



Briefing n°38: Fighting against Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated fishing (IUU): Successes from ACP countries

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SUCCESSES IN FIGHTING IUU FISHING: THE CASE OF FIJI

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Executive Summary

Fiji, is a small tropical island State in the South Pacific with a population of 860,000, a total land area of 18,300 square kilometers and an ocean area of 1.3 million square kilometers. Fiji is 3 hours by plane north of Auckland, New Zealand or 4 hours by plane northeast of Sydney, Australia or 6½ hours south of Honolulu, Hawaii.

As a responsible flag State, fishing State, port State and exporting State, Fiji sees illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing as an irresponsible and insatiable action and has committed itself in joining others to combat this undesirable activity.

Fiji's "yellow carding" by the European Union in 2012 for not meeting the standards they perceive as supportive of combatting IUU fishing was a wakeup call for us. This we thank the team from the Directorate General for Marine Affairs and Fisheries (DG MARE) in undertaking a worthy assessment of our legal and policy framework and processes and came up with recommendations to fix our shortfalls.

As compared to other major world economies, Fiji relies heavily on tourism as the number one contributor to our economy. Raw sugar, minerals and fish are our other major export revenue earners.

Japan, the United States of America and Thailand are the major markets for our fish and fishery products with the European Union only recently started and is expected to be a major force in the near future through the Economic Partnership Agreement.

So in order for us to continue trading with our fish and fishery products, we did not take the outcome of our assessment by DG MARE lightly but strongly went ahead and started addressing each of their recommendation.

So within two years of our yellow carding, we managed to come up with all what we were tasked to undertake that resulted in the lifting of the yellow card on 14 October 2014. This will only make us more committed in combatting the global IUU fishing in ensuring that our vessels and nationals behave themselves at all times and all fish and fishery products going through our ports are cleared of IUU fishing activities.