

The 16th RPOA-IUU Coordination Committee Meeting

Regional Plan of Action to Promote Responsible Fishing Practices including Combating Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated Fishing in the Region (RPOA-IUU)

26-27 October 2023

Summary Report

General Overview

The 16th Regional Plan of Action to Promote Responsible Fishing Practices including Combating IUU fishing in the Region (RPOA-IUU) Coordination Committee Meeting (CCM) was held in Dili, Timor-Leste, for two days from 26 to 27 October 2023 in hybrid mode. The meeting was attended by 11 (eleven) RPOA-IUU participating countries (Australia, Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Timor-Leste, and Viet Nam), RPOA-IUU advisory bodies (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), InfoFish, Southeast Asian Fisheries Development Centre (SEAFDEC)), and RPOA-IUU observers (Arafura and Timor Seas Ecosystem Approach Phase-2 (ATSEA-2 Project), the United States Agency of International Development for Sustainable Fish Asia Technical Support (USAID SuFia TS), Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR), and International MCS Network (IMCSN).

Of the participating countries, Australia, Indonesia, Papua New Guinea, and Timor-Leste participated in person. Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Timor-Leste, and Vietnam participated virtually. In addition, the other organizations that participated, FAO, USAID SuFia TS, and ATSEA-2 Project participated in person. InfoFish, SEAFDEC, CCAMLR, and IMCSN participated virtually. The detailed information of participants who attended the 16th RPOA-IUU Coordination Committee Meeting can be seen in **Annex 1** and the updated list of the RPOA-IUU Coordination Committee representatives is shown in **Annex 2**.

The meeting was co-chaired by:

- Mr. Lourenço dos Reis Amaral, National Director of Inspection for Fisheries and Aquatic Resources, Timor-Leste
- Mr. Eko Rudianto, Principal Fisheries Inspector, Ministry of Marine Affairs and Fisheries The Republic of Indonesia on behalf of the RPOA-IUU Secretariat Coordinator
- Mr. Duane Bridger, Director, Fisheries Governance and Trade, Department of Agriculture, Fisheries, and Forestry

Opening Session

Domingos da Conceição dos Santos, Secretary of State for Fisheries, Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, Fisheries, and Forestry, Timor-Leste opened the meeting by highlighting the importance of cooperation in addressing the challenges posed by illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing (IUU). He also cited that Timor-Leste is committed to strengthening the ties

of cooperation with regional countries under the RPOA-IUU framework. It was also mentioned that the data-sharing mechanism plays a pivotal role in minimizing the number of IUU fishing activities and serves as a cost-effective platform for enhancing surveillance operations, particularly given Timor-Leste's resource and facility constraints. The remarks of the Secretary of State for Fisheries, Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, Fisheries, and Forestry are available in **Annex 3**.

The remarks from the RPOA-IUU Secretariat were delivered by Suharta, Executive Secretary of the Directorate General of Surveillance for Marine and Fisheries Resources, Ministry of Marine Affairs and Fisheries, The Republic of Indonesia as the RPOA-IUU Secretariat Coordinator. He acknowledged the country's participation in an initial discussion on data-sharing mechanism development ahead of the CCM. He also highlighted the importance of data-sharing as a cornerstone of effective regional cooperation since it facilitates transparency and the development of strategies to collaboratively achieve shared goals and mutual challenges. He also referred to the 7th SESCO and SSS sub-regional working group meeting in which Malaysia, as the secretariat of the SESCO and SSS sub-regional working group, took the initiative to organize the meeting. It demonstrates that the RPOA-IUU MCS Sub-Regional Workshop served as an inspiration for the South China Seas and Sulu-Sulawesi Seascape (SESCO and SSS) sub-regional working group to revive the activity of the SESCO and SSS sub-regional group. The remarks of the RPOA-IUU Secretariat Coordinator are available in **Annex 4**.

1. Introduction

1.1. Background of meeting

Mr. Eko Rudianto provided a general introduction and outlined the objectives and expected outcomes of the meeting. He outlined the RPOA-IUU Coordination Committee is an annual forum to review the progress status of RPOA-IUU Work Plan 2023, share reports of the RPOA-IUU core elements implementation, and develop the RPOA-IUU Work Plan 2024.

1.2. Adoption of Agenda

The draft of the agenda was adopted and can be found in **Annex 5**.

2. Regional Outlook and Priorities

2.1. Emerging issues on international effort in promoting responsible fisheries

The representative from FAO, Mr. Ilhwan Cho presented several international frameworks to combat IUU fishing. It includes, as follows:

- 1982 The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS)
- 1993 FAO Compliance Agreement (fishing vessels on high seas)
- 1995 UN Fish Stock Agreement
- 1995 Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries
- 2001 International Plan of Action to Prevent, Deter, and Eliminate IUU Fishing
- 2009 Agreement on Port State Measures (PSMA)

Mr. Ilhwan Cho further elaborated on the context of functioning PSMA. FAO has organized various meetings and activities of PSMA with the aim of promoting and accelerating the effective and efficient implementation of PSMA. Additionally, he also introduced the Global Information Exchange System (GIES), which is expected to be fully operational by the end of 2023. GIES is a tool which will facilitate information sharing among the parties to the PSMA as well as to non-parties. It encompasses various aspects, including port entry/use denials and inspection reports of suspected IUU fishing vessels and the entrance of fish products.

He also reported that during the 4th Meeting of Parties to PSMA adopted 'A strategy to improve the effectiveness of the PSMA to prevent, deter, and eliminate IUU fishing (Bali Strategy)'. The strategy emphasized the reinforcement of interagency coordination and collaboration and the operationalization of the GIES by the end of 2023. The 4th Meeting of Parties to PSMA also underscored the importance of encouraging more countries to become parties to the PSMA through bilateral, sub-regional, regional and global efforts.

He also informed that the 5th Joint Working Group will be held in 2024 in Geneva. The meeting will be attended by the IMO-Cape Town Agreement, FAO-PSMA, and ILO-Work in Fishing Convention to discuss robust measures to address IUU, labour problems, and maritime safety. He also added that FAO and WTO are currently engaged in the collaborative mechanism and actively share necessary information on what the WTO looks for from the PSMA.

