

**SUMMARY REPORT OF
THE 7TH MEETING OF THE MCS SUB REGIONAL
(TIMOR & ARAFURA SEAS) GROUP
KOKOPO, PAPUA NEW GUINEA**

26-27 APRIL 2017

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The 7th MCS Sub-Regional (Arafura and Timor Seas) Group meeting was convened in Kokopo, Papua New Guinea from 26 to 27 April 2017 in follow up to the 6th MCS Sub-Regional (Arafura and Timor Seas) Group meeting held in Dili, Timor-Leste in April 2016.
2. The meeting was attended by delegates from all of the four member countries: Australia, Indonesia, Papua New Guinea and Timor-Leste. The list of participants appears as **Annex 1**.
3. Ms Martina Ragagalo, Compliance Manager, National Fisheries Authority, as host of the meeting welcomed the delegates and handed over to Mr Wilson Matava, Provincial Administrator, East New Britain Province, to officially open the meeting. Mr Matava thanked the National Fisheries Authority hosting the meeting and noted the importance of MCS Sub-Regional Group in establishing an action plan to ensure the sustainable economic growth of fisheries. He acknowledged the deep importance of fisheries to people across the region.
4. Mr Brendan Rayner, acting manager of International Compliance Operations, Australian Fisheries Management Authority, as Chair of the meeting welcomed the delegates, and thanked Mr Matava for his warm welcome. Mr Rayner reiterated his thanks to the hosts. Mr Rayner acknowledged the importance of the Sub-Regional Group, and highlighted some of its past successes in the light of new challenges.
5. The meeting discussed and agreed to adopt the agenda. The agenda appears as **Annex 2**.

II. CURRENT SITUATION IN THE REGION

PAPUA NEW GUINEA

6. Mr Gisa Komangin delivered a presentation outlining the current situation in Papua New Guinean waters as well as new initiatives implemented to combat IUU fishing. The presentation appears as **Annex 3**.

Key issues from Papua New Guinea (PNG) include:

- Vietnamese fishing boats

- Illegal fishing for Tropical Rock Lobster (TRL) and Bêche de Mer (BDM) (BDM/Trepang) in the Australian/PNG jurisdiction by nationals
 - Continuous illegal fishing by licensed and unlicensed Indonesian Type 3s
 - BDM trading in the north/south PNG/Indonesian border
 - Catch traceability by fishing vessels in the BDM and TRL fisheries.
7. Mr David Karis provided a short overview on iFIMS (integrated Fisheries Information Management System). The program is designed to integrate various Monitoring, Control and Surveillance (MCS) Units, such as observer data, satellite tracking data, licensing information and Catch Documentation Scheme (CDS) Data into a single management system.

INDONESIA

8. Mr Sahono Budiarto delivered a presentation updating the Group on current activities occurring in Indonesian waters as well as new initiatives implemented to combat IUU fishing. The presentation appears as **Annex 4**.

Key issues from Indonesia include:

- Vietnamese fishing boats
- Unauthorised Fish Aggregating Devices (FADs/Rumpon)
- Fishing vessels without legal permit (cloning/duplication of vessel name)
- Fishing using prohibited fishing gears, in unauthorised fishing ground, port of call
- Fake documentation and manipulation of documents requisite to conduct fishing activities (eg. deletion certificate from previous flag State, bill of sale)
- Illegal and/or unreported transshipment or failing to report to the assigned fishing ports
- Multiple flags
- False company address and forged documentation.

TIMOR-LESTE

9. Mr Pedro Rodrigues delivered a presentation updating the Group on current activities occurring in Timor-Leste waters. The presentation appears as **Annex 5**.

Key issues from Timor-Leste include:

- Issuance of authorisation letters to four fishing companies proposing to fish in Timor-Leste, and subsequent arrival of 18 licenced foreign fishing vessels
- Continuing request for assistance with Port State Measures training, VMS, Catch Documentation Schemes, review of fisheries legislation and licensing
- Development of ship rider protocols to encourage cooperation with Indonesia

- IUU fishing activities in the southern Timor-Leste waters.

AUSTRALIA

10. Mr Brendan Rayner delivered a presentation updating the Group on current activities occurring in Australia waters as well as new initiatives implemented to combat IUU fishing. The presentation appears as **Annex 6**.

Key issues from Australia include:

- Vietnamese fishing boats and related proposed public information campaign in Vietnam
- Ongoing cooperation with PNG NFA and Royal PNG Constabulary (RPNGC) in dealing with referred cases and prosecution of offenders
- The reopening of the BDM fishery in PNG, and the need for ongoing monitoring of potential illegal activities in shared jurisdiction areas
- Ongoing coordinated patrols between Australian and Indonesian authorities
- Strong cooperation between Australia and Papua New Guinea in the management of a PNG flagged fishing vessel found to be illegally fishing in Australia
- Sighting of suspected IUU fishing vessel in the Indian Ocean and the potential for action by RPOA member States following notification.

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

11. A summary of the outcomes and the Action Plan for 2016 resulting from the 6th MCS Sub-Regional (Arafura and Timor Seas) Group meeting, held in Dili, Timor-Leste was presented by Mr Rayner and endorsed by the Group. This is included at **Annex 7**.

IV. RECOMMENDATIONS AND FORWARD WORKING PLAN

12. The meeting had extensive discussion in relation to possible actions for the reduction of IUU activities in the Arafura and Timor Seas. As a result of discussions, action agreed to be taken by the Group are detailed in the 2017 Key IUU Issues and Action Plan in **Annex 8**.
13. While strong progress had been made in reducing IUU activities in the Arafura and Timor Seas, some key issues identified at previous MCS Sub-Regional (Arafura and Timor Seas) Group meetings were continuing to occur.

These key issues are:

- Increasing numbers of Vietnamese fishing vessels operating illegally in the region

- Continuing need for capacity building activities in Timor-Leste in relation to licenced foreign fishing vessels and continuing IUU fishing activities in the southern waters of Timor-Leste
- Unlicensed fishing vessels operating in the waters of member countries
- False documentation of fishing vessels
- Continued use of unauthorised FADs in the Arafura and Timor Seas.

V. OTHER BUSINESS

14. There was no other business raised.

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

15. Pending confirmation, Indonesia offered to host the 8th MCS Sub-Regional meeting in Indonesia in the first quarter of 2018.
16. Papua New Guinea, Indonesia and Timor-Leste requested that Australia continue in the role as the MCS Sub-Regional (Arafura and Timor Seas) Group Secretariat. Australia has agreed to hold the position for another year.
17. The outcomes of this meeting will be reported to the RPOA members through the RPOA-IUU Secretariat. Activities undertaken throughout 2017 will also be reported to the Coordination Committee at the next RPOA Coordination Committee meeting.

VII. CLOSING OF THE MEETING

18. Mr Brendan Rayner as Chair expressed his appreciation to all participants for their active participation and contribution, which enabled the meeting to agree upon viable outcomes and recommendations for combating IUU fishing in the Arafura and Timor Seas.
19. Mr Brendan Rayner as Chair declared the meeting closed.

Annex 1 – List of Participants

Annex 2 – Agenda

Annex 3 – Papua New Guinea Presentation

Annex 4 – Indonesia Presentation

Annex 5 – Timor-Leste Presentation

Annex 6 – Australia Presentation

Annex 7 – Review of 2016 Key IUU Issues and Action Plan

Annex 8 – 2017 Key IUU Issues and Action Plan

Annex 9 – Register of Apprehended Vietnamese vessels since January 2016