

Developing World Working Group of the Marine Stewardship Council Meets in Brussels, Belgium

The Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) has set up a Developing World Working Group (DWWG) to advise the Council. The DWWG is an important specialist group of the MSC and meets annually. The second meeting of the DWWG was held in Brussels, Belgium on 26 April 2008. Dr Y S Yadava, Director of BOBP-IGO and a member of the DWWG, took part. Ms Meredith Lopuch of the Worldwide Fund for Nature chaired the meeting.

Ms Yemi Oloruntuyi of the Council provided a brief update on recent developments.

She said that MSC is doing pilot assessments of six small-scale fisheries. It is also researching exports (by origin and species) of small-scale fisheries to markets of the developed world.

The Council updated members on the status of projects suggested at the 2007 meeting of the DWWG. These included a trust fund for capacity-building; incentives for participation in the Marine Stewardship Council; guidance for NGOs of developing nations; and keystone projects.

The DWWG agreed that seafood trade among developing nations should be increased. It also discussed ways by which members of DWWG could discuss issues throughout the year rather than just once a year. It discussed three proposals in the meeting's agenda:

- Developing a template to certify action plans;
- MSC fishery associates; and
- Fishery certification training package.

Members evinced keen interest in the first and third proposals. They agreed that any training kit or tool for certification must include not only the economic and market benefits of certification, but also the environmental and political benefits. The tools should build on work already done in developing countries relating to ecological sustainability and management. A range of projects was discussed, including the GTZ development of tools to help fishers honour the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries; the COBI and WWF pre-analysis tool; and the Parfish tool developed by MRAG, which is used in India.

Members pointed out that since MSC's core mission is environmental sustainability, it should focus on improving the fisheries environmental performance of members.



DWWG Members at the Meeting in Brussels.

The Working Group said it was necessary to raise awareness about the MSC and its programmes and their potential benefits in developing nations – including government and private managers and potential donors. Funding was needed to strengthen and improve fisheries and make it certifiable.

Marine Stewardship Council

The Marine Stewardship Council (<http://www.msc.org>) or the MSC is an international non-profit organization set up to promote solutions to the problem of overfishing. The



MSC runs the only certification and eco-labelling programme for wild-capture fisheries consistent with the ISEAL Code of Good Practice for setting Social and Environmental Standards and the Guidelines of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations on fisheries certification.

Presently, over 160 fisheries are engaged in MSC programme with 43 certified, 102 under assessment and another 20-30 in confidential pre-assessment. Worldwide, more than 2 500 sea food products resulting from the certified fisheries seal the blue MSC eco-label. The estimated retail value of seafood products bearing the MSC logo is estimated around 1.4 billion US \$ annually. MSC labeled products are currently available in 42 countries.

The MSC offices are located in London, Seattle, Tokyo, Sydney, The Hague, Edinburgh, Berlin, and Cape Town.