

URANGA ENTITY INSTITUTE

A PROJECT UNDER THE URANGA DEVELOPMENT ACTION GROUP

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Press Release

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Illegal Fishing on Africa's Shores Threatens Fish Sustainability

Nairobi, 2 February 2007- Illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing is diminishing Africa's fish stocks due to poor management structures, corrupt and ignorant fisheries officials and lack of enforcement of fisheries regulations due to expensive infrastructure needed for the job.

Illegal fishing threatens the sustainability of fish stocks through overexploitation and prevents African governments from monitoring catches and developing good management strategies; it deprives local fishermen of resources and creates conflict between them and those fishing without permits and illegal boats without specialised equipment can damage marine birds, seals and turtles. By ignoring conservation laws and safety practices, illegal fishing vessels also experience lower costs and cause huge revenue losses for the legitimate fishing industry. This supports a climate of illegality and may add to wider national governance problems.

A study by the UK Marine Resources Assessment Group in 2005 estimated that the global value of illegal fishing is between US \$ 4 billion and US \$ 9 billion. This is significant for developing countries where the value can be up to five percent of Gross National Product. Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated fishing in sub-Saharan African Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) is worth almost US\$ 1 billion; mostly by vessels from developed countries. There is a link between the standard of governance in a developing country and the amount of illegal fishing in its waters.

To counter illegal fishing, African countries need support in expanding the capabilities of the International Monitoring, Control and Surveillance (MCS), develop a global information system on vessels capable of fishing on the high seas and encouraging more states to ratify the United Nations Fish Stocks Agreement. At the same time, the UEI is urging friendly governments especially Uganda and Tanzania to release all the Kenyan prisoners held for illegal fishing due to the difficulty in determining the location of the border.

The Uranga Entity Institute (UEI) is an independent broad based public policy research project operated by the Uranga Development Action Group (UDAG). The UEI carries out its activities through advocacy, training and information dissemination. The UEI promotes the view that innovation and culture are an integral part of environment sustainability and crucial to meet the Millennium Development Goals (MDG). For further information, please contact Wilson Rading Outa at: (+254) 020 780569 or wilsonrading@yahoo.com

NOTES TO READERS

David Agnew (2006) "*Time to tackle illegal fishing*".