



United Nations

Resumed Review Conference on the Agreement Relating to the Conservation and Management of Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks

New York, 24 – 28 May 2010

General facts regarding world fisheries

- According to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), capture fisheries and aquaculture supplied the world with about 110 million tonnes of fish for human consumption in 2006, providing an apparent per capita supply of 16.7 kg, which is among the highest on record. Of this total, aquaculture accounted for 47 per cent.
- World capture fisheries production in 2006 was about 92 million tonnes, with an estimated first-sale value of US\$91.2 billion, comprising about 82 million tonnes from marine waters and 10 million tonnes from inland fisheries.
- The top ten fisheries producer countries in 2006 were China, Peru, the United States, Indonesia, Japan, Chile, India, the Russian Federation, Thailand and Philippines.
- The top ten species that contributed most to global catches were anchoveta, Alaska pollack, skipjack tuna, Atlantic herring, blue whiting, chub mackerel, Chilean jack mackerel, Japanese anchovy, largehead hairtail and yellowfin tuna.
- The four marine fishing areas in 2006 yielding the most catch were the Northwest Pacific, Southeast Pacific, Western Central Pacific and Northeast Atlantic.
- A recent study prepared by FAO and the World Bank concludes that marine capture fisheries are an underperforming global asset. The difference between the potential and actual net economic benefits from marine fisheries is in the order of \$50 billion per year. Improved governance of marine fisheries could capture a substantial part of this \$50 billion annual economic loss.

State of world fish stocks

- FAO concludes that the maximum wild capture fisheries potential from the world's oceans has probably been reached.
- Overall, 80 per cent of the world's fish stocks for which assessment information is available are reported as fully exploited or overexploited and, thus, requiring effective and precautionary management.
- In 2007, about 28 per cent of stocks monitored by FAO were either overexploited, depleted or recovering from depletion and thus yielding less than their maximum potential owing to excess fishing pressure. A further 52 per cent of stocks were fully exploited and, therefore, producing catches that were at or close to their maximum sustainable limits with no room for further expansion. Only about 20 per cent of stocks were moderately exploited or underexploited with perhaps a possibility of producing more.

- The areas with the highest proportions of fully-exploited stocks were the Northeast Atlantic, the Western Indian Ocean and the Northwest Pacific.

Straddling fish stocks and highly migratory fish stocks

- Of the straddling stocks for which the state of exploitation is known, nearly two-thirds of the stocks (64 per cent) are classified as overexploited, depleted or recovering, 23 per cent are fully exploited, 12 per cent are moderately exploited and 2 per cent are underexploited.
- Of the tuna and tuna-like stocks for which the state of exploitation is known, 30 per cent of the stocks are classified as overexploited or depleted, 53 per cent are fully exploited and 18 per cent are moderately exploited.
- With respect to the shark species with a known state of exploitation, more than 60 per cent are considered potentially overexploited or depleted.
- Some of the shark species within the scope of the Agreement are also listed under global and regional instruments concerning conservation of, or trade in, wildlife, for example the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals, and the Protocol concerning Specially Protected Areas and Biological Diversity in the Mediterranean of the Barcelona Convention for the Protection of the Mediterranean Sea.

World fishing fleets

- The number of motorized fishing vessels in 2006 was estimated to be 2.1 million, of which almost 70 per cent were in Asia. Almost 90 per cent of motorized fishing vessels are less than 12 metres long, and these vessels particularly dominate in Africa, Asia and the Near East.
- According to the Lloyd's database, the number of industrialized fishing vessels and fish carriers (that is, above 100 gross tonnage) operational in 2007 was 23,000 and 740, respectively. The numbers of such fishing vessels and fish carriers have stayed around the same level in the last ten years. Since 2001, there has been a dramatic decline in the number of new fishing vessels being built, and this number has dropped to under 200 per year in the last few years. Several major fishing nations have established programmes to cut the size of their fishing fleets.
- As reported by FAO and the World Bank, total fishing subsidies, which directly impact fishing capacity and fuel overfishing, amounted to over \$10 billion in 2000. Close to 80 per cent of the total global subsidies are provided by developed countries.

Contribution of fisheries to sustainable development

- Overall, fish provided more than 2.9 billion people with at least 15 per cent of their average per capita animal protein intake.
- Fish and fishery products are highly traded, with more than 37 per cent (live weight equivalent) of total production entering international trade. World exports of fish and fishery products reached US\$85.9 billion in 2006, increasing in real terms by 103.9 per cent between 1986 and 2006, and 32.1 per cent between 2000 and 2006.

- Developing countries play a major role in the fishery industry. FAO estimates that in 2006, 79 per cent of fishery production took place in developing countries, and accounted for 49 per cent of world exports of fish and fish products in value terms and 59 per cent in terms of quantity.
- Fisheries and aquaculture play an essential role in the livelihoods of millions of people around the world and contribute to food security and poverty alleviation. In 2006, 43.5 million people were directly engaged in primary production of fish, either by fishing or in aquaculture. Most of the 34.8 million people engaged in fishing are small-scale, artisanal fishers, operating in coastal and inland waters.

IUU fishing

- According to a recent report, current losses due to illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing worldwide are estimated to be between \$10 billion and \$23.5 billion annually, representing between 11 and 26 million tonnes of catch.

By-catches

- The amount of fish and other species caught as “by-catch” is estimated by FAO to be more than 20 million tonnes globally, which is equivalent to 23 per cent of marine landings, and growing.

Lost/abandoned gear

- FAO and UNEP estimate that abandoned, lost or otherwise discarded fishing gear in the oceans make up approximately 10 per cent (640,000 tonnes) of all marine litter.

Sources

Food and Agricultural Organization, “The State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture”, 2008.

Food and Agricultural Organization and The World Bank, “The Sunken Billions: The Economic Justification for Fisheries Reform”.

Food and Agricultural Organization and United Nations Environment Programme, “Abandoned lost or otherwise discarded fishing gear”, Regional Seas Report and Studies No. 185, FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Technical Paper No. 523, 2009.