

**IUU Signing Event
OPENING REMARKS
Washington, DC
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As Prepared**

- Distinguished guests, colleagues, and friends: Thank you for joining us today to recognize the importance of the agreement we sign today. We are honored to have with us:
 - Senator Inouye – who, with his former co-chair on the Commerce Committee, Senator Stevens, has long been a champion to eradicate illegal fishing. In his present role as Chair of the Appropriations Committee, Senator Inouye continues to lead on domestic and international fisheries issues. This Congress, he introduced the International Fisheries Stewardship and Enforcement Act - a bill that would greatly strengthen NOAA's ability to combat illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing. I look forward to the bill's passage. Senator Inouye, I greatly appreciate your taking time to join us today, and I thank you for your leadership on this and so many other important issues.

- I wish to also recognize our close colleagues from the U.S. State Department: Kathleen Doherty, Director of Office of EU, and Anne Coleman-Honn, Economic Officer, Office of EU; Thank you for being here, and please convey our appreciation to Secretary Clinton for her support for our joint efforts.

- Enforcing IUU fishing regulations would not be possible without our close partners, the **U.S. Coast Guard**. Today, we welcome: Daniel Schaeffer, Chief, US Coast Guard Fisheries and Marine Protected Species Enforcement; and LCDR Gregg Casad, USCG's liaison to NOAA Fisheries. Thank you both for joining us today and please thank your Commandant, ADM Papp for the critical services provided by USCG for our joint efforts.

- And a heartfelt thanks to the many Congressional staffers and delegations represented here today.

- [Senator Begich/arriving later/acknowledgements when he arrives – see last page for text]

IUU FISHING AGREEMENT

- I am delighted to share the podium with Commissioner Damanaki today. She is a true visionary, a courageous woman, and a strong partner who is committed to an ambitious but achievable vision that I share: productive and sustainable fisheries from healthy oceans.
- **Commissioner Damanaki's** presence in Washington sends two powerful messages: (1) pirate fishing poses a grave threat to international security, global prosperity and sustainable fisheries and (2) defeating pirate fishing and achieving sustainable fisheries will require sustained international partnerships.
- Commissioner Damanaki and I stand here today as partners - **the EU and U.S. – committed to working together to eradicate pirate fishing and end unsustainable fishing practices.**
- The **agreement** we sign today is a major step forward in strengthening the global effort to combat pirate fishing.
- The **film** you just viewed shows the real threats of pirate fishing to the safety and livelihoods of fishermen as well as the impacts on fishing economies and the health of the oceans.

IUU FISHING

- Formally known as 'illegal, unreported, or unregulated fishing', or 'IUU fishing' for short, pirate fishing hauls in between 11 and 26

million tons of seafood annually and may represent as much as 40% of the total catch in some fisheries.

- Pirate fishing is a global problem, one that undermines efforts to achieve healthy oceans and sustainable fisheries.

SETA 70 SEIZURE

- Illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing is a **global problem** and **international cooperation** is critical to combating these activities. As an example of how such cooperation plays out, let me describe an **incident** that occurred a few months ago.
- On July 22, the *Seta 70* [see-tuh], a fishing vessel owned by a Korean multinational company, was chased down and seized off the coast of Liberia after it was caught fishing illegally in inshore waters and destroying the nets of local fishermen. A **Liberian observer** aboard the ship, trained by **NOAA Fisheries** tipped off officials. The ship was seized by the **Liberian Coastguard** with the assistance of **Liberia's Bureau for National Fisheries** and the **U.S. Coast Guard**.
- It's no coincidence that Liberian waters were targeted for illegal fishing activities. **Developing countries** often are victimized by this activity because of their limited capacity to respond.

- *Seta 70* is one of a number of vessels reported by the Environmental Justice Foundation to have been fishing illegally in Sierra Leone earlier in the year. The Environmental Justice Foundation apprised EU authorities of these ships' illegal fishing activities, and, in April 2011, approximately \$650,000 of fish were seized in a Spanish port – the largest seizure since the EU instituted new illegal fishing regulations.
- I **congratulate Commissioner Damanaki** and her team for this significant accomplishment.
- Our **goal is to make these successes a norm**, not the occasional exception as a step towards ending pirate fishing.
- We recognize that pirate fishing **endangers the economies of all nations** that import and export fish. We recognize that pirate fishing is also **a threat to food security**. With 3B people depending on seafood as their primary source of protein, we can no longer ignore activities that undermine access to nutritious sources of food. Pirate fishing **endangers fishermen's safety and livelihoods**.
- And, as these other activities show, pirate fishing **harms the environment** and undermines efforts to manage fish sustainably – often taking away from legitimate operations whose adherence to sustainable practices and stewardship need to be encouraged and

replicated – such as the large scale commercial operations off the coast of Alaska who have been instrumental in putting U.S. sustainable fisheries on the map.

