

Statement by the ACP Secretary General at the 38th Brussels Briefing on Illegal Unreported and Unregulated Fishing, 27 October 2014, Brussels

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Representative of DG DEVCO, Representative of DG MARE, Representative of European Commission, Director of CTA, Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,

First of all, I thank the CTA for organizing this important event where intellectuals are gathered to exchange ideas and share experiences on the very important subject of "*Fighting Against Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing (IUU)*". Secondly, I appreciate the efforts of the CTA on the consistent organization of the series of *Policy Briefings* on issues of agriculture, fisheries and rural development, targeting ACP countries. With the extension of these briefing sessions to the ACP regions, I believe that the wider coverage and participation of stakeholders in the agriculture, fisheries and rural development sector shall continue to raise the profile of this event, and boost the visibility of the CTA and the ACP Group.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

With the growing world population and the persistent problem of hunger and malnutrition in many developing countries, efforts towards improving food and nutrition security has become the focus of international concern.

Fishery resources are an important source of high quality proteins, vitamins and micronutrients, particularly for many low-income populations in rural areas. Consequently, their sustainable use to support food security has garnered significant attention. Sustainable fisheries management relies, among other things, on adequate control of fishing operations and enforcement of management measures.

Records from the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) of the United Nations indicated that global fish production has grown steadily in the last five decades, with food fish supply increasing at an average annual rate of 3.2 percent, outpacing world population growth at 1.6 percent. Preliminary estimates of world per capita fish consumption increased from an average of 9.9 kg in the 1960s to 19.2 kg in 2012.

The global aggregate wealth generated from both aquaculture and fisheries in marine and freshwater environments is estimated to be in the order of US\$ 500 billion per year.

Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing remains a major global threat to the long-term sustainable management of fisheries and the maintenance of productive and healthy ecosystems as well as to the stable socio-economic condition of many of the world's small-scale and artisanal fishing communities. In particular, poverty and food insecurity in developing countries are often the result of economic and social marginalization and the use of unsustainable practices employed by IUU fishing.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

IUU fishing includes a wide range of activities such as unauthorised fishing in Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZs) and in Regional Fisheries Management Organisations (RFMOs) convention areas; taking juvenile and protected species; using prohibited gear; failing to report catches; etc. It is largely motivated by economic gains and is sometimes, in industrial fisheries, associated with organized crime.

IUU exploits weak management regimes, preys on developing countries and takes advantage of corrupt administrations with respect to vessel registration, "authorizations to fish" and shore-side operations.

In a nutshell, IUU fishing undermines national and regional efforts to manage fisheries; inhibits stock rebuilding efforts; hastens the downward slide in many fisheries, and potentially affects food and livelihood security for poor communities in developing countries.

The international community has been trying to eradicate IUU fishing through various measures since it became a prominent issue on the global agenda. However, its complex nature defies simple or uniform solutions. Effective responses and sensitization among governments and civil society about the negative impacts of IUU fishing were part of the strategies deployed to tackle IUU. Similarly, during the past decade, the emphasis has shifted from targeting IUU fishing vessels to targeting their catch.

Therefore, in devising new strategies to combat IUU fishing, it is essential to identify measures that either reduce the expected income benefits and/or increase the costs of the activity to the perpetrators in addition to increase investment in laws and regulations enforcement mechanisms.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

To save your time, I believe the eminent members of the two panels who will address the issues of “*what we know about IUU in ACP countries*” and “*selected successes in fighting IUU and regaining market access*” are more than competent to address these issues. Our expectation is that the discussions and experiences shared in today’s briefing will contribute to the larger efforts in fighting the menace of IUU globally and in ACP countries particularly.

I thank you.

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