
Summary Report

The 3rd COORDINATION COMMITTEE MEETING of the Regional Plan of Action to Promote Responsible Fishing Practices including Combating IUU Fishing in the Region (RPOA)

**Da Nang – Vietnam
1-2 December 2010**

1. WELCOME AND BACKGROUND

The Coordination Committee was attended by representatives of eight participating countries to the Regional Plan of Action to Promote Responsible Fishing Practices including Combating IUU Fishing in the Region (RPOA) (Australia, Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam). Brunei Darussalam, Papua New Guinea and East Timor were not able to attend the meeting. Also representatives from the inter-governmental organisations, i.e. Southeast Asian Fisheries Development Centre (SEAFDEC), FAO Asia Pacific Fisheries Commission (APFIC), InfoFish and Worldfish were unable to attend.

The meeting was led by Dr Suseno Sukoyono (Social and Cultural Advisor to the Minister of Marine Affairs and Fisheries, Republic of Indonesia), Mr Simon Veitch (Manager, Northern International Fisheries, Sustainable Resources Management Division, Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, Australia) and Mr Nguyen Viet Manh (Director of Department of Science, Technology and International Cooperation, Directorate of Fisheries, Government of Vietnam) as the co-chairs of the meeting.

Mr Nguyen Viet Manh, Director of Department of Science, Technology and International Cooperation, Directorate of Fisheries, Government of Vietnam welcomed RPOA participating countries to the 3rd meeting of the RPOA Coordination Committee. Mr Manh outlined the increase in total catches in Vietnam and the significant contribution this has had on the economy. He outlined the many challenges still faced by Vietnam in the fisheries sector and the resultant policies that have been developed with support and direction from the Prime Minister, especially in combating IUU fishing. Mr Manh emphasised the many common issues of concern for RPOA participating countries regarding fisheries resources and was hopeful of increased communication and cooperation. He thanked the Australian and Indonesian Governments for their initiative to establish the RPOA.

Dr Suseno Sukoyono, Social and Cultural Adviser to the Minister of Marine Affairs and Fisheries, Republic of Indonesia, thanked the Government of Vietnam for their efforts to hold this event. He outlined national efforts of each state to promote responsible fisheries as well as to combat IUU fishing should be strongly supported through regional cooperation. Dr Suseno noted the RPOA has a role – to fill in the gaps between the international and national implementation efforts to combat IUU fishing. He reiterated Indonesia's commitment to serve as the Secretariat as outlined

in the 2nd Coordination Committee Meeting and indicated Indonesia's willingness to provide the Secretariat for a further two years. He was certain the outcomes would lead to a stronger commitment, better coordination and understanding in implementing RPOA actions.

Mr Veitch thanked Vietnam for hosting the meeting and Indonesia for serving as the RPOA Secretariat for the past three years. He reiterated the RPOA initiative was endorsed by Fisheries Ministers with the authority of governments. Mr Veitch noted this was the 3rd Coordination Committee since 2007 and had built the necessary foundations for significant progress. He noted the benefit of bilateral, subregional and regional cooperation to progress RPOA programs. He recalled the Coordination Committee's responsibility to provide advice on the emerging issues, such as Port State Measures, and on national circumstances that might impact on the region. He also noted the meeting was a good opportunity for members to share views in the RPOA context and echoed the RPOA was at a critical stage requiring accelerated management and human and institutional capacity development.

The co-chairs expressed their appreciation to the Secretariat for their excellent arrangements for this meeting. The Secretariat stated the main objective of the meeting which was to review the workplan developed in the 2nd RPOA Coordination Committee Meeting and to develop the work plan for 2011.

2. REGIONAL OUTLOOK

Australia presented on the impacts of IUU fishing and some of the strategies used effectively at the national, regional and international level to combat IUU fishing. The Committee noted that IUU fishing is recognised as being a major contributor to the declining global trend in fisheries resources and that its impact, particularly on developing countries, can have several ecological, sustainable, economic growth and social consequences. Australia reported that a combined approach using effective enforcement, regional cooperation and targeted education and capacity building has resulted in a sharp decline in IUU fishing in Australian fishing waters.

RPOA participant countries noted that effective communication and cooperation were key to addressing the issues associated with IUU fishing and developing sustainable fishing practices in the framework of responsible fisheries. It was emphasised that there are other regional bodies and forums with similar agendas which may be able to support the RPOA, including scientific and data information management support. The EC Regulation 1005/2008 (which entered into force on 1 January 2010) for catch certification has provided significant impetus to progress matters from catch to export and it was noted that non-cooperating countries may find difficulties in the future to trade fisheries products.

