

MINUTES

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE LONG DISTANCE FLEET ADVISORY COUNCIL

**Venue: Brot für die Welt (Bread for the World) HQ
Caroline-Michaelis-Str.1, Berlin**

Wednesday, 22 May 2024

13:30 – 17:00 h

Chair: Iván López van der Veen

Vice Chairs: Vanya Vulperhorst, Julio Morón and Marc Ghiglia

Rapporteurs (Secretariat): Alexandre Rodríguez and Manuela Iglesias

1. Welcome by the Chair.

The Chair, Mr. Iván López, welcomes attendees.

He then gives a list of absent representatives of member organisations that delegate powers to present representatives of member organisations, as received by the Secretariat:

- SSNC (Ms. Sara Fröcklin) delegates to CFFA-CAPE (Ms. Béatrice Gorez)
- ELDFA (Mr. Einar Bergur) delegates to LLDFA (Mr. Aivaras Labanauskas)
- VIANAPESCA (Mr. Francisco Portela Rosa) delegates to OPP3/OPNAPA (Mr. Edelmiro Ulloa)
- ADAPI (Mr. Luis Vicente) delegates to OPP3/OPNAPA (Mr. Edelmiro Ulloa)
- KFO (Mr. Dominic Rihan) delegates to DPFA (Mr. Tim Heddema)

The full list of participants (including members and observers) is included in **ANNEX I**.

The Secretariat informs the members that, in conformity with the rules of procedure, the necessary quorum for adoption of decisions is reached, since at least 50% of the total number of members are present or represented.

2. Approval of the agenda.

The agenda is approved with no changes to it.

3. Approval of the minutes of the last Executive Committee meeting (Stockholm, May 2023)

The minutes of the previous General Assembly meeting held on 24 May 2023 are approved with no comments or amendments.

4. Presentation of EU work priorities related to International Ocean Governance and External Dimension of CFP – Céline Idil, DG MARE

Ms. Céline Idil, acting Head of Unit B at DG MARE, makes a presentation on EC priorities for 2024 and the future. The first milestone to be mentioned is the formal adoption of the UN Treaty on Biodiversity Beyond areas of National Jurisdiction (BBNJ). Once again, she insists that the EU is promoting the ratification of this agreement by as many countries as possible so that it may come into force as soon as possible. She recalls that ratification by 60 parties is required and that so far only 5 have ratified it.

As for the FAO COFI36 meeting, she informs that it will take place in July, highlighting that three sub-committees (fisheries management, fish trade and aquaculture) are in the process of making preparations. She is struck by the fact that the fight against IUU fishing is not included in the COFI agenda, and after asking FAO about it she informs that the reason behind this decision is that this has already been discussed within the sub-committees. In addition, side events dealing with different topics will be held (marine protected areas, 10th anniversary of FAO guidelines for securing sustainable small scale fishing, etc.).

Besides, she insists that the EC is promoting the ratification of ILO C188, WTO Subsidies Agreement, as well as ratification by more countries and effective implementation of the Port States Measures Agreement (PSMA).

At regional level, Ms. Idil, EC, explains that in the second half of the year there will be plenty of multilateral meetings since the EU is a member or contracting party of 15 RFMOs. She points out that the EC is an important actor, although it sometimes finds itself fairly isolated regarding its proposals dealing with fish stocks conservation and management based on scientific recommendations to ensure sustainable fisheries, as well as with other proposals on effective monitoring, control and surveillance measures, the fight against IUU fishing or improved data collection, among other. This is often complicated due to the blockage or veto of countries like China or Russia, in addition to social and labour issues or marine pollution and climate change as aspects that are starting to be discussed within RFMOs and that require to be coordinated by DG MARE and other DGs with competence in these areas.

As for ICCAT, she informs that they are in the process of preparing and drafting the mandate prior to the annual meeting, the main issues to be addressed being allocation formula keys for bigeye tuna (BET), of utmost importance for developing countries, as well as management and assessment measures for yellowfin tuna (YFT).

Regarding IOTC, she welcomes the fact that after three years they have succeeded in adopting a resolution on fish aggregating devices (FADs). As for sharks, an attempt was made to reach an agreement on certain measures, but this was not possible and work will continue this year.

At bilateral level, she summarises that there are 11 valid sustainable fisheries partnership agreements (SFPAs) with third countries in force, 2 of which are about to expire (Cape Verde and Guinea-Bissau) and 4 are still to be renewed. She adds that negotiations are becoming more complex, more consultative and more time-consuming. Ms. Idil stresses the importance for the European fishing fleet with access rights to increase its use of the fishing opportunities allocated in the tuna agreements, as some are seriously under-utilised. This aspect will be a matter of reflection for the internal evaluation.