He also explained that the FAO Voluntary Guideline for Transshipment is important to be implemented to ensure that the transshipment is appropriately authorized. He also added that FAO is actively seeking the most effective approach to integrate FAO-PSMA with labour-related matters and transshipment activities. The representative of the RPOA-IUU secretariat raised a question about the possibility.

Mr. Ilhwan Cho also confirmed that the members of parties to PSMA could access GIES and obtain information regarding the denial report and the port information. Since FAO-APFIC has finished, he stated that he is a point of contact for FAO-PSMA for regional Asia Pacific and is welcome to work and collaborate with the RPOA-IUU.

Herewith are his details.

Mr. Ilhwan CHO
Senior Fishery Officer, FAO
E: ilhwan.cho@fao.org

The FAO's presentation is available in **Annex 6**.

Co-chair/discussion notes

1. The RPOA-IUU secretariat informed that FAO has been involved in several RPOA-IUU activities, such as international workshops and training.

2. Following FAO's presentation, the RPOA-IUU secretariat identified two potential areas for further exploration for collaboration such as labor issues and transshipment. The RPOA-IUU secretariat raised a query about how to encourage countries to adopt the transshipments regulations. In addition, the RPOA-IUU secretariat also seek support from FAO to facilitate discussion on those potential areas.
3. Australia's delegates raised the importance of WTO Fisheries Subsidies to be incorporated into FAO's agenda. In response, the representative of FAO explained that FAO will be involved in capacity development for WTO Fisheries Subsidies.
4. During the discussion session, Australia's delegates expressed their interest in inviting FAO to the partner coordination meeting which plan to be held in 2024.

3. Presentation of Reports

3.1. RPOA-IUU Secretariat's Evaluation of RPOA-IUU Work Plan, challenges, follow-up action, and recommendations

On behalf of the RPOA-IUU Secretariat, Mr. Eko Rudianto delivered a presentation on the progress made in implementing the 2023 RPOA-IUU Work Plan. He also highlighted the key activities undertaken by the RPOA-IUU secretariat during 2023, which involved several partners and international agencies. He also detailed several activities from partners in supporting the implementation of the RPOA-IUU Work Plan, as follows:

1. Focus Group Discussion (FGD) on Data-Sharing Mechanism and MCS Training Needs facilitated by the ATSEA-2 Project-hired consultant held in February 2023;
2. RPOA-IUU MCS Sub-Regional Workshop was held in Bali, Indonesia on 16-17 March 2023 in person;
3. The 1st Regional Plan of Action to Promote Responsible Fishing Practices including Combating IUU Fishing in the Region (RPOA-IUU) Consultative Meeting (CM) was held in Bali, Indonesia on 17 March 2023 in hybrid mode;
4. Focus Group Discussion (FGD) on Regional Policy Status Assessment facilitated by USAID SuFia TS-hired consultant held in June 2023;
5. Focus Group Discussion (FGD) on Fisheries Intelligence, in collaboration with ATSEA-2 Project held in June 2023;
6. Workshop on Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) and Communication, in collaboration with USAID SuFia TS held in September 2023
7. An initial discussion on data-sharing mechanism development, in collaboration with USAID SuFia TS, held in October 2023

Mr. Eko Rudianto also reported that the RPOA-IUU secretariat participated in regional and international fora, such as the 15th ASEAN Fisheries Consultative Forum (AFCF) Meeting, SAFET Conference, and IORA Workshop. He also presented some proposed activities that will be incorporated into the RPOA-IUU Work Plan 2023. The proposed activities include the development of evaluation and reporting tools, gap analysis on the implementation of international instruments, market measures (Traceability-CDS/CDT), data-sharing mechanism, and decent work on fishing vessels and the seafood industry. Another capacity-building program proposed by the RPOA-IUU secretariat is to conduct **'Advanced Fisheries Intelligence Training'**. Mr. Handoko Adi Susanto, as the representative of ATSEA-2 Projects informed that ATSEA-2

Projects will be concluded by the end of 2024 so therefore, ***Advanced Fisheries Intelligence Training*** is supposed to be held in the first quarter of 2024. He also added that the ATSEA-2 Project's resources will be focussed on the Ministerial Declaration held in Timor-Leste in August 2024.

During the discussion session, Australia's representative suggested that the RPOA-IUU secretariat could provide more details on the activity background and the rationale of the proposed activity, aligning the details with specific points in the RPOA-IUU Work Plan. He also recommended that completed activity reports should be made available for upload to the website.

The presentation of the RPOA-IUU secretariat can be seen in **Annex 7**.

3.2. RPOA-IUU Participating Countries Reports

3.2.1. Australia

Australia's delegates provided a comprehensive overview of Australia's multifaceted strategy in combating IUU fishing. It included strong on-the-water action against IUU fishing in Australia's waters, the exchange of information regarding known and suspected IUU fishing vessels, engagement in bilateral and regional collaborations, and capacity-building assistance for Indo-Pacific countries.

Under the SEA IUU Fishing Program, she updated that Australia's domestic treaty process for accepting the Agreement has been completed and expects to lodge its instrument of acceptance by October 2023. She also reported that Australia has delivered the first block of the MCS training course in person at Nha Trang University with 40 participants from RPOA-IUU participating countries, including women attending.

She also reported that Australia delivered the RPOA-IUU MCS sub-regional workshop in Bali, Indonesia in March 2023 attended by 24 participants from RPOA-IUU participating countries. The objective of the workshop is to increase and intensify the engagement of sub-regional working groups. Notably, this event was held in conjunction with the 2023 ATS sub-regional working groups meeting, which Australia hosted as well. Australia's delegates also added that Australia has several procedures for fisheries management, such as stock assessments and catch monitoring, including electronic reporting and catch reporting.

During the discussion session, regarding the SEA-IUU fishing programs' context, Australia's delegates encouraged Papua New Guinea to participate in the program innovation fund. Australia's delegates also stated that Australia is delighted to provide opportunities for fisheries exchange, which Papua New Guinea could possibly join.

Co-chair notes:

- Australia, in collaboration with the RPOA-IUU secretariat, will host a partner coordination meeting. The meeting will invite the existing RPOA-IUU partners to deliberate

complementary activities for supporting the RPOA-IUU while preventing any duplicative activities among partners and countries

- Australia will host a workshop on women in fisheries. The details will be provided as soon as possible
- Australia was requested to provide its best practices and experience in implementing Catch Documentation and technology

The presentation of Australia can be found in **Annex 8**.

