

# *Protecting vulnerable marine ecosystems (VMEs) in the high seas from deep-sea bottom fishing impacts*

Moderator: Serge Garcia – IUCN / FEG

- Jessica Sanders - *FAO Subregional Office for the Pacific Islands*
- Tony Thompson - *FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Department*
- Mauricio Galvez - *South Pacific Regional Fisheries Management Organization / Fishery Research Division, Instituto de Fomento Pesquero (IFOP) Chile*
- Michel Kaiser - *IUCN-FEG / School of Ocean Sciences, Bangor University*
- Joe Appiott – *Marine programme, Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)*

Jointly organized by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)  
and the Fisheries Expert Group (FEG) of IUCN

11:30 – 13:00 | Wednesday, 06 September 2017 | Salon Bahia 3





## *Programme*

### PRESENTATIONS:

- Jessica Sanders: Background and introduction to VMEs
- Tony Thompson: Deep sea fisheries and VMEs
- Mauricio Galvez: VMEs in the SPRFMO area
- Michel Kaiser: Evaluating trawl impacts

### PANEL AND OPEN DISCUSSION



Food and Agriculture Organization  
of the United Nations



# Background and introduction to Vulnerable Marine Ecosystems

Jessica Sanders

*Fisheries Officer, FAO Subregional Office for the Pacific Islands*

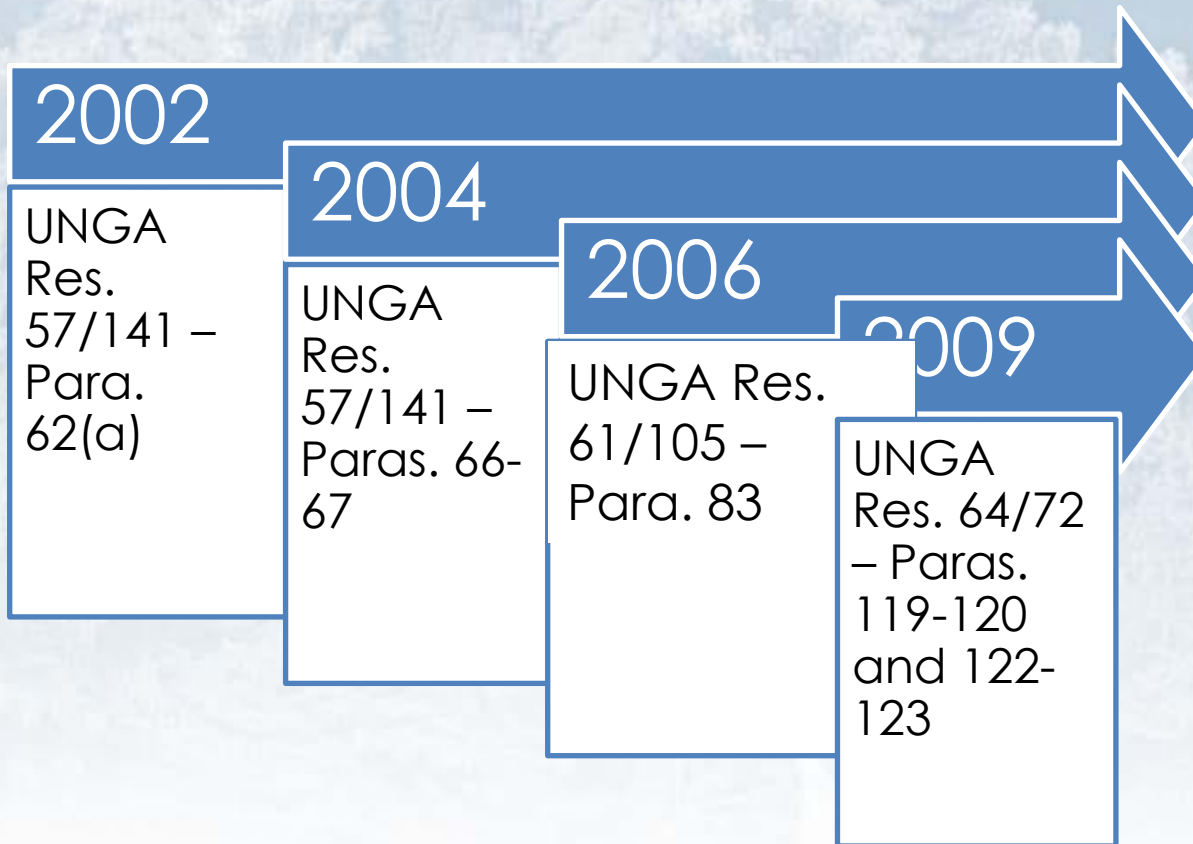
IMPAC IV

La Serena, Chile

4-8 September

2017

