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Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business

Team of Specialist on Sustainable Fisheries

Second session

Geneva, 31 January - 01 February 2019

Report of the 2nd Session of the UNECE Team of Specialists on Sustainable Fisheries

I. Introduction and attendance

1. The United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) Team of Specialists (ToS) on Sustainable Fisheries held its second session on 31 January and 1 February 2019. The session was attended by 44 delegates and experts representing national government agencies, international organizations, non-governmental organizations, and the private sector. The following UNECE member States were represented: Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Portugal, the Russian Federation, and Sweden. The following Non-UNECE member States participated in the meeting: Bangladesh, Congo, Haiti, Saudi Arabia, Thailand, and Uruguay. The following United Nations (UN) Bodies and Organs participated in the meeting: UNECE, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), and the United Nations Division for Ocean Affairs and Law of the Sea (DOALOS). Representatives of the following intergovernmental organizations participated: the European Commission Directorate-General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries (DG MARE), the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL), and the World Trade Organization (WTO). Representatives of the following non-governmental organizations and private sector participated: Centre for Socio-Economic Development (CSEND), Fondazione Acquario di Genova, International Investment Center, Manaia Productions, Marine Stewardship Council, Marketing Research Foundation, Poseidon Aquatic Resource Management Limited, and World Wildlife Federation (WWF).

II. Opening

2. The UNECE Executive Secretary opened the meeting by stressing the important role of the UNECE Team of Specialists on Sustainable Fisheries in supporting countries' efforts to achieve Sustainable Development Goal 14, which commits humanity to conserve and sustainably use oceans, seas and marine resources. She mentioned that to help address growing concerns about the grave problem of overfishing by today's modern fishing fleets, the United Nations Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business (UN/CEFACT) has developed a concrete solution: a global standard, which helps improve fisheries information management, and plays a key role in preventing overfishing and the collapse of global fish stocks,

the UN Fisheries Language for Universal eXchange (UN/FLUX). With this standard, Fishery Management Organizations around the world have, for the first time, a common language for the collection and dissemination of the fishery catch data needed for sustainable fishery management and for detecting and combatting illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing. Additionally, the development of a reliable, up-to-date database on fish catches will improve research in science-based fishery management. The standard, which is a UN global standard, was adopted in 2016 and has already come under the spotlight for its high acceptance rate among fishers and traders. It is currently used in all European Union (EU) member States, while other countries across the globe are working towards its implementation, including Thailand and Brazil.

3. The Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Thailand stressed the importance of the work of the ToS and the UN/FLUX standard for international cooperation on sustainable fisheries, as it supports a common understanding of available data on vessels, stocks and catches and facilitate the exchange of such information between stakeholders. Since 2015, Thailand has embarked on the arduous task of overhauling the fisheries sector with a view to achieving a sustainable and responsible fisheries and seafood industry, utilising advances in technology to replace the paper-based system with an electronic one. He also mentioned that Thailand stands ready to be a role model for the region in the fight against IUU fishing, and that the progress of UN/FLUX will be complementary to the country's efforts.

4. The Chair of the Team of Specialists of Sustainable Fisheries recounted the development process of the UN/FLUX standard, whose objective is to promote and improve information exchange, develop and manage data and support scientific research on fisheries. He highlighted the need to do more work to maintain, further develop and implement the standard and to assist all interested countries and relevant partners with its implementation (which is the purpose of the ToS). He mentioned that for the development of the standard, a good policy brief and communication materials, such as a leaflet, brochure and poster are important deliverables to encourage stakeholders' adoption of the standard to combat IUU, preserve local fish stocks and support coastal communities that rely on fisheries. He mentioned the importance of the extension of the mandate of the ToS beyond July 2019 to accomplish the tasks included in the ToS Programme of Work (ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2018/22).

