

SADC Member States receive Certificates of Recognition for their Commitment to the Long-term conservation and sustainable use of marine living resources and marine ecosystems

11 July 2016, FAO Headquarters, Rome, Italy

Three of the four SADC Member States which ratified the Agreement on Port State Measures to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) Fishing, otherwise referred to as the Port State Measures Agreement (PSMA), received certificates of recognition at the Special High-Level event to commemorate the coming into force of this Agreement. The three are Mozambique, Seychelles and South Africa, while Mauritius was absent during the presentation of the certificates.

This Special High-Level event took place at the 32nd Session of the FAO Committee on Fisheries (COFI) held on 11 July 2016 in Rome, Italy, and was opened by the Director General of the FAO, Dr. José Graziano da Silva. Keynote address was given by the recently appointed NEPAD Champion for African Fisheries and Aquaculture, His Excellency Professor Alpha Condé, President of the Republic of Guinea.

In his opening remarks, the FAO Director-General hailed the PSMA and indicated that this event "marks the dawn of a new era in the effort to combat illegal fishing but rapid action is needed to make sure its implementation is effective".

The treaty went into force last month and so far 34 nations as well the European Union on behalf of its 28 members have acceded to the treaty. More countries have initiated the accession process.

The PSMA is well aligned with the SADC Statement of Commitment (SoC) to combat IUU fishing which was signed by the Ministers responsible for marine fisheries in 2008 as an addendum to the SADC Protocol on Fisheries (2001). The SADC SoC is aimed at (a) improving regional and inter-regional cooperation with a view to eradicating IUU fishing; (b) strengthening fisheries governance and legal frameworks to eliminate IUU fishing; (c) developing regional plan of action in relation to IUU fishing; and (d) strengthening fisheries monitoring control and surveillance capacity regionally. These priorities are well captured in the Revised SADC Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan (RISDP) and the SADC Regional Agricultural Policy (RAP).

The SADC Secretariat, under the leadership of Dr. Stergomena Lawrence Tax applauds the SADC Member States, Seychelles (2013), Mozambique (2014), Mauritius (2015) and South Africa (2016) for ratifying the PSMA, and encourages other coastal Member States to ratify this important instrument.

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