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E15 Expert Group on Oceans, Fisheries and the Trade System

First Expert Group Meeting

28-29 April 2014

Agenda

Monday 28 April

9:00-9:15 **The E15 Initiative – Process and Purpose**

- Ricardo MELÉNDEZ-ORTIZ (ICTSD)

9:15-9:45 **Session I: Oceans, Fisheries and Trade**

Chair: Christophe BELLMANN (ICTSD)

- Rashid SUMAILA (UBC): Presentation of the background paper

Fisheries are one of the most highly traded commodities, and play an essential role in supporting food security and income generation across the globe. Governance of fisheries resources, and particularly of fisheries trade, is patchy. Multilateral attempts at addressing the economic drivers of over-fishing (including subsidies and illegal trade in fish) have stalled, while regional attempts have had limited success. This presentation will provide participants with an overview of key issues and concerns regarding global trade in fish products, its impact on ecosystem and development, and the effectiveness of efforts to improve fisheries trade governance. Issues to be covered include the environmental impact of key traded species' harvest levels and aquaculture production, the contribution fisheries make to sustainable development along the production chain, and how public and private trade measures shape fisheries trade, harvests and ecosystems.

9:45-13:00 **Open discussion**
(Coffee break at 10:45)

13:00-14:00 **Lunch**

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14:00-18:00 **Session II: Break-out groups on specific sub-themes**
(Coffee break at 16:00)

For this session, participants will split into four groups. Each group will go through four successive iterations during which they will discuss four different topics namely (i) reforming harmful fisheries subsidies (ii) improving the contribution of non-tariff measures to sustainability and livelihoods (iii) liberalising tariffs on fisheries trade and (iv) addressing illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing. Each topic will be briefly introduced by a resource person who will rotate from one group to the other as the group goes through its different iterations. This will allow participants to contribute to each topic.

Topic 1 **Reforming harmful fisheries subsidies**
Resource person: *Guillermo VALLES GALMÉS (UNCTAD)*

Subsidies that increase fishing capacity and fishing effort are frequently cited as one of the main contributors to stock depletion and resulting social dislocation. Negotiations in the WTO on disciplines on fisheries subsidies have stalled, in large part because of conflicting views of the appropriate level of disciplines to be applied to developed and developing countries. In the absence of movement in the WTO, regional trade agreements (like the Trans-Pacific Partnership) may move ahead with limited sets of disciplines. Reducing fisheries subsidies would likely limit fishing effort and catch, to the benefit of depleted stocks, but may also raise the global price of fish, with consequences for food security. This group will discuss how disciplines on fisheries subsidies could be structured so as to support the health of fish stocks, livelihoods (income and employment) and food security.

Topic 2 **Non-tariff measures and trade in fisheries products**
Resource person: *Cathy ROHEIM (University of Idaho)*

Food safety requirements and sustainability standards are increasingly requirements for access to markets and specific supply chains for seafood products. Given the current structure of global seafood trade, aquaculture and fishery standards are of particular relevance to developing country producers. Public and private food safety and sustainability standards are often cited as non-tariff barriers to entry to markets, but also present opportunities for product differentiation. The need to meet standards may provide incentives for consolidation in fragmented fisheries industries. This group will identify priority issues on which cooperation among governments would improve the contribution of non-tariff measures to environmental sustainability, livelihoods and food security.

Topic 3 **Liberalising tariff barriers to trade in fisheries products**
Resource person: *Carl-Christian SCHMIDT (OECD)*

Tariffs on fisheries products present a multi-faceted policy challenge. Relatively high tariffs on processed fish products act as a barrier to developing countries' attempts to add value to their exports. Lowering MFN tariff levels would, however, erode the preferential access currently enjoyed by particular developing countries (eg the Africa, Caribbean and Pacific group) to developed country markets. Extensive liberalisation of trade in fisheries products could also reduce the average price of fish, increasing demand for fish products and putting more pressure on stocks. This

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group will discuss how tariff reductions on fisheries trade could be structured so as to balance stock sustainability and food security with income and employment opportunities.

Topic 4 Addressing Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing through the trading system

Resource person: Audun LEM (FAO)

IUU fishing undermines efforts to manage fisheries sustainably and presents a threat to marine governance generally. Efforts to control this activity range include catch and trade documentation schemes in regional fisheries management organisations, the FAO Port State Measures Agreement, specific IUU fish import regulations in the EU and provisions in regional trade agreements (RTAs). The effectiveness of these efforts has been patchy, often due to weaknesses in enforcement but also because of the difficulty in implementing traceability of fisheries products along complex production chains. This group will identify areas where trade-related cooperation between governments would help to address the market for illegally caught fish and the supply chains along which it is traded.

19:00 **Informal Dinner (details to follow)**

Tuesday 29 April

9:00-11:00 **Session III: Reports from break-out groups**

Chair: Christophe BELLMANN (ICTSD)

- Resource persons will present main conclusions of the different group discussions on the four topics.

Open discussion

11:00-11:30 **Coffee break**

11:30-12:30 **Session IV: Translating ideas into action**

Chair: Ricardo MELÉNDEZ-ORTIZ (ICTSD)

- Christophe BELLMANN (ICTSD)
- Rashid SUMAILA (UBC)

In this session, participants will identify the salient themes of the meeting's discussion and discuss how best to take them forward.

12:30 Light lunch served.