Participating countries also identified the need for strong governance frameworks and legislation with a desire to harmonise legislation amongst countries in the future. The need for an architecture to guide and support the RPOA secretariat was noted. Additionally, there was an emphasis placed upon Training of Trainers (ToT) and sharing of experiences, with the objective of providing information through officials to fishers and fishing communities.

3. RPOA OUTCOMES

The meeting reviewed the RPOA implementation to date, the continuing IUU pressures, and the responses of RPOA members to address those issues.

The Secretariat provided an update to the Coordination Committee regarding the implementation of the 2010 workplan. The catch certification trial in Indonesia was conducted for local port and fisheries officials. It was outlined the trial needs some improvement and further exploration regarding future opportunities for RPOA participating countries in order to share their experiences. The Secretariat noted that sharing of information must consider existing information and the available formats used in each country, but recommended the use of the FAO template. It was encouraged that sharing experiences would be beneficial for RPOA participating countries in order to ensure compliance of the EC Regulation 1005/2008. The Secretariat also encouraged the use of the RPOA website for this matter.

Indonesia additionally presented progress regarding the implementation of Port State Measures through trials in ports of five fishing ports, both in Western and Eastern Indonesia.

4. RPOA MCS SUB REGIONAL GROUPS

a. Arafura – Timor Seas

The Arafura-Timor Seas group includes Australia, Indonesia, Papua New Guinea and Timor Leste. The objectives of the Arafura and Timor Seas sub-regional group are:

- to identify MCS priorities that will benefit from a collaborative and cooperative approach;
- to share relevant information; and
- to coordinate sub-regional activities supporting the promotion of responsible fishing practices including targeting IUU fishing activity.

A workshop held in April 2009 identified four priorities which could lend themselves to a cooperative approach. The priorities were:

- to broaden the scope of cooperative activity between Indonesia and Australia to include Timor Leste and Papua New Guinea
- to identify and share data on IUU vessel activity within the region
- to take action consistent with port state responsibilities
- to report on training and MCS activities.

b. Gulf of Thailand

The Gulf of Thailand group includes Thailand, Vietnam and Cambodia. Thailand highlighted the importance of the inventory record for both small and large scale vessels, noting the different systems currently operating in each of the sub working group countries. Also, Thailand emphasised the need to harmonise data systems and outlined the benefits of information exchange. It was reported that SEAFDEC was holding training courses on MCS.

The Coordination Committee noted that there was a need to meet the expectation of the FAO Global Record but also noted that small scale vessels were prevalent in the region and small scale fisheries were difficult to define. There was significant discussion regarding a proposal that SEAFDEC could coordinate information

regarding the minimum information requirements as recommended by the FAO Global Record Expert Consultation.

c. Southern and Eastern Area of the South China Sea and Sulu-Suluwesi

Malaysia presented the progress of the Southern and Eastern Area of the South China Sea and Sulu-Suluwesi group including the preparation of a meeting of an Ad-Hoc Technical Working Group on MCS Network and Fishery Resources and Management, to be held in Malaysia, 8-10 December 2010. The report of the 2nd Meeting on The Southern and Eastern Area of the South China Sea and Sulu-Suluwesi group is provided in Annex **X**.

The Coordination Committee emphasised the need for all RPOA participating countries to enhance coordination amongst relevant agencies within countries, to continue coordination within MCS sub regional working groups and to foster information exchange with the Secretariat, especially regarding the IUU vessel list.

5. RPOA ADVISORY BODIES

Vietnam presented on recent meetings of SEAFDEC and APFIC. The Coordination Committee was encouraged by the fact many of the issues were common to the RPOA workplan. The Committee cautioned against duplication of work and urged countries to work together to progress RPOA initiatives in these bodies. The Coordination Committee also suggested that it would be useful if the bodies recorded their terms of reference in order to better align their work and avoid any potential duplication.

Similarly, the Coordination Committee noted that a presentation was delivered at the RPOA workshop on 29-30 November 2010 on the Coral Triangle Initiative (CTI) and recognised that close coordination was required due to areas of mutual interest.

6. CAPACITY BUILDING WORKSHOP

As an action item from the 2010 RPOA workplan, Australia tabled a paper prepared by MRAG-Poseidon, the consultancy group procured by Australia to develop a framework for development assistance. The Coordination Committee noted that the final report would not be finalised before the end of 2010 but welcomed the outcomes as were tabled at the meeting and agreed in principle to adopt them as actions for capacity building in the region. There was a need to coordinate projects under the draft report headings but countries were encouraged to use the final report to identify priority areas and approach donor agencies. This could be done either collectively or individually, but with emphasis on approaching donor agencies as a coordinated group. It was again emphasised there may be a risk of duplicating activities due to the work of RPOA advisory bodies and donors working in the region. Countries were asked to ensure there was effective coordination. Several options for the promotion of the report were suggested, including the RPOA Secretariat working closely with the ASEAN Secretariat in order to discuss activities with donors.