3.2.2. Brunei Darussalam

Brunei Darussalam's delegates stated that Brunei Darussalam remains committed and fully supports the RPOA-IUU and its program for responsible fishing practices. In 2023, Brunei Darussalam's delegates reported that there is no foreign fishing vessel being apprehended due to encroach nor conduct of IUU fishing activities within Brunei Darussalam's EEZ maritime waters. Brunei Darussalam's delegates also informed that they actively participated in several capacity-building programs and activities within Brunei Darussalam's EEZ maritime waters.

Brunei Darussalam's delegate also updated that they participated in several relevant capacity-building programmes and activities on instruments and measures to promote responsible fishing practices as well as to combat IUU fishing activities organized in 2023. The activities include The Maritime Laws Seminar with the Government of Japan, the 3rd ASEAN Network for Combating Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing (3rd AN-IUU Meeting), the ASEAN Workshop on Refresher Training in using the AN-IUU Interactive Platform, and the 2nd Workshop on Maritime Law Enforcement Agencies (MLEA). Furthermore, it was mentioned that Brunei Darussalam is currently progressing towards becoming a party to the PSMA in 2024, subject to government approval.

The presentation of Brunei Darussalam can be found in **Annex 9**.

Co-chair/discussion notes:

1. The representative of the RPOA-IUU secretariat provided a comment on Australia's priority in market measures and partner coordination meeting
2. It was noted that Australia will engage in discussion on the program activity to prevent overlapping and redundancy
3. Papua New Guinea's delegates raised a question about potential participation of PNG in SEA-IUU program, particularly in the targeted capacity building support (TCBS) and fisheries officer exchange program. In response, Australia's delegates conveyed their intention to engage in further communication with PNG to explore potential activity.

3.2.3. Cambodia

Cambodia's delegates reported that Cambodia has conducted a survey on fish catch monitoring inland (900 fishing households, in 17 inland provinces) and marine water (at 8 landing

sites, 225 fishing vessels, in four coastal provinces). Cambodia's delegates also informed that they participated in the MCS training course at Nha Trang University, Viet Nam.

It was also said that Cambodia had a bilateral meeting with Vietnam in October 2023. He also informed me that Cambodia is considering ratifying the World Trade Organization (WTO) agreement. Cambodia's delegates also stated that Cambodia has developed 10 10-year strategic plans for fisheries management and conservation and a five-year management plan for marine fisheries management areas in the Kep and Preah Sihanouk Provinces. It was also mentioned that Cambodia regularly updated the SEAFDEC RFVR and FAO GFRV data.

The presentation of Cambodia can be found in **Annex 10**.

3.2.4. Indonesia

Indonesia's delegates presented that Indonesia recognizes the significant contribution of RPOA-IUU in combating IUU Fishing in the region and commits to supporting RPOA-IUU. It was also mentioned that Indonesia has established the PSM National Secretariat and become the host country of the 4th Meeting of Parties to PSMA in Bali and the parties have agreed upon the Bali Strategy. He also reported that Indonesia is in the process of public consultation for ratification of the 2012 Cape Town Agreement. He also pointed out that Indonesia has been strengthening its MCS measures by establishing The Integrated Maritim Intelligent Platform with advanced VMS features, strengthening the fisheries patrol vessels fleet, improving the electronic fishing log book coverage, and implementing the National Fish Traceability System (STELINA). Indonesia has also initiated the formulation of the Guideline on Combating IUU Fishing in the Indian Ocean within the Indian Ocean Rim Association.

Indonesia's delegates updated that Indonesia has conducted the 1st Bilateral Consultative Meeting with Timor-Leste. The meeting delivered several recommendations, including the willingness of both countries to share data regarding the suspected IUU fishing vessels in waters under the national jurisdiction of each country. Indonesia's delegates highlighted that Indonesia has specific regulations governing transshipment activities. The regulation is applied for Tuna long liners and hand liners through Government Regulation No 11/2023 on Quota-based fishing and Minister of Marine Affairs and Fisheries Regulation No 28/2023 on the Implementation of Government Regulation No 11/2023 on Quota-based Fishing.

The presentation of Indonesia can be found in **Annex 11**.

3.2.5 Malaysia

Malaysia's delegates delivered their commitment to strengthening cooperation with the RPOA-IUU. It was explained that Malaysia is currently progressing with the principle of providing decent working conditions for the crews through regulating a policy in fishing vessel modernization. It was reported that Malaysia has successfully implemented the e-ACDS system and is currently in the process of familiarization with various stakeholders and government agencies. He also elaborated on Malaysia's efforts to improve the country's food security by

strengthening the infrastructure and logistics along the fisheries sector's food system chain, improving the efficiency of energy use and technology and ensuring sustainable exploitation of resources. Malaysia urges this platform to work closely and unequivocally to combat IUU fishing in order to ensure the sustainable exploitation of resources.

The presentation of Malaysia can be found in **Annex 12**.

3.2.6 Papua New Guinea

Papua New Guinea's delegates reinstated their commitment to combating IUU fishing and other related activities not only in their water but also in the region. It was also stated that Papua New Guinea has applied significant efforts and resources into combating IUU fishing by strengthening MCS systems, tools, programs and legislative requirements. He also informed that Papua New Guinea improved market access to address IUU fishing through various measures. These include conducting awareness-open dialogue, consolidating enforcement duties, enhancing fisheries intelligence and data-sharing, and implementing patrols and routine inspections.

It was reported that the Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA) fully support the implementation of the Agreement to Port State Measures. Papua New Guinea ensured that all fishing vessels were listed in the Global Fishing Watch and maintained and implemented Flag States responsibilities in the RFMO bodies under the requirements of the 1993 FAO Compliance Agreement.

The presentation of Papua New Guinea can be found in **Annex 13**.