# UN General Assembly resolutions related to bottom fisheries



# UNGA resolutions related to bottom fisheries

*UNGA resolutions called on high seas fishing nations and RFMOs to take urgent action to protect VMEs from fishing activities in the ABNJ.*

In **2002**, UNGA Resolution **57/141** first used the term “**VMEs**” when the Assembly recommended discussions on protecting VMEs.

In **2004**, UNGA Resolution **59/25** called upon States and RFMO/As to consider **mitigation measures** to protect VMEs from destructive fishing practices, and called on RFMOs to adopt **conservation and management measures** to this end.

In **2006**, UNGA Resolution **61/105** kickstarted the VME process and called on States and RFMOs to conduct **impact assessments** and to **cease bottom fishing** where VMEs are known or likely to occur.

In **2009**, UNGA Resolution **64/72** reaffirmed that impact assessments should be conducted **before** bottom fishing activities are authorized, and that all relevant resolutions should be implemented by States and RFMOs in accordance with the **FAO Deep-Sea Fisheries Guidelines**.



# Major instruments and processes: deep-sea fisheries

## Binding

- UN Convention on the Law of the Sea
- UN Fish Stocks Agreement
- Compliance Agreement
- Port State Measures Agreement

## Non-binding

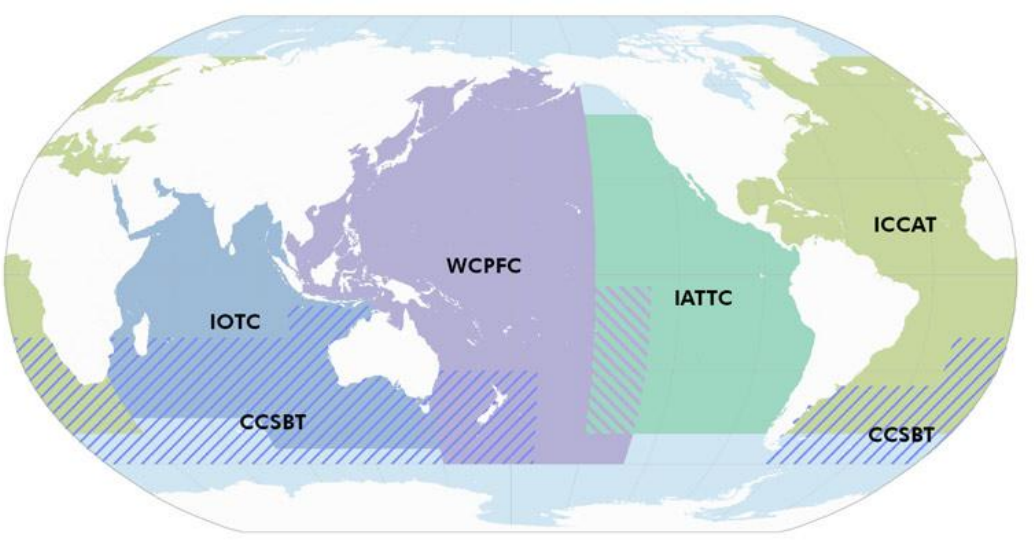
- UN General Assembly Resolutions
- FAO International Guidelines on Deep-sea Fisheries in the High Seas
- Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries
- International Plans of Actions

