

Report of the 7th Regional Fishery Body Secretariats Network (RSN) Meeting

INTRO

The Regional Fisheries Body Secretariat Network (RSN) was established to facilitate ongoing information exchange among Regional Fishery Bodies (RFBs) Secretariats. The biennial meetings of the RSN Network started in March 2007. FAO provides the venue and secretariat services to the Network meetings. For more information about the RSN Network please visit <http://www.fao.org/fishery/rsn/en>

CONTENT

The SPRFMO Executive Secretary participated in the 7th RSN meeting in the margins of 2018 FAO Committee on Fisheries (COFI) in Rome. This report is structured following the Agenda of the 7th RSN meeting that can be found in Annex I.

1. Opening of the meeting

- a. The RSN meeting was chaired by Mr. Driss Meski, former Executive Secretary of the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT). The FAO secretary post of the RSN is currently held by Dr. Piero Mannini, Senior Fishery Liaison Officer of the Fisheries and Aquaculture Department of FAO.
- b. Participants (41 out of the of 54 RFBs) were invited to introduce themselves. The Chair thanked FAO for its intersessional support in organising the 7th RSN meeting.

2. Report of the Chairperson

- a. The Chairperson provided a brief update on the following intersessional matters relevant for the RSN:
 - i. The developments on the Agreement on Port State Measures (PSMA) as the first binding international agreement to specifically target illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing.
 - ii. WTO negotiations on fisheries subsidies considering that the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) target 14.6 sets the deadline in 2020 for eliminating subsidies that contribute to IUU fishing and for prohibiting certain forms of fisheries subsidies that contribute to overcapacity and overfishing.
 - iii. Outcomes of the Second Meeting of the Sustainable Ocean Initiative (SOI) Global Dialogue with Regional Seas Organizations and Regional Fisheries Bodies (Aichi Biodiversity Targets) held in Seoul in April 2018. This meeting focused on enhancing cross sectoral collaboration among regional seas organizations and RFBs to further strengthening their complementary roles in supporting achieving the Aichi Biodiversity Targets and the relevant Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
 - iv. RSN 2017 intersessional meeting: In the margins of the First Meeting of the Parties to the PSMA held from 29-31 May 2017 in Oslo, Norway, the RFMOs invited met at the RSN intersessional meeting, to discuss their role in supporting the implementation of the PSMA. Six RFMOs (ICCAT, FFA, NAFO, NEAFC, RECOFI, and SEAFO) attended the informal RSN inter-session meeting.

- v. RSN Newsletter N17: The RSN Secretariat facilitates cooperation and communication among its members being of the initiatives the renewal of the RSN Newsletter. The Chair thanked the participants for contributing to the latest issue (The online version is not available yet). Previous RSN Newsletters can be found at <http://www.fao.org/fishery/rsn/newsletter/en>

A video to promote the RSN work was presented. This video will be available in the FAO website and FAO YouTube channel <https://www.youtube.com/user/FAOoftheUN/featured>

- b. The Chairperson noted the need to strengthen the RSN network basically through funding and staff support.
- c. Input from Dr. Piero Mannini: Dr Mannini, stressed the increasing role of the RFMOs as international mechanisms highlighting that the RSN is not an FAO network; FAO just gives administrative support.

3. Adoption of the Agenda

- a. The agenda (can be found as Annex I of this report) was adopted.

4. Relevant news and issues from RSN members

The presentations were not available before/at the meeting. Unfortunately, as in previous RSN meetings they are not available either in the RSN website.

