

FW: Second draft of the second world ocean assessment (WOA II) - PMs/OMs2

DOALOS <doalos@un.org>

Fri 9/4/2020 8:06 PM

To: Dmitry Gonchar <gonchar@un.org>; Marco Boccia <marco.boccia@un.org>; Lika Doebl Diouf <lika.diouf@un.org>; Henock Legesse Workie <legesseh@un.org>; Bingzhuo Li <bingzhuo.li@un.org>; Elena Temnova <temnova@un.org>

 1 attachments (29 KB)

WOA II - review by States - Letter from Co-Chairs_second draft WOA II.pdf;

From: Jón Erlingur Jónasson**Sent:** Friday, September 4, 2020 8:05:40 PM (UTC-05:00) Eastern Time (US & Canada)**To:** DOALOS; Elena Temnova; Henock Legesse Workie**Subject:** FW: Second draft of the second world ocean assessment (WOA II) - PMs/OMs2

Dear Henock Legesse Workie

With reference to the letter of 17 August 2020 from the Co-chairs of the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole on the Regular Process for Global Reporting and Assessment of the Marine Environment, including Socioeconomic Aspects, inviting states to review the second draft of the WOA II, Iceland has the following comments:

Please confirm the receipt of this e-mail.

With best regards

Jón Erlingur Jónasson, skrifstofustjóri/Director General

Skrifstofa tvíhliða samstarfs og svæðisbundinna málefna / Directorate for Bilateral and Regional Affairs

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E-mail: jej@mfa.iswww.mfa.is - [Fyrirvari/Disclaimer](#)**On Chapter 7M – regarding high-latitude ice, climate change and impact on Arctic shore side communities**

The recent climate changes are having a different impact on Arctic settlements and biosphere depending on their location and how close they are to receding glaciers. While coastal communities are over most parts of the world suffering the consequences of rising sea level, in the near vicinity of fast retreating glaciers land is rising at an increasing speed. This causes problems for the coastal communities as shoreside infrastructure, such as harbours may in near future not serve their purpose. This is evident f.ex. in Greenland and SE Iceland.

On Chapter 8 – a point on the importance of SDG 5 on equality in the maritime industry

In the second WOA II draft there are paragraphs on gender and fisheries: On page 475: „In 2017, some 135 million people were involved in capture fisheries and marine aquaculture: Employment in capture fisheries (as opposed to subsistence fishing) amounts to about 40.4 million, and employment in marine aquaculture is about 15.6

million. In addition, there is a slightly smaller workforce engaged in post-harvest processing. About 13 per cent of this employed workforce are women.” The best estimate of the proportion of seafarers who are women remains at about 2 per cent, mainly in the cruise-ship sector (ITF, 2019)

The Maritime industry is extremely gender biased. The theme of IMO in the year 2019 was “Empowering Women in the Maritime industry.” On page 481 it is stated that “The best estimate of the proportion of seafarers who are women remains at about 2 per cent, mainly in the cruise-ship sector (ITF, 2019).”

In Iceland’s view there is a strong gender element to the exploitation of marine resources. According to the World Bank, Small Scale fisheries employ more than 90 per cent of the world’s 120 million people involved in capture fisheries, of which about half, 50% are women, mainly in developing countries. It is the only type of fishery where there is some equality. Despite a significant contribution to global catchment, SSFs are marginalized, with increasing pressure from both industrialized (and often subsidized) fleets and other ocean uses. Climate changes were expected to impact SSF participants adversely, and therefore have a greater impact on women and their livelihood.

In Iceland, prior to industrialization women were around 1/3 fishermen on open boats. With industrialization of the fishing fleet women at sea are now only a few. Around 0,3% of those who are qualified ships engineers are women and 1,2% of those qualified as Ship operators, captains, helmsmen etc. 6-8% of seafarers in total are women. However, gender norms and values are not fixed and can evolve over time, can vary substantially from place to place, and are subject to change. As one of the means to fulfil SDG 5, Iceland has recently launched a project with the aim of increasing the participation of women at sea. It is a clear quality goal as fishermen, as well as other seafarer in freight or research, earn manifold that of skilled labour on land, even if performing the same job.

On Chapter 15

There is improvement in the document from the first draft, and account has clearly been taken of many of Iceland’s comments. This is to be commended. However, fundamental problems with Chapter 15 can not be overlooked.

Iceland’s general comments on the first draft regarding Chapter included the following: “It has major oversights that must be corrected, which will require significant re-writing of the whole chapter. Minor amendments in a few places will not suffice to bring the quality of the draft to an acceptable level.” Iceland notes that other States reached similar conclusions, with the United States e.g. recommending in its comments that “that the authors review the whole chapter”.

Unfortunately, the Chapter was not re-written, but rather some amendments have been made to it which do not change the fact that it mostly overlooks the fact that two-thirds of fisheries are being sustainably managed. The Chapter consequently completely overlooks the fact that for the vast majority of fisheries the priority is to maintain and strengthen further the existing well-functioning fisheries management. This then further leads to the fact that the problem of overfishing is not put in the context of the need to expand well-functioning fisheries management to cover more fisheries.

It may be too late in the process to expect fundamental re-writing of Chapter 15. This is unfortunate, as without such an overhaul the low quality of this Chapter will inevitably undermine the credibility of the whole WOA report.

For clarity, the following is the general comment that Iceland made to Chapter 15 in the first draft, which unfortunately still largely apply even though some of the more specific comments have been addressed:

“Chapter 15, on fisheries, starting on page 619, is unfortunately currently of very low quality. It has major oversights that must be corrected, which will require significant re-writing of the whole chapter. Minor amendments in a few places will not suffice to bring the quality of the draft to an acceptable level.

