to integrate experts from the WATF Member States into these teams to increase the exposure of local experts and bolster the teams' expertise to support countries with local knowledge and to increase ownership of the WATF.

DISCUSSION:

This concept was supported and the implications for sustainability of the WATF were noted. Regional experts would contribute to preparing workplans, reports, training material, Task Force meetings, and have a key role in the facilitation of country-to-country exchanges. The TT will disseminate draft ToRs for review by the TF.

2.7 Fisheries management issues

2.7.1 Overview of small-scale vessel tracking trials around Africa

Mr Copeland on behalf of exactEarth presented a tracking system developed for smaller vessels using satellite AIS based on Class B units with boosted transmission strength and a self-contained power source. ExactTrax has been trialed in ten African States with the intention for them to become operational programmes in the longer term. ExactEarth provide installations and user training, with monitoring done through Shipview (online platform) and offline analysis, they include an SOS service, a smart phone App and vessel position can be communicated via SMS from the device. There are differences between ExactTrax and industrial tracking systems. For instance, there is no polling function possible as the system is private not public like other AIS systems and there is no catch reporting function. A challenge is to know where small-scale fishing vessels operate and with more reliable and cost-effective technology small vessel tracking will become increasingly possible.



2.7.2 EJF tracking plans for saiko fishing in Ghana

Mr Segbor outlined the plans of EJF and Hen Mpoano, under the Far Dwuma Nkodo project, which will map the fishing grounds of smaller vessels, with 25 tracking devices from Pelagic Data Systems (PDS) that will be piloted on artisanal and semi-industrial vessels operating in regular fishing grounds. Areas of conflict between fleets, such as between industrial trawlers and artisanal set-net vessels will be identified. The devices are compact, impact resistant and waterproof, storing data and transmitting it automatically when within range of a cellular connection. Data is saved at up to 600 positions per hour, allowing for detailed analysis of tracks. The initial period is one year, which will be broken into two phases. Phase one will be an early trial, lasting one month and covering three to five vessels. Phase two will be based on lessons learned during phase one and will cover all 25 vessels, including 20 that operate in coastal regions and five semi-industrial inshore vessels engaged in trawling for at least part of the year. Vessels that travel beyond the outer limit of the IEZ and go to sea often will be prioritised.

Generating heatmaps from this data may be useful including to inform the management and protection of areas for artisanal fishers, inform decisions regarding the extension of the IEZ and provide the basis for future efforts to develop a national marine spatial plan.

2.7.3 Small-scale vessel tracking in Liberia – a case study

Mr Patrick Davis, NaFAA MCS Manager, reported on the 2017 six-month trial, in which small-scale vessels with AIS transponders from two providers (Pelagic Data Systems and Smartone) for comparison purposes. The transponders are solar powered and reporting times can be configured, allowing for asset location tracking as well as reporting of faults and movements. The trial was conducted through the West Africa Regional Fisheries Project to increase safety onboard vessels below 24 meters length overall (LOA) and to identify and establish fishing zones and monitor landings. Challenges included the short length of the trial limiting the overall picture of the sector and the transmission interference in rainy weather.

DISCUSSION:

The importance of the small-scale fishing sector means that tracking vessels is key whatever the technology, and fishers should be sensitised to dispel any distrust and equipment should not be too expensive for fishers. In South Africa, transponders are a licence requirement with the government paying for the equipment. Another approach, raised by Liberia, is that the government sources the equipment and a payment plan is implemented for fishers to pay off the total cost. Generally, further focus on small-scale fisheries under the WATF would be beneficial.



2.8 Operationalisation of the regional VMC

2.8.1 Framework and operational arrangements

Mr Makane Diouf N'diaye, MCS Consultant, provided an update on the RVMC. The FCWC was requested by the Conference of Ministers to create the RVMC, and Ghana has agreed to host this within the FCWC Secretariat. The legal framework and administrative and operational frameworks for the RVMC are needed and drafts have been circulated, addressing organisation, responsibilities, mission, means and rights and links to national systems. The RVMC will house the regional VMS, regional record of fishing vessels and the regional observer programme (ROP). The equipment will be installed by April 2020 along with training. Xsealence, based in Portugal, will be the VMS service provider.