# Regional Fisheries Management Organisations (RFMOs)

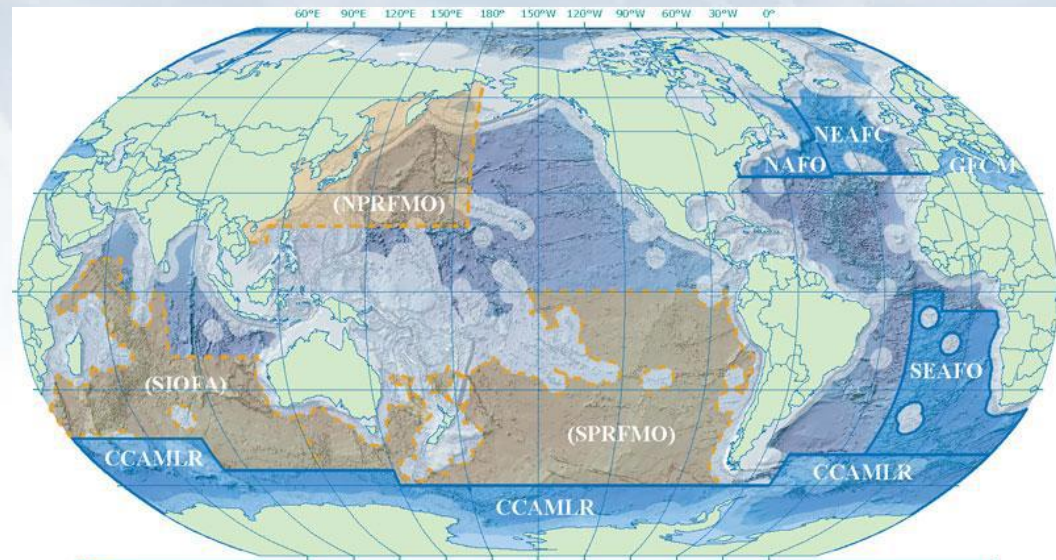
- **What is an RFMO?**
- An organisation with competence under international law to adopt legally binding conservation and management measures for fisheries in the high seas
- Authority to manage high seas fisheries
- **Expanded role of RFMOs**
- Traditionally
  - ❖ Focus on target stocks and bycatches of other commercially important species
- Now
  - ❖ Also focus on the effects of the fisheries on other parts of the marine ecosystem and on biodiversity

# Bodies managing fisheries in the high seas

Specific Species RFMOs and Arrangements (tuna)



Deep-sea RFMOs and Arrangements



Competence area of established RFMO/As
  Competence area of (RFMO/As) in the process of being established
  200 nautical miles arcs

Map Projection: Robinson  
FAO, 2008



# FAO International Guidelines for the Management of Deep-Sea Fisheries in the High Seas

## Guidelines designed for fisheries that occur beyond national jurisdiction, and where:

- catch includes species that can only sustain low exploitation rates, and
- fishing gear may contact the sea floor

## Objective of the guidelines:

- to provide tools, and guidance on their application, and to facilitate and encourage the efforts of States and RFMO/As towards;
  - sustainable use of marine living resources,
  - prevention of significant adverse impacts on deep-sea VMEs.



# FAO International Guidelines for the Management of Deep-Sea Fisheries in the High Seas

*The FAO Deep-Sea Fisheries Guidelines elaborate on five science-based criteria for identifying VMEs and provide guidance for conducting **impact assessments**.*

