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Fighting against Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated fishing (IUU):
Impacts and challenges for ACP countries

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The role of an ACP regional organisations in fighting IUU fishing: CRFM

Terrence Phillips, CRFM Secretariat

Executive Summary

The presentation describes the important contribution to employment, income, foreign exchange earnings, rural stability and food security made by the fisheries sector in the CARIFORUM/CARICOM region. It highlights current issues posed by IUU fishing, the full extent of which is not quantified, such as poaching in countries with high value species like conch and lobster stocks in Belize, Jamaica and The Bahamas, shrimp in Guyana and Suriname, and tunas in the Eastern Caribbean Islands; inadequate MCS to ensure compliance with existing legislations and regulations; and insufficient awareness among public and private sector stakeholders and the public at large about compliance and the negative effects of IUU fishing.

In addition, the implications of the implementation of the EC regulation to prevent, deter and eliminate IUU fishing by States exporting to or intending to export fish and fish products to the EU are described. These include the implementation of appropriate legislative and administrative measures to ensure compliance; development of the necessary administrative capability to monitor and control the operations of their fishing vessels; implementation of effective fisheries management measures such as fishing authorisations and data collection systems; assessment of their internal systems and capability to identify gaps and specific actions that might be needed to meet the new EC requirements; and redeployment of human and financial resources to establish the required system.

It sets out the main elements of the MCS strategy to combat IUU fishing at the national and regional levels which would entail a two-pronged approach, with one being to encourage voluntary compliance through a process of education and awareness to obtain support for fisheries management strategies and efforts to combat IUU fishing; and the other to ensure compliance by fishers and other stakeholders who resist the regulatory regime. Also addressed, is the role of the Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism in the implementation of said strategy. Among these actions are encouraging ratification, accession, acceptance or adoption, where necessary, of the relevant international instruments for fisheries management and compliance; promoting the development of NPOAs to prevent, deter and eliminate IUU fishing; promoting the establishment or strengthening of regional databases and other information systems; promoting collaboration and coordination among states, and in particular, regional cooperation on port state control; and strengthening national and regional institutional capacity and infrastructure through the assistance of international agencies and organizations.

In concluding, it notes that IUU fishing is a threat that will undoubtedly affect CARIFORUM/CARICOM States because it is a significant obstacle to sound management of the fishing industry. The CRFM is well placed to promote fisheries management, including the implementation of strategies to prevent, deter and eliminate IUU fishing. CRFM Member States are in the process of elaborating a Common Fisheries Policy and finalising a Draft Declaration on IUU Fishing.

At present, the existing MCS and enforcement functions are not as effective as required due to severe human and financial resource constraints within the region's fisheries administrations. With the advent of the

EC regulation, this situation will be compounded for those Member States exporting to or intending to export fish and fish products to the EU. As such, the EU needs to take into account the capacity constraints facing developing countries and regional fisheries bodies and be prepared to provide technical assistance and training to such countries and bodies to facilitate the implementation of the catch certification scheme.