The regional VMS will link to national VMS centres that will automatically send data to the RVMC if no national VMS exists, vessels will transmit directly to the RVMC and access to relevant data by these States will be through a secured web-based interface. Advantages of a RVMC include cost sharing, increased monitoring of vessels and improved information for resource management.

DISCUSSION:

All countries will have access to VMS data through a secured interface in each country with linked screens and laptops. Countries should provide a secured space for the equipment, as well as a working high-speed internet connexion. Functionalities will be tailored to each Member State, including synergy between VMS and other information sources such as radar systems and AIS. TF members congratulated the FCWC and stressed that the draft frameworks should be reviewed and discussed, if necessary, through an extraordinary meeting before the next Conference of Ministers. Compatibility with existing systems will be ensured if countries authorize for their data to be shared with the RVMC. A broader assessment of maritime domain platforms, like that undertaken in Ghana, was proposed in order to maximize the use of existing systems and communication between them.

Planned trainings for FMC operators organized by EFCA in November (for francophone countries) and in early 2020 (for anglophone countries) for Sub-Regional Fisheries Commission (SRFC) and FCWC are not linked to the RVMC equipment. They are for analysing and cross-referencing information from various sources and a separate training on the RVMC equipment will take place.



2.8.2 Update on the Southern African Development Community (SADC)

Mr Bergh provided an update on the development of the SADC Regional MCS Coordination Centre (MCSCC), which Mozambique will be hosting that will include inland and marine fisheries. The SADC Ministers decided that the FISH-i Africa mechanism will become part of the SADC MCSCC with FISH-i Africa's communications platform (Basecamp) being integrated into the Centre. FISH-i Africa is a Task Force established in 2012 on the East coast of Africa, comprised of Comoros, Kenya, Madagascar, Mauritius, Mozambique, Seychelles, Somalia and Tanzania. The WATF initiative was launched after the successes of the FISH-i Africa Task Force.

SADC is a regional economic community, like ECOWAS and sub-regional fisheries bodies exist, such as the Southwest Indian Ocean Fisheries Commission (SWIOFC), with the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC) being the relevant RFMO. The Indian Ocean Commission (IOC) is another regional body, consisting of relevant island States and operating a regional VMS and joint patrols. The regional MCSCC, is intended to include cooperation with non-SADC States as necessary.

DISCUSSION:

The Task Forces in West and East Africa are collaborating, through cases and they are supported by similar TTs, making information sharing less complex. However more formalised exchange of information linked to the ECOWAS and SADC processes and the FCWC, and SWIOFC would be beneficial for long-term sustainability.

2.9 Observer countries

Cameroon and Sierra Leone as observers, presented about their fisheries sectors and MCS challenges.

2.9.1 Cameroon

Dr Jean Blaise Ngollong Njangi, Chief of the Fisheries Control and Surveillance Brigade, provided an overview of fisheries MCS in Cameroon. Under the Ministry responsible for fisheries, there is the Fisheries Control and Surveillance Brigade, a Fisheries Centre and multiple Fisheries Control Posts. The Ministry benefits from formal collaboration with the ministry of Defence, and the Multinational Coordination Centre. Cameroon's fisheries legislation, while quite outdated, does enable fisheries enforcement officials to conduct at sea patrols, in cooperation with the Navy and multiple arrests are made annually. Challenges faced include a non-functional VMS, insufficient human, infrastructure and economic resources, non-operational observer programme, inadequate fines and weak regional cooperation.

DISCUSSION:

Nigerian shrimp trawlers regularly make incursions at night to fish illegally in Cameroon's waters either trawling or to collect shrimps from local boats and arrests have been made. Communication between Nigeria and Cameroon fisheries authorities is needed. An increasing number of fishing vessels operating globally are taking the Cameroon flag, however cooperation between fisheries and the maritime authority are weak and need strengthening.

2.9.2 Sierra Leone

Mr Hindolo D.S. Momoh, Head of the MCS Unit, presented an overview of fisheries MCS in Sierra Leone. The draft 2017 Fisheries and Aquaculture Act and Regulations are in the final stages of being passed. The new legislation has increased licence fees, fines and other charges, fines increased to up to USD 1 million. The NPOA-IUU has been finalised and in 2018 they acceded to the PSMA and the UN Fish Stocks Agreement and in 2019 the FAO Compliance Agreement.

