

34th Forum of the United Nations Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business (UN/CEFACT)

Meeting of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) Team of Specialists on Sustainable Fisheries
Geneva, 29 October 2019

Report of the Meeting of the UNECE Team of Specialists (ToS) on Sustainable Fisheries

I. Opening and adoption of the Agenda

The Chair of the Team of Specialists (ToS) send his apologies as he was not able to attend due to pressing other commitments. The meeting was chaired by Maria Ceccarelli (UNECE) and Harm van Bourg (Netherlands). The Agenda of the meeting was approved with changes.

II. Outcomes of 2nd meeting of the ToS

The report on the second meeting of the ToS had been circulated by email. No comments were received for this meeting.

III. Promotional Activities

Maris Berzins (European Commission, DG Mare) provided an update on the development of promotional materials. The visual identity, rollup stands, and posters have been developed. The briefing note on the benefits of implementing UNFLUX and addressing FAQs (ToSSF/2019/Inf.4) and the briefing note on the use of UNFLUX in combatting IUU and the relationship between UNFLUX and fisheries subsidies (ToSSF/2019/Inf.5) are available on the website of the ToS. The FLUX brochure and the leaflet have been given to the EU contractor for improvement and publication. The current work on the policy brief is on hold, awaiting the outcomes of WTO negotiations on fisheries subsidies. Following this the policy brief and the promotion video will be developed. The target audience for the promotion videos are policy makers of countries that are potentially interested in FLUX implementation. Participants of the ToS are invited to send suggestions for the video.

IV. FLUX messages

Frans van Diepen sent presentation with an overview of changes to the FLUX message to better accommodate inspection reports. Changes allow for transmission of multiple inspection reports in one message, adding dates of the inspection report, the checks

performed during the inspections, etc. A more detailed technical note on the changes can be shared with interested participants. The changes will be implemented in the CCL19.B

In the discussion there were some questions regarding the context of the inspections and details of technical implementation. It was suggested to provide a more detailed presentation at the next meeting of the ToS.

V. Reports

Frans van Diepen attended the Meeting of the FAO Coordinating Working Party on Fisheries Statistics (CWP) and has sent a presentation. The current CWP handbook on fisheries statistics is not yet in line with UNFLUX and there are some minor issues in data definitions such as date/time which could affect data collection for statistics. Harm van Bourg informed that UN/CEFACT is reviewing its harmonising its own definition of date and time with the relevant ISO standards.

Markus Pikart (UNECE) reported on the 3rd Oceans Forum, Geneva, 10 September 2019. The meeting was jointly organized by UNCTAD, FAO, UNEP, UNECE and partners. The Forum focused on the impacts of climate change on fisheries and the oceans economy, as well as on key aspects of the WTO fisheries subsidies negotiations. The meeting emphasized the need for the transition to sustainable ocean economies to expand and maintain the value of the oceans, while also maintaining their natural ability to support climate changes and promote countries' resilience to climate change. Adaptation to climate change should be undertaken within the multifaceted context of fisheries, complementing overall governance for sustainable use, and with due consideration for political commitments, technological innovation and behavioral change.

The Expert from FAO gave an update on the FAO Global Record. The Global Record is an initiative to gather and disseminate information about vessels directly involved in fishing activities or in support of fishing activities. The objective is to combat IUU fishing and to strengthen the fisheries' sector through enhanced transparency and traceability. All information to the Global Record is provided by flag states. Currently 11000 vessels are registered in the database. Reporting is currently done by online data entry or upload from spreadsheets. In the future it is planned to upload data through interfaces with UNFLUX and other electronic systems which will increase quality and timeliness of the Global Record. UNFLUX could also be used to upload inspection reports for the implementation of the agreement on Post State Measures (PSMA).

The Expert from the North-East Atlantic Fisheries Commission (NEAFC) reported on the current status of the UNFLUX implementation and NEAFC's experience. Since the year 2000 NEAFC has been using a standardised format – The North Atlantic Format (NAF), for fishing activity information. In 2016, an Ad Hoc Working Group on Electronic Reporting System (ERS) began to explore the feasibility to use the UNFLUX standard for exchange of fishing activity information as a harmonized message standard allows RFMO's such as NEAFC to automatically access the electronic data from the E-Logbooks from the fishing vessels. UNFLUX allows stakeholders to develop their own system as long as the systems are able to communicate in the same language. The use of a global data exchange format for fisheries information is also important to implement the FAO PSMA as well as NEAFC's Port State Control system, in particular for advance vessel information exchange for the port State evaluation before the vessel enters the port and for risk-based management of inspections.

The meeting received a brief update on the ongoing negotiations on fisheries subsidies in the WTO as negotiations are ongoing and large parts of the texts are still in brackets. The objective is still to reach an agreement at the WTO MC12 in June 2020 in Kazakhstan.

VI. Preparation of the next meeting of the ToSSF

The next meeting of the ToSSF will take place on 4 February 2020 in Geneva, Palais des Nations, Salle VIII

The meeting discussed a shortlist of possible organizations that could make a presentation. It was agreed to organise a conference call for the preparation of this meeting in December 2019.

ADDENDUM 1: List of Participants

1. Frans van Diepen, the Netherlands, Chair, excused
2. Harm van Burg, the Netherlands, meeting Chair
3. Maria Ceccarelli, UNECE
4. Maria Pisani, UNECE
5. Markus Pikart, UNECE
6. Giuliano Carrara, FAO
7. Hrannar Mar Asgeirsson, North-East Atlantic Fisheries Commission
8. Maris Berzins, European Commission, DG Mare, excused
9. Glauco Bertoldo, Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Food Supply, Brazil