FAO reports that are correctly quoted in the chapter state that 33.1% of fish stocks are overfished, which leaves 66.9% of fish stocks as not overfished. It is of course necessary to highlight the issue of a third of fish stocks being overfished, as this is of serious concern. However, the authors of the chapter seem to have overlooked the fact

that 66.9 is a greatly higher number than 33.1. Overlooking the 33.1% would have been wrong, and Iceland welcomes the fact that the draft Second WOA report does not overlook this part of the world's fisheries. However, Iceland finds it inexplicable that the draft report ignores the 2/3 majority of fish stocks that are not overfished. This oversight colours the whole chapter, from the fact that there is no mention of the vast majority of fish stocks being sustainably harvested in the "keynote points" at the start of the chapter to the fact that the "outlook" and "gaps" parts toward the end of the chapter do not mention the fact that for the vast majority of fish stocks the overriding priority is to maintain fishing at sustainable levels. For some reason, there is no mention of this important priority, which one would have expected to be a prominent feature in a chapter on global fisheries. There are several important issues related to the issue of maintaining fisheries at sustainable levels, including ways to safeguard and strengthen further the fisheries management that is working efficiently. These genuinely major issues are simply not to be found in this chapter on fisheries. The issues of overfishing are thereby also not put in the context of the need to extend the well-functioning management regimes to cover the overfished stocks. Again, overlooking the fact that many stocks are in need of management action to halt overfishing and to rebuild stocks would have been a clear oversight. Likewise, the current situation of overlooking the fact that there is no need for halting overfishing or rebuilding stocks for 2/3 of fish stocks defies explanation. Iceland trusts that this whole chapter will be re-written to ensure that there is proper balance where it is clearly stated that a majority of fish stocks are being fished within sustainable levels that must be maintained, while a third of fish stocks constitute a problem that must be addressed. Maintaining the current approach to this chapter would undermine the credibility of the whole WOA report. The re-written chapter should properly address the various well-functioning fisheries management measures implemented at the national level and through regional cooperation, such as in RFMOs."

In this context, and as further demonstration of the lack of quality in Chapter 15 that remains in the second draft, it is perhaps also worthwhile to reiterate comments that Iceland made regarding the identification of "significant gaps" in the Chapter's section 1 (on page 655 of the second draft).

This is in relation to identifying as "significant gaps" issues that have not actually arisen, but may potentially arise at some point in the future, and present it as "significant gaps" that these have not been fully and exhaustively addressed. The fact is that both examples are issues that have to a very large extent already been addressed, despite being potential future issues rather than current issues, but they are nevertheless considered by the authors as "significant gaps".

Iceland's original comments, which unfortunately still apply to the second draft, reads as follows:

"On page 621, starting on line 13, there is a list of gaps "in establishing and reaching consensus on management practices for sustaining healthy fish stocks". This list includes the following:

...

"limited progress in the conservation of fish stocks in the Central Arctic Ocean (a temporary 16 year moratorium on unregulated fishing awaited entry into force)". The fact is that there are no commercial fisheries in the high seas of the Central Arctic Ocean, but relevant States have nevertheless come together to conclude an agreement to proactively address the potential issue of future fisheries there. This is foresight that should be applauded that is for some reason here presented as a gap and a problem that needs to be addressed.

"absence of management of prospective fisheries in the mesopelagic zone, where regulation was either nascent or non existent". The main reason why there is limited regulation of mesopelagic fishing is the fact that there is very little such fishing. The legal framework and enforcement mechanisms for formulating and applying relevant conservation and management measures is widely in place at both the national level and for the high seas (i.e. this is within the existing legal mandate of Generic RFMOs). To present it as a significant gap that an issue that has not yet arisen has not yet been fully addressed is stretching things to an extent that is unbecoming of a WOA report.

Yet again it should be stressed that it would be inappropriate to overlook genuine problems. However, it is not only also inappropriate to overlook things that are being done well (in particular when these constitute the vast majority of cases) but also inappropriate to present issues as problems when they simply are not problems. This list of "gaps" is therefore difficult to understand and Iceland suggests that revising it significantly be a part of the re-writing that is clearly needed for this entire chapter on fisheries."

From: Henock Legesse Workie <legesseh@un.org>
Sent: Monday, August 17, 2020 11:37 AM
Cc: Dmitry Gonchar <gonchar@un.org>; Marco Boccia <marco.boccia@un.org>; Bingzhao Li <bingzhao.li@un.org>; Lika Doehl Diouf <lika.diouf@un.org>; Elena Temnova <temnova@un.org>
Subject: Second draft of the second world ocean assessment (WOA II) - PMs/OMs2

Attention: All Permanent and Observer Missions to the United Nations

Further to the communication circulated on 27 April 2020 inviting United Nations Member States to provide written comments on the first draft of the second world ocean assessment (WOA II), please find attached a letter from the Co-Chairs of the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole on the Regular Process for Global Reporting and Assessment of the State of the Marine Environment, including Socioeconomic Aspects (Regular Process), inviting Member States to review the second draft of WOA II and the responses to their comments on the first draft of WOA II and raise any questions they may have with the Group of Experts.

To allow sufficient time for the Group of Experts to reflect, respond and/or make changes to the draft, as necessary, such questions, if any, should be communicated to the secretariat of the Regular Process (doalos@un.org; temnova@un.org; legesseh@un.org) by the Permanent Mission of the State to the United Nations or by its designated National Focal Point for the Regular Process as soon as possible but no later than midnight (New York time) on 4 September 2020. Delegations are kindly requested to put "WOA II second draft" in the subject line.

The second draft of WOA II, the responses agreed by the Group of Experts to comments from States, as well as all comments received from States are available at: <https://www.un.org/regularprocess/WOA-II-review-by-states/draft-assessment>.

Sincerely,

DOALOS - Secretariat of the Regular Process