The Joint Maritime Committee (JMC) comprises several agencies related to maritime activities, including fisheries, they conduct joint at-sea patrols. The JMC houses the Joint Operations Centre which is staffed 24/7, and runs the VMS supplied by ORBCOMM. The VMS alerts when tampering with a transponder is detected or when a vessel leaves the EEZ.

The national observer programme provides 100% coverage and daily catch reports on all, approximately 70, non-tuna industrial fishing vessels. Pre-licensing, port and pre-departure inspections are conducted. Community monitoring is ongoing, regional SRFC surveillance exercises supported by PESCO take place and drones are used for aerial surveillance. Challenges include reliance on projects to support MCS activities, insufficient port facilities for inspections, limited radar coverage, no regional IUU vessel list, insufficient offshore patrol vessels and no dedicated sub-regional platform for information sharing.

DISCUSSION:

Observer coverage by national observers does not include tuna vessels due to capacity issues. Observer data collection is somewhat basic but covers date and position of net setting and hauling, quantity of haul and other general information. Observers training is limited and not adequate for deployment on tuna vessels, although scientific training for observers is underway and the matter is being discussed with ICATT. Tuna vessels do not use VMS but are using AIS.

Liberia expressed concerns about the increasing number of trawlers operating in Sierra Leone and noted that several of them are importing fish to Liberia. It is however very difficult for Liberia to monitor the activities of those vessels in their waters, or to verify their export authorizations. Increased cooperation between the WATF and its neighbours Cameroon and Sierra Leone is needed, and it was proposed that they should become permanent observer States to WATF, provided that a focal point is elected, and the principles of communication, collaboration and cooperation are adhered to. The role of observers needs defining and integrating into the TF TORs, when it is reviewed.

2.10 Regional observer programme

Mr Ndiaye gave an update on the possibilities for a ROP under the FCWC. An at-sea observer acts as the eyes of the authorities and not as an enforcement official, and observer placement is complimentary to other tools like VMS. The benefits of observers include increased knowledge of fleet activities and dynamics, vessel operation, catch and gear information and possible evidence for use in prosecutions. Robust national programmes can contribute towards a regional programme. A feasibility study has started, and a draft preparatory document was circulated for comment, the final will be prepared for the next WATF meeting or the Conference of the Ministers 2019.

DISCUSSION:

Observers are usually agents of the State, but the programme may be outsourced, the FCWC mechanism is yet to be determined. Legislation and mechanisms are required to protect observers and avoid corruption. The FCWC feasibility study will assess national observer programmes with regard to pooling of observers and rotations, indirect payment by vessel owners, daily communications, role of agent, etc.

2.11 Regional plan of action to combat IUU fishing (RPOA-IUU)

Mr Ndiaye provided an update on the RPOA-IUU validated by the Conference of Ministers in November 2018, which addressed the responsibilities of Member States in their capacity as coastal, flag, port and market States, and the responsibilities of the Secretariat. The strategic document for the implementation of the RPOA-IUU has been circulated, which includes actions for Member States and an explanation of responsibilities. A draft monitoring and evaluation system has been communicated to Member States, to guide the implementation of NPOA-IUUs.

DISCUSSION:

Togo and Nigeria noted they are reviewing the draft received and that NWG meetings will provide an opportunity to review the documents.



2.12 General update

2.12.1 FCWC Factsheets

Mr Kofi Taylor-Hayford, FCWC Communications Officer, gave an overview of the FCWC Factsheets which are information documents which use infographics, charts and common language to communicate information to a variety of readers. FCWC Factsheets are on: FCWC Regional Vessel Monitoring Centre, the PSMA, shared information on licensed vessels, and maritime security. Future Factsheets are planned to cover transshipment, transparency, information sharing, and harmonised minimum terms and conditions of access. These are produced in both French and English.

2.12.2 JICA Technical Assistant

A Technical Expert, Mr Shoichiro Kawai has been appointed the JICA Regional Fisheries and Aquaculture Expert, to support FCWC as part of a regional programme on maritime fisheries and inland aquaculture. JICA will be running workshops on policies and countermeasures against IUU fishing between 2019 and 2021 and applications should be submitted through JICA country offices.

DISCUSSION:

The workshops offered by JICA are targeted at administrators and focus on policy and countermeasures. Participants will benefit from the lesson learning of Japan as well as external experts from Japan's partner agencies such as NOAA.



