

UNODC contribution to the Secretary-General's background note for the preparatory meeting on the high-level 2020 UN Conference to Support the Implementation of SDG 14: *Scaling up ocean action based on science and innovation for the implementation of Goal 14*

II. Activities, challenges and opportunities relating to the implementation SDG 14

2. Challenges and opportunities

Challenges

The health of our oceans is undermined by criminal activities, which threaten the achievement of SDG 14, specifically target 14.4, which was set to “effectively regulate harvesting and end overfishing, illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing (IUUF) and destructive fishing practices...” by 2020. There are numerous cases where IUUF has converged with other crimes, which include corruption, money-laundering, forced labour, human trafficking and other forms of organized crime. Many of these offences are transnational in nature as defined in the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (UNTOC) and its Protocols. Tackling these crimes requires extensive collaboration among relevant stakeholders in the fisheries sector. These can include fisheries management authorities, fiscal and tax authorities, law enforcement agencies, coast guards, prosecutors and other actors. Due to the global nature of the fisheries sector, collaboration at regional and international level is key in tackling these crimes. Without addressing the broader criminality in the fisheries sector, IUUF and crimes along the fish value chain will likely continue.

The regulatory frameworks and controls governing the fisheries sector can be vulnerable to corruption and economic crimes. Without addressing corruption, these frameworks are left unguarded and prone to manipulation, and result in ineffective governance of the fisheries sector. Significant financial, environmental and societal damages will continue if States do not properly prevent and combat corruption.

As guardian of the UNTOC and its Protocols and the United Nations Convention against Corruption, UNODC is raising awareness of Member States on the different crimes that occur in the fisheries value chain and their links to IUUF and assists them in addressing these crimes to sustain the health of the ocean.

Opportunities

As was emphasized in the Declaration “Our Ocean, Our Future: Call for Action”, achieving SDG 14 requires a multi-disciplinary, collaborative approach. Linking SDG 14 to SDG 16 on the rule of law is instrumental to strengthen the prevention and integrity practices in the fisheries sector to address IUUF and other crimes in the fisheries value chain.

UNODC currently works with Governments to apply corruption risk-based approaches in the fisheries value chain that can be helpful to the authorities working on fisheries management, enforcement, governance and anti-corruption. UNODC provides guidance on the use of anti-corruption techniques to more effectively prevent and combat crimes in the fisheries sector and to strengthen institutional integrity. By identifying and addressing the vulnerabilities in the fisheries value chain, UNODC is helping to build preventive approaches and accountability among the key actors, which will be an anchoring pillar over the long-term sustainability of the oceans.

In other words, the better the understanding of the vulnerabilities that exist in the fisheries value chain increases the chances to address the gaps and challenges and ultimately improves the social and economic development of the country.

The UNODC Global Programme for Combating Wildlife and Forest Crime supports Member States to address many of the serious offences committed along the fisheries value chain. UNODC works with criminal justice institutions, fisheries authorities and other stakeholders to enhance criminal justice and law enforcement responses to criminality in the fisheries sector and promotes accountability for sustainable use of marine resources.

III. Scaling up ocean action based on science and innovation

UNODC Global Maritime Crime Programme (GMCP) is working closely with EMSA Copernicus in strengthening Member States' maritime law enforcement capacity in response to maritime crime by use of technology, including satellite imagery. The technical assistance is provided ideally where GMCP has embedded maritime law enforcement mentors. These mentors can support national maritime law enforcement agencies in strengthening their maritime domain awareness with use of provided Copernicus satellite imageries as part of responding to crimes occurring in their waters and which allows for a more cost efficient and targeted patrolling.

IV. Developing partnerships for the implementation of SDG 14

UNODC and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) have recognized that the work they undertake are complementary in nature and practice. Both institutions are also aware of the important role of Regional Fisheries Management Organizations (RFMOs). Strong partnerships are critical so that there is a broad and sustained focus on technical assistance support to Member States in combatting both IUUF and crimes along the fisheries value chain.

UNODC proposes to continue building on this approach and to promote knowledge of the links between SDG 14 and SDG 16. The Office will continue to raise awareness of the crucial collaboration of all relevant actors to tackle IUUF and crimes along the fisheries value chain, thereby contributing to the conservation and sustainable use of the ocean resources.

V. Possible theme for interactive dialogue

UNODC proposes to include a theme "The nexus between SDGs 14 and SDG 16: illegality along the fisheries value chain, using the full force of the law to safeguard our oceans".