- a. Communication from the Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea (UNDOALOS)
 - i. Review conference to assess the effectiveness of the UN Fish Stocks Agreement (UNFSA). From the 2016 conference a summary of discussions was presented together with some recommendations. Next review conference for 2021.
 - ii. The Informal Consultations of State Parties (ICSP) ICS-13 focused in 2018 on the “Science-policy interface”. For 2019, ICSP-14 will focus on “Performance reviews of Regional Fisheries Management Organizations and Arrangements”. Panellist for the meeting in 2019 are welcomed.
 - iii. The next Review of Bottom Fishing will take place in 2020 after the General Assembly has reviewed the actions taken by States and RFMOs in response of the resolutions to address such impacts in 2009, 2011 and 2016.
 - iv. The Informal Consultative Process on Oceans and the Law of the Sea (ICP) was also addressed highlighting that in 2017 the ICP focused on “The effects of climate change in the oceans” and that in 2018 the ICP focused on “Anthropogenic underwater noise”.
 - v. The Institutional arrangements for the Regular Process was also explained: There is a Group of experts (Pool of experts of 600 people, the assignment still open) and the process follows a two-cycle period (first cycle establishes the baseline, the second 2016-2020 cycle evaluates trends and gaps).
 - vi. BBNJ process: 4th preparatory meeting and BBNJ intergovernmental conference (Resolution 72/249). The conference will meet for four sessions of 10 working days each in 2018, 2019 and first half of 2020. The first session will take place from 4 to 17 September 2018.
- b. Recent development in Fisheries and Resources Monitoring System (FIRMS)
 - i. FIRMS, launched in 2004, provide access to high-quality information on the global monitoring and management of fishery resources.

- ii. The FIRMS database covers: shared stocks under RFM mandate, national stocks and status of national fisheries. The published inventory is made of 1479 stocks and 738 fisheries. The database is week in the Pacific Region.
 - iii. FIRMS smart viewer, is the tool to consult fact sheets where the state of the stocks has been published <http://firms.fao.org/firms/stocks-fisheries-map-viewer>
 - iv. FIRMS is linked with the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 14 “Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development” where one of the indicators is the “Proportion of fish stocks within biologically sustainable levels”.
 - v. New Tools linked with FRIMS are: The Global Record for Stocks and Fisheries (GRSF) is a pilot experience on information on the data supply chain, the Global Tuna Atlas where 5 tuna RFMOs partner to share data and new approaches at regional level covering the Fishery Committee for the Eastern Central Atlantic (CECAF) and the Western Central Atlantic Fishery Commission (WECAFC).
- c. International Whaling Commission (IWC) presentation on bycatch mitigation**
- i. The IWC endorsed in 2016 a Bycatch Mitigation Initiative (BMI) aiming to develop, assess and promote effective bycatch prevention and mitigation measures world-wide. BMI has 4 areas of work: improved assessment of bycatch, innovation and testing of mitigation and management methods, transfer of expertise, technology and management measures between countries and engagement with other relevant international organisations.
- d. NPAFC/NASCO introduction of the International Year of the Salmon (IYS)**
- i. The IYS is a project launched by the North Pacific Anadromous Fisheries Commission (NPAFC) and the North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organization (NASCO) where 2019 will be the focal year. It will include outreach activities, research priorities at basin scale (Pacific, Atlantic, Arctic or Baltic and at the local coastal level) and the identification of scientific themes.
- e. NAMMCO highlights on its work**
- i. The North Atlantic Marine Mammal Commission is an international regional body for cooperation on conservation, management and study of cetaceans and pinnipeds in the North Atlantic. With 4 members (Faroe Islands, Greenland, Iceland and Norway) relies on the cooperation with NAFO, NEAFC, OSPAR and ICES focusing on understanding the role of marine mammals in the North Atlantic marine ecosystem. A message successfully conveyed was the consideration as “neglected food resource” of these species.
 - ii. Main challenges ahead are: identifying the full range of human impacts, improve hunting activities, integrate findings into management advice and communication across divers actors.

5. Strengthening the RSN: needs and challenges

- a.** The RSN is a platform for coordination not a decision-making body. As such, RSN is made up of Executive Secretaries, this is to say Secretariats not Governing Councils/Commissions, etc.
- i. The increasing connectivity among RFBs to address common and emerging issues was identified as the main need while the limitation with languages (not French or Spanish available documents) was pointed out as one of the main issues to be addressed within the RSN meetings.
 - ii. Communication and visibility, governance, the resource mobilisation and why strengthening the RSN were also addressed.

