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Implementation of the EU regulation on IUU fishing Organising the dialogue with developing countries stakeholders

May 19th, 16.45 – 18.30

Chair: Béatrice Gorez, Coalition for Fair Fisheries Arrangements, Coordinator

Speakers:

- Hélène Bours, Independent expert, CFFA adviser on IUU issues
- Gaoussou Gueye, Fish monger and fish exporter, vice president CONIPAS, Senegal
- Sid'ahmed Sidi Mohamed Abeid, artisanal fisherman, president FNP-artisanale, Mauritania
- Concepción Sánchez Trujillano, Subdirectora General de Asuntos Pesqueros Comunitarios, Spain

1. Three key messages

- The EU should support developing countries investments in appropriate Monitoring, Control, Surveillance and traceability systems, in order to ensure that the information provided through the catch certification scheme (CCS) corresponds to the reality and that the CCS doesn't become an administrative barrier to legal fish trade. A program comparable in its aim to the SFP (*Strengthening Fishery Products health conditions in ACP countries*), with efficient and participative mechanisms for identifying and implementing support actions, should be put in place to help developing countries producers and exporters to comply with the IUU regulation.
- The EU should and its developing countries partners should involve the local fishing sector to ensure a smooth implementation of the IUU regulation – for example, the rapid alert system, which should ensure developing countries producers could be directly informed in case of administrative problems with the catch certificates, should be swiftly put in place.
- The EU should insist with its developing countries partners on the necessity to share data about vessels authorised to fish in their waters, so that swift action can be taken by EU MS authorities in case a fraud is detected and illegally caught fish is trying to find its way on the EU market.

Summary of the interventions from the panel

Mrs Béatrice Gorez introduced the debate and highlighted that, although there is still little experience of the implementation of this regulation that entered into force beginning of 2010, third countries fishing sector stakeholders already have to share problems and opportunities that have arisen from the implementation of this regulation in their countries, and suggestions to make to ensure the smooth implementation of the regulation, so that the ultimate objective is met: fight efficiently IUU fishing.

The first panellist, **Mrs Hélène Bours** showed the various aspects of IUU fishing in Africa. IUU fishing raises issues for the exploitation of the resources, but has also impacts on coastal fishing communities and on competitiveness with legal fishers. Her presentation also showed the indecent working conditions on board IUU vessels, and the appalling sanitary conditions for the treatment of the products.



Lian Run7, an Asian trawler fishing illegally in Guinean waters: indecent working conditions ...

Sanitary conditions for the sorting of the fish on deck an IUU trawler



Pictures courtesy of Greenpeace, 2006

Mrs Bours highlighted how the EU IUU regulation, in conjunction with other EU policies (SANCO, Trade policy), can help developing countries fight IUU fishing. She insisted on the need for the EU to support developing countries for Monitoring, Control and Surveillance initiatives, highlighting some particularly cost-effective initiatives, like ‘participative surveillance’, - where local fishing communities are involved in the detection of illegal operations (mainly by trawlers of foreign origin).

Mr Gaoussou Gueye, Senegalese fish exporter, and **Mr Sid’Ahmed Sidi Mohamed Abeid**, President of the Mauritanian artisanal fishermen organisation, then explained the challenges that their sectors had to address for the implementation of the EU regulation.



Two pannelists: Mrs Sid’Ahmed Sidi Mohamed Abeid, president of the Mauritanian artisanal fishermen organization, and Gaoussou Gueye, Senegalese fish exporter, Vice president of the National artisanal fishing sector organisation

They highlighted the following:

