



COMHAFAT/ATLAFCO

CONFERENCE MINISTERIELLE SUR LA COOPERATION HALIEUTIQUE ENTRE LES ETATS AFRICAINS
RIVERAINS DE L'OCEAN ATLANTIQUE

MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE ON FISHERIES COOPERATION AMONG AFRICAN STATES BORDERING
THE ATLANTIC OCEAN

Restitution Meeting

" Study for the establishment of a Regional Harmonized Port Inspection Program in the ATLAFCO's zone "

Rabat 12-13 March 2018

The context

The establishment of a **Regional Harmonized Port Inspection Program (RHPIP)** is one of the flagship recommendations of the Marrakech workshop organized by ATLAFCO in October 2015 [1]. Such a program may certainly be an important step in the cooperation between West African States against IUU fishing. In fact, if ATLAFCO member States attain through harmonized port inspections to discourage or prevent IUU vessels from gaining access to their ports and thus preventing them from marketing their catches, they will probably be fatal to illegal activities that often involve organized crime, depriving operators of the expected economic benefits. ATLAFCO Member States have an important role to play in this fight as nearly 3.5 million tons of fishery products pass through their ports each year.

The international community is committed to strengthening the fight against IUU fishing through Port inspection by the adoption of **the FAO Agreement Port State Measures (PSMA)** in 2009 that entered into force in 2016 following a sufficient number of ratifications. Currently, ten ATLAFCO Member States have formally acceded to this binding instrument, and others are preparing to deposit their instruments of ratification. Longtime before the entry into force of PSMA, Atlantic coastal states had already committed to strengthening port inspection through ICCAT Recommendation 12-07, which port control, broadly aligned with those endorsed by PSMA but only for tunas.

[1] Workshop on "Monitoring, Control and Surveillance (MCS) as an effective tool in the fight against IUU fishing" October 27-28, 2015 Marrakech - Morocco.

Workshop documents : <http://www.atlafco.org/en/news.php?id=20>

Constraints

The full implementation of PSMA procedures places high demands on the States concerned. This agreement is based on several pillars which are in order of importance :

- *i*) upgrading the national regulations to transpose the PSMA rules into national law
- *ii*) the establishment of national mechanisms for inter-agency cooperation as port inspection potentially falls under the mandate of several State authorities (fisheries, port and maritime authorities, customs, immigration, etc.)
- *iii*) the training of inspectors to enable them to carry out and report the results of inspections in accordance with the spirit of the PSMA,
- *iv*) operational inspection procedures to follow those promoted by the PSMA
- *v*) mechanisms for prosecution of offenders so that IUU behavior detected through port inspections can be punished to the level of harm done.

The survey carried out as part of the study indicates that most ATLAFCO Member States have taken the necessary actions to implement these five pillars, but that they encounter difficulties related to a lack of human and financial resources and the implementation of cooperation with other States concerned (coastal States, flag States). These difficulties are not a singularity of the ATLAFCO region. The implementation of port inspection mechanisms has faced similar problems in the Indian Ocean and the Pacific Ocean.

Nevertheless, there are good practices in the ATLAFCO region that should be sources of inspiration. They include particularly the efforts of the FCWC IUU Fishing Working Group, which has established a high level of cooperation among the Member States of this RFO, or the example of the actions of African States under the Abuja MoU related to the inspection at the port of commercial vessels. In other regions of the world, the initiatives of the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission in strengthening the capacity of its members in terms of inspection at the port are also to be highlighted.

Current initiatives in capacity development

The difficulties faced by developing States in West Africa have not escaped the international community. This has motivated the adoption and implementation of several cooperation programs to promote the full implementation of port inspection measures. These programs include :

- FAO under AMREP Part 6 with Umbrella fund mobilization of US\$ 15 million;
- ICCAT which aims to support developing States in Implementing Recommendation 12-07 with the establishment of a special fund (the MCSF Fund) ;

- The European Union with the start of the 2017 PESCAO program for the ECOWAS Member States with an indicative budget of EUR 15 million over the period 2017-2022 ;
- The World Bank with the multi-year PRAO program for the benefit of SRFC member states and FCWC member states. The PRAO program has already invested nearly \$ 70 million and will continue over the next ten years in successive phases ;
- Norwegian cooperation with support to the FCWC Working Group.

Other programs are being defined, with the World Bank program that plans to support the strengthening of governance in the COREP member states.

Therefore, it appears that the problem is not so much to create a new regional program, but to help States and RFOs to make the best possible use of existing regional programs, taking into account future developments such as the creation of new regional programs, a global information exchange mechanism by the FAO, which has now been adopted.

The coordination of interventions and the promotion of cooperation are entirely within the purview of the ATLAFCO mandate.

The expectations of the workshop

The workshop has several objectives :

- A restitution of the study commissioned by ATLAFCO on the regional inspection program for validation and appropriation of its results by the stakeholders ;
- Exchanges around successful experiences in West Africa (FCWC WG and Abuja MoU) and in other regions of the world ;
- A review of current and future port inspection capacity building programs and the identification of mechanisms to make the best use of them in the spirit of regional cooperation ;
- The formulation of a first action plan to support the States and their RFOs in the development of port inspection capacities including the establishment of shared resources essential for the effectiveness of inspections such the registers of authorized fishing vessels