

MINUTES

29th LDAC Working Group 4 Meeting Bilateral Relations with Third Countries

Tuesday 22 March 2022, 14:30-17:30h CET

Hybrid meeting: Hotel Puerta de América, Madrid- videoconference-Zoom

Chair: Julio Morón (OPAGAC)

Vice Chair: Sara Fröcklin (SSNC)

1- Welcome and opening of the meeting.

The Chair, Mr. Julio Morón, welcomes members, observers, representatives of DG MARE and Member States, and thanks them for their attendance and participation.

The complete list of members and observers is included in Annex I.

2- Approval of the minutes of the last WG4 meeting (held via videoconference on 30 September 2021)

The minutes of the last meeting are approved with no additional comments.

3- Approval of the agenda.

The agenda is approved with no additional items or changes to it.

4- State of play on negotiations with third countries.

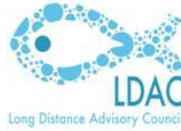
4.1. Report from DG MARE on implementation of SFPAs in force; negotiations on renewals for existing ones and prospective new SFPAs.

The representative of the EC and deputy head of the DG MARE Fisheries Agreements Unit, Mr. Emmanuel Berck, informs that four Sustainable Fisheries Partnership Agreements (SFPAs) have been renewed:

- Greenland: the protocol was signed in March;
- Gabon: it was signed in June;
- Mauritania: it was signed in November after two rollovers;
- Cook Islands: it was signed in December.

He then informs on the new developments regarding fisheries agreements by country:

- Mauritius: they continue with negotiations initiated in 2021. The adoption of the mandate started late and they are negotiating a 6-month renewal. Demands are fairly high. There is an interest in moving forward. The next round of negotiations will be held on 30-31 March. They hope to be able to conclude it as soon as possible.



- Madagascar: no evolution due to financial demands being unrealistic, so negotiations are at a stalemate.

- Kiribati: there was a technical meeting in order for negotiations with the EU to be discussed and resumed. Both this agreement and that with Cook Islands deal with very interesting fishing areas.

- Liberia: a procedure was launched to start negotiations. It is now halted within the Council, since the situation regarding the IUU fishing yellow card has not improved. The EU decision is not to negotiate an SFPA while the country has a yellow card.

He then informs about the agreements in the Atlantic Ocean:

- Morocco: The EU has decided to appeal the ruling by the Court of Justice. This leads to a difficult situation, since the protocol will expire in July 2023.

At present a reflection process is taking place to analyse the most favourable option regarding negotiations with Morocco. Besides, Mr. Berck highlights that some stocks are underutilised owing to technical reasons.

- Mauritania: regarding a possible expansion of fishing areas, the EU is cautious when referring to scientific advice. Mauritania will work on a management plan to be presented before the EC at the Joint Committee. The main issues to be addressed are: dialogue on how to improve technical conditions and fishing areas.

- Senegal: there are many difficulties to implement this agreement. They will try to find a solution to the technical issues regarding catch calculation, which are triggered by a misinterpretation by Senegal of the IT system they were using. There is the possibility of suspending the agreement if no improvements are achieved.

- Greenland: work is satisfactory. The following Joint Committee meeting will be held in May. Dialogues will focus on sectoral support and the establishment of a quota for next year will be discussed in November.

- Guinea Bissau: Mr. Berck regrets the application of a biological closure without prior notice and without respecting the protocol procedure. The Joint Scientific Committee will discuss the transition to the quota system foreseen in the protocol next week. The Joint Committee will be convened in April.

- Cape Verde: there are no relevant problems to report.

- Côte d'Ivoire: a Joint Committee is currently being held in Abidjan. There is a pending issue regarding seamen's wages, since cases of wage discrimination and underpayment to the crew by Ivorian vessels have been reported.

- Gabon: the reference tonnage has been respected. As for the landing target, he wishes to avoid disappointment and profound effects in the event they do not take place. At the next Joint Committee meeting they will try to solve the problem regarding boarding of observers.

- São Tomé: they cannot promise anything in terms of seamen boarding, since they have been suspended by health and ministerial decision. They will keep an eye on how things are evolving.

He then informs about the agreements in the Indian Ocean:

- Seychelles: they are very satisfied with how the work is being carried out, they have been in close contact with the Fisheries Ministry of Seychelles in order to find a remuneration and bonus framework to compensate EU MS vessels and operators' efforts.

