

FAO Statement on Environment Impact Assessment
11 September 2018

Thank you Mr. Facilitator,

FAO wishes to comment only on 5.3, in particular on the threshold and criteria for EIAs.

It will be noted from the elements we will outline for consideration that they are sectoral, and suggests that they are based on an activities-orientated approach. The activities orientated approach would also suggest that only generic guidelines be stated in a global framework but that sectoral criteria for EIAs for specific activities be applied.

In relation to deepsea fisheries, the elements for the threshold and criteria for related EIAs are set out in the FAO International Guidelines for the Management of DeepSea Fisheries in the High Seas (FAO Guidelines – paragraph 47). These are:

- i. **type(s) of fishing conducted or contemplated**, including vessels and gear types, fishing areas, target and potential bycatch species, fishing effort levels and duration of fishing (harvesting plan);
- ii. **best available scientific and technical information** on the current state of fishery resources and baseline information on the ecosystems, habitats and communities in the fishing area, against which future changes are to be compared;
- iii. **identification, description and mapping of VMEs** known or likely to occur in the fishing area;
- iv. **data and methods used to identify, describe and assess the impacts of the fishing activity, the identification of gaps in knowledge, and an evaluation of uncertainties in the information presented in the assessment;**
- v. **identification, description and evaluation of the occurrence, scale and duration of likely impacts, including cumulative impacts of activities** covered by the assessment on VMEs and low productivity fishery resources in the fishing area;
- vi. **risk assessment of likely impacts by the fishing operations to determine which are likely to be significant adverse impacts**, particularly those on VMEs and low-productivity fishery resources; and
- vii. **the proposed mitigation and management measures to be used to prevent significant adverse impacts** on VMEs and ensure long-term conservation and sustainable utilisation of low-productivity fishery resources, and the measures to be used to monitor effects of the fishing operations.

These sectoral and activities-orientated approach, outlined in the FAO Deepsea Guidelines, are not new as they are really a restatement of what UN Members have recommended for consideration in the development of guidelines for the management of deepsea fisheries in UNGA Resolutions 61/105 and 64/72 among others.

Thank you for your attention.