- The initiative to speed up the process for being ready to implement the regulation came, in both countries, from the **private sector**. The sector raised awareness with the authorities about the practical challenges to be met, in November and December 2009. The fish producers and exporters generally play a role of ‘watchdog’ for international developments that affect fish exploitation and fish trade, and it’s important to find mechanisms for a sustained dialogue about concrete issues arising for the implementation of this regulation (administrative issues about catch certificate, etc) – a rapid alert system would be desirable;
- The choice of the **competent authority** should also take into account the necessary accompanying measures so that the catch certification scheme can be adequately implemented. In Senegal for example, the competent authority (Fisheries Surveillance Administration) validating catch certificates works in a decentralized manner (with offices along the coast) and has usually little contacts with the fish exporting sector, which has to comply with the catch certification scheme requirements. To implement the IUU regulation, it has been necessary to open up a specific office at the airport, comprising representatives of all competent services, in order to offer the exporters a ‘one stop shop’ for validating the catch certificates.
- A lot of **investments** have been necessary in order to comply with the administrative tasks linked to the catch certification scheme (computers, renting an office, etc). Most investments have been made by the private sector, as such expenses were not planned in the state budget... there are still important needs, particularly to reinforce the staff dealing with catch certificates, so that a 24/24 hours service can be offered to the exporters. The private sector is therefore keen to know whether all these efforts and investments are having a positive impact on the fight against IUU fishing.

- Concerning the artisanal fishing sector, it was felt that the **flexibility** introduced in the EU regulation (sometimes referred to as the ‘clause pirogue’) was very important. Nevertheless, the implementation of the administrative procedure for catch certificates in this sub sector was a challenge. A first sale certificate and the electronic registration of the pirogues (with an electronic chip) have been the two main instruments that were put in place. An example was given that, in one of the most important fishing sites in Senegal, Mbour, the day before the IUU regulation entered into force, 280 fishermen had their pirogue registered, because they understood the importance of such instrument of traceability. This improvement of the pirogues electronic registration also has positive effects on safety at sea, as a pirogue can be more easily localized, at any time, with the electronic chip.

Problems were identified in the first months of the implementation, for Senegal. The delays for treating catch certificates, particularly in Spain, were too long, and fresh fish consignments were unduly blocked in European (air)ports for several days triggering sanitary alerts.

The final pannelist was **Mrs Conception Sanchez Trujillano**, who recalled that Spain was the first EU Member State, in importance, for fish imports, with 21% of EU total fish imports. Imports come through ports like Vigo, Algesiras, etc, as well as airport (Madrid). She explained how a system for the centralisation of data has been put in place, which makes it possible to cross check various data (management data (licences, catches, etc), VMS data, landing data, etc) and insisted on the importance of such cross checks to detect potential frauds. She then explained what concretely the treatment of catch certificates consist of, highlighting the existence of a simplified catch certificate for small boats, or without superstructure, or smaller than 20GT, only landing in their flag country. This clause is of particular interest for third countries small scale sector.

She then presented several cases and explained how they are treated:

- direct landing from a third country fishing vessel for importation into Spain / landing of third country transport vessel with fishery products caught by a 3d country vessel;
- landing from a third country vessel with non exported non processed EC catches
- indirect import (landing from a third country fish transport vessel for import into Spain of catches exported and processed in a third country other than the flag state of the vessel that caught the fish).

She finally highlighted the importance of fish imports in Spain coming from African countries such as Morocco, South Africa, Namibia, Senegal and Mauritania, insisting on the special attention to be given to ensure a smooth implementation of the new IUU regulation for fish coming from these countries.

Questions from the floor were mainly on the role of the IUU regulation for ensuring fish products coming onto the EU market are sustainable. Panellists insisted that the IUU regulation is not a regulation that will ensure that, as it is limited to control the legal origin of the fish, but that will contribute to promote sustainable fisheries, provided sufficient attention is given to the needs of developing countries (MCS, etc). A question was also raised about the fact that some EU ports, in particular Las Palmas, are often referred to as ‘port of convenience’. Panellists replied that Las Palmas, as any other big port, was likely to be the entry point for fraudulent fish. Mrs Sanchez explained that it was almost impossible for Spain to take any action against a fishing vessel/a transport vessel if they were not given information by third countries (particularly West African countries) about whether these boats had been fishing legally in their waters.

Links to all presentations and speeches by speakers

<http://cape-cffa.org/spip.php?article158>

Contact person

Béatrice Gorez

Telephone: 0032 (0)2 652 52 01

Fax: 0032 (0)2 654 04 07

e-mail: cffa.cape@scarlet.be

web site: www.cape-cffa.org