- With the document we **sign today**, we are committing our countries
 - to **combat illegal fishing**,
 - to **strengthen our monitoring and enforcement** of management measures in our role as parties to regional fishery management organizations, and
 - to **prevent those engaged** in pirate fishing **from benefiting from their activities**.

TOWARD SUSTAINABLE FISHERIES

- The joint EU-U.S. efforts to combat illegal fishing are a down payment on a larger shared commitment to **sustainable fisheries**.
- **Just because fishing might be legal, does not mean it is sustainable.**
- Our **commitment** is to ensure that **good management and enforcement measures are in place** so that fishing is both sustainable and legal.
 - **In Europe**, Commissioner Damanaki has proposed the Common Fisheries Policy Reform – innovative and timely modifications to ensure fisheries are sustainable;

- **Here in the U.S.**, we are finally turning the corner on fisheries management and reaping the benefits of the landmark legislation, the Magnuson-Stevens Act, which revolutionized fishery management.
- For all too long, fisheries have been thought of as an inexhaustible resource. 35 years ago, **the U.S. Congress recognized that fisheries were not inexhaustible and passed and later strengthened the Magnuson-Stevens Act which lays out the broad framework under which US fisheries are managed today.**
- As recently as the 1960s, well-respected marine scientists were touting the virtually limitless capacity of the world's oceans to feed humanity.
- By early 1980s some of our nation's iconic stocks were in trouble and by late 1980s and early 1990s their populations crashed.
- Thanks in large part to a strengthened Magnuson-Stevens Act, the 230 most economically important fish stocks have improved steadily over the last decade.
- Now, during this 35th anniversary year of the original passage of that bold legislation, and after decades of overfishing, we are now **turning the corner** on sustainable management of U.S. fisheries.

- The lesson? Ending overfishing and rebuilding depleted fisheries takes time, persistence and sacrifice, but is possible, and brings significant economic and social benefit.
- The **Magnuson-Stevens Act** set **strict goals and timetables**, requires **adherence to scientific information**, and values **precaution** when uncertainty exists.
- **Let me be clear**: Implementation of these tough measures has not been quick or easy for fishermen – commercial and recreational – nor has it been easy for regulators.
 - We are making excellent progress in achieving the goals of the legislation, but we still have quite a way to go.
 - Nonetheless, most fishermen and regulators alike share the goal of healthy fisheries that can be sustained for generations and generations.
- Without tough rules and commitment by all parties, it is all too easy for short-term pressures to continually undermine good intentions and stymie progress.
- **Sustainable fisheries is about a better future** – a time when fishermen can rely on fishing as a **stable income for their families**, a time when **grandparent and grandchild** enjoy the day fishing together out on the water, and a time when **fishing communities**

can count on fishing to help their local economies recover and thrive.

- **And thanks to past and recent efforts, the sacrifices and discipline are paying off.**

STORIES

- I've **talked with fishermen around the U.S.** who are seeing the positive difference that fishery reforms can make. They're seeing it their **pocketbooks**, their **communities**, and their **hopes for the future**.
- When I was in Morro Bay, CA three weeks ago, I talked with young **Rob Seitz**, a groundfish fisherman who recently moved to Morro Bay. Rob is the face of a **new generation of fishermen**. Although he comes from a long line of fishermen, Rob almost left fishing behind. But when he learned about the new West Coast trawl catch share program, he saw light at the end of the tunnel. Rob said that, in the past, a lot of fish were damaged – fish he couldn't sell, fish that weren't in the sea - because he'd been trying to catch it fast. He is now **fishing smarter, not harder** and is optimistic about his future as a fisherman.
- I talked with another fisherman in Morro Bay, who is part of an experimental program, in which he's fishing **hook-and-line** instead of

trawling. Trawling, he used to get about \$1.80 a pound for black cod. After he made the switch to hook-and-line, he's getting \$5 a pound! Even though he isn't catching as many fish, chefs are clamoring for his **superior product**. He's fishing hook-and-line because of an **innovative experimental program** to see if fishing hook-and-line would increase value and quality. He doesn't catch as many fish, but these **trade-offs** are paying off. This strategy allows black cod populations to recover because they're not as many fish taken, yet gives fishermen a better return for their effort. Like Rob, this fisherman is fishing smarter, not harder too.