6. COFI related common matters - Global processes and subjects relevant for RFBs/RFMOs:

- a.** WTO progress on fishery subsidies negotiations
 - i. The main question is what subsidies are the ones contributing to overcapacity and overfishing, and how to craft a prohibition of harmful subsidies while allowing developing members to develop their fisheries sustainably.
 - ii. The sustainable development and not only the trade effects were given high importance.
 - iii. The Doha and Honk Kong negotiating mandate, the SDG targets and the Ministerial mandate avoiding overcapacity and IUU fishing (great deal of debate about IUU listing made by RFMOs) were also addressed.
- b.** 2018 SOI Global Conference
 - i. The 2nd Meeting of the Sustainable Ocean Initiative (SOI) Global Dialogue with Regional Seas Organizations and Regional Fishery Bodies on Accelerating Progress Towards the Aichi Biodiversity Targets and Sustainable Development Goals took place on 10-13 April 2018 in Seoul, Republic of Korea.
 - ii. Many RFBs activities already support Aichi Targets and SDGs, but have not been through an alignment process.
- c.** IUU fishing and PSMA implementation, RFBs participation at trainings as well as other capacity activities
 - i. Flag States, Port State, Coastal State, and market State responsibilities were described. Attention was given to the factors that hinder adherence to the PSMA (lack of knowledge, lack of political will, complex internal procedures, weak legislative framework, financial implications and insufficient operational capacity).
 - ii. The outcomes of the first meeting of the parties of the PSMA were presented (requirements for the implementation of the agreement, transmittal, electronic exchange and publication of information, requirements of developing states and monitoring of the implementation of the agreement). The second meeting of the Parties will take place in Chile in 2019.
 - iii. The FAO Global Capacity Development Umbrella Programme was described (basically a technical assistance programme in around 40 countries, over the next 5 years, to support the implementation of the PSMA, being the donors USA, Norway, Sweden and the EU).
- d.** UN processes, including SDGs' implementation
 - i. Agenda 2030 and the 17 SDGs and 169 targets where the framework of this presentation including the mapping actions to SDGs, and the 14.4 and 14.7 targets.
 - ii. On SDG 14.4 the role of RFB in reporting, strengthening statistics, participation in FIRMS and contributing to SOFIA reporting were addressed.
 - iii. On SDSG 14.7, facilitating access to markets, the inter-agency collaboration and supporting regional networking were the main tools on the economic benefit to Small Island developing States (SIDS) and least developed countries (LDCs).
- e.** GFCM mid-term strategy and SDG 14
 - i. Midterm strategy focusing on: the increase in the number of stocks assessed while slightly increasing the % of sustainability exploited stocks, the conservation of red coral (voluntary guidelines), the role of adopting spatial management measures, the role of aquaculture and the role of small-scale fisheries were presented.

7. RSN statement at COFI-33

- a. The RSN Secretariat presented a draft which was discussed and approved after contributions received from some of us. The final RSN statement can be found as Annex II of this report.

8. Analytical review of the activities and development of RFB and RFMOs from 2000 to 2016:

- a. Two FAO publications in preparation. The first one reviewing and showing global trends in RFBs and RFMOs activities (through a questionnaire which will be available in February 2019) and the second one on reviewing the performance reviews of RFMOs and RFBs.

9. RSN Rules of Procedure

- a. Housekeeping matters were discussed, particularly the draft Terms of Reference for the RSN which should clearly state:
 - i. The lack of decision-making power of the RSN, the Secretariat membership, the potential funding, the mandate of the RSN, the role of invited experts, the identification of common issues among RFMOs, the number of years for the RSN chairperson (should be two instead of four years), etc.
 - ii. A drafting working group will be created to address all these issues.

