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Background information

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Port State Measures Agreement

IUU fishing - a global problem

Illegal, unregulated and unreported fishing (IUU) is present in all fisheries from the high seas to coastal zones. It damages ecosystems, undermines livelihoods, and is often associated with other serious problems such as drug trafficking, human slavery, organized crime and maritime security.

Illegal fishing is a major global problem and threatens the long-term health of our oceans and the livelihoods they support. While governments, NGOs, and the fishing industry have made some progress combatting illegal fishing through government-led and voluntary programs including Marine Stewardship Council certification, the problem is far from solved.

What is the Port State Measures Agreement?

The Port State Measures Agreement (PSMA) is a powerful legal instrument in the global fight against illegal fishing that can prevent illegally caught fish from entering the market through ports around the world.

The treaty will empower port officials to prohibit foreign vessels that are suspected of illegal activity from receiving port services and access. Port officials who have evidence that a vessel has a known or suspected record of illegal fishing would turn away the vessel or subject it to immediate inspection. If there is evidence of illegal catch, port officials would prohibit the landing of the catch. They also would alert other ports to the situation and could deny the vessel permission to refuel or receive repairs.

The Port State Measures Agreement was brokered between 92 nations by the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization and was opened for signature on Nov. 23, 2009. Up to now 11 countries have already ratified the agreement, namely: Chile, European Union, Gabon, Myanmar, New Zealand, Norway, Oman, Seychelles, Sri Lanka, Uruguay, and Mozambique. The agreement will take effect once 25 parties have ratified it. Once enforced this agreement will help close ports to vessels suspected of illegal fishing and block illegally caught fish from entering the global marketplace.

Signatories of the treaty are: Angola, Australia, Benin, Brazil, Canada, Chile, European Union, France, Gabon, Ghana, Iceland, Indonesia, Kenya, Mozambique, New Zealand, Norway, Peru, Russian Federation, Samoa, Sierra Leone, Turkey, United States of America and Uruguay.

Importance of PSMA

- It will allow Port States to enforce powerful and cost-effective measures against IUU fishing.
- It will block the entrance of illegal catches onto national and international markets.
- It will make the operations of vessels engaged in IUU fishing more difficult.
- It will enhance regional and international cooperation necessary to identify IUU vessels and then deny access to ports and markets.
- Developing countries that have ratified the agreement will be eligible for requesting special funding assistance to develop its capacity those.

WWF's mission is to stop the degradation of the earth's natural environment and to build a future in which humans live in harmony with nature.

President Chief: Yolanda Kakabadse
Director General: Dr. James P. Leape
President Emeritus:
HRH The Duke of Edinburgh

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WWF-World Wide Fund For Nature
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Characteristics of the PSMA

- It is an international legally binding instrument
- It establishes a minimum requirement to be enforced by Port States to combat Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing (IUU)
- Is applicable to foreign fishing vessels that seek port entry for landing, transshipping, packaging and processing of fish that have not been previously landed and for other port services, including inter alia, refuelling and resupplying, maintenance and dry docking

Mozambique ratifies the Port State Measures Agreement

WWF welcomes the ratification in August 2014 by the government of Mozambique, which is a huge step in the global fight to eliminate illegally caught fish. Illegal fishing is responsible for losses of \$35 million a year in Mozambique. Mozambique is the third African country (after Gabon and Seychelles) to ratify the agreement. Mozambique has designated three ports (Maputo, Beira and Nacala) to be contacted and approached by Foreign Fishing Vessels seeking landing or services.

IUU Fishing in Mozambique

African countries are the most targeted by IUU fishing due lack of resources and lack of governance. IUU fishing in Mozambique includes fishing without a license, unauthorized transshipments, failing to report catches or making false reports, keeping undersized fish or fish that are otherwise protected, fishing in closed areas or during closed seasons and using prohibited fishing gear which affects the ecosystem and community livelihood, as 2/3 of Mozambican population lives along the coast and depends entirely on fish as a key source of daily protein and employment.

WWF urges all governments to sign and ratify the PSMA

Illegal fishing not only contributes to overfishing but is responsible for \$10-\$23.5 billion in losses from the global economy each year.

More than 20% of wild caught seafood imported into the US—worth at least \$1.3 billion—is likely illegal, according to a new study published in the journal *Marine Policy* on 7 April. This new estimate underscores the role of the US market in fueling the global trade of illegal fish, estimated at \$23 billion, and the need for the US government to take proactive efforts to combat it.

Globally, WWF urges all governments to ratify and implement the Port State Measures Agreement to help deliver the dock-side transparency needed to tackle illegal fishing at scale. By establishing standards to verify all fish imported and landed are legally caught, port states can reduce the profits and incentives driving this crisis. By keeping illegal fish off of the markets, we can benefit everyone from consumers, to businesses, to governments and especially the coastal communities that rely on marine resources.

For more information:

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