

**FAO CONTRIBUTION TO PART I OF THE REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-  
GENERAL ON OCEANS AND THE LAW OF THE SEA**

SUBMITTED PURSUANT TO GENERAL ASSEMBLY DRAFT RESOLUTION  
A/69/L.29

RELATED TO THE TOPIC OF FOCUS OF THE  
SIXTEENTH MEETING OF THE UNITED NATIONS OPEN-ENDED INFORMAL  
CONSULTATIVE PROCESS ON OCEANS AND THE LAW OF THE SEA (ICP 16):

“Oceans and sustainable development: integration of the three  
dimensions of sustainable development, namely environmental, social  
and economic”



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## Contents



sectors that use oceans and seas to create jobs and economic and social benefits for millions of people globally.

Over the last century a multitude of threats have eroded the ocean's ability to sustain the benefits it can provide for present and future generations. Furthermore, poorly managed human activities and resulting negative impacts have been eroding the resilience of the oceans, including to climate change. While marine ecosystems become more vulnerable, population growth, especially along the coasts, makes more people depend on marine ecosystem services for their health and livelihoods.

Overfishing - the most immediate threat - is compounded by the destruction of critical habitats such as mangroves, salt marshes, and coral reefs as well as by pollution, discards and climate change. Some 29% of the assessed exploited marine fish stocks are overexploited leading to, biodiversity losses, reduced food production on the order of 16.5 million tonnes<sup>1</sup> and economic losses on the order of 50 billion USD/year<sup>2</sup>.

Fishing communities in developing countries are particularly vulnerable to this marked decline in the productivity of marine fisheries, as many people, especially those with the lowest income, have few if any alternative livelihoods. The dramatic effects of overfishing are worsened by avoidable losses of up to 30% of total harvest due to inadequate post-harvest practices. Climate change and natural disasters, access conflicts<sup>3</sup>, rapid development and population growth further increase the vulnerability, poverty and food insecurity of the easily marginalized, poor fishing communities.

It has long been recognized that sustainable use of natural resources requires approaches that reconcile different and apparently contrasting objectives such as those related to

In FAO's new strategic framework, emphasis has been put on these aspects. In particular, Strategic Objective 2 "*Increase and improve provision of goods and services from agriculture, forestry and fisheries in a sustainable manner*" has identified development of adequate policy and governance frameworks as key to achieving its goals. Two levels of governance need to be addressed. One is sectoral, that focuses on sustainability in a given sector, and one is multisectoral, focusing on the interactions between sectors and their compounded impacts at ecosystem level.

Despite the work by FAO and other partners, progress on actual implementation of various market mechanisms to support sustainable fisheries has been slow. Management practices based on stronger users' rights are still not widely accepted, and subsidies not been significantly addressed. Compounding this problem, the lack of experience in business planning and management means coastal fishers and local fishing communities struggle to escape the poverty trap and will keep overexploiting coastal resources.

The related lack of adoption by coastal fisheries of improved practices to reduce fish waste, discards and fish losses prevents fishers and coastal communities from fully realizing potential benefits of their fishing activities.

*Governance and Management.* Ineffective fisheries governance and management is at the heart of declines in fisheries resources. The current governance challenge – and a key source of poor management results - is to address the inadequacy of the behavioural incentives that are created by many management systems.

The critical factors exacerbating inefficient governance and management include: (i) poor stakeholder participation; (ii) insufficient scientific support and ineffective management approaches; (iii) insufficient access to relevant and timely data and information; (iv) weak capacity for monitoring, control and surveillance (MCS); and (v) insufficient use of available knowledge. Operating under the principle of free and open access creates conflicting and disparate incentives among users, other stakeholders, and managers and simply does not ensure the sustainability of these resources. Yet, a large number of fisheries are managed in this way instead of being managed using incentive-aligning strategies. Moreover, fisheries don't exist in isolation. The socio-economic and institutional environment within which they exist has important impacts on the behaviour of fisheries stakeholders.

Politically unpalatable transitions to more effective fisheries management are made even more difficult by inadequate institutional frameworks (in terms of out-dated laws and regulations, poor information flows, and limited stakeholder participation); weak decision-making mechanisms; and a general lack of integration of sectoral development policies.

Societal demands for increasingly higher standards of resource stewardship from users and managers, alike, are requiring greater transparency and accountability and an active desire to participate and shape utilization decisions. Unfortunately, this is happening even while the capacity of many fishery bodies is still insufficient for effecting management or for fully implementing the new international instruments, particularly at regional levels. Many fisheries bodies are simply advisory, have weak decision-making rules, and lack sufficient resources.