Co-chair/discussion notes:

1. As a response from PNG's concerns on Indonesia's transboundary fishermen, Indonesia's delegate explained that Indonesia is currently strengthening Monitoring, Control, and Surveillance measures through urging fishing vessels with provincial-issued license to instal VMS and EMS. He suggested this issue could be addressed by bilateral meeting between Indonesia and Papua New Guinea
2. Based on lesson-learned between Australia dan PNG, PNG's delegates also suggested to address this issue through bilateral dialogue or sub-regional meeting
3. Australia's delegate conveyed suggestion of resolving issue between Indonesia and Papua New Guinea through discussing in the MCS sub-regional meeting platform, delivering Public Information Campaign, and encouraging country to continue with the Flag States's responsibility

3.2.7 The Philippines

The Philippines's delegates explained that they are strengthening their domestic policy and legal framework, engaging in various capacity-building activities, and developing both internal and international collaboration to combat IUU fishing for the conservation and sustainable use of aquatic resources and ecosystems. It was said that the Philippines has also

issued specific legislation concerning the protection of aquatic species, namely Fisheries Administrative Orders such as FAO No. 272 series of 2023; FAO No. 271 series of 2023; FAO No. 270 series of 2023; FAO No. 269 series of 2023; and FAO No. 268 series of 2023.

It was stated that the Philippines continues to implement the Philippines's IUU Fishing Index and Threat Assessment Tool (I-FIT) and has ratified FAO No. 263 s. In 2019, the management of Fisheries Management Areas (FMAs) is based on scientific information provided by the Scientific Advisory Group (SAG). He also updated that the Philippines is currently ratifying and acceding to the World Trade Organization's Fisheries Subsidies Agreement. The Philippines's delegates also mentioned that its government received support and assistance from NOAA to implement the PSM ranging from manual operation to inspector training.

The presentation of The Philippines can be found in **Annex 14**.

3.2.8 Singapore

Singapore's delegate shared information about a review of Singapore's Fisheries Legislation. These reviews include Singapore's Fisheries Management Policies and Legislation, the Fisheries Act to enable effective implementation of the Port State Measures Agreement and an assessment of the accession to the FAO Port State Measures Agreement. He also informed that Singapore has continued cooperation with Regional Fisheries Management Organizations (RFMOs), such as CCAMLR, ICCAT, and CCBST. Under the cooperation with CCAMLR, Singapore participated in the monitoring of *Dissostichus spp* trade through e-CDS by the issuance of DRED.

Singapore's delegates also highlighted that Singapore also cooperates with ICCAT on the issuance of re-export certificates for Big Eye Tuna and Swordfish consignment. He also emphasized that Singapore's participation in several regional organizations could enable closer collaborations towards more effective compliance and enforcement activities against IUU fishing. It was reported that the completion of the Fisheries Act amendment will be concluded by the end of 2024/2025. The delegates added that Singapore will participate in programmes of RPOA-IUU, SEAFDEC and RFMOs

The presentation of Singapore can be found in **Annex 15**.

3.2.9 Thailand

Thailand's delegates provided an update on the ongoing effort to prevent, deter, and eliminate Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated (IUU) fishing. It was also stated that Thailand issued an IUU-free national policy ensuring that imported or exported fish and fisheries products are free from IUU fishing activities and meet the IUU-free standards for entry into the supply chain. Thailand's delegates also informed that Thailand is currently engaging in the FAO/GEF project namely "Promoting the blue economy and strengthening fisheries governance of the Gulf of Thailand through the Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries (GoTFish Project)" with the expected commencement scheduled for early 2024.

It also reported the progress of the implementation of the 1993 FAO Compliance Agreement as an effort to improve the control of fishing vessels in international waters by enhancing Thailand's responsibility as the flag state. In addition, he also further explained Thailand's initiative to increase the Flag State's roles through establishing a database of fishing vessels, issuing fishing licenses, monitoring the transshipment and support vessels, and controlling fishing activities through installing VMS, fishing vessel marking and fishing logbook.

The presentation of Thailand can be found in **Annex 16**.

3.2.10 Timor-Leste

Timor-Leste's delegates updated that Timor-Leste has ratified the Agreement to Port States Measures and is in the process of incorporating PSMA into national legislation. Timor-Leste's delegates also elaborated that they have been implementing the digitalization of data by integrating technology, information, and communication (TIC) to acquire the data from vessels and fisheries product inspection. It was also reported that Timor-Leste has conducted a Public Information Campaign (PIC) in three domestic areas, such as Atauro, Oecusse, and Covalima. Timor-Leste's delegates also explained that they use specific technologies, namely, pesKAAS and PDS to monitor small-scale fishing activity. It was also reported that Timor-Leste continues to monitor the operation of illegal fishing vessels using open-source, such as Skylight and Global Fishing Watch (GFW).

The presentation of Timor-Leste can be found in **Annex 17**.

3.2.11 Viet Nam

Viet Nam's delegates provided an update on the ongoing cooperation with WCPFC-Improved Tuna Monitoring (ITM). The objective of the project is to monitor tuna fishery systems in the Philippines, Indonesia, and Viet Nam. Regarding the improvement of the national fisheries legislation, it was noted that Vietnam is in the process of regulation amendments related to IUU fishing concerning controlling the importation of fishing vessels, enhancing Vessels Monitoring Systems (VMS), and controlling imported fish. Viet Nam's delegates reported that Viet Nam is fully committed to implementing the obligations of PSMA, and UNFSA and has ratified the Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ) Agreement.

Regarding the Flag State responsibility, Viet Nam has issued national legislation to regulate fishing vessels' license registration and emphasized that fishing vessels exceeding 50 metres in length should be equipped with VMS devices and logbooks, and maintain a database for national and foreign labour. It was also reported that The installation of vessel monitoring system (VMS) devices on fishing vessels 15 meters long or more has achieved 97.8%.

The presentation of Viet Nam can be found in **Annex 18**.

Co-chair/discussions notes:

- Vietnam's delegates demonstrated a compulsory regulation for fishing vessels exceeding 15 metres in length. It was mentioned that it should be equipped with Vessels Monitoring Systems (VMS). Additionally, she mentioned that the Vietnamese Government is actively working to address the EU Yellow Card by developing sustainability measures for fisheries management.

3.3 RPOA-IUU monitoring, control and surveillance (MSC) sub-regional group reports

3.3.1. Gulf of Thailand

Thailand, as a Chair of the Gulf of Thailand (GoT) MCS sub-regional groups, described the implementation of the GoT Fish project namely 'Promoting the blue economy and strengthening fisheries governance of the Gulf of Thailand through the ecosystem approach to fisheries'

He also added that there are 4 (four) components covering the projects, as follows:

1. Regional transboundary fisheries governance and management strengthened
2. Alignment of incentive mechanisms
3. Ecological Corridor of Critical and Important Habitat for Aquatic Resources in the Gulf of Thailand
4. Project monitoring, knowledge management and stakeholder engagement

The presentation of the Gulf of Thailand' presentation can be found in **Annex 19**.

