



**COMMISSION  
EIGHTH REGULAR SESSION**  
Tumon, Guam, USA  
26-30 March 2012

---

**Greenpeace position on Rights Based Management -2012\_02\_29**

---

**WCPFC8- 2011/OP-07  
24 March 2012**

Greenpeace Position on Rights Based Management

**Allocating rights of access to marine resources  
in order to meet environmental, social and economic objectives**

March 2012

Decades of industrial development of fishing activities, their continuous geographical expansion to virtually every corner of the world's oceans and an increasing demand for fish products in international markets have left a profound footprint on marine ecosystems, resulting in an overall decline in their diversity and global productivity.

In order to,

- (a) ensure the recovery of overexploited populations and of the integrity of marine ecosystems;
- (b) guarantee the future sustainability of the world's fisheries; and
- (c) facilitate the development of sustainable economies and alleviate poverty,

**Greenpeace seeks a substantial transformation** from fisheries production dominated by large-scale, capital-intensive, socially and economically unjust and environmentally destructive methods to prioritise smaller scale, community-based, labour intensive fisheries using ecologically responsible, selective fishing technology and environmentally sound practices.<sup>1</sup>

Greenpeace holds the position that **in making such transformation, the allocation of rights of access to marine resources can play an important role** provided that the rights are defined and allocated in a way which ensures that environmental, social and economic objectives are met.

**RBM is not a synonym for fisheries management based on property rights (ITQs, catch shares and the like).** It is crucial to bear in mind that the concept of management based on rights should not be limited to just one type (ITQs, or any other) as many involved in this debate assume too often.

Marine resources are part of the global *commons* and the way they are used should be decided upon by societies at large with an overall sustainable management of our natural resources as the core aim. Only by aiming at sustainability in the way resources are harvested is prosperity for fishing communities possible. **Greenpeace opposes the privatisation of access to fishing and control of marine areas<sup>2</sup>** and believes privilege to access fisheries should not be allocated *on a permanent basis; neither should such rights be tradable without clear, well-defined, restrictions.*

**Greenpeace supports rights based management schemes which**

- are designed to achieve a set of management objectives including environmental, social and economic objectives;
- are designed to achieve conservation objectives, including maintaining healthy fish stocks and associated species, the integrity of marine ecosystems and keeping fishing capacity in line with a sustainable and precautionary level of fishing mortality, consistent with the ecosystem-based and precautionary approaches;
- are designed to grant priority access to resources to those who meet a set of well-defined environmental and social criteria,<sup>3</sup> consistent with the overall management objectives;

1 Greenpeace Principles for Low-Impact Ecologically-Responsible Fisheries. Principle 2.3.

2 "In order to protect society's common natural heritage, access to fishing and control of ocean areas should not be privatised." GP Principles for Low Impact Ecologically Responsible Fisheries. Principle 2.3.9.

- result in a fair allocation of marine resources and include provisions on social equity, avoiding the concentration of such rights, prioritise the interests of artisanal, traditional and subsistence fishermen and fulfil fishing and coastal communities and indigenous people's rights;
- are tailored to the specific environmental and cultural context of the area where they take place, for example by taking into account already existing traditional tenure systems;
- involve all stakeholders through co-management schemes, including civil society,
- are transparent and allow for full participation from the design phase;
- include clear restrictions in the tradability of access rights, in order to avoid the creation of fishing cartels, the promotion of armchair fishers/slipper skippers (fishers who lease their quota to others) and other undesirable effects;
- are used in combination with other management tools such as capacity management, gear and area restrictions, habitat protection and an effective monitoring, control, surveillance and enforcement system, ie. rights based management schemes do not substitute for other elements of a coherent management package;
- contain provisions for periodic review of their performance, allowing for public intervention in cases of non-compliance or failure to meet established objectives.

In transitioning to sustainable fisheries, **Greenpeace states that Governments are ultimately accountable for the sustainable use of marine resources.** Such responsibility should in no way be delegated to private operators but rather shared through co-management regimes that engage all stakeholders. This way, the interests of society at large are properly represented, not just those of a small number of industrial operators exploiting marine resources.

---

3 Including: environmental impacts (level of by-catch; damage to the marine environment, including impact on species composition and the marine food web); history of compliance/flag State performance in the case of international fisheries; amount and quality of data provided; employment provided at sea and on land; quality of the fish produced and delivered to market; energy consumption per unit of fish caught; socio-economic benefits provided, especially to coastal fishing communities.