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NOTIFICATION

UNCTAD and the Commonwealth Secretariat Ad Hoc Expert Meeting on Trade in Sustainable Fisheries

Geneva, 29 September–1 October 2015

The Ad Hoc Expert Meeting on Trade in Sustainable Fisheries will be held from 29 September to 1 October 2015 in room XXV of the Palais des Nations, Geneva. It will commence at 10 a.m. on Tuesday, 29 September.

The meeting aims to provide a platform for discussion on possible approaches and options within the trade policy toolbox to mainstream sustainable fishing practices and trade in fish and fish products in the international trading system, trade negotiations, and relevant United Nations and Commonwealth processes, while enabling the conservation of fishery resources and marine ecosystems for the livelihoods of current and future generations. The meeting will gather together leading experts on trade and sustainable fisheries, representatives from the permanent missions in Geneva, as well as other relevant stakeholders to deliberate and identify key policy issues on trade in sustainable fisheries against the backdrop of sustainable development goals related to marine resources.

Background and purpose of the meeting

Fish and other marine living organisms comprise a fundamental part of human diet, livelihoods and development, especially of coastal populations. Fish account for about 17 per cent of the global population's intake of animal protein. In many least developed countries and small island developing States, fish contribute 50 per cent or more of some local populations' daily protein intake. More than 3.2 billion people live close to coastlines, relying on the oceans and seas for their livelihoods, and about 350 million jobs are linked to fisheries, port management and other related activities.

Exports of fish and fish products have attained an historical peak, valued at US\$ 136 billion in 2013, indicating an increasing demand for these products, especially in developing and emerging economies. About 97 per cent of the world's fishermen and fisherwomen live in developing countries and over 90 per cent are employed in small-scale activities. The importance of the fisheries sector for food, poverty reduction and development in developing countries is thus undeniable.

Until recently, fish were an abundant and easily available resource. However, humanity has overutilized marine resources, especially during recent decades, without a clear conscience of the long-term impact on fish populations.

The need for urgent global action has been well articulated by the international community, including in the Rio+20 outcome document, the Samoa Pathway outcome document and recent resolutions of the United Nations General Assembly (resolution A/RES/68/71 of 2013), which highlight the challenges posed by the effort to achieve conservation, sustainable use and rebuilding of fish stocks and ecosystems while, at the same time, ensuring equitable access to those resources. In sum, healthy oceans and resilient marine ecosystems and living resources are essential in the quest for a more sustainable future for all and, in particular, for coastal states.

This year marks several milestones that could change the way fish trade and fisheries are managed. The sustainable development goals, which may include a stand-alone goal on oceans and seas, are expected to be adopted in September; the first Global Oceans Assessment will be presented to the United Nations General Assembly; the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries will celebrate its twentieth anniversary; and the World Trade Organization's Nairobi Ministerial Conference in December may prioritize the conclusion of the current negotiations on fish subsidies and a sectoral market access deal on fish.

Documents and contributed papers

The provisional programme is attached for reference. A background note will be distributed two weeks before the meeting to provide an update on key issues relevant to trade in sustainable fisheries.

Experts are invited to submit their views and contributions in the form of PowerPoint presentations and short notes, in English, on the subject matter. The notes should reflect the key messages and recommendations for action that the expert wishes to impart. These papers will be made available at the meeting in the form in which they are received.

Participation

Registration should be completed online. To do so, please use the following link: <http://unctad.org/en/Pages/MeetingDetails.aspx?meetingid=854>

Experts will be participating in the meeting in their personal capacity. Member State delegations wishing to nominate experts to the session are requested to do so by **10 August 2015**. Specialized agencies and intergovernmental bodies wishing to participate in the session are requested to inform the UNCTAD secretariat of the names of their representatives by the same date. Non-governmental organizations in the general category that are interested in the work of the Expert Meeting on Trade in Sustainable Fisheries and wish to participate as observers are requested to inform the UNCTAD secretariat of the names of their representatives also by 10 August 2015.

Logistics

Upon arrival, participants are requested, before entering the Palais des Nations, to collect their badges at the United Nations Security Service, Pregny Gate entrance, 14 avenue de la Paix. The Security Service is open from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Because of the security measures in force, participants are strongly advised to arrive before 9 a.m. in order to complete entry procedures in good time and proceed to the meeting in the E Building (Batiment E) of the Palais. Participants are requested to carry a passport or similar national identity card with them. Taxis are not allowed to enter the grounds of the Palais des Nations and visitors will therefore be dropped off at the requested entrance gates. Furthermore, luggage may not be brought into the buildings unless the Security Service grants special clearance.

Further information and contact details

Substantive and other inquiries should be addressed to the UNCTAD secretariat, Trade, Environment, Climate Change and Sustainable Development Branch; fax: 41 22 917 0044; e-mail: David.VivasEugui@unctad.org, ivonne.paredes@unctad.org or malick.kane@unctad.org.

(signed)

Mukhisa Kituyi
Secretary-General of UNCTAD

15 July 2015