2.12.3 Upcoming international meetings

While the Secretariat is preparing for the Conference of Ministers in December 2019, they do not have the funds to organize the meeting due to delays in receiving Member States' financial contributions. Countries were reminded that donor-funded projects do not cover salaries and statutory meetings. The remainder of last year's contributions, in particular Nigeria's, have been used to date, and these are now finishing, creating a situation when the Secretariat will fall short of funds to pay salaries, this is the first time this is happening in the FCWC's history.

While Benin reassured the Secretariat that all administrative and financial arrangements have been taken to hold the Ministers Conference, all Member States shared the Secretariat's concerns and agreed to do everything in their power to fulfil their commitment. Togo, currently serving as Chair of the FCWC, will support the Secretariat in following up with Member States.





3. Task Force outcomes, requests and recommendations

3.1 Outcomes of the Task Force

TF9 had the following outcomes, to:

3.1.1 Support of the Task Force

- Reiterate and reinforce the will and intention of all Member States to uphold the cooperation; communication and coordination objectives of the WATF and continue the fight against IUU fishing.
- Support the integration of national experts into the Technical Team to build on local expertise, promote exchanges of experience between countries and support all Task Force activities moving forward, in a view to strengthen countries' ownership of the Task Force.

3.1.2 Information sharing

- Encourage Member States to share the outcomes of their investigations or due diligence processes with the Task Force after intelligence support has been provided, to ensure that it provides a learning opportunity to all countries.
- Note with concern that some countries are not regularly sharing information on licensed vessels and encourage all Members to be proactive with sharing licensing information in a timely manner.

3.1.3 Capacity building and exchanges

- Welcome the release by the Technical Team of a new manual on document verification aimed at combatting vessel identity fraud and related crimes.
- Recognise that the pool of officers who have benefitted from the Training of Trainers sessions organized at the European Fisheries Control Agency (Spain), at the Regional Maritime University (Ghana) and at the Interregional Maritime Safety Institute (Côte d'Ivoire) should be at the core of building national capacity and institutional memory.

3.1.4 Interagency cooperation

- Note that the formalisation of interagency cooperation mechanisms is still challenging in some countries. Those countries can request support from FCWC to address the issue in a meeting ahead of the Conference of Ministers. Task Force members are implored to maintain a dialogue with their policy makers so that support at the political level is secured.

3.1.5 Port State Measures Agreement

- Congratulate all Member States for their effort towards supporting the PSMA, noting that four countries out of six are now parties to the agreement, and the two remaining countries have initiated a process of ratification.
- Encourage Member States to make use of the facilities offered by the PESCAO programme in terms of reinforcing countries' regulations and capacities in view of the implementation of the PSMA.
- Agree that the recently finalized legal review conducted under PESCAO should be the basis for identifying and addressing gaps in regulations that currently hinder the implementation of the PSMA.
- Agree to engage partners and funders, in particular FAO, in order to initiate a regional-level project supporting the implementation of the PSMA.
- Encourage Ghana to actively share their experience from the PSM-SIF project with the other Member States, for lesson learning and emulation, including opportunities for exchanges of personnel.
- Acknowledge the need to clarify the roles of relevant national agencies in the implementation of the PSMA, reiterating the importance of formalised cooperation through instruments such as MOUs.

3.1.6 FCWC Strategy to combat illegal transshipment at sea

- Welcome the ongoing work in documenting reefer operations and assessing related IUU risks in the region.
- Acknowledge that other forms of 'saiko-type' transshipments between trawlers and landing canoes or small-scale fishing boats exist in the region and recommend documenting those practices at regional level.

3.1.7 Regional record of authorized fishing vessels

- Acknowledge the added value of the current Regional Combined Licence List for MCS efforts, its contribution to operationalizing key FCWC conventions, and also its limitations in its current form.
- Agree to move towards implementing the Member State's 2013 commitment to establish a 'sub-regional register of vessels engaged and authorised in fishing, including carrier and support/service vessels'. In order to avoid any confusion caused by terminology, it will be called a 'regional record of authorized fishing vessels'. The record will be made accessible through a secured interface on the FCWC website.