III. Adoption of the Agenda (Agenda Item 1)

5. The Agenda of the meeting was approved as proposed (*Decision 1*).

IV. Overview of recent relevant developments (Agenda Item 2)

6. The expert from the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) reported on its related work areas and pointed out its activities in the fight against IUU, in particular through the Global Record—a tool to increase transparency, and a single access point for information about vessels and its activities. She recounted FAO's efforts towards responsible supply chains and trade through traceability of fishery products in the areas of food safety (Codex), fisheries eco-labelling, and certification. She then presented the work on policymaking through trends monitoring, including the production of global fishery statistics and information, and the role of the Coordinating Working Party on Fishery Statistics (CWP) in developing fishery statistical standards. Since 2013, the FAO and UN/CEFACT have been working together, particularly on vessel identification, history, licences and inspection, and

she confirmed FAO's readiness to engage with the ToS in its future work and the use of UN/FLUX for the Global Record.

7. The experts from the World Trade Organization (WTO) presented their recently launched environment database (www.wto.org/edb), capturing almost 20 years of environmentally-based notifications, which can be useful for monitoring policies for trade and environment. A number of notifications pertained to sustainable fisheries management, and this emphasised the importance of increased transparency among WTO member states on fishing activities. They also referred to the importance of the work of the ToS in this area. Additionally, they stressed the importance of the ongoing fishery subsidies negotiations and referred to the objective of concluding the negotiations by the end of 2019.

8. A UNECE expert presented the work of the UNECE Working Party 6 on Regulatory Cooperation and Standardization Policy in the area of sustainable fisheries management, and reported on two workshops on Risk Management for Regulatory Systems for SDG 14, in February 2017 in Germany, and at the ICES/UNECE Symposium on Risk Management tools and standards in support of SDG 14 in October 2018 in Iceland. She stressed the key role of an agile regulatory system, where laws and implementation measures need to adapt rapidly to keep up with the change in the regulatory framework.

9. An expert from the United Nations Division for Ocean Affairs and Law of the Sea (DOALOS) provided an introduction to the role of DOALOS. He explained relevant aspects of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea regime in exclusive economic zones and for high seas fishers. He also mentioned upcoming DOALOS meetings relevant to the work of the ToS: informal consultations of State Parties to the UN Fish Stock Agreements on 2-3 May 2019, and the UN Open-ended Informal Consultative Process on Oceans and the Law of the Sea on 10-14 June 2019. He reviewed the implementation of the provisions of relevant General Assembly resolutions on the impacts of bottom trawling on vulnerable marine ecosystems and the long-term sustainability of deep-sea fish stocks.

V. Progress on Programme of work (Agenda Item 3)

10. The Chair presented the progress on the implementation of the ToS Programme of Work for 2018-2019 (ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2018/22). He also recalled that the overall objective of the ToS is to contribute to integrated maritime governance by promoting, facilitating and supporting the implementation of fishery data standards on a global scale, including UN/FLUX. Finally, he provided an overview of activities undertaken under Work Area 1: Policy dialogue and advice; Work Area 2: Technical monitoring, assessment and guidance; Work Area 3: Communication and outreach; and Work Area 4: Capacity building, to achieve such objectives. Within the Programme of Work, he noted the team had made significant progress.

11. In particular, he reported that in the area of the development of promotional materials, the visual identity for UN/FLUX—the first step in developing iconic communications materials—was finalised in December 2018 and had undergone multiple rounds of review: at the ToS face to face meeting at the Hangzhou UN/CEFACT Forum, via email correspondence among all experts, and at the UNECE secretariat. Additionally, the roll-up and posters, with content developed by ToS members in collaboration with the UNECE secretariat—had been finalised in January

2019, and available for viewing at the second session. He also noted the presentation template, which was prepared in January 2019 by the UNECE Secretariat, utilising the visual identity elements developed in coordination with the communications contractor, and used throughout the Second Session.