10. COFI-33 outcomes and implications for RFBs/RFMOs

- a. RFMOs were given a lot of visibility during the COFI-33 discussions particularly on IUU, Governance, Climate change... IUU and transshipments were mentioned recurrently in COFI-33 and these could be the topics for discussion in the next RSN meeting.
- b. The potential development of a "Subcommittee on fisheries management" (Norwegian proposal) could be an opportunity for RSN to work jointly on global processes.
- c. Reinforcing RFBs/RFMOs requires the continued support of FAO and a strong commitment by Member States/Contracting Parties.

11. Election of the Chair person

- a. The next RSN Chair will be Mr. Guillermo Compeán, Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC) Director.

12. Other matters:

- a. Thanking words to Mr Driss Meski for his role as Chair and to Dr. Piero Mannini, and Dr. Eliana Haberkon, FAO Fisheries Institutions and Policy Expert, for the support and excellent preparation of the 7th RSN meeting.

ASSESSMENT OF THE RSN MEETING

1. This meeting is a valuable opportunity for networking and exchanging information on current challenges and emerging issues experienced by RFBs.
2. Issues for Commission consideration:

- a.** It is recommendable a higher participation and involvement on the RSN processes and Newsletters as in the last years SPRFMO has not played an active role. <http://www.fao.org/fishery/rsn/newsletter/en>
- b.** The 2019 International Consultations of States Parties to the UN Fish Stocks Agreement (ICSP-14) will focus on “Performance reviews of Regional Fisheries Management Organizations and Arrangements”. Panellist for such meeting in 2019 are welcomed. Considering that SPRFMO is currently involved in its first Performance Review process, the Commission may consider SPRFMO participation in ICSP-14.
- c.** The Fisheries and Resources Monitoring System (FIRMS), is an information sharing partnership to facilitate the monitoring of stocks status and fisheries which today includes 14 intergovernmental organizations covering 19 RFBs. SPRFMO is not one of the partners. Considering that FIRMS is disseminating only public data always acknowledging the provenance and ownership, the Commission may consider SPRFMO becoming a partner in such FAO initiative considering that the database is week in the Pacific Region. <http://firms.fao.org>



**Food and Agriculture
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REGIONAL FISHERY BODY SECRETARIATS' NETWORK

Seventh Meeting
Rome, 7 and 13 July 2018
PROVISIONAL AGENDA

MEETING PLACE: FAO HQ

First Session, Saturday 7-07-2018

Room: Malaysia (B227)

From 09:00 hours to 17:00 hours

- 1) Opening of the meeting
- 2) Report of the Chairperson
- 3) Adoption of the Agenda
- 4) Relevant news and issues from RSN members
 - a. Communication from UNDOALOS
 - b. Recent development in Fisheries and Resources Monitoring System (FIRMS)
 - c. IWC presentation on Bycatch mitigation
 - d. NPAFC/NASCO introduction of the International Year of the Salmon (IYS)
 - e. NAMMCO highlights on its work
- 5) Strengthening the RSN: needs and challenges
- 6) COFI related common matters - Global processes and subjects relevant for RFBs/RFMOs:
 - a. WTO progress on fishery subsidies negotiations
 - b. 2018 SOI Global Conference
 - c. IUU fishing and PSMA implementation, RFBs participation at trainings as well as other capacity activities
 - d. 1. UN processes, including SDGs' implementation
2. GFCM mid-term strategy and SDG 14
- 7) RSN statement at COFI
- 8) Analytical overview of the activities and development of RFBs and RFMOs from 2000 to 2016:
Two FAO publications in preparation

RSN members are kindly requested to bring their copies to meetings. RSN related documents can be accessed at <http://www.fao.org/fishery/nems/41061/en>, in order to minimize environmental impact and promote greener communications.

