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Coral Triangle Countries Tackle Illegal and Destructive Fishing in the Pacific Region



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CORAL TRIANGLE INITIATIVE
ON CORAL REEFS, FISHERIES AND FOOD SECURITY

Honiara, Solomon Islands – More than 20 representatives from the Pacific side of the Coral Triangle Initiative (CTI) – Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, and Timor-Leste – will gather in Honiara July 31-Aug 2, 2013 to attend a workshop exploring innovative approaches to fight illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing in the world’s epicenter of marine biodiversity.

The workshop is organized by the Solomon Islands’ Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources in collaboration with the CTI National Coordinating Committee, USAID’s US CTI Support Program and the United States National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). The workshop will present various tools, used in the United States and internationally, to combat IUU fishing and the trafficking of IUU fish and fish products. Presenters will include experts from NOAA, the Australia Fisheries Management Authority, and the Secretariat of the Pacific Community the Forum Fisheries Agency.

The workshop aims to strengthen participating countries’ capacity to combat IUU fishing by sharing lessons learned and best practices in fisheries law enforcement such as developing joint regional surveillance operations and intelligence gathering. It will also tackle the trans-boundary nature of IUU fishing by enhancing collaboration and communication between fisheries officers of CTI countries who are in charge of fisheries monitoring, control and surveillance systems.

IUU fishing is one of the major identified threats to fisheries in the Coral Triangle region. It involves fishing practices that do not comply with national, regional or global fisheries conservation and management regulations. IUU fishing results in unfair competition for law-abiding fishermen and reduces the value of legally harvested seafood. In addition to distorting the market, IUU fishing negatively affects the sustainability of ocean resources, adversely impacts ecosystems and damages habitat as well as food security and livelihoods in coastal communities.

“A future without fish is not a good future for the people of the South Pacific. I applaud the Government of Solomon Islands, NOAA and our Pacific partners for working together to stop unsustainable fishing practices.” said U.S. Ambassador Walter North.

In 2009, the six Coral Triangle countries – Indonesia, Malaysia, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Solomon Islands and Timor-Leste – formed the CTI as a multilateral partnership that aims to safeguard the marine and coastal resources of the Coral Triangle, considered the world’s epicenter of

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marine biodiversity. In its CTI Regional Plan of Action, the member countries committed to deterring and eliminating IUU fishing through greater collaboration between national fishery management agencies; joint enforcement programs; greater sharing of data, information and knowledge; and addressing illegal, cross-border fishing by small-scale, large-scale, and trans-boundary fishers among others. USAID and NOAA support CTI member countries in addressing IUU fishing through capacity building workshops based on information gathered in country-specific monitoring, control, and surveillance surveys.

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