12. He then discussed ongoing development of several outputs for use in awareness building and for sharing at international fora, including a presentation to promote and introduce UN/FLUX, which was created by the ToS and the UNECE Secretariat. The ToS also created a draft document addressing frequently asked questions, and a draft template for UN/FLUX Implementation Documents. He also noted that a template for collection of case studies on UN/FLUX in UN Member States was developed by the UNECE secretariat in consultation with the ToS in December 2018. Its aim being to facilitate the sharing of countries' experiences and lessons learned on the challenges and opportunities related to implementing UN/FLUX. The first case study had been prepared by the Government of Thailand and was available for consultation. The template was then to be circulated among all members of the ToS for a compilation of case studies.

13. The Chair provide a brief overview of ongoing activities with a more technical and policy guidance focus, which included the UN/FLUX leaflet, brochure and policy brief content, under development by the ToS members and UNECE Secretariat, in coordination with the communications contractor supported by the European Commission DG MARE funding. These were planned to be finalised following the policy brief. Finally, the last deliverable planned would be a short promotional video, using a narrative with infographics. Its purpose would be to explain UN/FLUX and its advantages to a lay audience. It would be shareable on social media and used during conferences and fora to raise awareness of UN/FLUX and its benefits.

14. The Chair additionally highlighted, that, as part of its communication and outreach efforts, the Team jointly organized the 2nd Oceans Forum on the trade-related aspects of SDG 14 with UNCTAD, FAO and UNEP in July 2018 at the Palais des Nations in Geneva and is invited to contribute to the 3rd Oceans Forum in July 2019. An online collaborative space has been created to allow Team members to share documents; a demonstration on its use would be given during the workshop for members of the Team.

VI. Implementation and documentation (Agenda Item 4)

15. Representatives from Thailand reported on their experience in implementing UN/FLUX, including implementation phases and timeframe, the supporting legal/regulatory framework, along with the challenges and opportunities of implementing the standard.

16. The Secretariat presented the template for the collection of case stories on the implementation of UN/FLUX in UN Member States, to facilitate the sharing of experiences and lessons learned on the use of the standard. The Secretariat will finalize this document, with proposed suggestions integrated, and circulate it to the Team of Specialists (ToS) on Sustainable Fisheries by 31 March 2019, in preparation for the next meeting at the UN/CEFACT Forum in April 2019 (*Decision 2*).

VII. Reports from experts (Agenda Item 5)

17. Experts from the ToS presented and discussed its current and future activities, along with proposals to widen membership in the ToS and collaborations with other bodies.

18. In particular, the expert from the European Commission DG MARE referred to the communication materials to promote the implementation of UN/FLUX, developed by the ToS, with the support of EU funding (ToSSF/2019/INF.6). He then discussed the essential building blocks to implement UN/FLUX: first, a standardised data-exchange language to enable data exchange, second, software on secure data communication and visualisation. Both should be addressed within an implementation document (ToSSF/2019/INF.6), which aims to establish details on the communication using UN/FLUX standards. The implementation document would be negotiated between each pair of data-exchange partners and include the legal basis for the data exchange, refer to relevant laws and regulations and define how required business data is included in UN/FLUX standard. He requested the delegates to analyse, test, challenge, and use the standard and to send their feedback. He shared the proposals for UN/FLUX standard XSD changes in the following areas: Generic Entities, Fishing Licence Authorisation and Permit (FLAP) domain, Vessel domain, Sales domain, Master Data Management domain and Fishing Activities domain.

19. The draft briefing note on the benefits of implementing UN/FLUX, addressing frequently asked questions, was presented (ToSSF/2019/INF.4). The briefing note was discussed, and it was agreed to further develop the frequently asked questions by 31 March 2019 in preparation of the next meeting at the UN/CEFACT Forum in April 2019 (*Decision 3*).

20. A briefing note on the use of UN/FLUX in combatting illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing, and the relationship between UN/FLUX and fisheries subsidies (ToSSF/2019/INF.5) was discussed, and will be updated to reflect the developments of the negotiations at the WTO Negotiating Group on Rules, and to highlight the work of FAO and Regional Fisheries Management Organizations (RFMOs), by 31 March 2019 in preparation of the next meeting at the UN/CEFACT Forum in April 2019 (*Decision 4*).

