

National strategy to be developed to combat Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing

Swakopmund, 1 June: National institutions and the Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO) jointly reviewed the country's implementation of the Agreement on Port State Measures (PSMA) and complementary instruments to combat Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing. The review happened at a workshop in the coastal town of Swakopmund, Namibia from 28 May - 1 June 2018.



The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) also participated in the workshop, which was carried out under the auspices of FAO's global capacity development programme to support the implementation of the PSMA. Namibia became a Party to the PSMA on 17 August 2017 and has received financing for implementation from the Port State Measures Support Project funded by the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (Norad).

While applauding the partners for their turnout, the Minister for Fisheries and Marine Resources, Hon. Bernhardt Esau, explained the need for PSMA.

"In order to get their catch from ship to shelf, fishers involved in IUU operations have traditionally relied on a range of tactics and loopholes in various national laws and management procedures. They have exploited ports known for lax law enforcement or limited capacity to carry out proper inspection operations. The PSMA is changing that."

"Parties to the agreement can refuse entry to their ports or access to port services, including landing and transshipping fish, to foreign-flagged vessels known to have engaged in IUU fishing", he said.

FAO Representative in Namibia, Farayi Zimudzi, said Namibia has one of the most productive marine environments in the world due to the Benguela Current that flows along the coast

"By its very nature, the full impact of IUU fishing is unknown, but there can be no doubt of its significant adverse impacts that cannot be allowed to continue."

- Farayi Zimudzi, FAO Representative to Namibia

northward. The Benguela Current is the eastern portion of the South Atlantic Ocean gyre and this system supports rich populations of fish that form the basis of Namibia's marine fisheries sector. Namibia boasts several achievements in fisheries management, and the institutional arrangements governing fisheries have made Namibia a regional success story with relatively low levels of IUU fishing.

"The Government of Namibia deserves thanks for its efforts in combatting IUU fishing, including becoming a Party to the PSMA in July 2017. The PSMA entered into force on 5

June 2016 and is the first binding instrument to specifically combat IUU fishing. 54 States are now Party to the PSMA and this number will no doubt, continue to grow. This reflects the global recognition that the PSMA is a powerful and effective instrument in the fight against IUU fishing”, she said.

Highlighting the relevance of addressing IUU fishing for international development, Zimudzi added, “Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 14 of the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development calls for an end to overfishing, IUU fishing and destructive fishing practices by 2020. This is no doubt an ambitious goal, but we must continue to work collectively towards it, including through the effective implementation of the PSMA”.

The review will lead to the development of a strategy aimed at enhancing Namibia’s current systems to combat IUU fishing through Port State Measures.

