

UNECE contribution to the

Background Note for the United Nations Conference to Support the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14, Lisbon, 2-6 June 2020

The global demand for fish has led to increasing pressure on existing fish stocks. Due to overfishing and illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing (IUU), the world fish stocks are being depleted. In some areas such as the Mediterranean and Black Sea, significant drops in capture have been observed. Rough calculations indicate that global IUU fishing represents around 11 to 26 million tons of fish every year with a value of USD 26 to 35 billion annually. IUU fishing exploits the resources of developing countries, prevents assessment of existing stocks and the development of science-based quotas for sustainable exploitation.

In order to counter further depletion and promote sustainability, global fish resources are managed by Fishery Management Organisations (FMOs). An essential requirement for an effective management of fish resources through FMOs is the timely acquisition of information on stocks and catches and the exchange of such information between stakeholders. The management of fisheries to date has been largely based upon the collection and exchange of large sets of data between various fishery institutions. **The diversity of data sets has created a patchwork of data management solutions** which hinders exchanges, impairs quality, and greatly increases costs.

Better solutions are required to provide a sounder basis for the management of fish stocks. UNECE, through its UN Centre for Trade Facilitation and e-Business (UN/CEFACT), has developed a **global data exchange standard, which helps improve fisheries information management**, thus contributing to the prevention of overfishing and the collapse of global fish stocks. This standard, **the UN Fisheries Language for Universal eXchange (UN/FLUX)**, allows FMOs to automatically collect fishery catch data in electronic format from fishing vessels, including vessel identification, catch area, species and quantity of fish, date and time.

With this standard, FMOs around the world have for the first time a communication tool to automate the collection and dissemination of the catch data needed for sustainable fishery management and for detecting and combatting IUU fishing. In addition, the development of a reliable and up-to-date database on fish catches will improve research on science-based fishery management and help address the issue of IUU subsidies.

UN/FLUX is now being used in all EU Member States involved in fishing, while there are also ongoing initiatives in other countries. In 2016, the FAO adopted UN/FLUX as the automated transmission mechanism for its Global Record. **A UNECE Team of Specialists on Sustainable Fisheries, has been established to support the promotion of the UN/FLUX standard** and as a platform to promote partnerships with experts from governments, private sector, civil society, consumer associations and international organisations.

The Team and its work are part of UNECE's Voluntary Commitment "Promoting standards for sustainable fisheries management and traceability of fish products on a global scale" made at the 2017 Ocean Conference.

For more information, please visit:

<http://www.unece.org/tradewelcome/un-centre-for-trade-facilitation-and-e-business-uncefact/about-us/team-of-specialists-on-sustainable-fisheries.html>