21. The first draft template for a UN/FLUX implementation document (ToSSF/2019/INF.6) was discussed and approved. Delegates and experts were invited to send comments by 28 February 2019, for an updated version of the template to be presented at the ToS meeting on 2 April 2019 (*Decision 5*).

22. A proposal for the interaction between UN/FLUX and FOCUS (ToSSF/2019/INF.7), submitted by the FOCUS Community Manager, who is also a member of the ToS was discussed, and it was requested that the secretariat would explore possible synergies and feasibility (*Decision 6*).

23. The report on the development of communication materials was noted (ToSSF/2019/INF.8), and the Secretariat will circulate a questionnaire to collect input for materials under development, by 8 March 2019 in preparation of the next meeting at the UN/CEFACT Forum in April 2019 (*Decision 7*).

24. The ToS agreed on an update of UN/FLUX data items and requested the UN/CEFACT domain experts on fisheries to submit the update for the CCL19A library, at the earliest possible (*Decision 8*).

VIII. Planning future activities (Agenda Item 6)

25. The Team of Specialists on Sustainable Fisheries has a mandate until June 2019. The achievement of the objectives set in the current programme of work (ECE/Trade/C/CEFACT/2018/22) requires an extension of its mandate. The chair presented proposals for activities of the Team of Specialists in the coming years, and to extend its mandate through 2021. The proposal to request an extension of the ToS mandate through 2021 was discussed and approved (*Decision 9*).

IX. Other Business (Agenda Item 7)

26. The Chair invited nominations for the position of Vice Chair.

27. Delegates and participants were also invited to attend the following meetings and events:

- The participant from Poseidon invited delegates and participants to attend the launch of the IUU Fishing Index on 7 February 2019.
- The ToS decided to meet during the UN/CEFACT Forum on 2 April 2019 and agreed on the list of key international fora during 2019 for which to consider participation and presenting UN/FLUX (*Decision 10*).
- Delegates and participants were invited to attend the ASEAN IUU Workshop in April 2019 (to be confirmed).
- Delegates and participants were invited to attend the 5th meeting of the Global Record working group in South Korea on 6 and 7 May 2019 (to be confirmed).
- Delegates and participants were invited to attend the 2nd meeting of the PSMA technical working group on information exchange on 8-10 May 2019 (to be confirmed).
- Delegates and participants were invited to attend the Tuna RFMOs meeting on FAD in California on 8-10 May 2019.
- Delegates and participants were invited to attend the 3rd Oceans Forum in Geneva on 14-15 July 2019 (to be confirmed).
- Delegates and participants were invited to attend the FAO code meeting in May 2019.

X. Adoption of decisions and the report of the second session (Agenda Item 8)

28. Delegates and participants approved Decisions 1 to 10, and will receive the complete session report (ToSSF/2019/INF.10) for comments by 18 February; submission of comments to the Secretariat is requested by 28 February (*Decision 11*).

XI. Workshop on future activities (Agenda Item 9)

29. A workshop was conducted for ToS experts to review the Programme of Work, to advance ongoing work (e.g. proposals for XSD changes to UN/FLUX) and plan future activities. During the workshop, the Secretariat provided a demonstration of documents management within the UN/CEFACT CUE workspace dedicated to the Team of Specialists.

30. Modifications were proposed to the UN/FLUX XSD for the Fishing Licence Authorisation and Permit (FLAP) domain, the Vessel domain, the Sales domain, the Master Data Management domain and the Fishing Activities domain. The ToS agreed on an update of UN/FLUX data items and requested the UN/CEFACT domain experts on fisheries to submit the update for the CCL19A library, at the earliest opportunity possible

31. The ToS invited participants to share ideas and suggestions for a promotional video of UN/FLUX.

32. The ToS discussed ways to better promote UN/FLUX.
