

Committee on Fisheries meeting March 2-6, 2009

IUCN's statement on vessel and port control

Thank you, Mr. Chairman

IUCN the International Union for Conservation of Nature together with Birdlife International welcomes the progress to date to develop a Port State agreement as an adjunct to flag state implementation of obligations under the Law of the Sea to manage fisheries. In this regard, it will be very important to develop a Global Record of fishing vessels, to include support vessels, in support of a Port State agreement.

At the 4th World Conservation Congress, IUCN members adopted a Recommendation (4.117) on Flag State responsibility regarding Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing which included a number of operative paragraphs. These include *inter alia*:

“...URGES states to develop and adopt, individually or collectively through FAO and RFMOs, effective Port State measures directed at vessels flying the flags of states that do not fulfil the criteria as defined and banning access to markets for the fishing products caught and/or transported by these vessels....and...ENCOURAGES states, without prejudice to the primary responsibility of Flag States, to adopt measures against their nationals engaged in or supporting IUU fishing, including beneficial owners....”

Mr. Chairman, the requirement to manage all species subject to fishing mortality to ensure their sustainability is a requirement in line with the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea and the Code of Conduct and an integral component of the ecosystem approach to fisheries management. IUCN notes that the United Nations General Assembly through the omnibus sustainable fisheries resolution adopted during its current session encouraged “States to consider the development of standards for reducing or eliminating discards, such as through the development of an international plan of action, at the twenty-eighth session of the Committee on Fisheries of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations,....”

IUCN strongly supports the development of such standards through new FAO guidelines on reducing discards with due consideration to bycatch-related management issues, starting the process with expert and technical consultations.

Mr. Chairman, I will turn briefly to an issue with respect of capacity building for monitoring, control and surveillance. On this point we are joined by the industry NGO International Coalition of Fisheries Associations (ICFA). We strongly support the “operationalization” of the International Monitoring, Control and Surveillance Network. The Network should serve as an important tool for capacity-building, for coordinated law enforcement to combat illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing. The International MCS Network could also house a number of data-intensive endeavors. In this regard, we note that this Network could serve as the host of the Global Register of fishing vessels once it is established. We would welcome it if the Network explored options for operation independent of any single government.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman