

MINISTRY OF BLUE ECONOMY, MARINE RESOURCES, FISHERIES AND SHIPPING

54th Meeting of the Regional
Coordination Unit (RCU) of the Regional
Fisheries Surveillance Plan (PRSP) –
12/13 December 2022

Opening Statement by the Honourable

Minister Sudheer Maudhoo

Prof Vêlayoudom Marimantou
Secrétaire Général COI

Representatives of the EU Delegation

MR MILKO VAN GOOL - ~~Chief~~ Head of cooperation

Representatives from the ECOFISH/IOC, of the EU

Representatives of Diplomatic Corps.

Representatives of Indian Ocean Commission

(IOC) Countries - Reunion, Madagascar, Comoros
Seychelles - Swaziland - Kenya - Tanzania
Mozambique - Somalia.

Senior Officials of Ministries and Departments

Distinguished Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

All protocols observed

Good Morning.

I am pleased to be in your midst this morning for this 54th Meeting of the Regional Coordination Unit (RCU) of the Regional Fisheries Surveillance Plan (PRSP).

A special welcome to all our friends representing the IOC countries.

We are also very grateful to the EU Commission and the IOC for their support and assistance towards Mauritius in the fight against IUU, as well as for the technical and financial support for this important meeting.

In recent years, there has been a deepening global focus on the serious impacts of IUU fishing and the measures being taken to combat this problem.

*Illegal, unregulated,
unreported.*

Therefore, it is of paramount importance to adopt good governance principles to achieve effective fisheries management that ensure fisheries' sustainability and maintain their contributions to economic growth, food security and livelihoods.

Since the signing of the first agreement between Mauritius and the EU in the nineties, the European Commission has played a significant role in the socio-economic development of Mauritius and in the fight against IUU fishing.

I wish to highlight that in September 2022, officials of my Ministry had intense discussions with the delegation from the European Commission's Directorate General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries (DG MARE), which took place in Mauritius.

I wish to reiterate my gratitude to the EU delegation for their pertinent proposals made on IUU fishing. These proposals are being catered for, to the extent possible, in the new Fisheries Bill and relevant regulations pertaining to IUU fishing.

I also wish to point out that more stringent penalties will be applied in respect of IUU fishing.

Furthermore, arrangements are being made for the Vessel Monitoring System to be operational round the clock as additional Fisheries Protection Officers will be recruited.

In the regional context, Mauritius is fully participating in the PRSP "Plan Regional de Surveillance des Pêches dans le Sud Ouest de l'Océan Indien" to combat IUU fishing under the ECOFISH project.

The PRSP represents 6.4 million km² and 20% of world tuna catches.

The main objectives of the PRSP are to:

- Firstly, contribute to the conservation and management of regional fisheries by pooling resources to prevent IUU fishing in the South West Indian Ocean region
- Secondly, carry out monitoring, control and surveillance efforts through sea patrols and air patrols; and

- Thirdly, promote effective monitoring, control and surveillance policies by building the regions human capacity.

The PSRP operates through information exchange, risk analysis, surveillance/missions, port inspections and observations.

In 2021 under the PRSP-IOC Programme, Mauritius participated in a regional surveillance patrol mission on board Patrol Vessel OSIRIS.

Fishing Protection Service

Two FPS officers from the Mauritius – Port State Control Unit (PSCU) participated in the joint surveillance mission.

In 2022, officers of the PSCU participated in a sea patrol mission and Air Patrol Surveillance

Mission last month on board Patrol Vessel Saya de Malha and on Dornier SY010 of Seychelles Air Force, respectively, under the IOC PRSP/ECOFISH Program Mauritius. The Dornier aircraft is also participating in the surveillance missions.

I wish to thank the ECOFISH/IOC and the PRSP, especially the Secretary General of the IOC, Mr [✓] Marimoutou, for the donation of equipment to Mauritius and to all countries of the IOC/PRSP represented here.

This equipment will be used by Fisheries Protection Service inspectors to perform their duties efficiently during sea and air surveillance mission under the IOC/PRSP.

I seize this opportunity to wish you a fruitful meeting and hope that the IOC/PRSP Programme continues to bring support to the IOC countries in the fight against IUU fishing in the South West Indian Ocean.

I have remarked that whilst such workshops and meetings do contribute to providing recommendations which are vital to surveillance ~~and~~ measures to fight IUU, unfortunately many of these recommendations are not implemented. ~~One of the main reasons being lack of funds.~~

It is high time that the coastal nations of the Indian Ocean have consensus in ways to

combat IUU in the Indian Ocean region. The use of two patrol vessels ^{should} may be contemplated for dedicated and effective surveillance in the EEZ of our Indian Ocean Island countries, which will be a major deterrent.

My Ministry is in the process of establishing a 24/7 surveillance system using satellite in the ^{7. Panfaron} Fishing Port for strengthening its fight against IUU fishing.

^{Port-640} Once again, I thank all participants and ~~I hereby~~ declare the meeting open and wish you all fruitful deliberations.

Thank you for your attention.