The agreement with Senegal will expire in November. An ex post / ex ante evaluation has just been published showing that the protocol has been difficult to implement owing to different reasons, not only in terms of fisheries and access rights, but also regarding the use of sectoral support.

Regarding the agreement with Mauritania, in view of its renewal, an attempt will be made to negotiate an increase of vessels in category 1 (shrimp fisheries), so that they can land their catches in Spain. Even though there is no intention to reduce the financial compensation, there is no will to continue paying a high amount if the fleet is not using it.

The ex post evaluation has finished, but it has not been published yet, so the position to be taken in the future needs to be decided. Moreover, she says that, as part of the evaluation of the CFP and the external dimension, efforts will be made to reflect upon the elements to be improved in the new generation of agreements.

Another highly controversial and increasingly contested issue is that related to the social clause and labour conditions of seafarers. DG MARE is still working on proposals for the agreement of a standard clause. A recent example are negotiations held with Cape Verde and Guinea-Bissau.

In market terms, negotiation of a free trade agreement (FTA) with several countries, such as Thailand, the Philippines, Indonesia or India are of great interest to the EU. She points out that work is being carried out with DG TRADE on the following aspects: market access, rules of origin and sustainable development, also seeking to include own fisheries resolutions in addition to environmental and social considerations.

As for Autonomous Tariff Quotas (ATQs), they were adopted in November 2023 for the following three years. The idea is to work to have a more global sustainability framework, hoping not to import fisheries products that are not sustainable.

Regarding the WTO, the Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies was reached a couple of years ago. Today, 74 parties have ratified it, but 109 are required.

As for the fight against IUU fishing, she highlights that the EU is still recognised as international leader for its work in this regard. She stresses that in January 2026 the digital catch certificate (IT-CATCH) will come into force as mandatory, and with a view to its implementation training workshops with Member States are being held. The idea of extending training also to third countries has not been ruled out.

The LDAC Chair thanks Ms. Idil for her thorough presentation and opens a round of questions for attendees regarding the following topics:

- Activity of East Asian fleets and processing companies as a problem for European competitiveness (level playing field) and environmental, economic and social sustainability.
- Agreement with Guinea-Bissau: while an agreement as soon as possible is necessary, disruption will be inevitable.
- Angola: at the moment everything is at a standstill and there is no mandate yet.
- China: there is a desire to cooperate more with them so that they can improve; as for the request by some members to give this country a red card, Ms. Idil says that this decision goes beyond DG MARE.

- Norway: it is a complex relationship, they have used trade as a negotiation tool for the first time.

5. Presentation of the EU public consultation on “Better protecting sharks through sustainable fishing and trade” - DG MARE

Ms. Céline Idil, acting Head of Unit B at DG MARE, makes a presentation on the public consultation that DG MARE has launched on sharks.

The technical presentation is fully available here: https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/better-regulation/have-your-say/initiatives/14158-Better-protecting-sharks-through-sustainable-fishing-and-trade/public-consultation_en

The consultation aims to channel contributions and arguments in a transparent and participatory way in order to take a decision on the European citizens' initiative called “*stop finning - stop trade*”.

To this end, the EC seeks the views of knowledgeable stakeholders on this issue (deadline: 4 June) that may help to assess in detail environmental benefits, as well as the potential economic costs and opportunities associated with a ban on trade in sharks and shark fins.

The LDAC Chair thanks Ms. Idil for her explanations and opens the round of questions for interested LDAC members and observers:

The Spanish representative, Mr. Juan Acacio, underlines the need for the implementation of a ban on shark finning in all RFMOs. He congratulates the EC for its work regarding tuna RFMOs, insisting on the need to achieve a level playing field among all operators and flag states to ensure responsible trade. On the other hand, he also insists on the need to specify the commercial species of sharks in particular, as some are in good condition and therefore would not need specific catch mitigation measures.

Furthermore, he says that it is important to note as well its role vis-à-vis food security since the species caught and marketed by the Spanish fleet (blue shark and shortfin mako) are a healthy and economic source of proteins which is frequently exported to countries like Morocco, Uruguay or Brazil.

Finally, he stresses that the European fleet has adapted to comply with the stipulated measures, while the fleets of other non-EU countries do not.

Ms. Iris Ziegler, Seas at Risk, supports a global ban and explains the need for sustainably managed shark stocks, like with all other species, especially as many shark species are critically endangered and most RFMOs have not taken action. Finally, she points out the weak control of shark fin trade worldwide.

Mr. Javier Garat, CEPESCA, agrees with the representative of the Spanish General Secretariat for Fisheries (SGP) and explains that the Spanish surface longline fleet, mainly fishing for blue shark and shortfin mako, will be hard hit by trade restrictive measures, while fleets from other non-EU countries will continue to do nothing and therefore there will be unfair competition. In addition, he says that the data provided are often incorrect, many Spanish longliners have physical observers on board and electronic observers (cameras), and there is scientific monitoring with the Spanish₄

Institute of Oceanography (IEO). Moreover, the industry launched a fisheries improvement programme called FIB BLUES in 2019 and they have a lot of regulation in place. Once again, he points out that management rules for sharks are exclusively met by the European fleet.