3.3.2. Southern and Eastern Area of the South China Sea (SEASCS) and Sulu-Sulawesi Seas (SSS)

Malaysia, as a Chair of the SEASCS and SSS MCS sub-regional groups, reported an update on the 7th Sub-Regional Meeting on the Southern and Eastern Areas of the South China Seas and the Sulu-Sulawesi Seas on August 22, 2023, in a virtual mode. The meeting was attended by representatives from Brunei Darussalam, Indonesia, Malaysia, and the RPOA-IUU secretariat. The meeting marked the first convening of the 7th SEASCS and SSS after a hiatus since 2015. She also reported that the meeting adopted the terms of reference (ToR) of SEASCS and SSS sub-regional groups which covers the arrangement and mechanism of the meeting.

The meeting also identified key issues within the sub-regional, such as encroachment by foreign fishing vessels, fishing without valid fishing gear and fishing license, fishing with cyanide and blast fishing, and fishing in restricted zones. It was noted that the action plan for 2024 is:

1. To nominate a focal point of information exchange among member participations;
2. To strengthen awareness of programmes among the stakeholders;
3. To strengthen and establish community-based surveillance;
4. To implement ongoing MCS activities among enforcement agencies.

The presentation of SEASCS and SSS' presentation can be found in **Annex 20**.

3.3.3. Arafura and Timor-Seas

Australia, as a chair of the Arafura and Timor-Seas MCS sub-regional groups, provided a report highlighting key issues on IUU fishing in Arafura and Timor-Seas. She identified that sightings of marine debris, including ghost nets and fish aggregation devices (FADs) show an increase in activities. It was mentioned that information-sharing plays a pivotal role in enhancing the Flag State responsibility. It was also reported that such high-level cooperation has been carried out, such as joint patrols and public information campaigns (PIC).

The representatives of ATS sub-regional groups highlighted several potential action plans for 2024. It includes an increase in coordinated patrols and surveillance, continued information-sharing, strengthened engagement, and regional participation in targeted capacity building, Fisheries MCS in Southeast Asia course, and Fisheries Officer exchange programs.

The ATS' presentation can be found in **Annex 21**.

3.4. RPOA-IUU MCS Advisory Bodies

3.4.1. SEAFDEC

The representative of SEAFDEC, Mr. Kongpathai Saraphaivanich, reported areas of technical assistance for the member countries of SEAFDEC covering workshop on Monitoring, Control, and Surveillance (MCS) and Port States Measures (PSMA), the development of regional guidelines and information-sharing platforms, and research on IUU fishing. He also explained an initiative taken by SEAFDEC to enhance an understanding and knowledge of the UNCLOS among fishery officers from ASEAN Member States (AMS). Furthermore, It was also mentioned that SEAFDEC actively participated in regional information-sharing, such as engaging in workshops like the RPOA-IUU and MCS sub-regional working group workshop, Sustaining Marine Biodiversity through Blue Economy Symposium, the 7th Global Fisheries Enforcement Training Workshop (GFETW), and FAO Voluntary Guidelines for the Transshipment.

The representative of SEAFDEC also highlighted several potential collaborative areas for 2024. It includes supporting technical assistance for e-ACDS application funded by the Japanese Trust Fund (JTF) and conducting capacity-building on Voluntary Guidelines (VG) for Transshipment for Southeast Asia region, BOBLME-II and ASEAN-JICA for combating IUU fishing.

The presentation of SEAFDEC's presentation can be found in **Annex 22**.

3.4.2. InfoFish

The representative of InfoFish, Ms. Gemma Meermans Matainaho, provided an update on capacity-buildings, including technical training, workshops, and industry/seminars. It was also mentioned that InfoFish utilizes Commodity Conferences, publications, and digital platforms to increase public awareness in promoting responsible fishing practices, including combating IUU fishing. The representatives of InfoFish also explained that InfoFish has conducted several conferences and dialogues for sustainable tuna in 2022 and 2023. It was also stated that InfoFish

will continue to use its trade promotion, technical advisory, and consultancy network and platforms to support and strengthen coordination and cooperation in promoting responsible and best fishing practices, including combating IUU fishing.

The presentation of InfoFish' presentation can be found in **Annex 23**.

3.5. RPOA-IUU advisory bodies

3.5.1. IMCSN

The representative of IMCS Network introduced the portfolio of IMCS Network which was established 20 years ago focussing on fisheries MCS, compliance, and enforcement community. It was also mentioned that the IMCS Network plays a key role in enhancing the capacity to respond to IUU fishing activities by supporting the member country to improve the country's capability at national, regional, and international levels. The representative of IMCS Network also stated that IMCS Network is a founding organization of the Joint Analytical Cell (JAC). The objective of JAC is to provide data availability and transparency in fisheries operations in partner countries as well as to assist partner countries in developing data analytics for fisheries MCS and enforcement.

He also expressed his interest in assisting RPOA-IUU participating countries by facilitating support provided by JAC, such as providing high-quality fisheries intelligence, Strengthening access to data and technology, and Building MCS capacity. It was stated that IMCS Network will engage the RPOA-IUU secretariat to promote information-sharing to RPOA-IUU participating countries and to coordinate potential collaborative areas in the development of MCS capacity needs assessments, job aids, Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) or access to the technology.

The presentation of IMCSN's presentation can be found in **Annex 24**.

3.5.2. Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR)

The representative of CCAMLR delivered its concerns on Illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing compromises the objectives of the CAMLR Convention. He also explained that CCAMLR has adopted conservation measures to specifically address the threat of IUU fishing. There are several supports and collaborations in 2024 proposed by CCAMLR, such as market measures/traceability, IUU vessels movement and sightings, and Port inspection/PSMA implementation. He also added that CCAMLR has engaged with some RPOA-IUU participating countries, such as Singapore and Thailand.

He described several follow-ups and recommendations, such as formal and/or informal cooperation with CCAMLR, education and control of nationals within the framework of national legislation, effective implementation of port inspection regime (including PSMA), and cooperation with CCAMLR in CDS and/or trade monitoring of toothfish species.

The CCAMLR presentation can be found in **Annex 25**.

