



**Brussels Rural Development Briefings**  
**A series of meetings on ACP-EU development issues**

**Briefing session n° 10:**  
**Fighting against Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated fishing (IUU):**  
**Impacts and challenges for ACP countries**

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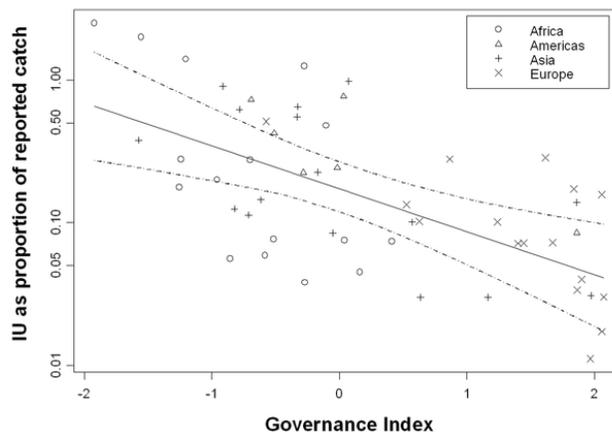
**Estimating the Worldwide Extent of Illegal Fishing: the economics of Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing and the impact of IUU Fisheries on ACP countries**

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***Executive Summary***

Illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing contributes to overexploitation of fish stocks and is a hindrance to the recovery of fish populations and ecosystems. A recent DFID and DEFRA-funded study undertook a worldwide analysis of illegal and unreported fishing based on case study analyses of 54 countries and high seas fisheries. Lower and upper estimates of the total current losses to illegal and unreported fishing worldwide are between US\$9 billion and US\$24 billion annually, representing between 11 and 26 million tonnes of fish. Developing countries have been identified as those most at risk from illegal fishing, with the total value of losses in sub-Saharan Africa estimated to be about \$1 bn.

Agnew *et al.* (2009<sup>1</sup>) demonstrated a significant relationship on a global scale between the level of illegal and unreported fishing and indices of governance. Developing countries with poor governance are not to blame for illegal fishing, but they are more vulnerable to illegal activities — conducted by both their own fishers and by foreign vessels. This represents a failure of control on behalf of the flag state as well as the coastal state.



Regional trends reveal issues related to the quality of fishery management and governance in coastal states. For example in the Eastern Central Atlantic there appears to have been a steady increase in IUU fishing over the last 20 years. This is a large area, covering many ACP states with a wide variety of fisheries with complex management requirements and a wide range in governance scores (Morocco to Angola), some of

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.plosone.org/article/info:doi%2F10.1371%2Fjournal.pone.0004570>

which, such as Guinea, Sierra Leone and Liberia suffered increasing illegal catches as a result of internal conflict in the 1990s. By contrast, some of the countries in West Africa such as Mauritania have been able recently to reduce the amount of illegal fishing in their waters. In both west Africa and the SADC region the primary forms of IUU appear to be fishing by industrial fleets without licenses and in areas set aside for artisanal fishermen, and misreporting of catches. However, IUU is not restricted to industrial fleets – the coastal artisanal vessels in west Africa are also implicated in unreported fishing without controls.

The incentives for IUU fishing are basically economic, where [IUU incentive ~ Profit from IUU fishing = Benefit from IUU fishing – Cost of IUU fishing]. A large number of drivers act within this equation: social drivers, lack of market control, price distortion, effect of the global economy and world fishing opportunities, international regulations, fishing agreements, reflagging, national fisheries management policy including subsidies and excess capacity and low levels control or situations in which control is difficult.