



United Nations Environment Programme

برنامج الأمم المتحدة للبيئة • 联合国环境规划署
PROGRAMME DES NATIONS UNIES POUR L'ENVIRONNEMENT • PROGRAMA DE LAS NACIONES UNIDAS PARA EL MEDIO AMBIENTE
ПРОГРАММА ОРГАНИЗАЦИИ ОБЪЕДИНЕННЫХ НАЦИЙ ПО ОКРУЖАЮЩЕЙ СРЕДЕ

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INFORMATION NOTE

UNEP convenes Fisheries Subsidies Reform Workshop in February

Geneva, 3 January –UNEP's work in fisheries aims to build understanding and consensus on policy reforms in that sector, including subsidy reform that will contribute to the sustainable development of fisheries. A comprehensive approach is envisaged through a combination of research work, country studies and policy dialogue, aimed at understanding the effects of fisheries subsidies on the economy, environment and society. A technical workshop will be held on February 12, 2001 between governments, international organisations, non-governmental organisations, experts, and policy- and decision-makers in Geneva. The workshop is being organized in close collaboration with the World Trade Organisation (WTO). Invitations have been extended to the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and relevant NGOs to participate in the workshop.

In preparation for this workshop, a Workshop Draft Paper has been commissioned (<http://www.unep.ch/etu/trade/fishery/fishsub.htm>) and two country studies are underway.

Main objectives of the Fisheries Workshop:

- Create better understanding, quantification and classification of the economic, environmental and social effects of subsidies to the fishery sector;
- Explore a variety of approaches to develop policy reforms for the sustainable management of fisheries, which will simultaneously build consensus on the need for reforms.

Main objectives of UNEP's Work in the Fisheries Sector:

- Understand and quantify the economic, environmental and social impacts of fisheries subsidies through research work and country case studies;
- Establish a classification of subsidies to the sector according to their effects on the economy, the environment and society, backed up by country case studies;
- Promote constructive dialogue between experts, policy- and decision-makers, aiming at designing and ultimately implementing a subsidy reform, as part of a more comprehensive

policy reform of the fishery sector, that would contribute to sustainable and equitable management of fisheries.

UNEP's Economics and Trade Unit (ETU) has been working on fisheries subsidies and sustainable development of fisheries for more than three years. In June 1997, it co-organized with WWF a workshop on the "Role of Trade Policies in the Fishing Sector", which highlighted the necessity to roll back subsidies to the fishing sector for economic and environmental reasons. The workshop also recognized the need for more studies on their environmental and developmental impacts.

In August 1998, "Fisheries Subsidies, Overfishing and Trade" was published under the UNEP Trade and Environment Series. In October 1999, UNEP convened an expert group meeting on fisheries subsidies to discuss and consider options of addressing perverse fisheries subsidies.

During the last few years, a number of international, regional and national bodies have addressed the issue of subsidies on fisheries resource sustainability and trade, and the possibility to reform fisheries subsidies has been discussed by delegates at the WTO Committee on Trade and Environment (CTE) since 1999. However, delegates have acknowledged that more work needs to be done to address the linkages between fisheries subsidies and fisheries resource sustainability to guide progress towards subsidy reform to the fishery sector, that integrates environmental, developmental and trade objectives.

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