Second Session, Friday 13-07-2018

Room: Philippines (C277)

From 09:30 hours to 11:30 hours

- 9) RSN rules of procedure
- 10) COFI-33 outcomes and implications for RFBs/RFMOs
- 11) Election of the Chairperson
- 12) Other matters

Annex II – Statement of the Chairperson of RSN-7

COFI 33 – STATEMENT OF THE CHAIRPERSON OF RSN-7

AGENDA ITEM 8.3

Mr Chair,

Distinguished Delegates,

I am taking the floor as Chair of the Regional Fishery Body Secretariats' Network, also known as the 'RSN'. This network, established in 1999 as an FAO-led initiative, consists of 54 Regional Fishery Bodies (RFBs) Secretariats, of which 11 are FAO statutory bodies. RSN is a coordination mechanism which facilitates sharing experiences, data and information, and provides a forum for discussion on emerging issues of common concern among the RFB Secretariats; it does not engage in policy development, nor take decisions of a binding nature. The Network provides an ever-evolving RFB collaboration framework, and is the focal point between the RSN members and FAO.

It worth recalling that RFBs, which are served by the established respective Secretariats, are intergovernmental organizations constituted by FAO Members, which include both advisory bodies and bodies that adopt legally binding conservation and management measures (also known as Regional Fishery Management Organizations, RFMOs); their focus varies from high seas fisheries to coastal fisheries, inland fisheries and aquaculture.

Chair,

Last Saturday 7 July, prior to COFI, 41 members of the Network participated in the 7th meeting of the RSN (RSN-7), that is more than three quarters of the current RFBs and RFMOs of the world. Crucial topics of the international agenda on fishery and aquaculture governance at both the global and regional scale were discussed. The report of the meeting will be prepared and disseminated by the RSN Secretariat.

At the request of the RSN, I wish to take this opportunity to share some outcomes of the RSN-7 session that are relevant to the Committee of Fisheries (COFI).

First and most importantly, the RSN would like to bring to the attention of COFI Members the key role of the regional dimension, as also strongly emphasized by the UN Special Envoy for the Oceans in his opening statement. Working at the appropriate ecosystem scale requires cooperation at the regional level, as processes related to the exploitation of natural living resources usually involve at least several countries. The regionalization of fisheries and aquaculture governance is a concrete approach and instrumental to address common concerns, create synergies among key stakeholders and to mainstream the UN global objectives into the regional and local agendas, while making them accessible intra-regionally and to the general public.

In an increasingly connected world, RFBs, and particularly RFMOs, are gaining importance in international fora for discussion of issues related to fisheries management and shared living

marine and inland resources. Efforts have been made to enhance the visibility of the work of RSN and its members, a newsletter has been circulated since 2011 and a Special edition launched for COFI 33, which shares the RFBs' work on SDGs, and a guidance article of the UN Special Envoy for Oceans. In addition, a video was recently produced together with FAO on the role of RSN and to promote the work of RFBs and RFMOs in achieving SDG and contributing to food security.

The RSN meeting stressed the need for RFBs and RFMOs to consider their participation in the rapidly enhanced UN and other global initiatives, to ensure these fora are fully aware of the work and role of RFBs and RFMOs in coordinating the related global initiative outputs through their members.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable development emphasizes the importance of the regional and sub-regional dimensions, regional economic integration and interconnectivity in sustainable development. The regional level is the most appropriate level for establishing a collaborative framework that encompasses the whole ecosystem and their efficient preservation and protection, and respects regional diversity while providing opportunities for participating states to sustainably benefit from the services they provide.

The regional dimension is a central milestone of international fisheries management policy as also proved by the rapid expansion of the family of RFBs and RFMOs. Enabling conditions that render this collaboration successful require strong political will of the parties to these regional instruments. In this regard, FAO is actively engaged in strengthening the Regional Fishery Body Secretariats Network (RSN), which has a key instrumental role in this process. RSN is being required by most of its members to further develop its cooperative and coordinated efforts among them, aiming for sustainable fisheries and aquaculture development. To this end, FAO is invited to consider ways to make additional human and financial resources available, consistently with the suggestion made by the UN Special Envoy for the Oceans *'to enable the establishment of a proposed joint financial mechanism'*.

On behalf of all the Regional Fishery Body Secretariats participating in the Network, I wish to thank you, COFI, the COFI bureau and FAO for the positive consideration given to the RSN that provides visibility and recognition to the work of the Regional Fishery Bodies.

Thank you.