- From these two Morro Bay fishermen and others I've spoken with in Cape Cod, the Carolinas, the Gulf, and Alaska, what I'm hearing is that there are **fishermen out there who are benefiting from what NOAA and fishermen have done together** to change the dynamics and incentives of fishing, enabling profitable fishing now and profitable fishing tomorrow.
- Just like **money in a checking account**, we can't withdraw more than is renewed or we'll run out altogether. Healthy fish populations and healthy habitats are necessary if withdrawals are to be made on a sustainable basis.

- **One of NOAA's jobs is to keep a close eye on the Nation's fisheries accounts.** Every year NOAA publishes a tally of the nation's fisheries.
- Today, NOAA is announcing the release of its **Fisheries of the U.S. Report for 2010.** This is the annual statistical yearbook. Two highlights provide a snapshot:
 - 1) Three fisheries stocks from the Northeast – Georges Bank haddock, Atlantic pollock and spiny dogfish – have now been rebuilt to healthy levels, bringing to 21 the number that have been rebuilt nationwide since 2000.
 - 2) In 2010, 84 percent of the 253 stocks investigated were fished at a sustainable rate, and 77 percent of the 207 stocks with known population levels were abundant enough to be fished sustainably.
 - These numbers illustrate encouraging progress, but we have considerable work to do before all U.S. fisheries are fully rebuilt and fished at sustainable levels.
 - In 2010, 84 percent of the stocks examined for fishing activity (213 of 253 stocks) were free from overfishing, or not fished at too high a level, and 77 percent of the stocks with known population levels (159 of 207 stocks) were above the

overfished level, that level too low to provide the maximum sustainable yield.

BUILDING A BETTER FUTURE TOGETHER

- Rebuilding is a joint effort. **Together, with fishermen, we are building a better future.**
 - A better future because fishermen have **good, stable jobs in good, stable fisheries.**
 - A better future because commercial fishermen, charter boat operators, regional fishery councils, government agencies, and non-governmental organizations are building **relationships based on trust.**
 - A better future because **good science** guides the management of healthy oceans and sustainable fisheries.
 - And a better future because where uncertainty in information exists, we **err on the side of caution**, preferring to favor healthy fisheries over collapses.
- **But building this better future is not easy, especially in tough economic times. It takes courage, hard work, good partners and continual evaluation and adjustments.**

CLOSING

- With the work that **Commissioner Damanaki** has done to put forward a **proposal for Common Fisheries policy reform** and in our future work together to clamp down **on pirate fishing**, the U.S. is pleased to be standing with the EU.
- The reforms to the **Common Fisheries Policy** proposed by Commissioner Damanaki **will benefit not only fisheries in the EU, but fisheries globally.**
 - I **congratulate Commissioner Damanaki** for having the courage and vision to put forth such a proposal.
 - If adopted, these reforms will require some **sacrifice**, but I believe, as has been the case in the United States, these sacrifices will be repaid by much greater rewards. Pulling out of a downward spiral, reversing direction and making steady progress upward is
- We still have a **long, long way to go** on sustainable management of the fisheries on a global scale. Targeting IUU fishing brings us a step closer.

SENATOR BEGICH [insert after the senator arrives]

- Senator Begich joined us a few minutes ago. As Chair of the Fisheries Subcommittee of the Senate Commerce Committee, and

as Senator from the great state of Alaska where fisheries play a prominent role in the culture and economy, he is a champion of sustainable fisheries. Two weeks ago I had the pleasure of meeting with a range of commercial, recreational, tribal and subsistence fishing interests in Alaska with the Senator. Alaska's collaborative and innovative, science-driven approach to fisheries provide successful models. Changing conditions also illustrate ongoing challenges for achieving sustainable fisheries across the board. It's a pleasure to have another champion for sustainable fisheries join us here today.