An important challenge is to deal with the trade-offs between the dimensions of sustainability, starting from reconciling and harmonizing management and policy objectives across these dimensions. Examples of possible trade-offs include : (i) Maximizing rent vs employment vs food production; (ii) Optimizing outputs vs distribution among actors; (iii) Exploiting forage fish (krill,



Due to a recognition by FAO of the importance and need for the fisheries and aquaculture sector to sustainably grow in order to meet rising food demand and contribute to poverty alleviation, and the fact that zero growth is neither realistic nor desirable, FAO has launched in December 2013 the *"Blue Growth Initiative"*. FAO defines Blue Growth as *"Sustainable growth and development emanating from economic activities using living renewable resources of the oceans, wetlands and coastal zones that minimize environmental degradation, biodiversity loss and unsustainable use of aquatic resources, and maximize economic and social benefits"*. With the BGI, FAO aims at restoring the productive potential of the oceans and wetlands by strengthening responsible management regimes and practices to reconcile economic growth and food security with th reuhu(n)2.2(s)-1.3(i93(c)8.9(rve)-3(c-3.1(r ))TJ[(u)2.2(rit(g)2.6(-0.7(s)6.6( a)-3.3(n)6i8(s)50



are needed to address the increasing demand for piloting the BGI in other regions and countries and upscale successful experiences to benefit other communities and regions.

Following is a brief description of ongoing and projected BG activities:

- (a) Integrating BG concepts into fisheries policy and governance processes aimed at sustainable aquatic resource development, management and conservation.
- (b) Providing technical assistance on Sustainable Intensification of Aquaculture.
- (c) Dissemination of better management practices, decent employment and livelihoods and improved markets in fisheries and aquaculture.
- (d) Improving ecosystems services in the aquatic sector.

The BGI aligns with related initiatives launched by other Organizations such as GEF, UNEP, OECD, World Bank, World Fish Center and the EU to promote the concept of Blue Growth and related activities. As a result, through the BGI, FAO would provide knowledge products (science-based fisheries information, facilitation for extension and advisory services, capacity building for policy development and for the implementation of international instruments and good practices), experience and on-the-ground operational capacity.

Annex 1 maps pilot countries and regions with ongoing and pipeline BGI related activities.

### **3.2 Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries and to Aquaculture (EAF/EAA)**

FAO has been promoting the adoption of an integrated approach to fisheries management, i.e. one that explicitly takes into account the three dimensions of sustainability, for the past decade or so, through the Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries (EAF, FAO, 2003). However, it should be noted that the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries (CCRF, 1995), formulated on the wake of the Earth Summit (Rio, 1992) is the first milestone in fisheries in terms of capturing principles of sustainable development. EAF is, in effect, a means of implementing many of the provisions of the Code and provides a way to implement these in a practical and comprehensive way. More recently the same approach has been applied to aquaculture, resulting in the Ecosystem Approach to Aquaculture (EAA).

EAF and EAA are holistic strategies for managing capture fisheries and aquaculture that integrate the ecological, socio-economic and institutional dimensions.

In the FAO definition of EAF, the word 'ecosystem' is used to emphasize the holistic nature of the approach, addressing the fishery system as an integrated socio-ecological system. Human beings are an integral part of the ecosystem. FAO's definition reflects this notion:

*"An Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries strives to balance diverse societal objectives, by taking account of the knowledge and uncertainties about biotic, abiotic and human components of ecosystems and their interactions and applying an integrated approach to fisheries within ecologically meaningful boundaries." (FAO, 2003<sup>5</sup>).*

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<sup>5</sup> FAO. The ecosystem approach to fisheries. FAO Technical Guidelines for Responsible Fisheries. No. 4, Suppl. 2. Rome, FAO. 2003. 112 p.

The above clearly addresses both human and ecological well-being thus combining two concepts, that of conserving biodiversity, ecosystem structure and functioning and that of fisheries management dealing with providing food, income and livelihoods for humans. The definition therefore provides the basis for mainstreaming sustainable development into fisheries policy frameworks and decision-making at national, regional and global levels.

