



The Secretariat

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South East Atlantic Fisheries Organisation (SEAFO)

18 January 2024

The Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea of the Office of Legal Affairs
doalos@un.org

CC: gonchar@un.org; Yunjin.kim@un.org

**RE: RESPONSE FROM SEAFO on General Assembly resolutions 78/69 of 5
December 2023 – on The oceans as a source of sustainable food.**

Dear Miguel

I acknowledged receipt of your said request. Below please find SEAFO's response regarding The oceans as a source of sustainable food

**Report on The Ocean as a Source of Sustainable Food for the Regional
Fisheries Management Organization (RFMO), South East Atlantic
Fisheries Organization (SEAFO)**

Executive Summary:

The ocean represents a vast and critical resource for meeting global food demand sustainably. This report examines the current status of oceanic food sources, the challenges they face, and potential strategies for ensuring their sustainable management. As a Regional Fisheries Management Organization, it is crucial to adopt policies and practices that promote responsible and sustainable harvesting of marine resources.



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Introduction:

The ocean plays a pivotal role in supporting life on Earth, providing a rich and diverse array of food resources. As the global population continues to grow, there is an increasing demand for sustainable and nutritious food sources. This report explores the importance of the ocean in meeting this demand and emphasizes the need for effective management to prevent over-exploitation and environmental degradation.

Status of Oceanic Food Sources:

1. **Fisheries:** Fisheries and aquaculture are significant contributors to global food security. SEAFO has very little fish resources for harvesting due to about only 2% of the total Convention Area of SEAFO being shallower than 2000 m and accessible for bottom fishing. Currently five commercial species are managed by Total Allowable Catches, of which only two species are actively fished. The trends in these two stocks are stable and prospects look favorable to long-term viability of fish populations.

Challenges and Threats:

1. **Overfishing:** The most significant threat to oceanic food sources is overfishing. Unregulated and excessive harvesting can lead to the collapse of fish populations, disrupting ecosystems and livelihoods. SEAFO enforces TAC's to deter overfishing.
2. **Climate Change:** Climate change poses a threat to marine ecosystems, impacting the distribution and abundance of fish species. SEAFO collaborates with other international organizations to understand the impact of climate change and to implement adaptive management strategies when needed.
3. **Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated (IUU) Fishing:** IUU fishing undermines sustainable management efforts. SEAFO encourages and assists to empower Contracting Parties to enforce the PSMA. Training is also provided to port inspectors of the most used harbours in the Convention Area to empower them to conduct better inspections based on the principles of the PSMA. SEAFO also has two vessels on its IUU vessel list which were involved in IUU fishing activities in the CA.



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Sustainable Management Strategies:

1. **Ecosystem-Based Management:** Adopting an ecosystem-based approach ensures the protection of entire marine ecosystems rather than individual species. SEAFO are working towards integrating ecosystem considerations into its management strategies as far as possible given a data poor situation due to only two vessels fishing.
2. **Technological Innovations:** SEAFO embrace technological advancements such as AIS monitoring and artificial intelligence to enhance monitoring, control, and surveillance measures. These technologies can provide more information about the activities of fishing vessels in the Convention Area.
3. **Closed Areas:** SEAFO have implemented a system of closed areas where VME's may or do exist. Fishing outside of these areas are monitored closely by two hourly VMS positions from fishing vessels.

Conclusion:

The ocean remains a crucial source of sustainable food, but effective management is paramount to address the challenges posed by overfishing, climate change, and IUU activities. The RFMO plays a pivotal role in fostering international cooperation, implementing robust regulations, and promoting innovative solutions to ensure the long-term sustainability of oceanic food sources. By embracing these strategies, the RFMOs can contribute significantly to global food security while preserving the health and resilience of marine ecosystems. SEAFO commit itself to address the challenges in order to contribute to these objectives.

Yours sincerely

Lizette Voges

Executive Secretary