3.1.8 Establishment of the RVMC

- Thank Ghana, the host country, for accommodating the request of the FCWC Secretariat and for offering to extend the FCWC office space available to host the equipment of the RVMC. Urge Ghana to formalize the office space extension by way of an official letter.
- Welcome the preparation of a draft legal, administrative and technical framework for the RVMC and encourage Member States to review it and to hold discussions, if necessary, through an extraordinary meeting, before the next Conference of Ministers.
- Recognise that the operations of the RVMC will rely on the availability of an up-to-date record of fishing vessels authorized to operate in the area.

3.1.9 Management of small-scale fisheries

- Agree that, going forward, MCS efforts in the small-scale fisheries sector should become a more important focus of the West Africa Task Force.
- Commend the efforts already undertaken and those ongoing within Member States in the area of vessel tracking within the artisanal fleet. Stress the importance of ensuring cost effective means of securing necessary equipment in a manner that is not overly burdensome for fishers. Acknowledge the need to engage and sensitise fishers in order to dispel any distrust. Urge that pilot projects, upon completion, are properly assessed and documented in order to facilitate support from funders and technical partners for scaling-up.

3.1.10 Communication with other States and regional bodies

- Welcome the participation of Sierra Leone and Cameroon in this Task Force meeting as a first step towards increased communication and information sharing with countries and regions neighbouring the FCWC area.
- Agree that Cameroon and Sierra Leone will become permanent observers to the West Africa Task Force, provided that they designate a focal person and adhere to the principles of communication, collaboration and cooperation.
- Stress the need for operational cooperation between FCWC and its sister organisations SRFC and COREP to facilitate collaboration on cases, the dissemination of warnings and vessel notifications, the verification of vessel documents, and other matters.
- Agree to work towards formalizing the existing cooperation between the West Africa Task Force and the FISH-i Africa Task Force through engaging the relevant Regional Economic Communities, namely ECOWAS and SADC, and establishing operational links between the two emerging regional MCS centres.

3.1.11 Cooperation with other agencies and initiatives

- Welcome the decision of JICA to support a regional project in support to the FCWC's intervention areas, and in coordination with existing initiatives. Agreed that JICA will become a permanent observer in future Task Force meetings.

3.1.12 2019 FCWC Conference of Ministers

- Note with concern that no funding was yet available to hold the upcoming Conference of Ministers in Benin due to delays in receiving Member States' contributions to the operating budget of the FCWC Secretariat, and urge all members to assist in securing the required budget in time.
- Agree to work towards the successful implementation of the FCWC Secretariat's activities around the 2019 Conference of Ministers. Each Member State committed to take necessary actions.

3.2 Requests from the Task Force

The WATF meeting agreed to the following requests to the TT, to:

3.2.1 Support to the Task Force

- Prepare draft TORs for the integration of regional experts into the Technical Team.
- Review and update the existing Task Force TORs, including the role of observer countries and other parties in the Task Force.

3.2.2 International meetings

- Proceed with the preparation of upcoming meetings, in particular those taking place next month (Our Ocean 2019 in Norway and the IMO Cape Town Agreement meeting in Spain).

3.2.3 Training and equipment

- Integrate the content of the newly released manual on vessel document verification into dedicated training activities. Training material derived from the manual will be validated at national and regional levels for further use in future trainings.
- Finalize the procurement of basic equipment for inspectors using the facility provided under the Norad-funded project, including tablets. Provide associated training to this equipment.
- Finalize the preparation and production of fisheries inspector language cards to overcome language issues and facilitate communication between inspectors and foreign crew onboard fishing vessels.
- Ensure that the pool of officers who have benefitted from the Training of Trainers sessions organised under the EU and Norway-funded projects are selected in priority to participate in all upcoming technical trainings under the current projects supporting the Task Force. This is to ensure that capacity building activities are aimed at individuals who can build and maintain the institutional memory of their agencies, and train their peers.

3.2.4 Regional record of authorised vessels

- Assess options for setting up the architecture and interface of the record to be hosted by FCWC, and the processes for national sharing of relevant information into the record. Options will be presented to TF members with a glossary of the terms used in the meeting and following the review of the 2011 study on fishing vessel registers to ensure the agreed terminology is well understood by all members.

3.2.5 PSMA

- Ensure that national level training activities consider the strengthening of port controls, as per the individual needs of each Member State.
- Facilitate exchanges of personnel to build port control operational capacity.