- { an adaptive management process is established that includes mechanisms for feed-back loops at different time scales to adjust the tactical and strategic performance based on past and present observations and experiences;
- { 'best available knowledge' is the basis for decision-making, including both scientific and traditional knowledge, while promoting risk assessment and management and the notion that decision making should take place also in cases where there is lack of detailed scientific knowledge.
- { the system builds on existing management institutions and practices.

Development of fisheries management plans is a key element in the implementation of these integrated approaches. It should be noted that the CCRF (FAO, 1995) also explicitly requires that "Long-term management objectives sh



the ABNJ Program referred to as the **Common Oceans Program**– was approved by GEF under the lead of the FAO and is being executed in close collaboration with a large array of partners.

The Common Oceans Program aims to promote efficient and sustainable management of fisheries resources and biodiversity conservation in ABNJ to achieve an efficient and equitable system capable of generating and sustaining wealth and conserving the biodiversity upon which ocean health and human well-being depend. The Program focuses on tuna and other shared highly migratory stocks, deep-sea fisheries and associated biodiversity and contributes to achieving the global targets agreed in international fora.

The five-year Program is an innovative, unique and comprehensive initiative working with a wide range of partners. It is made of four Projects which bring together governments, regional management bodies, civil society, the private sector, academia and industry to work towards ensuring the sustainable use and conservation of ABNJ biodiversity and ecosystem services.

The wide range of partnerships, working successfully under the coordination of FAO, brings together organizations and initiatives with diverse roles, mandates and membership, united by the common goals of sustainability and conservation of biodiversity.

The Program concentrates on short-term milestones as part of a long-term plan to establish the strong networks, best management practices and facilitate information sharing needed to make a transformational impact towards responsible and sustainable use of ABNJ resources. It aims to:

- x move towards the ecosystem approach and rights-based systems and away from the "race to fish";
- x increase our ability to protect fragile ecosystems;
- x foster international and cross-

- o Reducing ecosystem impacts from tuna fishing, including bycatch and associated species

**x Sustainable use of deep-sea living resources & biodiversity (led by FAO/UNEP)**

The objective is to enhance sustainability in the use of deep-sea living resources and biodiversity conservation in the ABNJ through the systematic application of an ecosystem approach.

This project will focus on four areas:

- o Improved implementation of existing policy and legal frameworks
- o Reduced significant adverse impacts on Vulnerable Marine Ecosystems (VMEs) and Ecologically or Biologically Significant Areas (EBSAs)
- o Improved planning and adaptive management for deep-sea fisheries in ABNJ

- o Capacity Development
- o Knowledge Management and Outreach

The Tuna Project, has been operational since the beginning of 2014 and it is working closely with the partners, including the tuna Regional Fisheries Management Organizations (RFMOs) to advance the RFMO processes that align with the objectives of the Project. Similarly, the Deep-Sea Project has started its operations during late 2014, and it is gearing towards full implementation. The Ocean Partnership Project, led by the World Bank, has started in the last quarter of 2014, establishing four activities also related to tuna fisheries in various regions of the world. The Global Capacity Project has also been in operations since mid 2014, supporting dialogues involving young regional leaders to discuss global issues affecting the ABNJ.

### **3.3.2 The Coastal Fisheries Initiative (CFI)**

The Coastal Fisheries Initiative (CFI), which sees FAO as its Global Coordinator, has been developed within the framework of the GEF's work on safeguarding world oceans and their coasts. Recognizing the need for more integrated approaches to sustainable development and ocean activities, based on strong sectoral management, the CFI is intended to complement the GEF multi-country LME approach. Its rationale builds on the recognition that overfishing is among the greatest threats to oceans' health and that the biological diversity in the world's oceans is concentrated in near-shore waters. The initiative takes the three pillars of sustainability – the environmental, social and economic dimensions – into account, including resilience, and recognizes that, especially in developing countries, millions of people are directly dependent on the capture fisheries value chains for their livelihoods and that small





2. Collaborative processes among development partners have been successfully tested and are replicated in new initiatives.
3. Knowledge on CFI experiences of innovative approaches to coastal fisheries management is documented and accessible to the wider global community concerned with coastal fisheries.

