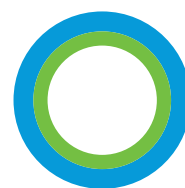




A unique group of leaders who are fast-tracking solutions to the most pressing challenges facing the Ocean



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## Ending Illegal Fishing in the Pacific by 2020

The Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Summit, to be hosted in Chile in 2019, offers a unique opportunity to address the scourge of illegal fishing in the Pacific.

Illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing robs nations of an estimated USD\$23 billion annually, undermining fisheries management and cheating legal fishers. Under the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 14 (Life Below Water or the 'Ocean Goal') governments committed to end IUU fishing by 2020. It is often challenging or impossible to apprehend illegal vessels on the open Ocean but governments, acting together, can make it far more difficult and costlier for them to sell their catch by systematically preventing vessels from landing or transshipping their illegal catch at port. That is the purpose of the Port State Measures Agreement (PSMA).

The PSMA is a potentially powerful tool, but its effectiveness in reducing IUU fishing will depend on broad participation and cooperation so that IUU vessels are blocked from not just some ports but from all. APEC countries can use the PSMA to crack the challenge of IUU fishing in the Pacific by joining together in coordinated implementation of the Agreement: ensuring that important port and flag states

have ratified the Agreement; sharing key data on both fishing and fishing support vessels and their activities; developing tools that provide timely information; and establishing efficient communication among port authorities to coordinate enforcement. These government actions will support and be reinforced by a growing number of private sector initiatives to require traceability and, ultimately, sustainability in their supply chains, and by new technologies that enable lower cost and more efficient monitoring and enforcement.

### Ratification

Ten of the APEC member states – Australia, Chile, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, New Zealand, Philippines, Peru, Thailand, United States – have ratified the PSMA. To control IUU fishing, it will be important to get every important port and flag state in APEC on board. Further priority ratifications among APEC countries include: Canada, China, Malaysia, Mexico, Russia and Singapore.

### Implementation

The success of the PSMA depends on cooperation among the port states in a region and the flag states whose vessels operate there. New and emerging technologies have the potential to provide robust information on each vessel's activities. For these systems to be effective, however, countries must share data and create systems



for real-time communication with each other. An APEC strategy for implementation of the PSMA could establish the fundamental components of a regional system. Key components could include:

- Publication of ship registry, ownership, licences and permits, and Unique Vessel Identifiers (IMO numbers) for flagged vessels through the Global Record;
- Sharing data on vessel fishing activities, including VMS data and transshipment information, with other countries in the region;
- Encouraging the application of complementary or equal measures to domestic fleets;
- Investing in capacity-building in developing countries in the Pacific that are important port or flag states, so that they can ratify and implement the PSMA;
- Committing to participate fully in the FAO process to help drive effective global implementation of the PSMA; and
- Creating national action plans to ensure coordinated PSMA implementation between agencies.

This implementation work will run in parallel with Friends of Ocean Action efforts on supply chain traceability in the commercial sector, together with the emerging Global Tuna Alliance, the International Seafood Sustainability Foundation, and SeaBOS (the top 10 global companies for seafood sustainability). Coordinating these efforts will ensure that efforts by commercial retailers and seafood companies

reinforce PSMA implementation and that data collected for PSMA enforcement can be used as the basis for traceability throughout the supply chain.

## Pilot

As a pilot for this APEC initiative, a coalition of Latin American countries, including perhaps Chile, Peru, Ecuador, Colombia, and Costa Rica, could establish a programme for joint implementation of the PSMA. Their collaboration could demonstrate the potential of coordinated implementation by showing a path forward for real-time information sharing, embodying the components outlined above, while tackling IUU fishing in one of the Pacific's most important fishing regions.

In 2019, Chile will host the second meeting of the parties to the PSMA and, later in the year, the APEC Summit. These meetings offer a unique opportunity to accelerate progress on the PSMA and to build a powerful implementation programme in the Pacific. The FAO, the World Economic Forum's Centre for the Fourth Industrial Revolution and The Nature Conservancy, the Pew Environment Group, and Global Fishing Watch are poised to provide support for such an initiative. The Friends of Ocean Action and the High Level Panel for a Sustainable Ocean Economy can help mobilise the political will that it will require.

**For more information, please contact:**  
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Petty Officer 2nd Class Chris Parmenter, an aviation maintenance technician from Coast Guard Air Station Barbers Point, looks for illegal fishing vessels in the water using the Casper camera on a C-130 Hercules airplane over the southern Pacific Ocean May 16, 2017 © Ted Small/Alamy