Mr. Juan Manuel Trujillo, ETF, highlights that his organisation is in favour of the fins-attached policy, but totally against an indiscriminate global trade ban.

Mr. Edelmiro Ulloa, OPNAPA, completes Mr. Garat's explanation by noting that this measure would lead to the demise of the Community surface longline fleet (Galician and Portuguese fleet). Trade should be regulated with more precise and sophisticated conservation tools than a total ban.

On his part, Mr. José Manuel Beltrán, OPP7-Burela, supports the comments voiced by Messrs. Garat and Ulloa, and suggests asking the European Fisheries Control Agency (EFCA) whether it could assist the Commission in submitting proposals and strengthening control over other countries' fleets, such as Asian fleets, under RFMOs' Control and Compliance Committees.

Ms. Yobana Bermúdez, CONXEMAR, informs that surface longliners have an interprofessional organisation called INTERFISH of which its organisation is part, and where everything is rigorously controlled and regulated.

The EC representative, Ms. Idil, thanks speakers for their input and contributions, and urges them to submit their arguments in writing in order to gather as much technical and objective evidence as possible to minimise negative economic impacts that are not necessary. Finally, she announces that a specific event will be organised at EFCA's headquarters in Vigo to improve knowledge on shark conservation and management.

6. Policy Report on LDAC Year 18 (1 June 2024 - 31 May 2025) -

6.1. Presentation of Strategic Plan / Annual Work Programme.

Mr. Alexandre Rodríguez, General Secretary, explains the LDAC strategic plan together with the annual work programme for year 18 (2024-2025) requesting the formal approval of the GA members. Full presentation available on the following link: https://ldac.eu/images/LDAC_Presentation_ExCom_22.05.2024.pdf

6.2. Provisional calendar of meetings.

Mr. Alexandre Rodríguez, General Secretary, informs about the provisional calendar of meetings, highlighting that Working Groups 1, 2, 4 and 5 will meet in October 2024 in Brussels and that the ExCom meetings will take place in Brussels in October and in Madrid in November of the same year.

The complete calendar of meetings is made available to all members in the following presentation: https://ldac.eu/images/LDAC_Presentation_ExCom_22.05.2024.pdf

6.3. Ratification/approval of items 6.1 and 6.2.

The General Assembly members ratify the previous two items as follows:

DECISION:

The General Assembly members approve the LDAC annual strategic plan for Year 18 (2024-2025) and the provisional calendar of meetings there included. With the approval of the General Assembly, the process is concluded and the strategic plan is considered formally adopted in conformity with provisions set forth in articles XIII and XV, section a) of the LDAC rules of procedure.

7. Administrative and Financial Report on LDAC Years 17 (2023-2024) and 18 (2024-2025)

7.1. State of annual accounts (Income/Expenditure) in Year 17 (2023-2024)

The General Secretary, Mr. Alexandre Rodríguez, on behalf of the Chair and of the Executive Committee, presents a summary of the work carried out by the organisation during Financial Year 17 (1 June 2023 - 31 May 2024) regarding the programme, summarising actions and agreements achieved. In addition, recommendations (letters and opinions) adopted during Year 17 are mentioned.

The presentation specifically prepared for the General Assembly is available here: https://ldac.eu/images/LDAC_Presentation_ExCom_22.05.2024.pdf

Once the accounts of the current year are presented, it is proposed that the Assembly should give a vote of confidence to the accounts presented. The final accounts shall be sent once the year is over (31 May 2024) and they have been duly audited.

7.2. Budget proposal for LDAC Financial Year 18 (2024-2025)

The General Secretary, Mr. Alexandre Rodríguez, presents the new budget proposal for year 18 (1 June 2024 - 31 May 2025). The draft budget has been sent in writing to all ExCom members for adoption via e-mail and to all GA members sufficiently in advance to the meeting as set forth in the rules of procedure (date sent: 24 March) and was approved by the fast-track procedure granting a period of 8 calendar days.

Moreover, the Chair proposes to update the salary of Ms. Manuela Iglesias, due to her dedication and the increase of tasks to be carried out in the course of recent years. The increase is unanimously agreed and so is the fact that it will be up to the Management Team (LDAC Chair and Vice Chairs) to decide on the actual increase based on a proposal from the General Secretary.

After the presentation of the draft budget proposal is made by the General Secretary and approved by the ExCom in good time and appropriate manner, the Chair recommends that the General Assembly should ratify this draft budget for the following financial year.

