

FAO gives PMSA treaty combating illegal fishing the thumbs up

FAO Director-General José Graziano da Silva has hailed the more than 100 countries that are committed to combating unsustainable and illegal fishing, calling the rapid international adoption of the [Port State Measures Agreement](#) (PSMA) to prevent, deter and eliminate illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing a "fantastic achievement".



christijamin via [Pxabay](#)

The PSMA, an international treaty brokered by FAO, entered into force in 2016.

The PSMA requires foreign vessels to submit to inspections at any port of call, if deemed necessary by port states, and for such states to share information on detected violations. The agreement strengthens prior rules requiring countries to control the activities of their own fishing fleets and is designed to raise the cost of IUU fishing by making it harder for wrongly-caught fish to be sold.

IUU fishing is estimated to account for up to 26 million tonnes a year, or around one-fifth of the global catch, and undermines efforts to ensure sustainable fisheries through effective fish stock management measures around the world. Currently, [one-third of the world's fish stocks](#) are being caught at biologically unsustainable levels - up threefold from the mid-1970s.

"One of the main conditions of the PSMA to achieve good results is to have a large number of countries preventing vessels

from landing their illegal catch." said Graziano da Silva. "Otherwise, if a vessel cannot disembark in one country, it will do so in a neighbouring country."

Currently, adhering parties comprise more than half of the planet's coastal states.

The meeting of the parties in Chile

On the agenda of the four-day Meeting, which began on Monday, are agreeing on rules of procedure by which parties can govern the administrative aspects of the PSMA, further technical protocols for how parties will exchange information, and focus on how to assure funding mechanisms that allow developing countries to implement the treaty provisions.

Graziano da Silva noted the kind and generous support of numerous countries in helping develop global capacity to implement the PSMA, and in particular, thanked Norway for helping developing countries participate in the current Meeting. FAO has devoted substantial resources from its own budget to boost the prospects for success of the treaty as part of the Organization's broader mission to stamp out IUU fishing.

Parties are also expected to discuss how broad monitoring and review of the PSMA's implementation, mandated for 2020, will take shape.

The parties' work is critical to the common quest to safeguard global marine resources and achieve sustainable development. IUU fishing also puts millions of livelihoods at risk and distorts markets for an important global industry as and source of nutrition.

"This is an important meeting for food security at the global level," said Jose Ramon Valente, Chile's Minister of economy, development and tourism. "From now until 2050, the world's population will need more protein, without saturated fats, and that's what ocean products offer," he added.

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