

033 Port state measures regarding illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing

MINDFUL of Article 119 of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, which mandates that states enact conservation measures protecting living resources in the high seas to restore or maintain populations of harvested species;

AWARE that the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) advises that illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing is one of the greatest threats to marine ecosystems due to its tendency to undermine efforts to manage fisheries sustainably;

CONSCIOUS that some forms of IUU fishing threaten the food and livelihood security of artisanal and Indigenous fishers;

RECALLING that IUCN Resolution 6.021 *Monitoring and management of unselective, unsustainable and unmonitored (UUU) fisheries* (Hawai'i, 2016) highlighted the need to urgently address problems of food insecurity, fleet overcapacity, overfishing, unsustainable and damaging fishing in areas within and outside of national jurisdiction;

ALSO RECALLING that Resolution 4.117 *Flag State responsibility regarding Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing* (Barcelona, 2008) urged states to develop and adopt effective port measures directed at vessels operating under flags of convenience, including by banning access to markets for fishing products caught and transported by these vessels;

RECOGNISING the significance of the Agreement on Port State Measures (PSMA) as the first binding international agreement to target IUU fishing by mandating state parties to prevent IUU fishing vessels from using certain ports and landing their catch;

ACKNOWLEDGING the outsized role that ports of convenience play in facilitating IUU fishing and undermining the efforts of PSMA state parties around the world;

NOTING that at the Fourth Meeting of the Parties to the PSMA in 2023, some member states expressed their concern over the failure of flag States to take action against vessels operating under their flag, and the entities and individuals over whom they have jurisdiction, that were found to be engaged in IUU fishing; and

ADVOCATING for the continuation of enforcement and implementation of port state measures to combat IUU fishing and render it less profitable;

The IUCN World Conservation Congress 2025, at its session in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates:

1. RECOMMENDS that the World Commission on Environmental Law assemble a committee to explore options for mandating party states to detain vessels found engaging in IUU fishing, unless a satisfactory response is received from the responsible flag State;
2. REQUESTS that the Fisheries Expert Group of the IUCN Commission on Ecosystem Management organise meetings on the prevalence of IUU fishing and roles of port states, and produces a policy brief discussing this issue;
3. INVITES all port states to consider becoming party to the FAO PSMA as a matter of urgency;
4. URGES state parties to the PSMA to consider adopting and implementing stronger port state measures to prevent further establishment of ports of convenience and deter vessels engaged in IUU fishing from seeking to dock at said ports, as well as traceability and electronic catch documentation schemes to exclude IUU products from supply chains;
5. REQUESTS parties to the PSMA to explore additional measures to encourage flag States that are PSMA parties to be more responsive to port state notifications informing them of vessels operating under their flag suspected of engaging in IUU fishing; and

6. CALLS on Regional Fisheries Management Organisations to expand data collection through the Global Information Exchange System on the prevalence of IUU fishing within their ports, to include the results of mandatory vessel inspections and to adopt port inspection schemes.