7.3. Approval/Ratification of items 7.1 and 7.2.

It is agreed to unanimously approve and ratify with no comments or amendments the financial report with updated accounts for year 17 and the new budget proposal for year 18 including the review of Ms. Manuela Iglesias' salary, respectively.

8. Update on administrative and organisational issues – Chair / Vice Chair / Secretary

8.1. Overview of LDAC members

The General Secretary, Mr. Alexandre Rodríguez, informs that the LDAC is currently made up of 54 organisations from 11 Member States. Regarding admissions and cancellations, no organisation has requested to be admitted this year, although a preliminary expression of interest (not a formal candidacy) was received from the organisation Flora and Fauna International.

As for cancellations, the following members of the Advisory Council have requested withdrawal due to lack of resources and capacity, and reorientation of strategic activities, respectively:

- Global Tuna Alliance (GTA)
- Earthworm Foundation on behalf of Tuna Protection Alliance (TUPA)

DECISION:

Global Tuna Alliance (GTA) and Earthworm Foundation on behalf of Tuna Protection Alliance (TUPA) shall cease to be members of the LDAC as of 1 June 2024.

8.2. Proposal for amendment of the Code of conduct for LDAC meetings.

The LDAC Chair, Mr. Iván López, recalls that at the previous General Assembly a proposal was made to update the code of conduct for members and observers at LDAC meetings.

The update proposal is available on the following link: <https://ldac.eu/en/meetings/archive/general-assembly-22-05-2024> , proposed amendments are highlighted in green. In view of the lack of time to explain all the changes, it is agreed to send the consolidated version to the members for decision at future meetings.

8.3. Annual ratification of the LDAC Chair.

The Chair of the LDAC, Mr. Iván López, is unanimously ratified for the third year of his term of office. Elections are reported to take place next year.

9. AOB - CLOSE OF THE MEETING

With no other issues to address, the Chair, Mr. Iván López, closes the session thanking the members and observers for their attendance and participation, the interpreting team for their work throughout the meeting and the Secretariat staff for all the work in terms of logistics, organisation and content in preparation for this meeting.

-END-

ANNEX I: List of attendees

Long Distance Advisory Council General Assembly

22 May 2024, Berlin

MEMBERS

1. Iván López van der Veen. AGARBA/CEPESCA
2. Béatrice Gorez. CFFA-CAPE
3. Julio Morón. OPAGAC
4. Francisco Mari. Bread for the World
5. Julien Daudu. EJF
6. Vanya Vulperhorst. OCEANA
7. Aivaras Labanauskas. Lithuanian Long Distance Fisheries Association
8. Edelmiro Ulloa. OPP3/OPNAPA/ACEMIX
9. Daniel Voces de Onaindi. EUROPÊCHE
10. Raúl García. WWF Spain
11. Javier Garat. CEPESCA
12. Despina Symons. EBCD
13. José Manuel Fernández Beltrán. OPP-7 Burela
14. Emil Remisz. High Seas Fish Producers Organization
15. José Ramón Fontán. ANEPAT
16. Tim Heddema. Dutch Pelagic Fisheries Association
17. Yobana Bermúdez. CONXEMAR
18. Juan Manuel Trujillo. ETF
19. Christine Xu. Aquatic Life Institute
20. Iris Ziegler. Seas at Risk
21. Jean Christophe Vandeveld. PEW
22. David Troncoso. ANASCO
23. Peter Breckling. DHV/DFV
24. Louis Lambrechts. WWF EU

OBSERVERS

25. Céline Idil. DG MARE B
26. Pedro Galache. EFCA
27. Barbara Pilz. EJF
28. Janne Posti. CONXEMAR
29. Joelle Philippe. CFFA-CAPE
30. Anne-France Mattlet. EUROPÊCHE Tuna Group
31. Ana Sedenko. Ministry of Agriculture of the Republic of Lithuania.
32. Nana Kweigyah. CaFGOAG
33. Dawda Foday Saine. CAOPA
34. Gaoussou Gueye. CAOPA

- 35. Diénaba Beye. International legal consultant
- 36. Eida Ahmed El Heiba. CAOPA
- 37. Babacar Sarr. CAOPA
- 38. Lala Ranaivomanana. Legal Expert CAOPA
- 39. Stephanie Czudaj. GIZ Germany
- 40. Annika Mackensen. GIZ Germany
- 41. Mr. Ahmed Babbou, Cornelis Vrolijk's Cap Blanc Company
- 42. Catherine Weller. Flora and Fauna International
- 43. Laura Sánchez Hernández. Secretariat General for Fisheries (SGP), Ministry for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (MAPA), Spain.
- 44. Juan Acacio. Secretariat General for Fisheries (SGP), Ministry for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (MAPA), Spain.

LDAC Secretariat

- 45. Alexandre Rodríguez. LDAC
- 46. Manuela Iglesias. LDAC