JOINT STATEMENT

BETWEEN THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION AND THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT ON EFFORTS TO COMBAT ILLEGAL, UNREPORTED AND UNREGULATED (IUU) FISHING

We, Maria Damanaki, European Commissioner for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries, and Dr. Jane Lubchenco, the U.S. Under Secretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Administrator, recognize the importance of combating IUU fishing and our mutual interest in strengthening our cooperation for this purpose.

IUU fishing constitutes one of the most serious threats to the conservation and sustainable exploitation of marine biological resources in the world's oceans. The European Union and the United States each play a key role in the commercial exploitation of fishery products globally, both as flag States and market States. This conveys a vast responsibility on both sides for the protection of the oceans' vital food and marine biological resources.

IUU fishing is a global phenomenon with devastating environmental and socio-economic consequences, particularly for coastal communities in developing countries who rely on fisheries for their livelihood or for protein.

IUU fishing is best prevented through international cooperation. The European Commission and the United States Government appreciate the progress made in Regional Fisheries Management Organizations and international organizations, such as the United Nations, in this area through the adoption of measures to combat IUU fishing. The European Commission and the United States Government fully recognize our responsibility to ensure the adoption and implementation of effective tools for combating IUU fishing, including through, control, monitoring and enforcement.

To this end, both sides acknowledge the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) International Plan of Action to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing as well as other instruments adopted at the global level to combat IUU fishing, in particular the FAO Agreement on Port State Measures to Prevent, Deter, and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated Fishing (Port State Measures Agreement).

Both the United States and the European Union have already put in place legal instruments to combat IUU fishing, in particular the U.S. High Seas Driftnet Fishing Moratorium Protection Act and the EU IUU Regulation (EC) No 1005/2008 respectively. The European Commission and the United States Government recognize that voluntary cooperation and sharing of information on IUU fishing will maximize the effectiveness of these and other instruments in the global fight against IUU fishing.

As a result, we intend to cooperate to:

Promote the conservation and sustainable exploitation of marine biological resources;

Support the adoption of effective tools in regional and international organizations which are designed to combat IUU fishing;

Encourage the strengthening of, control, monitoring and enforcement of management measures in Regional Fisheries Management Organizations through compliance committees;

Recognize that effective tools are required to prevent IUU operators from benefiting from their illegal activities;

Stress the importance of international cooperation in the fight against IUU fishing;

Strengthen and reinforce our bilateral cooperation in the fight against IUU fishing, both at the technical, operational and political level;

Consider a system for the exchange of information on suspected or confirmed IUU activities;

Encourage the ratification and implementation of the FAO Port State Measures Agreement;

Work together toward the improvement and expansion, as appropriate and warranted based on risk, of multilateral catch documentation and certification requirements, including electronic schemes.

Washington, 7 September 2011

FOR THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION
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for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries

FOR THE UNITED STATES
Dr. Jane Lubchenco
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