


The United Nations Fish Stocks Agreement and its current relevance for RFMO/As and Overview of the Agreement under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction

Side Event

ICCAT 28TH REGULAR MEETING

 6:15–7:15PM EET

 16 November 2023 (TBC)

 Virtual

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Microsoft Teams meeting

Meeting ID: 342 354 316 730

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Programme

Introductory remarks:

Mr. Dmitry Gonchar, Principal Legal Officer, Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea (virtual) (TBC)

Speakers:

Overview of the United Nations Fish Stocks Agreement and its relevance to the work of ICCAT

Mr. Michele Ameri, Legal Officer, Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea (15min)

Overview of the Agreement under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction

TBD, Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea (15min)

Principal outcomes of the Resumed Review Conference on the United Nations Fish Stocks Agreement in 2023

Mr. Michele Ameri, Legal Officer, Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea (10min)

Project of Assistance to Strengthen Participation in and Implementation of the United Nations Fish Stocks Agreement (UNFSA): Main results and activities

Ms. Mariana Blanco Bolanos, Programme Coordinator (5min)

Interactive discussion and questions (10min)

The United Nations Fish Stocks Agreement and its current relevance for RFMO/As and Overview of the Agreement under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction

DESCRIPTION OF THE EVENT

This side event will present a brief overview of the United Nations Fish Stocks Agreement (UNFSA) including its history, main provisions and relevance to the work of regional fisheries management organization and arrangements. It will also present the main outcomes of the recent Resumed Review Conference on the UN Fish Stocks Agreement in May 2023. The side event will also raise awareness of capacity-building opportunities under the Project of Assistance to Strengthen Participation in and Implementation of the United Nations Fish Stocks Agreement (UNFSA PoA). Presentations by the speakers will be followed by a section for Q&A and interactive discussion.

BACKGROUND

The United Nations Fish Stocks Agreement (UNFSA), as an implementing agreement to the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), strengthens the implementation of the legal regime set out in UNCLOS for the conservation and management of straddling fish stocks and highly migratory fish stocks. It provides a framework for cooperation in the conservation and management of those resources and promotes good order in the oceans through the effective management and conservation of high seas fisheries. Effectiveness of UNFSA in securing the conservation and management of straddling and highly migratory fish stocks calls for strengthened implementation of its provisions through different processes and efforts.

On 19 June 2023, after nearly 20 years of discussions in various formats, the Agreement under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction (the BBNJ Agreement) was adopted by consensus. The Agreement addresses a package of four key issues and a number of cross-cutting issues. The four key issues are: first, marine genetic resources, including the fair and equitable sharing of benefits; second, measures such as area-based management tools, including marine protected areas; third, environmental impact assessments; and fourth, capacity-building and the transfer of marine technology.

The Review Conference convened pursuant to article 36 of UNFSA contributes to strengthening the implementation of the Agreement by reviewing and assessing the adequacy of its provisions and by proposing means of strengthening the substance and methods of implementation of those provisions. The effectiveness of the Review Conference process is therefore critical to the overall global implementation of UNFSA by States, individually and through regional fisheries management organizations and arrangements (RFMO/As). The most recent Review Conference that took place in 2023 provided important outcomes and recommendations to strengthen the effective implementation of the Agreement. In an effort to also contribute to the full and effective implementation of UNFSA by all States Parties to it, the United Nations Division for Ocean Affairs and Law of the Sea (DOALOS) is currently implementing the “Project of assistance to strengthen participation in and implementation of the United Nations Fish Stocks Agreement (UNFSA)”. This three-year capacity building initiative is implemented in cooperation with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and aims to contribute to improving the conservation and management of straddling fish stocks and highly migratory fish stocks by increasing awareness of UNFSA and its provisions and increasing participation by developing States Parties in this important legal instrument.

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