



NEPAD Planning and Coordinating Agency  
Agence de Planification et de Coordination du NEPAD



## STOP ILLEGAL FISHING CASE STUDY SERIES 06

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# A regional policy that drove change

## THE BILLION DOLLAR TREASURE HUNT

### Background

Fishing is an important source of food and income in southern Africa with marine fish production estimated at almost 2.5 million tonnes in 2010. However, this valuable resource is being plundered. It is thought that one in four fish in Africa is caught illegally. Illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing is a global problem, but underdeveloped countries are often the worst affected and the lack of finance and trained personnel make monitoring, control and surveillance (MCS) of fishery resources a huge challenge to these countries.

Several regional and international fisheries management instruments were already in place, including the 2001 Southern African Development Community (SADC) Protocol on Fisheries, however, it was the 2001 International Plan of Action on IUU fishing (IPOA-IUU) that brought IUU fishing to the forefront of the global fisheries agenda. SADC Ministers responsible for fisheries were concerned that despite their best efforts to manage their fish stocks sustainably, these efforts would amount to nothing if the problem of IUU fishing was not tackled on a united front.

### The story

At the 10th SADC Marine Fisheries Ministers' Meeting in Swakopmund, Namibia in May 2002, IUU fishing featured strongly in the discussions. The South African Minister, Valli Moosa, voiced his concern about illegal fishing, by both local and foreign fleets. He proposed holding a Regional Ministerial Conference so that SADC Member States could discuss the issue, including the urgent need for greater cooperation and harmonised legislation. The proposal received unanimous support.

Nevertheless, little happened until 2006 when the challenge was taken up by Dr Abraham Iyambo, the Minister of Fisheries and Marine Resources in Namibia. At a meeting of the High Seas Task Force<sup>1</sup> Dr Iyambo discussed the problem of IUU fishing in southern Africa with Ben Bradshaw, the UK Minister responsible for fisheries. The UK Government offered one million US dollars to fund a policy process to help tackle the problem and in late 2006 the wheels were at last set in motion.

#### STOP ILLEGAL FISHING CASE STUDIES aim to:

Define best practice by analysing practical examples of different approaches in the fight against IUU fishing. They also demonstrate the magnitude of activities and partnerships underway to stop illegal fishing and provide the basis for policy advice.





## The story (cont'd)

A coordination team was put in place to support the SADC Secretariat in their task to facilitate the negotiation of a SADC Statement of Commitment to be signed at a Ministerial Conference, in time to present it at the SADC Summit in August 2008 for approval by the Heads of State and Government. Three areas of work soon began: the technical preparation and negotiation of the Statement; the logistical preparations; and a publicity campaign to support the Conference.

The technical work involved: an analysis of the economic and food security-related losses caused by IUU fishing to assess the magnitude of the problem; a study related to the technical and institutional options for tackling IUU fishing; an examination of National Plans of Action (NPOA) with respect to IUU fishing; and a review of MCS capabilities and gaps in the region. This information and the record of a regional consultation hosted by the Government of Mozambique in October 2007 provided essential background for the content of the Statement. The negotiation took place over eight months, with two regional sessions, in April and July 2008 in South Africa and Namibia and included all SADC coastal States and other stakeholders.

While logistical preparations for this high profile event were underway a publicity campaign that was integral to the Stop Illegal Fishing initiative was crafted to support the process. Based on the estimated and staggering loss of one billion US dollars a year from sub-Saharan Africa to IUU

fishing the Conference was given the title *'The Billion Dollar Treasure Hunt'*. The Stop Illegal Fishing website hosted information explaining the issues and the approaches being taken, while a comprehensive Conference brochure in the three SADC languages was prepared. Even T-shirts, caps, banners and stickers were produced to spread the message and create awareness.

On the 3 July 2008, after two days of technical presentations and working sessions, the SADC Ministers responsible for marine fisheries gathered in Windhoek, Namibia for a pre-Conference dinner. On the 4 July, with around two hundred participants, the Ministerial Conference took place. Powerful and committed statements were made by each SADC Minister present before the *'SADC Statement of Commitment on IUU Fishing'* was read to the Conference and then duly signed<sup>2</sup>.

In his closing remarks, Dr Abraham Iyambo summed up the sentiments that so many present had expressed: *"It is not an exaggeration to state that the plague of illegal fishing is one of the largest environmental crimes of our time. In this context, we may well be the last generation of decision-makers with an opportunity to prevent this scandalous crime and to bring to an end the troubling destruction of our oceans and the hardship it brings to our people. I cannot overstate the importance for us leaders to move from discussion to action on these matters as future generations will judge us on our actual achievements not our words."*

## Drivers

The main driver for action was the need to stop the damaging effects of illegal fishing on SADC societies and resources, and to implement the SADC Protocol on Fisheries. The interest in holding a SADC Ministerial meeting on IUU fishing had been discussed since 2002 but it was the UK Government's offer of funds that drove it forward.

## Lessons learned

- **The determination of key players**, notably Dr Abraham Iyambo, kept up the momentum and ensured that the Conference went ahead.
- **Engaging technically before the event** through preparing a book with over twenty authors and holding participatory workshops created awareness and engagement.
- **Working with political players and champions in the build-up to the event**, through interviews with Ministers, press releases and television coverage increased commitment and understanding of the issues and needs.
- **Linking to global processes and common problems** that required a regional solution strengthened the significance of the process internationally.
- **The appointment of professionals** to ensure that all elements of the project, including the background research, publicity campaign, Conference organisation and the formulation of a draft agreement were achieved to a high quality in the short time frame available was essential.
- **The high profile publicity campaign and attention-grabbing Conference title** played a big part in capturing the attention of politicians, officials and the public and resulted in excellent attendance of high-ranking global delegates and global media coverage.