3.2.6 Establishment of the RVMC

- Support the establishment of operations of the RVMC, including remote access to the regional VMS by all countries, including those with no national VMS.
- Integrate the regional VMS with existing and future national and regional tools (including Basecamp, the Regional Record of Authorised Fishing Vessels and the Regional Observer Programme).
- Conduct assessment and training on the regional VMS and other Maritime Domain Awareness platforms in Member States to ensure that each country is maximising the integration and benefits of available MCS tools.

3.2.7 Transhipment Strategy

- Continue the analysis of the operations of reefers visiting the ports of the region, based on the methodology presented, as a way to provide a baseline for future risk assessment and allow for better targeted controls.
- Initiate the production of outreach products building awareness and understanding of the outputs of the analysis in order to better communicate on the issues and bring them to the attention of decision makers.
- Initiate a regional study in order to assess the characteristics and nature of impacts of transhipment operations between trawlers and landing canoes or small-scale fishing boats across the region.

3.3 Further requests outside the scope of the TT

Promote the training and recruitment of fisheries technologists within fisheries departments to strengthen their capacity to conduct gear compliance assessments.

4. Closing remarks

The FCWC Secretary General thanked all participants, extending special thanks to Ms Bola Kupolati, the outgoing Nigerian Head of MCS for her hard work and dedication, having participated in the WATF since its inception.

The FCWC Secretary General introduced the NaFAA Deputy Director General, Mr Augustine M. Manoballah, who closed the meeting on behalf of the host State. The Deputy Director General confirmed that the President had that day given his signature to the new Liberian Fisheries Act, meaning actions to implement the PSMA can move forward. He extended his thanks and appreciation to all participants and noted that Liberia stands ready to support and implement the outcomes of the meeting.



5. Annexes

5.1 List of acronyms and abbreviations

AIS	Automatic identification system	MCSCC	SADC Regional MCS Coordination Centre
AREP	Advance request for entry to port	NAFAA	National Fisheries and Aquaculture Authority Liberia
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations	NGO	Non-governmental organisation
AU	African Union	nm	Nautical mile
CMM	Conservation and management measures	NORAD	Norwegian Development Agency
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States	NPOA-IUU	National plan of action to prevent, deter and eliminate illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing
EEZ	Exclusive economic zone	NWG	National Working Group
EFCA	European Fisheries Control Agency	PESCAO	The European Union's 'Improved Regional Fisheries Governance in West Africa' Project
EJF	Environmental Justice Foundation	PSMA	UN FAO Port State Measures Agreement
EU	European Union	PSM-SIF	Port State Measures to Stop Illegal Fishing
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations	PTFG	Port Task Force Ghana
FCWC	Fisheries Committee of the West Central Gulf of Guinea	RFMO	Regional Fisheries Management Organisation
FEU	Fisheries Enforcement Unit	ROP	Regional observer programme
FMC	Fisheries Monitoring Centre	RPOA-IUU	Regional plan of action to promote responsible fishing practices including combating illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing
GIZ	German development agency (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit)	RVMC	Regional Vessel Monitoring Centre
GOGIN	Gulf of Guinea Inter-Regional Network	SADC	Southern African Development Community
IATTC	Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission	SIF	Stop Illegal Fishing
ICAO	International Civil Aviation Organization	SRFC	Sub-Regional Fisheries Commission
ICCAT	International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas	SWIOFC	Southwest Indian Ocean Fisheries Commission
IEZ	Inshore exclusion zone	TF	Task Force
IMO	International Maritime Organization	TF8	Task Force meeting 8
INTREP	Intelligence report	TF9	Task Force meeting 9
IOC	Indian Ocean Commission	TMT	Trygg Mat Tracking
IOTC	Indian Ocean Tuna Commission	ToR	Terms of Reference
IUU	Illegal, unreported and unregulated (fishing)	TT	Technical Team
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency	USD	United States Dollar
JMC	Joint Maritime Committee	VMS	Vessel monitoring system
LCG	Liberian Coast Guard	WARFP	West Africa Regional Fisheries Project
LMA	Liberia Maritime Authority	WATF	West Africa Task Force
LOA	Length overall		
MCS	Monitoring, control and surveillance		