Co-chair/discussion notes:

1. The RPOA-IUU secretariat will reach out to IMCSN and CCAMLR about the possibility of convening several activities and capacity-building programs, such as MCS training, fisheries intelligence training, and market measures workshop
2. The representative of IMCSN highlighted the opportunity to expand its network with the RPOA-IUU. He also expressed his interest in working together with the RPOA-IUU and anticipates further collaboration with RPOA-IUU
3. Indonesia's delegates posed a question about the way to engage and collaborate with CCAMLR in a bilateral context. The representative of CCAMLR responded to Indonesia's question by providing an update about trade. He also encouraged countries to join CCAMLR
4. Australia's delegates announced information about the partners coordination meeting which will be held in 2024. The meeting will serve as a platform to share the regional activity updates undertaken by RPOA-IUU partners aiming to prevent duplicacy. CCAMLR and IMCSN will be invited
5. It was mentioned that collaborative works between RPOA-IUU partners will fill any gaps that require any expertise to address, including the development of intelligence data
6. PNG's delegates encouraged the RPOA-IUU secretariat to collaborate with the partners, particularly in focusing on Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) for intelligence collection.

3.5.3. USAID-SuFia TS

The representative of USAID SuFia TS explained regional products and services encompassing, as follows:

- regional fisheries policies, standards, and regulatory frameworks;
- fair labour and sustainable fishing practices used by the seafood industry;
- improved regional outreach and communications among relevant institutions and stakeholders.
- Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI), Climate Change, Maritime Security/ Maritime Domain Awareness

She also reported that USAID SuFia TS has facilitated several capacity-building initiatives, such as a knowledge management portal, communications plan and newsletter, communication plans, and program officer hiring. USAID-SuFia TS also provided technical assistance by engaging a fisheries expert to conduct a gap analysis on the implementation of international instruments, assessing the status of regional policy assessment status in each RPOA-IUU participating countries. It was also reported that USAID SuFia TS, in collaboration with RPOA-IUU, convened the Workshop on Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) and Communication. The representative of USAID SuFia TS also addressed the project implementation issues and challenges. It includes limited time, geographical scope and resources, and resources, and other prioritization of activities between RPOA-IUU and USAID SuFia TS.

The presentation of USAID SuFia TS presentation can be found in **Annex 26**.

3.5.4. ATSEA-2 Project

The representative of the ATSEA-2 Project reported an update on their assistance in enabling a preliminary study on the data-sharing mechanism and training needs assessment, led by a consultant. The study suggested that the efficient functioning of regional sub-groups and collaboration is a key value of developing a data-sharing mechanism. He also highlighted other initiatives supported by the ATSEA-2 Project, specifically Focus Group Discussion (FGD) on Fisheries Intelligence. He detailed that the FGD was attended by 5 of 11 RPOA-IUU participating countries from Indonesia, Malaysia, Timor-Leste, Australia, and Thailand). He also noted that countries' capability and capacity to process and analyze information is varied and at an initial stage.

The FGD also indicated several proposals and recommendations, such as organizing the 2nd Focus Group Discussion (FGD) in Fisheries Intelligence to discuss the concept paper of Regional Fisheries Intelligence Cooperation, developing draft terms of reference (ToR) for the establishment of RPOA-IUU Fisheries Intelligence Working Group (FIWG), and reaching out to potential international partners to coordinate fisheries intelligence activities and capacity-building efforts. The representative of the ATSEA-2 Project stated that ATSEA-2 Projects will support RPOA-IUU in implementing RPOA-IUU core elements and work plan.

The presentation of the ATSEA-2 Project' presentation can be found in **Annex 27**.

Co-chair/discussion notes:

1. Australia's delegates raised a question about the coverage of programs including the number of the RPOA-IUU participating countries that will be involved in the program. Considering the regional context covering USAID SuFia TS' work area, the representative of USAID SuFia TS explained that the program includes all RPOA-IUU participating countries plus Timor-Leste and Papua New Guinea
2. The representative of USAID SuFia TS confirmed that the activity of CDT has not been implemented yet.
3. Following the Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries Management (EAFM), this component has been incorporated into the 2023 RPOA-IUU Work Plan. The Secretariat is in the process of digesting and comparing the objectives with IUU fishing.
4. For the upcoming EAFM' workshop, USAID SuFia TS will invite the RPOA-IUU secretariat as the host. Nevertheless, the RPOA-IUU secretariat is still considering this invitation.

4. Discussions on RPOA-IUU issues for consideration/endorsement

4.1. Work Plan of Data-sharing Mechanism Working Group

The RPOA-IUU secretariat provided insight into the rationale behind the data-sharing mechanism, initially addressed during the 11th RPOA-IUU Coordination Committee Meeting (CCM) where countries reached a consensus to establish a working group for the data-sharing mechanism for this purpose. Subsequently, as a follow-up, the RPOA-IUU secretariat, in

collaboration with USAID SuFia TS, conducted an initial discussion on data-sharing mechanism development before the 16th RPOA-IUU Coordination Committee Meeting (CCM). It was also mentioned that this activity aligns with RPOA-IUU Work Plan Number 4.1 stated that the RPOA-IUU secretariat, with support from USAID-SuFia TS, facilitates the finalization of data-sharing mechanism guidelines.

During the discussion, countries acknowledged the result of the initial discussion on the Data-sharing mechanism outlining the responsibilities and function of the Working Group of the Data-sharing mechanism, as described below:

- Re-confirm and proceed with the consensus-driven approach as a priority;
- Facilitating an in-depth and holistic discussion on the need for the development of a data-sharing mechanism;
- To submit and present to the CC Meeting for endorsement of the findings and recommendations of the discussion.
- Preparing a road map for data sharing mechanism including recommendations for the implementation and cooperation with the partners;
- To submit and present the draft of the road map data sharing mechanism in the CC Meeting for endorsement.

The RPOA-IUU secretariat also mentioned that countries should nominate focal points for the Data-sharing Mechanism Working Group to become members of the Working Group. The RPOA-IUU secretariat also added that the RPOA-IUU secretariat will facilitate a meeting to prepare a road map for the data-sharing mechanism including recommendations for the implementation and cooperation with the partners.

The presentation and summary document can be found in **Annex 28**.