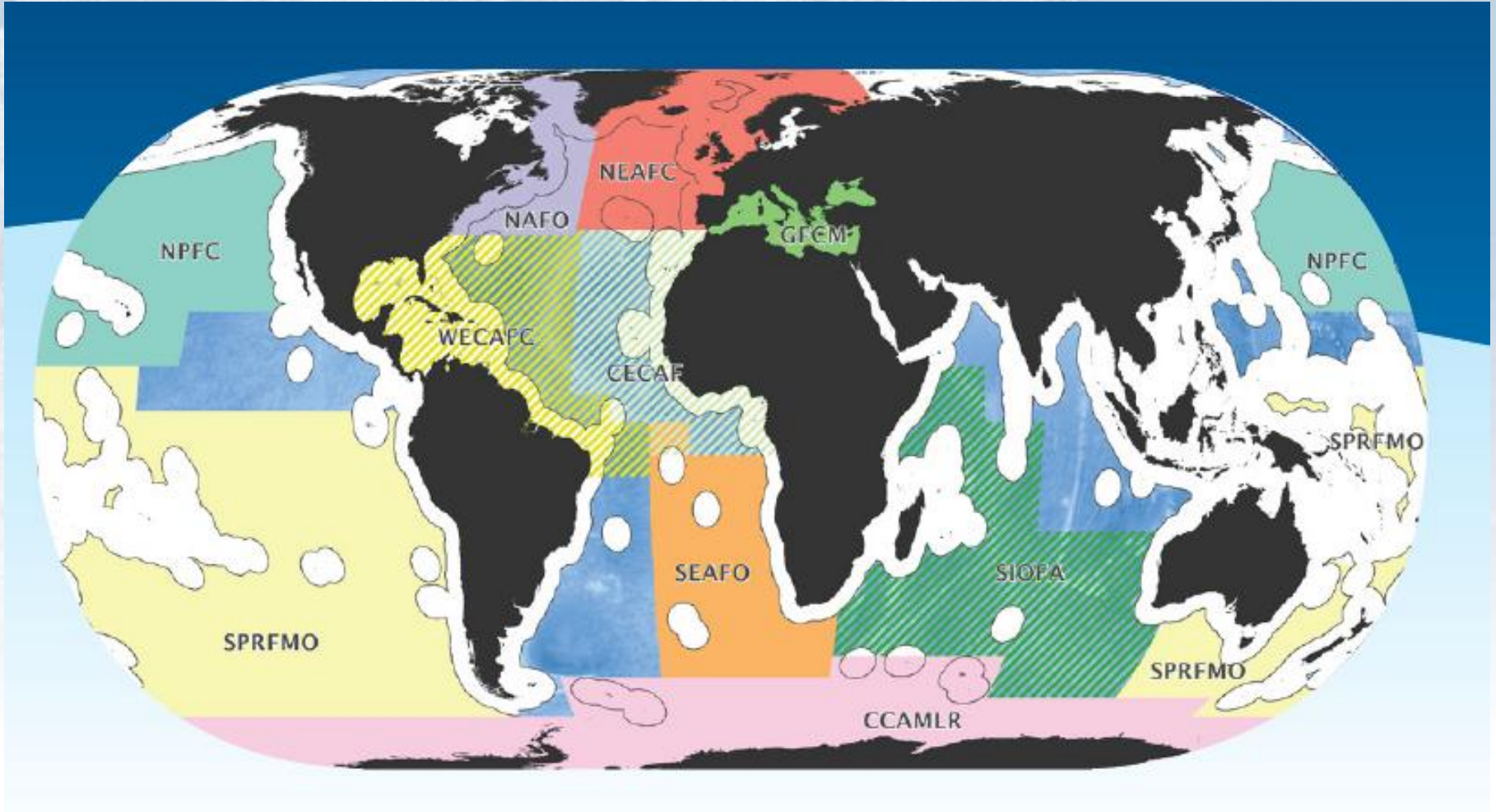
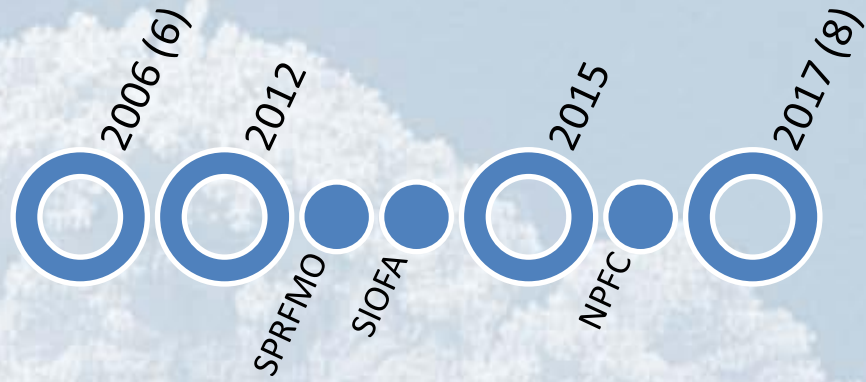
The Guidelines also provide **examples** of potentially vulnerable species groups, communities, and habitats, and describe **key concepts**:

**Vulnerability** is related to the likelihood that a population, community, or habitat will experience substantial alteration from short-term or chronic disturbance, and the likelihood that it would recover and in what time frame.

**Significant adverse impacts** are those that compromise ecosystem integrity (i.e. ecosystem structure or function) in a manner that:

- ❖ **Impairs** the ability of affected populations to replace themselves;
- ❖ **Degrades** the long-term natural productivity of habitats; or
- ❖ **Causes**, on more than a temporary basis, significant loss of species richness, habitat or community types.







**Thank you**

