



FIFTH INTERNATIONAL FISHERS FORUM

TAIPEI, TAIWAN • AUGUST 3-5, 2010



The Fifth International Fishers Forum on Marine Spatial Planning and Bycatch Mitigation August 3-5, 2010 Taipei, Taiwan

TAIPEI DECLARATION

Recalling that the central objective of convening the Fifth International Fishers Forum was to bring the fishing industry into the relatively recent dialogue of approaches for applying marine spatial planning and management;

Further recalling that a second central objective of convening the Fifth International Fishers Forum was to evaluate progress made during the period of the Forum series in mitigating interactions with sea turtles, seabirds, sharks and marine mammals, and to identify priority conservation and management areas in need of increased attention to ensure long-term environmental and socioeconomic sustainability;

Recognizing that the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization defines marine spatial planning as, “a public process of analyzing and allocating the spatial and temporal distribution of human activities in marine areas to achieve ecological, economic, and social objectives that are usually specified through a political process”;

Further Recognizing that marine spatial planning can be used as a tool to avoid and minimize conflicts, and sustain ecosystem functioning and services, comparable to land-use planning, but in the ocean;

Considering that the efforts of the fishing and broader seafood industry to initiate or improve coordination with other industries that use and affect marine resources will contribute to successful mitigation of some of the main global drivers of change and loss in marine biodiversity, including marine pollution, the spread of invasive alien species, and climate change, which adversely affect the fishing industry;

Recognizing that the Convention on Biological Diversity’s scientific criteria for identifying ecologically or biologically significant marine areas in need of protection, has potential for use as a tool to guide marine spatial planning, with implications for zoning marine capture fisheries;

Recognizing that the bycatch of certain species groups, including seabirds, sea turtles, marine mammals and sharks, is an ecological concern as they are particularly vulnerable to overexploitation of older age classes, can decline over short temporal scales, and are slow to recover from large declines;

Further recognizing that the bycatch of juvenile and undersized individuals of target species can exacerbate the overexploitation of some stocks, and is an allocation issue between gear types, between small scale and industrial fisheries, and between coastal and high seas fisheries;

Considering that fisheries provide a vital source of food, employment, recreation, trade and economic well-being for people throughout the world, both for present and future generations as stated in the FAO's Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries as well as FAO's Kyoto Declaration on the Sustainable Fisheries to Food Security;

Acknowledging that, since the First International Fishers Forum was convened a decade ago, the Fishers Forum series has catalyzed substantial progress in developing and the sharing of knowledge of effective methods to mitigate problematic bycatch in pelagic and demersal longline fisheries;

We, commercial fishers, management authorities, experts in marine spatial planning, fishing technology experts, seafood retailer representatives, marine ecologists and fisheries scientists, participants of the Fifth International Fishers Forum on Marine Spatial Planning and Bycatch Mitigation, declare that we will carry out and support the following actions:

1. Recognize the important role of marine spatial planning and management in the conservation of marine resources, while acknowledging that such planning and management in areas of the high seas should be addressed by the competent regional fisheries management organizations;
2. To ensure that the marine fishing industry has an equitable voice in decisions on spatial and temporal allocations of marine areas to different human activities, initiate and increase the participation of the marine fishing industry in broad, cross-sectoral marine spatial planning and management;
3. Ensure that socioeconomic effects on fishing communities are fully considered in future marine spatial planning activities;
4. Support the use of relevant marine spatial planning tools to contribute to the equitable and sustainable allocation of fishery resources between gear types, between small scale and industrial fisheries, and between coastal and high seas fisheries, such as area-based planning through the creation of zones for different gear types, and area-based restrictions on gear designs and fishing methods;
5. Conduct research to further elucidate the role of marine spatial planning to benefit fisheries;
6. Ensure that marine spatial planning initiatives incorporate mechanisms for reviewing efficacy and response to changing conditions, recognizing that marine ecosystems are dynamic systems;

7. Consider marine spatial planning as an additional tool to minimize fishery interactions with protected and sensitive species;
8. Encourage the competent regional fisheries management organizations to take measures, in applications of the Convention on Biological Diversity's suite of criteria to identify areas on the high seas and seabed that are of high relative importance to marine biodiversity;
9. Increase awareness of the successes achieved over the past decade by the global pelagic fishing community, fishery managers, fisheries scientists and engineers and the conservation community in researching and implementing bycatch mitigation measures;
10. Support the continued research on pelagic fishing gears to develop environmentally responsible fisheries targeting tunas and related species, with minimal impacts on juvenile and undersized individuals of target species, sea turtles, seabirds, marine mammals, and such sharks species whose stocks have been identified as overfished;
11. Encourage interactions between retailers, seafood buyers and suppliers and marine capture fisheries to achieve improvements in fisheries sustainability, including via employment of best practice bycatch mitigation and improved international governance;
12. Augment the dissemination and broad industry uptake of best practice methods to mitigate unwanted bycatch in longline and purse seine tuna fisheries, and small scale coastal fisheries;

We will transmit this declaration to the Director-General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Executive Director of the World Ocean Council, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, the Director-General of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, and the five tuna Regional Fisheries Management Organizations, for their consideration, and we will request that Governments, including the Governments of Taiwan and the United States, support fishers worldwide to implement this declaration.