4.2. Report on the development of evaluation and reporting tools

The RPOA-IUU secretariat detailed the synchronization of the activity with the 2023 RPOA-IUU Work Plan Number 11 (iii), where the RPOA-IUU secretariat will seek support from third parties to develop the evaluation and reporting tools. As a follow-up, the RPOA-IUU secretariat collaborated with USAID SuFia to develop evaluation and reporting tools. He reported a brief result of the Workshop on Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) and Communication which was held on 7-8 September 2023 in person in Jakarta, Indonesia. The Workshop was attended by Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, and Viet Nam aiming to enhance fisheries officers' capacity to communicate the country's profile and progress in combating IUU fishing into publicity and introduce the country to the importance of evaluation and reporting tools as a corrective action to improve the role of RPOA-IUU in combating IUU fishing.

During the discussion, countries agreed to continue the development of evaluation and reporting tools and advised the Secretariat that the finalization of the draft of evaluation and reporting tools should be in consultation with the participating countries. The presentation and summary document can be found in **Annex 29**.

Co-chair/discussion notes:

1. Following the discussion on the development of evaluation and reporting in the previous CCM, it was noted that the self-reporting tool is used for evaluating the country's activity in implementing the RPOA-IUU work plan. The regional tools for evaluation and reporting should be discussed and endorsed in the CCM.
2. Indonesia's delegates also delivered an insight into the targeted timeline of the endorsement of evaluation and reporting tools, for example, the tools should be endorsed in the next CCM.
3. Papua New Guinea's delegates highlighted the expected output of the tools. It was anticipated that self-evaluation and reporting tools could support the compliance status in the RPOA-IUU's work area. The representative of the RPOA-IUU secretariat said that the tools should be in an online system.
4. Australia's delegates requested the RPOA-IUU secretariat to share the material related to endorsement

4.3. Concept Note of Gap Analysis on the Implementation of International Instruments

Following the International Workshop on Advancing Regional Standards of Responsible Fisheries to combat IUU fishing, the RPOA-IUU secretariat reported that the RPOA-IUU secretariat has engaged with international partners to undertake regional policy status assessment. The result of the assessment identified various areas of potential capacity-building programs, including joint enforcement training and operations, technical guidance and assistance for the PSMA implementation, and technical training on labour inspections to comply effectively with ILO 188.

Throughout the discussion, countries acknowledged the RPOA-IUU secretariat, with support from USAID-SuFia TS, for the progress result of the study of gap analysis on the implementation of international instruments. RPOA-IUU secretariat proposed to develop regional guidelines for the implementations of international instruments. Furthermore, countries assigned the RPOA-IUU secretariat to collaborate with other international organizations to conduct capacity-building programs to foster countries' implementation of international and regional fisheries instruments.

The presentation and summary document can be found in **Annex 30**.

Co-chair/discussion notes:

1. Thailand's delegates suggested to not develop guidelines and focus on updating NPOA-IUU in each participating countries
2. Australia's delegates addressed that the needed capacity-building program may differ among participating countries due to diverse conditions and country' capacity
3. Timor-Leste's delegates put forward the idea to consider practical recommendations including the level of technology and fisheries legislation

4.4. Initial Discussions on Market Measures Traceability (CDS/CDT)

The RPOA-IUU secretariat explained the importance of regional market measures to improve the quality of fisheries products in international trade and markets, such as the EU and Japan. It was also mentioned that the components of the RPOA-IUU core elements concerning Coastal State responsibilities and market measures serve as a guiding framework for advancing various strategic actions for catching information under the RPOA-IUU structure.

Throughout the discussion, countries assigned the RPOA-IUU secretariat to collaborate with USAID SuFia TS and other international organizations to conduct in-depth discussions on regional market measures, including the catch documentation scheme and traceability. Furthermore, countries assigned the RPOA-IUU secretariat to develop a plan to follow up on the results.

The presentation and summary document can be found in **Annex 31**.

Co-chair/discussion notes:

1. Australia's delegates suggested before proceeding actions on fostering regional market measures, general discussion about the country's profile and progress in implementing catch documentation schemes should be first conducted
2. Papua New Guinea's delegates outlined that PNG is currently looking at the broader platform for combating IUU fishing and expressed a support for this initiative
3. Timor-Leste's delegates proposed the simplification of CDS for small-scale fisheries

4.5. Initial discussions on Decent Work on fishing vessels and the seafood industry

The RPOA-IUU secretariat demonstrated the alignment of this activity with the 2023 RPOA-IUU Work Plan which stated that the RPOA-IUU Secretariat to communicate with USAID Sufia TS or other relevant international stakeholders on the possibility of facilitating an initial discussion on working conditions on fishing vessels and in the seafood industry.

It was also added that the issues This issue is also highlighted by Sustainable Development Goal 8 which aims to *“promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all”*.

During the discussion, countries assigned the RPOA-IUU secretariat to provide a concept note regarding the plan to discuss decent working conditions on fishing vessels and the seafood industry. Furthermore, countries also assigned the Secretariat to collaborate with USAID SuFiA TS and other international organizations in facilitating further discussion on decent working conditions on fishing vessels and the seafood industry

The presentation and summary document can be found in **Annex 32**.

Co-chair/discussion notes:

1. Vietnam's delegates explained that regulation and compliance of working conditions in fishing vessels fall outside Vietnam's RPOA-IUU focal point's competence areas
2. Papua New Guinea's delegates questioned the definition of decent work on fishing vessels and elucidated what the specific strategy to integrate this issue into ILO-188
3. Singapore's delegates requested the RPOA-IUU secretariat to prepare draft concept paper highlighting the meaning of decent work in fishing vessels and the seafood industry
4. Indonesia's delegates provided the comparison and differences between ILO Convention 188 and IMO Cape Town Agreement. She mentioned that ILO Convention 188 put high concern for fishers who work in fishing vessels and the seafood industry

5. Programs to support RPOA-IUU

5.1. USAID SuFia TS

The representative of USAID SuFia TS described a rationale to support the implementation of the 2024 RPOA-IUU Work Plan. She also underscored the justification for collaboration between the USAID SuFia TS and RPOA-IUU secretariat, citing a shared spirit stemming from the regional context. She reported several activities undertaken by USAID SuFia TS as an effort to support the implementation of the RPOA-IUU core elements and Work Plan, such as MEL reporting tools and communications, assessment of the adoption and implementation of relevant regional and international policies for combating IUU fishing, and data-sharing mechanism development.

