

**SUMMARY REPORT OF
THE 5th MEETING OF THE MCS SUB REGIONAL
(TIMOR & ARAFURA SEAS) GROUP
Darwin, Australia**

11-13 MARCH 2015

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The 5th MCS Sub-Regional (Arafura and Timor Seas) Group meeting was convened in Darwin, Australia from 11 March to 13 March 2015 in follow up to the 4th MCS Sub-Regional (Arafura and Timor Seas) Group meeting held in Bali, Indonesia in April-May 2014.
2. The meeting was attended by delegates from all four member countries: Australia, Indonesia, Papua New Guinea and Timor-Leste. The list of participants appears as **Annex 1**.
3. Mr John Davis, Senior Manager Compliance Operations (Darwin), Australian Fisheries Management Authority, as Chair of the meeting welcomed the delegates and officially opened the meeting on behalf of Australia. Mr Davis commented that IUU fishing presents a significant threat to the south east Asian region. He commented that IUU fishing damages fish stocks that many countries are trying to manage in a sustainable manner and it robs countries of millions of dollars of potential revenue. Mr Davis commented that he was aware that this sub-group had made many significant moves forward in combating IUU in the sub-region and that these actions had made a difference. He expressed his appreciation to the delegates for their participation in the meeting and was confident that the meeting would result in further positive collaboration between the members in the fight against IUU fishing.
6. The meeting discussed the agenda and agreed to adopt the agenda. The agenda appears as **Annex 2**.

II. CURRENT SITUATION IN THE REGION

INDONESIA

8. Mrs Sere Alina Tampubolon delivered a presentation updating the Group on current activity occurring in Indonesian waters as well as new initiatives implemented to combat IUU fishing. Her presentation appears in **Annex 3**.

Key issues from Indonesia include:

- Fishing vessels without legal permit (cloning/duplication of vessel name)
- Fishing using prohibited fishing gear in unauthorised fishing grounds
- Fake documentation, manipulation of licences, (deletion certificate, bill of sale)
- Illegal and/or unreported transshipment at sea
- Multiple flags
- Dummy company address and forged documentation

TIMOR-LESTE

10. Mr Tomas De Sousa delivered a presentation outlining the current situation in Timor-Leste waters. His presentation appears in **Annex 4**.

The key issues from Timor-Leste is:

- Large scale fishing and transshipment vessels operating in southern Timor Leste waters.

PAPUA NEW GUINEA

9. Mr Gisa Komangin delivered a presentation outlining the current situation in Papua New Guinean waters. His presentation appears in **Annex 5**.

Key issues from Papua New Guinea include:

- Unlicensed fishing vessels and licenced fishing vessels operating without VMS operating in the Dogleg Area
- Unregulated transshipment at sea
- Duplication of issued licenses and Markings
- Flagging of fishing vessels and Catch Declaration as a result of transshipment
- Utilisation of member countries waters to avoid enforcement activities
- BDM trade between Merauke and Papua New Guinea

AUSTRALIA

7. Ms Cindy Bravos delivered a presentation detailing the current situation in Australian waters with Mr John Jones providing details of the issues in the Torres Strait. Their presentation appears in **Annex 6**.

Key issues from Australia include:-

- Continuing small incursions into the Australian Fishing Zone (AFZ) including the Torres Strait Protected Zone (TSPZ);
- The Seabed Jurisdiction Area where it is believed that sedentary species are being taken illegally;
- Concerns of large numbers of vessels operating just north of the AFZ including the TSPZ as well as the increasing numbers of fish aggregation devices in use in this area;
- Continuing concerns relating to destructive fishing methods being used in the Seabed Jurisdiction Area;
- PNG nationals visiting Saibai without gaining prior-approval from Saibai community and undertaking illegal netting of dugong and turtle and involved in unlicensed commercial operations concerning Tropical Rock Lobster sold in Daru, additionally take of Crab with Australian nationals;
- BDM taken illegally from the TSPZ and subsequent trade between Merauke and Papua New Guinea.

III. AUSTRALIAN CUSTOMS AND BORDER PROTECTION SERVICE PRESENTATION

11. Mr Sam Steane, Aviation Unit, Australian Customs and Border Protection Service, delivered a presentation on the changes that he has noticed occurring north of the Australian Fishing Zone identified through CoastWatch flights. These significant changes have occurred over a very short period, including increasing sightings of FADs and the increase in large-scale fishing vessels such as purse seiners as well as changes in the type/construction of vessels being sighted. Due to operational security, a copy of the presentation is not provided.

IV. REVIEW OF PREVIOUS MEETING RELATED TO THE MCS SUB-REGIONAL (ARAFURA AND TIMOR SEAS) GROUP

12. A summary of the outcomes and the Action Plan for 2014 resulting from the 4th MCS Sub-Regional (Arafura and Timor Seas) Group meeting, held in Bali, Indonesia was presented by Mr Davis and endorsed by the Group. This is included at **Annex 7**.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS AND FORWARD WORKING PLAN

17. The meeting had extensive discussions in relation to possible actions for the reduction of IUU activity in the sub-region. As a result of discussions, action agreed to be taken by the Group are detailed in the 'Key IUU Issues and Action 2015 document as it appears at **Annex 8**.
18. It was evident from discussions that issues identified at previous MCS Sub-Regional (Arafura and Timor Seas) Group meetings were continuing to occur in the Arafura and Timor Seas.
19. These key issues are -
 - Unlicensed fishing vessels operating in member countries' waters
 - Unauthorised mothership activity including transhipment
 - Duplicate licenses (multiple vessels using one licence and duplicate vessel markings)
 - Double flagged vessels
 - Non-compliant VMS
 - Utilisation of member countries waters to avoid enforcement activities;
 - Identified that the increasing use of FADs in the sub-region was a concern.

VII. OTHER BUSINESS

Australia noted the importance to maintain operational security in relation to the action items discussed in order to achieve the desired objectives.

Indonesia, Papua New Guinea and Timor-Leste expressed their appreciation to Australia for hosting the meeting and welcomed the opportunity to continue to collaborate in such a cooperative manner in combatting IUU fishing in the sub-region. All members thanked Mr Davis in his role as Chair.

COORDINATION OF THE MCS SUB-REGIONAL (ARAFURA AND TIMOR SEAS) GROUP

20. Timor-Leste kindly offered to host the 6th MCS Sub-Regional meeting in Timor-Leste in the first quarter of 2016 subject to approval by the General Director. Timor-Leste will advise the Secretariat of this decision by July 2015.

PNG generously offered to host the meeting in PNG if Timor-Leste was unable to do so.

22. The outcomes of this meeting will be reported to the RPOA members through the RPOA-IUU Secretariat. Activities undertaken throughout 2015 will also be reported to the Coordination Committee at the next RPOA Coordination Committee meeting.

VIII. CLOSING OF THE MEETING

23. Mr John Davis as Chair expressed his appreciation to all participants for their active participation and contribution, which enabled the meeting to come up with viable outcomes and recommendations for combating IUU fishing in the Arafura and Timor Seas.

25. Mr John Davis as Chair declared the meeting closed.

Annex 1 - List of Participants

Annex 2 - Agenda

Annex 3 – Indonesia: Presentation

Annex 4 – Timor Leste: Presentation

Annex 5 - Papua New Guinea: Presentation

Annex 6 - Australia: Presentation

Annex 7 – Review of 2014 Key IUU Issues and Action Plan

Annex 8 – 2015 Key IUU Issues and Action Plan