## Key features and outcomes

Following the signing of the Statement of Commitment and endorsement by the SADC Summit, a range of actions took place to implement it:

- **Strengthened and successful implementation of SADC coastal State laws relating to IUU fishing** – in July 2008 the FV Antillas Reefer was seized for fishing illegally in Mozambican waters and Namibia deflagged the FV Paloma V after it had been implicated in illegal fishing in New Zealand; in October 2008 Madagascar arrested a Senegalese fishing vessel, FV El Amine, for illegal fishing; and in March 2009 South Africa, Mozambique, Kenya and Tanzania participated in a joint patrol which led to the arrest of the FV Tawariq I for fishing illegally in Tanzanian waters.
- **Strengthened policy and legal frameworks to address the issue of IUU fishing** – for example, in September 2008 the Tanzanian government introduced measures to curb illegal fishing including a monitoring system, a ban on dumping of bycatch at sea and an observer programme.
- **As a result of the success of the process** – in 2009 the UK Government agreed to fund the pan-African Partnership for African Fisheries Programme to stimulate debate and knowledge exchange in the areas of good governance, illegal fishing and trade and to promote policies that support more economically productive and sustainable fisheries.
- **Stop illegal Fishing** – established to support this process was deemed a success, its mandate was expanded to all of Africa and by utilising a mix of campaigning, education and empowerment and on-the-ground implementation it continued to support the global effort to stop illegal fishing. It continues today, having become a not-for-profit organisation in 2013 engaging with governments and other partners.

- **As set out in the Statement a SADC IUU fishing Task Force was appointed in 2011** – the Task Force put together a road map for the establishment of a Regional SADC MCS Coordination Centre which was approved by the SADC Ministers responsible for fisheries in 2012 and is under development.

## Challenges

- **Resources available** to SADC coastal states vary greatly, fisheries management and associated MCS systems are developed to different levels and states have differing levels of resources available to them, which resulted in different capacities to commit to actions within the Statement.
- **Differences in the types of fisheries and related IUU fishing problems** between the west and east coasts of the SADC region implied that the Statement needed to cover a broad range of situations, but information and data on some of these were limited.
- **The Statement of Commitment was negotiated** by all interested parties, a process that ultimately required consensus, providing a challenge to produce a Statement that was acceptable to all but not weakened by compromise.
- **Bringing non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and civil society into the negotiation** for the first time, as although this was accepted on paper, it had not been put into practice in the fisheries sector.
- **Expertise and resources within the SADC Secretariat** were stretched following their recent reorganisation.
- **Agreeing a date that could accommodate all the key players** was not easy, the date was changed on several occasions, once within one month of the anticipated event.

## Policy implications

- The outcomes following signing of the Statement demonstrate that regional policy can underpin meaningful action.
- Regional policy should link into global and national frameworks and be negotiated transparently with wide participation.
- Ratifying and implementing regional, continental and international agreements on fishery related issues is important to facilitate national actions against IUU fishers and fishing operators.
- Stop Illegal Fishing continues to play a unique and vital role in the fight against IUU fishing on the continent and must continue to do so.

## Players involved

- **The UK Government:** provided funding through the Natural Resources Institute of the University of Greenwich, which coordinated 24 sub-contracts to deliver the process that resulted in the signed Statement.
- **SADC Secretariat:** as the regional economic community of southern Africa had the task of convening the Conference.
- **The host:** Namibia hosted the Conference and provided a strong lead in the process.
- **The coastal SADC Member States:** Angola, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Madagascar, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa and The United Republic of Tanzania all sent delegations to the Conference.
- **Other key players involved in the fishery sector:** neighbouring countries, regional fisheries programmes, NGOs and civil society, the fishing industry and the countries of the UK and Norway made Statements of Support at the Conference.
- **The coordination team:** was provided by NFDS Africa, the company that also coordinated the Stop Illegal Fishing initiative with legal, technical, MCS, communications and logistical expertise.

## Next steps

- **Annex the Statement of Commitment to the SADC Protocol on Fisheries** – so that all SADC Member States can be accommodated in the process as it presently only includes the coastal States, this will also make the provisions legally binding.
- **National and regional implementation of the Statement of Commitment** – an assessment in 2012 on the implementation of the SADC Statement of Commitment found that the lack of a Regional Fisheries MCS Coordination Centre was a major limitation and that sustainable funding for such a Centre to be hosted in Maputo, Mozambique is urgently required.
- **Develop a policy process for a regional Statement of Commitment for West Africa** – a proposal has been prepared by Stop Illegal Fishing in partnership with countries and regional bodies of West Africa that requires funding.
- **Extend cooperation in fisheries law enforcement outside of the SADC region** – to encompass the global aspects of this problem, including cooperating with other coastal States and Regional organisations outside of the SADC area.

## Further information



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## Footnotes

<sup>1</sup> In 2003 following a meeting of the Round Table on Sustainable Development at the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) a number of international Ministers responsible for the fisheries decided to form a High Seas

Task Force (HSTF) to develop practical proposals for confronting the challenge of IUU fishing on the high seas.

<sup>2</sup> See [www.stopillegalfishing.com](http://www.stopillegalfishing.com) for the record of the Conference and the Statement of Commitment.



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