

Valuing Fish- Addressing Crime Along the Fisheries Value Chain

Side event under the “Sustainable Fisheries” action area Our Ocean Conference, 23 – 24 October 2019 in Oslo

Time: Wednesday 23 October, 17:30-18:30

Target group: Government, industry and civil society

Countries regulate the fisheries sector through a combination of frameworks and policies, which include domestic laws, management measures recommended by regional fisheries management organizations (RFMOs) and provisions established by international conventions (for example, the UN Fish Stock Agreement). The objective of these arrangements is to promote sustainable fishing while ensuring integrity and legality in the sector vital to the growth of the blue economy, including trade, employment and food security.

Traditionally, any violations of regulatory arrangements have been categorized as illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing, a term now defined under the FAO Port State Measures Agreement. In some cases, IUU fishing is related to small-scale fishing operations, which, due to their largely subsistence motive, are typically handled through administrative sanctions. These violations can, however, be aggravated by several circumstances, and legal frameworks may enable the violations to be linked to serious offences; in some cases, IUU fishing is instrumental to uncovering transnational organized crime. As IUU fishing can be associated with broader fisheries crimes (criminal and administrative offences that occur along the fisheries value chain), the involvement of the criminal justice system is crucial.

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) work together to address IUU from different angles and support countries in combating IUU and fisheries crime, including against the institutional setting of RFMOs. RFMOs, as the regional organizations competent to adopt management measures for the sustainability of fisheries, have a crucial role in fostering cooperation. Most recently, the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean stressed the need to shed light on the links between IUU fishing and fisheries crimes (High-Level Conference on MedFish4Ever Initiatives held in June this year). While FAO is committed to eradicating IUU fishing, UNODC supports Governments in tackling fisheries crimes with a particular attention to crimes that qualify as transnational organized crime and corruption.

This side event will provide a platform to discuss illegality in the fisheries sector. Participants will learn about the complementary initiatives of FAO and UNODC to combat IUU fishing and fisheries crime and the measures used by RFMOs through their compliance mechanisms. The country case of Indonesia will be presented, where combating IUU fishing and fisheries crimes is a national priority. Indonesia will share its experience of confronting organized crime in this sector.

The side event will allocate sufficient time for an interactive QnA session.