7. RPOA 2010 WORKPLAN

Australia presented on an independent study undertaken into the strengths, weaknesses and harmonisation of fisheries legislative frameworks of RPOA countries. The study took into account all relevant regional and international fisheries

instruments including the recently concluded FAO Port State Measures Agreement. Copies (on a CD and one hard copy) of the country specific reports were presented to all attending countries. Countries recognised the need for consultation within governments on the recommendations within the reports. The Committee recognised that the report would be useful when reviewing legislation and making improvements.

The Coordination Committee was informed of the Indonesia-Australia Joint Public Information Campaign (PIC) and its objectives of raising awareness amongst fishers of the need for sustainable fishing practices. The PIC is delivered by officials from the Indonesian Government, including at the district and provincial level, and the Australian Government. The PIC focuses on meetings in regional areas but also includes public service announcements, newspaper, television, meetings with non-government organisations, fisher groups and academics. The program has changed over time in response to changes in the objectives of the two countries. The PIC also allows for sharing of information between provincial and district officials and government officials. The Coordination Committee noted that there were opportunities for the information campaign to be modified and extended to other RPOA countries but it should work in concert with other strategies to promote sustainable fishing practices.

8. RPOA 2011 WORKPLAN

The following workplan was endorsed by the Coordination Committee.

1. Strengthening legal, administrative and policy frameworks
 - 1.1. Countries to review the country specific reports of the model legislation study and provide comment to Australia (Murray Johns) on inaccuracies or concerns and indicate their endorsement of the finalisation of the report by 28 February 2011. Pending endorsement by countries, the outcomes of the study to be placed on the RPOA website by mid March 2011.
Timeframe: 28 February 2011
Responsibility: All RPOA countries
 - 1.2. Countries to report to the 2011 RPOA Coordination Committee meeting on improvements taken with respect to policy or legislation consistent with the findings of the model legislation, noting the desire of the RPOA to harmonise legislation in the region where possible.
Timeframe: Nov/Dec 2011
Responsibility: All RPOA countries
 - 1.3. Australia to finalise the framework for human and institutional capacity development and provide to the Secretariat for circulation to the Coordination Committee for endorsement in early 2011.
Responsibility: Australia/RPOA Secretariat
Timeframe: 1 March 2011
 - 1.4. Countries to review framework for capacity building development and to identify priority programs/projects and potential donor agencies/regional organisations in order to progress.
Responsibility: All RPOA countries
Timeframes: Nov/Dec 2011

- 1.5. Secretariat to circulate the RPOA terms of reference and a draft covering letter to the Coordination Committee with a view to being provided to fisheries regional bodies seeking advice and close cooperation on areas of mutual interest. Secretariat to advise participating countries of timeframes for comment.
Responsibility: All RPOA countries
Timeframe: 1 March 2011
2. Strengthening regional/international cooperation
 - 2.1. Countries to consult internally on implementation of the FAO Port State Measures Agreement and to report to the Coordination Committee on action taken.
Responsibility: All RPOA countries
Timeframes: Nov/Dec 2011
 - 2.2. Secretariat to coordinate arrangements for a capacity building workshop in FAO PSM.
Responsibility: Malaysia
Timeframes: February 2011
 - 2.3. Secretariat to include website links to RFMO IUU Vessel Lists on the RPOA website. Countries to continue to share information on experiences, regulations and IUU listed vessels (surveillance, inspection reports) on RPOA website.
Responsibility: All RPOA countries
Timeframes: Nov/Dec 2011
 - 2.4. Countries to designate and publicise the ports which vessels may request entry on its national websites, consistent with the FAO Port State Measures Agreement.
Responsibility: All RPOA countries
Timeframes: Nov/Dec 2011
 - 2.5. Australia/Indonesia to review the Australia-Indonesia Joint Public Information Campaign and identify lessons learnt. The review will include comments on extending the JPIC into other RPOA countries, including various stakeholders.
Responsibility: Australia/Indonesia
Timeframes: June 2011
 - 2.6. Vietnam to organise a workshop to assess the impacts of the EC Regulations on small scale fisheries.
Responsibility: Vietnam
Timeframe: Tentative Nov/Dec 2011

9. CLOSING REMARKS

Vietnam thanked all participants for their attendance and continued spirit of cooperation. Vietnam also thanked Indonesia and Australia for their support for this meeting.

Indonesia and Australia thanked Vietnam for holding the meeting, noting that the meeting had been extremely productive and looked forward to achieving the priority actions that had been identified in the 2010-2011 workplan.