4.2. Questions and comments voiced by the members.

Mr. Berck answers the questions asked by the different members as follows:

Regarding the comment made by Ms. Gorez, CFFA-CAPE, concerning problems with fishmeal factories in Mauritania and sectoral support to promote investments on land and fish processing and treatment, he says that sectoral support has been delayed because of the previous protocol and that they are aware of the problem, so they will monitor its evolution.

Mr. Ment van der Zwan, EUROPÊCHE, suggests discussing the issue of minimum wages in coastal states within the EU Social Dialogue Committee, since they have experts on this matter and the EC may consult with this body. In addition, he notes that although coastal states allocate funding to the development of local fishers, it might be positive to also allocate some funds to fishers' education, such as basic training regarding safety or language education.

Mr. Juan Carlos Martín, ANACEF, informs that this year the OPROMAR Conference to be held in Las Palmas de Gran Canaria will focus on the social aspects of fisheries agreements, inviting both the EC and the LDAC to participate in it.

Mr. Fernando Rebollo, ANAMAR, highlights the interest in continuing fishing in the Angola fishing ground under a fisheries agreement at EU level.

As for G. Conakry, he says that the landing fee was increased in 10% and although they clarified that it had been a mistake it will not be solved this year.

He also enquires when the joint committee meetings with G. Bissau and Mauritania will be held.

Mr. Berck, representative of the EC, notes down suggestions regarding the importance of social issues and thanks OPROMAR for their invitation. He hopes G. Conakry will solve the mistakes and that the fisheries agreement will improve transparency.

Joint committees with G. Bissau will meet on the last week of April and with Mauritania at the beginning of May.

Mr. Anertz Muniategui, ANABAC, points out the interest of the Spanish tuna fleet both in Angola and G. Conakry. In addition, he suggests that Equatorial Guinea's EEZ is very large and has a dormant agreement since 2001, so it would be positive to start making contact again.

Mr. Javier Garat, CEPESCA, explains the dramatic situation of pole and liners in Senegal. Their activity is at a halt and they are waiting for the situation to be solved, otherwise they will have to find an alternative fishing ground. There are four vessels in bankruptcy, so he wonders if it would be possible to give them some aid by means of EMFF and requests the EC to try and solve this issue at the next joint committee meeting.



Besides, he enquires whether the closure of the Mauritanian fishing ground for next 31 March is confirmed.

The representative of the EC, Mr. Berck, declares that a solution ought to be found for the problem with Senegal, hoping that it will be solved at the Joint Committee meeting to be held next week.

In response to questions asked by Mr. Julio Morón, OPAGAC, Mr. Berck says that regarding Mauritius the Council is arranging its signature, and about Kenya and Tanzania he notes that there are no European vessels fishing there with direct licence, so he does not know whether it is a priority for the fleet.

As for the comment voiced by Mr. Tim Heddema, DPFA, on Mauritania, Mr. Berck points out that the technical conditions of the plan will be presented next week.

After the round of questions, the following **ACTIONS** are agreed:

- **The representative of DG MARE, Mr. Emmanuel Berck, to ensure wider dissemination, will share with the Secretariat the link to the Euronews report showing the benefits of SFPAs/the use of sectoral support for coastal communities in Cape Verde and Côte d'Ivoire.**

- **The LDAC will be formally invited to participate in the Conference organised by OPRMAR on the application of the EU labour and social dimension in SFPAs to be held in Las Palmas de Gran Canaria.**

5- Evaluation of the EU SFPAs with third countries and regional dimension of SFPAs.

5.1. Presentation on outcomes of the targeted consultation on EU Evaluation of SFPAs (DG MARE/Poseidon)

The representative of the EC, Ms. Marta Moren, reminds attendees that in December 2020 the EC initiated a consultation to analyse SFPAs' implementation, results and impact.

The compilation of information was finalised in December 2021 (although no missions to specific groups of countries were carried out due to the pandemic).

A document is in preparation right now, which is expected to be finalised in the summer and published in December 2022.

