

ARF Workshop and Table Top Exercise on Crimes Related to Fisheries

(For inclusion in the ARF Work Plan on Maritime Security 2018-2020)

Background

Fish and fish products are among the most traded food commodities globally. The fisheries sector is a significant source of employment and prosperity in coastal communities, and of foreign currency earnings, so important in developing countries. The Sector is also a generator of household income and employment throughout the supply chain. Unfortunately this sector is extremely vulnerable to various organized criminal activities.

The close link between illegal fishing and transnational organized crime (TOC) is globally and regionally recognized. In 2009, the UN General Assembly expressed concern about possible connections between TOC and illegal fishing, through such documents as UNGA Resolution 67/79. The linkage between IUU fishing and other criminal activities has given rise to the concept of “fisheries crime” and prompted the establishment of relevant cooperative mechanisms, such as the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the Fisheries Crime Experts Group Meeting and INTERPOL Fisheries Crime Working Group.

The 2011 UNODC study on Transnational Organized Crime in the Fishing Industry found numerous cases of trafficking in persons and rights abuses aboard IUU vessels, including Vietnamese fishermen kept at sea for 18 months off South Africa. In 2012, Bloomberg reported that Indonesian fishermen were held in debt bondage on fishing vessels off New Zealand. The U.S. National Intelligence Council (NIC), in their Memorandum on Global Implications of IUU Fishing, revealed how “Ndragheta” crime boss “Fish King” Franco Muto, was arrested by Italian authorities in 2016 for controlling most of the fishing vessels along Italy’s Tyrrhenian coast while engaging in drugs trafficking, extortion, and robbery. The U.S. NIC documented the case of South Africa’s Cape Flats gangs that traffic in illicit abalone with Chinese triads in exchange for drugs, drug precursors, and cash.

At the regional level, the Jakarta Concord of the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) has underlined the importance of strengthening cooperation to address crimes in the fisheries sector. The ARF has adopted the ARF Statement on Cooperation to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate IUU Fishing during the 24th ARF Ministerial Meeting to promote regional cooperation in addressing the issue of IUU Fishing in a comprehensive manner. The ARF Statement highlighted important elements that were discussed during the ARF Workshop on Improving Fisheries Management (Honolulu, Hawaii, 22-23 March 2016) and the ARF Workshop on IUU Fishing (Bali, Indonesia, 20-21 April 2016). While noting with serious concern the environmental, transnational and complex impacts of IUU Fishing on the marine environment, sustainability of marine resources, and the well being of coastal states, the Workshops highlighted the connections between IUU Fishing and other illegal activities.

Against this backdrop, and as a follow up to the previous workshops, Indonesia proposes to convene a Workshop and Table Top Exercise on Crimes Related to Fisheries to further develop common understanding of the serious nature and extent of criminal offences that take place along the entire supply and value chain of the fisheries sector. This workshop and TTX serves also as a capacity building measure for fisheries control and law enforcement agencies.

The workshop and TTX will contribute to Priority Area #3 (Capacity Building of Maritime Law Enforcement Agencies in the Region) and Topic # 1 (Maritime Security and Cooperation) of the ARF Work Plan on Maritime Security and the implementation of the ARF Statement on Cooperation to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate IUU Fishing.

Workshop Format

Indonesia, along with a co-chair and a non-ASEAN ARF Participant, proposed to organize and conduct a Workshop and TTX involving all relevant agencies. The outcomes of the TTX will frame the elements taken up out during the Workshop.

The Workshop Sessions will focus on the following themes:

- a. Regulation and policy
- b. Law enforcement
- c. Cooperation and coordination
- d. Capacity building
- e. Monitoring through satellite Technology
- f. SOPs and guidelines

ARF Participants will contribute to the TTX and Workshop by sharing their experiences, expertise and perspectives on appropriate case studies on crimes throughout the supply and value chain of fisheries.

The TTX and Workshop outcomes will be in the form of recommendations on how to build and facilitate good working relationship between officials in various agencies and between states in order to ensure that all offences in fisheries sector are appropriately addressed and effectively deterred. The recommendations, together with the co-chairs' summary report, will be presented to the ARF Ministers for their endorsement.

Participants

ARF Participants are encouraged to involve their relevant agencies in this workshop, especially fisheries, customs, financial investigation, immigration, navy, coastguard, police and judicial authorities. Experts from international organizations, academia, as well as fisheries industries will also be invited to the workshop.

Date and Venue

The Workshop and TTX will be conducted for three days, and will be held sometime in the ARF inter-sessional year 2018-2019. The Workshop and TTX will be conducted in English. The venue will be announced in due course.

Administrative Arrangements

The host will bear administrative costs of the workshop and TTX, including cost of the meeting package, welcoming dinner and working lunches. International travel, accommodations, and other related costs necessary for participation will be borne by the participants.

Comments

For any questions or comments on this proposal please contact:

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