She also presented areas of potential collaboration between USAID SuFia TS and RPOA-IUU in 2024. It includes catch documentation and traceability focus group discussion, regional exchange/policy dialogue for the South China Seas and Sulu-Sulawesi Seascape, and the establishment of a knowledge management portal.

The presentation of USAID SuFia TS can be found in **Annex 33**.

Co-chair/discussion notes:

1. Australia's delegates sought information on activity design of the South China Sea and Sulu-Sulawesi Seascape exchange program including the objectivity and expected outcome. She also raised a query about the potential interpretation of this activity in the context of GESI initiatives and social inclusion.
2. The representative of USAID SuFia TS provided clarification on the areas of interest of USAID SuFia TS covering labor and workers in small-scale fisheries, government law and framework for small-scale fisheries. Nevertheless, she added that the objectives of upcoming the South China Sea and Sulu-Sulawesi Seascape exchange program will be defined in alignment with the RPOA-IUU's interest. She also mentioned that the ongoing activity supported by USAID SuFia TS involves the data-sharing mechanism, presenting an opportunity to collaborate

3. The RPOA-IUU secretariat suggested to have further discussion between the RPOA-IUU secretariat, Australia, and USAID SuFia TS regarding potential areas of collaboration, such as GESI and Women in Fisheries Workshop and Partner Coordination Meeting

5.2. SEA IUU Fishing Program

The representative of Australia provided updated progress of each program component of Australia's Combating IUU Fishing and Promoting Sustainable Fisheries in Southeast Asia program. Following the MCS training course, it was reported that the first block of training had been delivered in person in Vietnam for 3 (three) weeks in May 2023 by AFMA and CSIRO. The training was attended by 40 students from 8 (eight) RPOA-IUU participating countries including 4 (four) women. The second block of training will be delivered in November 2023. The application for the second cohort of the MCS Training Course will be open in January 2024.

It was also informed that within the program's targeted capacity-building support component, several activities have been implemented in VietNam and Thailand. These activities covered relevant topics to MCS measures, including PSMA, fisheries MCS innovation, data collection and analysis. There is also information about the forthcoming agenda for this program component, such as the development of activities with Timor-Leste, Indonesia, Cambodia, and Thailand.

The representative of Australia mentioned that the fisheries officer exchange program will foster sub-regional collaboration and regional efforts to combat IUU fishing. She also stated that the officer will visit another partner agency to learn about MCS and strengthen cooperation. The expected schedule for the program implementation is Q4 2023-Q1 2024. It was also reported that there were activities delivered under the Southeast Asia Regional Fund for Fishing (SEA-RIFF), namely the RPOA-IUU MCS sub-regional group Workshop in March 2023.

The representative of Australia also delivered an initiative focussing on strengthening gender inclusivity in fisheries. She detailed that the Women in Fisheries Workshop will be delivered in 2024 covering knowledge-sharing sessions, panel discussions, networking opportunities, and technical sessions with targeted topics. She also added that Australia will fund and arrange flights, visas, and accomodation for RPOA-IUU countries and the secretariat.

The presentation of the SEA IUU fishing program can be found in **Annex 34**.

6. Other Business

6.1. Upcoming activities: focus group discussions, workshops, and training

The matrix of RPOA-IUU initiatives and capacity-building programs for 2023-2024 was presented during this session. The details of the matrix can be found in **Annex 35**.

7. Review RPOA-IUU Work Plan 2023

7.1. Review the progress of the RPOA-IUU Work Plan 2023

The progress of the RPOA-IUU Workplan 2023 has been reviewed. Countries provided input and feedback on the progress. The progress of RPOA-IUU Workplan 2023 is in **Annex 36**.

Co-chair notes:

FAO will provide wide range of technical assistance of gap analysis. Information will be summarized and circulated to the RPOA-IUU secretariat.

8. Development of RPOA-IUU Work Plan 2024

The secretariat circulated the draft of the RPOA-IUU Work Plan 2024 and invited countries to provide feedback on the draft. Countries, the secretariat, advisory bodies, and observers would work together to implement the RPOA-IUU Work Plan 2024. The draft of RPOA-IUU Work Plan 2024 is shown in **Annex 37**.

9. 2023 Meetings

9.1. Host for the next RPOA-IUU CC Meeting

The representative of the RPOA-IUU secretariat presented the list of potential host countries for the CCM in the coming years. The potential host country for the 17th RPOA-IUU Coordination Committee Meetings is the Philippines. Noting that the Philippines has not been confirmed yet, the RPOA-IUU secretariat offered Vietnam and Singapore to be potential host countries for the next CCM. Singapore addressed that this proposal should be in consultation with the Philippines and Viet Nam.

The presentation of this discussion can be seen in **Annex 38**.

9.2. Host for the RPOA-IUU MCS sub-regional groups Meeting

The representative of the RPOA-IUU secretariat provided the list of potential host countries for each of the sub-regional groups meeting. The Arafura and Timor-Seas working group meeting will be held in March 2024 in Papua New Guinea. Thailand will host the next meeting of the Gulf of Thailand sub-regional working group meeting. Brunei Darussalam will host the next meeting of SESCO and SSS sub-regional working groups meetings

The presentation of this discussion can be seen in **Annex 38**.

9.3. Arrangements of Ministerial Meeting

The representative of the RPOA-IUU secretariat explained the circumstances and conditions of the postponement of the RPOA-IUU Ministerial Meeting. He also informed that the RPOA-IUU secretariat has received confirmation from several countries about the senior official

attendance at the Ministerial Meeting. He also added that Indonesia required the full attendance of Ministers from each of the RPOA-IUU participating countries. The details of confirmation received by the RPOA-IUU secretariat can be seen in **Annex 39**.

Co-chair notes:

1. The RPOA-IUU secretariat will engage with Indonesia to explore alternative approaches for organizing the Ministerial Meetings
2. Australia's delegates suggested that the Joint Ministerial Statement should be endorsed by high-level officials.

Closing Sessions

All of the RPOA-IUU participating countries delivered short closing statements. RPOA-IUU participating countries conveyed their gratitude to Timor-Leste as the host country for the 16th RPOA-IUU Coordination Committee Meeting and Indonesia for continuing their commitment as the host of the RPOA-IUU secretariat. The participating countries also expressed their commitment to continue to cooperate to combat IUU fishing under the framework of RPOA-IUU.