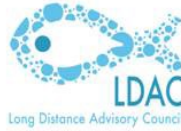
The presentation is available on the following link:
https://ldac.eu/images/SFPAs_evaluation_January_2022.pdf

After listening to the comments by the members, the following **ACTION** is agreed:

- **Once the study is available, it will be shared with the LDAC so that comments may be submitted and it may be used as a starting point for discussion at the next WG4 meeting to be held in September-October 2022.**

5.2. Discussion on ToR for a Focus Group on regional sustainable fisheries management for shared fisheries resources (small pelagics) in West Africa

Mr. Alexandre Rodríguez, General Secretary, recalls that at the last WG4 meeting it was agreed that ToR would be drafted where it should be noted that the concept note provided by Mr. Ad Corten on the historical view of developments in regional governance in West Africa will be the



starting point to initiate discussions at Focus Group level. Special mention should also be made to the poor situation of the sardinella stock due to a lack of scientific assessments as well as of reports on fisheries activities.

He then presents the Terms of Reference for the focus group, which are approved with no changes.

The document is available on the following link:

https://ldac.eu/images/ToR_for_the_setup_of_a_LDAC_FG_on_Regional_Fisheries_Management_in_West_Africa_March2022.pdf

After discussion among the members, the following **ACTION** is agreed:

- **The LDAC Secretariat will send a request for expressions of interest to the members and will convene a specific Focus Group on shared fishery resources with West Africa in order to prepare a draft advice.**

6- Transparency of SFPAs - social and working conditions on board EU vessels:

6.1. Update on the Focus Group to develop an advice on the inclusion and implementation of the “social clause” in SFPAs.

Mr. Daniel Voces, Europêche, recalls that the Focus Group (FG) set up in October 2021 started working on the basis of a document drafted by CFFA-CAPE. The FG met twice in 2021 (November and December). In February 2022, he, as Chair of the FG, had another meeting with the Secretariat. A lot of comments were received in writing, so Mr. Voces thanks the FG members for their involvement.

Work on the document is still ongoing, so a new FG meeting will be convened, and depending on the evolution of the document, the draft advice will be presented at the next Working Group meeting or a consultation will be carried out in writing.

The following **ACTION** is agreed:

- **To convene a new FG meeting and continue working on the document for potential approval.**

6.2. Proposal for draft letter to DG EMP+DG TRADE (cc DG MARE) on the need to raise awareness on social protection and safety of fishers.

Mr. Julio Morón, Chair, recalls that the idea is to consider seamen as essential workers, as it is the case with workers in the merchant navy.

The following **ACTION** is agreed:

- **To prepare a draft letter to be circulated prior to the next WG4 meeting so that it may be approved and sent to the EC.**

7. Roadmap on European Fishing investments in third countries: next steps

7.1- State of play from the LDAC Chair

Mr. Iván López, AGARBA, recalls that the [roadmap](#) was formally adopted at the last LDAC Executive Committee held on 16 February 2022.

He believes the time has come to analyse the role of this kind of companies, to consider what they can do better, what examples of best practices there are and how they can be included with rights and duties into European law, within the CFP.

7.2- Call for the Steering Committee

He then requests setting up a specific Focus Group/Steering Committee as soon as there are enough interested members and moving forward in the development of ToR for the organisation of an international conference.

The idea is for all integrating members to be active, with discussions being held among all parties and clear conclusions reached.

He requests those interested in taking part in the Steering Committee to inform the LDAC Secretariat. Mr. Ment van der Zwan, Europêche, voices his interest to take part in the latter.

The following **ACTION** is agreed:

- The LDAC Secretariat will call a Steering Committee meeting in order to work on the organisation of the International Conference.

8. Update on outreach and network of external partnerships:

- FAO

Mr. Alexandre Rodríguez, General Secretary, informs that back in February an informal scope meeting was held between the main representatives of FAO and the LDAC to identify common work priorities and potential collaboration paths.

Potential areas of common interest focused on:

- * Common Oceans ABNJ Programme: Deep-sea fisheries and tuna
- * Impacts of climate change on fisheries
- * The value of small-scale fisheries for food security and sustainability: role of blue economy and innovation in the fisheries value chains and the IYAFA
- * Links between the EU Blue Growth Strategy and the FAO Blue Growth Initiative/Forum
- * Fish trade: traceability of fishery products
- * Regional cooperation between RFMOs/RSCs - Dialogues between RFMOs
- * Fight against illegal, undocumented and unreported (IUU) fishing and implementation of the FAO PSMA.
- * Social responsibility of fisheries value chains
- * FAO report on agreements granting access to fisheries

After discussion among the members, the following **ACTION** is agreed:

- Mr. Iván López, Ms. Béatrice Gorez and Mr. Julio Morón, assisted by the Secretariat, offered to prepare a draft advice on the practical implementation of agreements granting access to fisheries, based on the FAO report, paying special attention to employment and job creation -by the EU fisheries fleet- and to the role of coastal communities in Africa. The draft advice will also refer to the importance of artisanal fisheries for the economy of beneficiary countries as part of the activities to be carried out in 2022 as the International Year of Artisanal Fisheries and Aquaculture (YAFA).

