



INCORPORATING RESOURCE IMPACT into FISHERIES SUBSIDIES DISCIPLINES: ISSUES and OPTIONS

A Discussion Paper



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First edition 2004

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UNEP/ETB/2004/10

UNITED NATIONS PUBLICATION

ISBN: 92-807-2492-4



printed on paper from 100 % recycled waste material

Designed and printed by TYPHON - Annecy

00 33 (0)4 50 10 00 00

Preface

Current negotiation at the WTO aimed at clarifying and improving WTO rules on fisheries subsidies have drawn substantial international attention. Along with related developments in a variety of other intergovernmental fora, including the FAO, OECD and UNEP, the WTO talks raise new questions and pose important opportunities and challenges to policymakers concerned with the promotion of sustainable fisheries. The negotiations present a major opportunity for the WTO to deliver win-win outcomes contributing not only to the reduction of trade distortions but also to environmental and sustainable development goals.

Since 1997, UNEP has worked actively to promote integrated and well-informed responses to the need for fishing subsidies reform. Through a series of workshops, analytical papers, and case studies, UNEP seeks to act as a forum for interaction among policymakers and stakeholders.

In 2003, UNEP initiated a project addressing the impact of different types of fishery subsidies under various regulatory and environmental conditions. The resulting study “Analyzing the Resource Impact of Fisheries Subsidies: A Matrix Approach” has undergone an intensive review process and was published in 2004. It provides a classification of fisheries subsidies and offers a systematic assessment of the impact of eight categories of subsidies taking into account the specific characteristics of a fishery’s level of exploitation and its management regime.

Building on the results of that study, UNEP commissioned Gareth Porter to analyze and investigate options for incorporating impacts on resources into new WTO disciplines on fisheries subsidies. The paper is offered in the hopes of stimulating further dialogue and creative thinking about the environmental and resource aspects of new WTO fisheries subsidy disciplines.

Acknowledgements

This discussion paper is part of a larger project initiated and managed by the Economics and Trade Branch (ETB), Division of Trade, Industry and Economics (DTIE) of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). UNEP would like to thank Gareth Porter, the lead author of this discussion paper. The paper has benefited from comments and suggestions received through a number of review rounds.

Special thanks go to Markus Lehmann (CBD Secretariat), Christina Schroder (WTO), Sabrina Shaw, Benjamin Simmons, and Ron Steenblik (OECD) for their written comments and suggestions at different drafting stages. Other members of the group of experts that informally met in Geneva on 16 July 2003 and contributed greatly to the paper included Hugo Cameron (ICTSD), Clare Coffey (IEEP), Anthony Cox (OECD), Karim Dahou (ENDA, Dipol), Ralf Döring (University of Greifswald), Maria Onestini (CEDEA, Argentina), Claudia Saladin (WWF), David Schorr, and Lena Westlund (FAO consultant).

After consideration and integration of the comments that were received at the expert meeting, the discussion paper was sent out for government review in December 2003. Comments were incorporated and the revision distributed to the UNEP Workshop on Fisheries Subsidies and Sustainable Fisheries Management, held in Geneva on 26-27 April 2004. The workshop was attended by more than 100 participants from 37 governments (including officials from environment, trade and fisheries agencies), a wide range of intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, academic institutions and regional fisheries management organizations. UNEP would like to express its gratitude to all participants for the comments and the interactive discussion based on this discussion paper at the workshop.

UNEP would also like to thank the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety for the financial support that made the realization of this project possible. Special thanks go to Cornelia Quennet-Thielen, Ulf Jaeckel and Volker Fuerst.

Incorporating Resource Impact into Fisheries Subsidies Disciplines: Issues and Options

At UNEP, Anja von Moltke, Economics Affairs Officer, was responsible for managing the project, coordinating review processes and editing the paper. She was supported by Minna Epps. Desirée Leon was responsible for administrative assistance.

United Nations Environment Programme

The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) is the overall coordinating environmental organization of the United Nations system. Its mission is to provide leadership and encourage partnerships in caring for the environment by inspiring, informing and enabling nations and people to improve their quality of life without compromising that of future generations. In accordance with its mandate, UNEP works to observe, monitor and assess the state of the global environment, improve the scientific understanding of how environmental change occurs, and in turn, how such change can be managed by action-oriented national policies and international agreements. UNEP's capacity building work thus centers on helping countries strengthen environmental management in diverse areas that include freshwater and land resource management, the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, marine and coastal ecosystem management, and cleaner industrial production and eco-efficiency, among many others.

UNEP, which is headquartered in Nairobi, Kenya, marked its first 30 years of service in 2002. During this time, in partnership with a global array of collaborating organizations, UNEP has achieved major advances in the development of international environmental policy and law, environmental monitoring and assessment, and the understanding of the science of global change. This work also supports the successful development and implementation of the world's major environmental conventions. In parallel, UNEP administers several multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) including the Vienna Convention's Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer, the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal (SBC), the Convention on Prior Informed Consent Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade (Rotterdam Convention, PIC) and the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety to the Convention on Biological Diversity as well as the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs).

Division of Technology, Industry and Economics

The mission of the Division of Technology, Industry and Economics (DTIE) is to encourage decision makers in government, local authorities and industry to develop and adopt policies, strategies and practices that are cleaner and safer, make efficient use of natural resources, ensure environmentally sound management of chemicals, and reduce pollution and risks for humans and the environment. In addition, it seeks to enable implementation of conventions and international agreements and encourage the internalization of environmental costs. UNEP DTIE's strategy in carrying out these objectives is to influence decision-making through partnerships with other international organizations, governmental authorities, business and industry, and non-governmental organizations; facilitate knowledge management through networks; support implementation of conventions; and work closely with UNEP regional offices. The Division, with its Director and Division Office in Paris, consists of one centre and five branches located in Paris, Geneva and Osaka.

Economics and Trade Branch

The Economics and Trade Branch (ETB) is one of the five branches of DTIE. Its mission is to enhance the capacities of countries, especially of developing countries and countries with economies in transition, to integrate environmental considerations into development planning and macroeconomic policies, including trade policies. ETB helps countries to develop and use integrated assessment and incentive tools for sustainable development and poverty reduction. The Branch further works to improve the understanding of environmental, social and economic impacts of trade liberalization and the trade impacts of environmental policies, and to

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