Indicators will be developed for each of the components of the CFI as they are developed in  
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meetings exploring how to bring together responsible fisheries and social development in coastal and inland small-scale fishing communities, FAO facilitated the development of an international instrument for securing sustainable small-scale fisheries in the form of international guidelines - The *Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication (SSF Guidelines)*. The SSF Guidelines are the outcome of an extensive consultation process directly involving over 4,000 stakeholders and represent a global consensus on principles and guidance for small-scale fisheries governance and development. The SSF Guidelines aim to enhance the contribution of small-scale fisheries to global food security and nutrition, to contribute to equitable development and poverty eradication, to achieve sustainable utilization of fishery resources, and to promote an economically, socially and environmentally sustainable future of our planet and its people. It proposes guidance that can be used by States and stakeholders for the enhancement of sustainable small-scale fisheries governance and development. It also promotes awareness raising and the advancement of knowledge on small-scale fisheries.

The SSF Guidelines complement the 1995 Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries (CCRF) and are based on international human rights standards, responsible fisheries governance and sustainable development in line with the outcome document '*The future we want*' and other international instruments, e.g. the Voluntary Guidelines on Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security and the Voluntary Guidelines on the Progressive Realization of the Right to Adequate Food in the Context of National Food Security.

Drawing on these instruments, the SSF Guidelines contain a number of key guiding principles that should underpin their future implementation: i.e. human rights and dignity; respect of cultures; non discrimination; equity and equality including for gender; consultation and participation; rule of law; transparency; accountability; economic, social and environmental

In addition, the SSF Guidelines include four areas related to ensuring an enabling environment and supporting implementation:

- x Policy coherence, institutional coordination and collaboration;
- x Information, research and communication;
- x Capacity development;
- x Implementation support and monitoring.

After the endorsement of the SSF Guidelines by COFI in 2014, the next big challenges lies ahead: the SSF Guidelines will only be effective if they are recognized, understood and widely accepted by stakeholders and systematically applied in accordance with the guiding principles established therein.

The SSF Guidelines are global in scope and provide a broad policy framework. To facilitate their implementation, there will be a need for a strategic approach that includes practical guidelines at regional and national levels that take local circumstances into consideration. The overall strategic approach for implementation of the SSF Guidelines should build on the inclusive and consensus-seeking spirit and environment that characterized their development. Accordingly, future implementation of the SSF Guidelines should be based on participation and partnerships, with implementation anchored at the national and local levels within a framework of regional and international collaboration, awareness raising, policy support and capacity development. This will require support to and collaboration with many different actors including governments, development agencies and international financing institutions, NGOs, academia, civil society and the private sector at all levels. Interdisciplinary partnerships will be required to ensure that the holistic approach promoted in the SSF Guidelines is implemented, i.e. considering all three

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on Global Food Security's *Principles for responsible investment in agriculture and food systems* and the recommendations of the 41<sup>st</sup> Committee on Food Security.

Further coordination and cooperation at the intergovernmental and inter-agency levels is needed to support countries and region in addressing the challenges associated with the inter-sectoral nature of the SSF Guidelines implementation and exchanges of implementation experiences and lessons learned will be important to optimize implementation effectiveness.

#### **4. Post-2015 development agenda process and Sustainable Development Goals**

During 2013-2014, FAO has continuously supported the Post-2015 development agenda process with technical and policy guidance. In February 2014, it presented Members with a package of issue papers on 14 themes identifying and suggesting ways to tackle the key social, economic and environmental barriers to improved food security and nutrition. One of these themes is Fisheries, Aquaculture, Oceans and Seas, which underlined that if the current trend in

Investments in Blue Growth, based on effective implementation of international instruments and approaches such as the CCRF, the Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries (EAF) and to Aquaculture (EAA) and associated guidelines, IPOAs, Small-scale fisheries guidelines, are needed at all levels. It is expected that the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries and related instruments will continue to be recognized as existing international regimes that will guide implementation of SDG 14.

With the closure of the Open Working Group process, there are now three main parallel tracks that FAO will continue to support. FAO will continue to engage in the main Post-2015 intergovernmental negotiations, leading up to the Post-2015 Summit in September, providing technical and policy guidance and ensuring that the richness of issues that was reflected in the OWG Report is maintained and, where possible, strengthened.