5.2 Workshop agenda

24 September 2019

08:30 to 09:00

REGISTRATION

09:00 to 09:40

OPENING SESSION

Welcome by FCWC Secretariat – Secretary-General Seraphin Dedi

- Remarks from the WATF Technical Team – TMT Executive Director Duncan Copeland
- Opening by the Director General of National Fisheries and Aquaculture Authority – Emma Glassco
- Introduction of participants

09:40 to 10:00

COFFEE BREAK

10:00 to 10:05

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

10:05 to 11:30

TECHNICAL TEAM REPORT TO THE WATF – TMT

- Quick Recap of the WATF and Norad and PESCAO supporting initiatives to date
- Technical Team report to the Task Force on TF8 Outcomes and Requests
- Update on equipment support to the WATF
- Update on Norad priorities
- Update on regional cases

11:30 to 13:00

WEST AFRICA TASK FORCE COUNTRY PRESENTATIONS – National Presentations by Country Representatives

- Nigeria, Togo, Ghana, Benin, Liberia, Côte d'Ivoire

13:00 to 14:00

LUNCH

14:00 to 15:30

WEST AFRICA TASK FORCE COUNTRY PRESENTATIONS cont.

15:30 to 15:50

COFFEE BREAK

15:50 to 17:20

WEST AFRICA TASK FORCE COUNTRY PRESENTATIONS cont.

17:20

END OF THE DAY

25 September 2019

- 09:00 to 09:05** **REVIEW OF DAY 1** – Host country + Secretary General of FCWC
-
- 09:05 to 11:00** **IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PORT STATES MEASURE AGREEMENT**
- Recap of PSMA in region – FCWC
 - African Ports Network – SIF and Ghana
 - A practical approach to implementation – SIF
 - Pre-port aspect of implementing PSM – SIF / TMT
 - Strengthening monitoring of national vessels through PSM – SIF
- 11:00 to 11:20** **COFFEE BREAK**
-
- 11:20 to 12:45** **REGIONAL STRATEGY TO COMBAT ILLEGAL TRANSHIPMENT AT SEA**
- Update on regional reefer study – TMT
 - Developing approaches to combat saiko fishing in Ghana – EJF
 - The establishment of the reefer control unit in Liberia – Liberia
 - Overview and research into transshipment in the FCWC region – SIF
- 12:45 to 13:30** **LUNCH**
-
- 13:30 to 15:00** **TOWARDS A FCWC REGIONAL RECORD OF FISHING VESSELS**
- Why a regional record? – FCWC
 - Review of 2012 feasibility study and potential next steps – TMT
 - Legal and institutional framework – FCWC
 - Opportunities, challenges, ways forward
- 15:00 to 15:45** **TASK FORCE TECHNICAL GROUP**
- Establishment of a WATF technical group made of national experts to work with Technical Team on workplans, reports, training development, TF meeting etc. – FCWC/TMT
- 15:45 to 16:05** **COFFEE BREAK**
-
- 16:05 to 17:30** **FISHERIES MANAGEMENT ISSUES**
- Small-scale fishing vessel tracking
 - Overview – small-scale vessel tracking trials around Africa - exactEarth
 - Case Study – small-scale vessel tracking in Liberia - Liberia
 - EJF tracking plans
- 17:30** **END OF THE DAY**
-

CONTINUED OVERLEAF...

5.2 Workshop agenda cont.

26 September 2019

09:00 to 09:05	REVIEW OF DAY 2 – Seraphin Dedi, Liberia representative
09:05 to 10:30	OPERATIONALISATION OF THE REGIONAL MCS CENTER <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Legal and institutional framework – FCWC TA• Operational arrangements at national and regional level – FCWC TA• Collaboration between the FCWC Regional MCS center and Yaoundé mechanisms – FCWC TA• Update from SADC – SIF
10:30 to 10:50	COFFEE BREAK
10:50 to 12:00	INCREASING COOPERATION WITH NEIGHBOURING COUNTRIES AND REGIONS <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Short presentation from Sierra Leone, Cameroon, SRFC and COREP on MCS initiatives and activities – Country Representatives / RFB Representatives• Discussion on Opportunities and Challenges for increased cooperation with the WATF, and ways forward
12:00 to 12:45	PLAN OF ACTION TO COMBAT IUU <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review of the strategic document for RPOA-IUU implementation – FCWC TA• Review of the strategic document for the implementation of NPOA-IUUs – FCWC TA• Towards a Regional Observer programme – FCWC TA• Discussion
12:45 to 13:15	FCWC GENERAL UPDATE <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Preparation for the FCWC 12th Conference of Ministers in Benin – FCWC• Presentation of the FCWC Factsheets – FCWC• Upcoming international meetings – FCWC/TMT
13:15 to 14:00	LUNCH
14:00 to 15:45	WEST AFRICA TASK FORCE SESSION – Member States <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Task Force discussion, requests, recommendations and internal decisions
15:45 to 16:00	THANKS AND CLOSING BY THE GOVERNMENT OF LIBERIA
16:00	CLOSE OF WEST AFRICA TASK FORCE MEETING 9