- ECOFISH/IOC Programme

Mr. Alexandre Rodríguez, General Secretary, informs that after having a meeting with the person in charge of the ECOFISH programme, both the WG4 Chair and himself will try to resume contacts to consider the possibility of joining in specific actions or results/case studies of this global programme that will be developed until 2024.

The following **ACTION** is agreed:



- The WG4 Chair and the Secretary will go through the notes of the informal meeting held in 2021 and will redirect the action points to suggest useful goals to IOC/ECOFISH in the interest of both organisations. Once prepared, this concept note will be shared with WG4 members for them to review and approve it before it is sent.

- AFRIFISH

The General Secretary, Mr. Alexandre Rodríguez, reminds attendees that on the LDAC performance review, one of the recommendations was to expand the network of collaborators, especially in those areas where the LDAC has less direct input.

We recently received a letter from AFRIFISH, which is the African Continental Non-State Actors Coordination Platform in Fisheries and Aquaculture, established under the African Union.

AFRIFISH has members from all five regional African non-state actors' platforms and focuses its goals on the sustainable development of small-scale fisheries and aquaculture in Africa, based on male and female fishers' aspirations in coastal communities.

The following **ACTION** is agreed:

- The LDAC Steering Committee will prepare a reply to the invitation letter received from AFRIFISH searching for potential forms of collaboration for the near future.

FINAL REMARKS AND CLOSURE

WG4 Chair, Mr. Julio Morón, thanks the Secretariat for its efforts in coordinating and preparing working documents and meetings logistics; the members present for their attendance and active participation, the representatives of the European Commission for their availability to keep us informed, and the interpreters for their technical job.

With no other issues to address, the session is adjourned.



ANNEX I. LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

WORKING GROUP MEMBERS (attending face to face)

1. Julio Morón. OPAGAC
2. Tim Heddema. Pelagic Freezer-Trawler Association.
3. Erik Olsen. The Danish Society for a Living Sea
4. Edelmiro Ulloa. Opanapa / OPP3/ Acemix / Agarba
5. Ángela Cortina. Opanapa / OPP3/ Acemix / Agarba
6. Iván López. AGARBA/CEPESCA
7. Julien Daudu. EJF
8. Daniel Voces. Europêche
9. Rocío Béjar. CEPESCA
10. Javier Garat. CEPESCA
11. Béatrice Gorez. CFFA-CAPE
12. Juana Parada. ORPAGU
13. Ignacio Fresco Vanzini. OCEANA
14. David Troncoso. ANASCO
15. Fernando Rebollo. ANAMAR
16. Michel Goujon. ORTHONGEL

OBSERVERS (attending face to face)

17. Hilario Murua. ISSF
18. Alexandre Rodríguez. LDAC
19. Manuela Iglesias. LDAC

WORKING GROUP MEMBERS (attending via Zoom)

20. Raúl García. WWF
21. Antonia Leroy. WWF
22. José Beltrán. OPP-Lugo
23. Sara Fröcklin. SSNC
24. Aivaras Labanauskas. Lithuanian Long Distance Fisheries Association
25. Juan Carlos Martín Fragueiro. OP ANACEF / OPROMAR
26. Anertz Muniategui. ANABAC
27. Alexandra Philippe. EBCD
28. Ment van der Zwan. Europêche
29. Luis Vicente. ADAP
30. Wim van der Zwan. Pelagic Freezer-Trawler Association.
31. Rob Banning. DPFA
32. Emil Remisz. NAPO
33. Despina Symons. EBCD
34. Vanya Vulperhorst. OCEANA

OBSERVERS (attending via Zoom)

35. Emmanuel Berck. DG MARE
36. Marta Moren. DG MARE
37. Maria Ferrara. DG MARE



- 38. Anais Demaille. DG MARE
- 39. Carmen Paz. Secretariat General for Fisheries, Spain
- 40. Carla Baz .MarInnLeg Foundation
- 41. Annina Bürgin Piñeiro. MarInnLeg Foundation