In parallel, the UN Statistical Commission—an intergovernmental body—will prepare indicators to support the SDGs. FAO's Chief Statistician co-chairs the Intern2(p) 54-

community only three years after UNCED which will celebrate its 20

Blue Growth Strategy

Ongoing

- Indonesia
- Mauritania
- Morocco
- Algeria
- Senegal
- Gabon
- Seychelles
- Madagascar
- Cabo Verde

Pipeline

- Near East Region
- Kenya
- Mozambique
- Bangladesh
- Côte d'Ivoire
- Gulf of Guinea
- Pacific\*
- Iran (Republic of)





## **Annex 2. FAO's work for practical implementation of EAF/EAA**

As a follow up to the international commitments FAO has been working in various ways to further the adoption of integrated approaches to fisheries management, and in particular the EAF, and for aquaculture the EAA. This includes normative work, as well as field work related to policy and management frameworks, implementing a number of projects in various parts of the world to support developing nations in their efforts to improve fisheries management in a way that is coherent with EAF and, in turn, with the principles of sustainable development. All the work of FAO's Fisheries and Aquaculture Department contributes either directly or indirectly to the implementation of the principles contained in the CCRF and to the EAF orh i(m)-6.4(7A)5(F)4.5( o)-3.2(4-3.2(4-3..

- x EAA guidelines<sup>14</sup>
- x Spatial tools for EAA<sup>15</sup>
- x MPAs<sup>16</sup> Fisheries management, v. 4: Marine protected areas and fisheries. FAO Technical Guidelines for Responsible Fisheries 4 suppl. 4. Rome, FAO. 2011. 198p.
- x Models for EAF<sup>17</sup> provides useful guidance to the various ecosystem models that can be used to assess fisheries impacts on marine ecosystems.

FAO is developing a guide to indicators for EAF, including ecological, social and economic indicators.

FAO is developing a guide on the implementation of international legal instruments and best legal practices at national level, in support of reinforcing national legal frameworks that provide an appropriate basis for the application of the EAF. The guide is expected to be available in the latter part of 2015. This guide has global relevance.

Also relevant are the "Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication"<sup>18</sup>, developed with support of the FAO, that specifically include the ecosystem approach to fisheries among the guiding principles (Chapter

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actions, is being supported through a number of field projects and countries/regions. Below some examples are provided.

*The EAF Nansen project* is an initiative to support the implementation of the ecosystem approach in the management of marine fisheries. The aim is to promote sustainable utilization of marine living resources and improved protection of the marine environment. The project, funded by the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (Norad), started in 2006, is ongoing and a new phase is envisaged starting in 2016.

Thanks to the availability of the Research Vessel "Dr. Fridtjof Nansen", deployed in collaboration with the Institute of Marine Research (IMR) of Bergen, Norway, knowledge on the state of resources and ecosystems is provided to developing countries. Furthermore, the project supports capacity development on various aspects of fisheries research and management

One of the case studies was related to the shared stocks of shrimp and groundfish fishery of the Guianas-Brazil shelf and aimed at mainstreaming EAF in the management of the shrimp and groundfish resources. A sub-regional training was provided on the fundamentals of the EAF and ecological risk assessment methodology to representatives from administration, industry, NGOs and academic institutions from Brazil, French Guiana, Surinam, Guyana, Trinidad & Tobago and Venezuela. National consultations were carried out in most countries to lay the basis of a sub-regional management plan for the shrimp and groundfish fisheries. An agreement was found between countries on the main issues to be addressed as a matter of priority in the sub-region, as well as on potential solutions.

Strong expectations were created by the case study for the stakeholders who were consulted and there is a real need of follow-up in order to keep the momentum. Different requests were submitted by the countries where national consultations were held, but all of them could not be supported because of lack of resources (institutional strengthening, development of management plans, improvement of statistic system, increase knowledge base on fish/shrimp species, etc.). However, this illustrates how the process initiated with the case study on shrimp and groundfish could easily be continued, building on the momentum that was created. Funding request was submitted to GEF to provide further support to administrations to develop, complete and implement an EAF sub-regional management plan.

*The BOBLME project* is supporting countries to implement an ecosystem approach to fisheries management of shared fish stocks in the Bay of Bengal. The EAFM framework has three tiers:

Supporting the implementation of EAF and EAA; focusing in those countries and locations where the fisheries and aquaculture are strongly increasing

The tropical mangrove estuary “Estero Real” in Nicaragua is a RAMSAR area of international interest, risking high level of degradation due partly to poor shrimp fisheries and aquaculture practices, poverty and lack of equity in the distribution and use of resources.

The ecosystem approach to fisheries and aquaculture (EAFA) is being implemented here since 2010 through a long participatory process with a strong national and local ownership. The final participatory workshop to adopt the management plan was held in March 2013<sup>21</sup> and its

Aquaculture promotion” entered into force on 7 January 2014. Follow up work on the development of regulations for artisanal fisheries has been undertaken.).<sup>23</sup>

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