5.3 Attendance list

5.3.1 Member States

BENIN

Aholoukpe Cyrille

Director's Representative

Brito Urbain

DPH/MAEP, Chef Service Controle SCS

CÔTE D'IVOIRE

Bina Fofana

Deputy Director of Maritime and Lagoon Fisheries

Maxime Diomande

Head of MCS

GHANA

Michael Arthur-Dadzie

Fisheries Commission Executive Director

Richard Yeboah

Principal Fisheries Manager

LIBERIA

NaFAA

Emma Glassco,

Director General

Augustine Manoballah

Deputy Director-General, Administration

William Boeh

Deputy Director-General, Technical Services

Francis Boimah

Transshipment Coordinator

Patrick Davis

Manager MCS

Alexander Dunbar

Manager of Policy and Planning

Checter Dweh

Human Resources Assistant

Foday Kallon

Inspector

Lewis Konoe

Communications Manager

Tete Doe Momoh

Assistant Director

Andy Read

Technical Advisor

Ellen Teewon

Chief Inspector

Glasgow Togba

Director of MCS

Siekula Vannie

Human Resources Director

Oretha Weah

Enumerator

Anthony Williams

Monitoring and Evaluation Manager

OTHER AGENCIES

Emmanuel Davies

National Port Authority of Liberia, Port Facility Security Officer

Sam Lomax

Border Marine Patrol Chief, Liberia Immigration Service

Abraham Saah

NaFAA, Supervisor of Fisheries Monitoring Center

Isaac Massaquoui

Liberian National Coast Guard, Communication Chief

Garpuh Garvoie Kardoh

Liberia Maritime Authority (LiMA) TMC Staff

NIGERIA

Ime Umoh

Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, Director

Bola Aduke Kupolati

Deputy Director, Head of MCS

TOGO

Kossi Ahoedo

Head of MCS

Bokobosso Kisse

Assistant SPP

5.3.2 Observers

CAMEROON	Ngollong Njangi Jean-Blaise <i>DPAIH/MINEPIA, Chef de la Brigade de Contrôle et Surveillance des Pêches</i>
SIERRA LEONE	Hindolo D S Momoh <i>Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources, Head, MCS Unit</i>
ECOWAS	Aboubacar Sidibe <i>Senior Policy Officer</i>
EFCA	Alexander Kempff <i>Head of Section</i>
EJF	Socrates Segbor <i>Programme Manager/Country Coordinator</i>
JICA	Kawai Schoichiro <i>Expert</i>

5.3.3 Technical Team



Seraphin Dedi <i>Secretary-General</i>
Makane Ndiaye <i>Technical Advisor</i>
Kofi Taylor-Hayford <i>Communications Officer</i>
Ayebaine Ere-Walson <i>MCS Compliance Coordinator</i>
Per Erik Bergh <i>Coordinator</i>
Sally Frankcom <i>Communications Officer</i>
Mathew Markides <i>Research Officer</i>
Duncan Copeland <i>Executive Director</i>
Viviane Koutob <i>TMT Regional & PESCAO Project Coordinator</i>
Jodie Lee <i>Analyst</i>
Yann Yvergniaux <i>Analyst</i>



The West Africa Task Force brings together the six member countries of the FCWC – Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Liberia, Nigeria and Togo – to tackle illegal fishing and fisheries crime. The Task Force is hosted by the FCWC and supported by a Technical Team that includes Trygg Mat Tracking (TMT) and Stop Illegal Fishing with funding from Norad. By actively cooperating, by sharing information and by establishing interagency working groups the West Africa Task Force are working together to end illegal fishing.

For more information go to:

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