

Prohibition of purchases from FAO Area 34 (West Africa)

Owing to serious concerns regarding a high level of illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing off the coast of West Africa, and consequent negative impacts on people and communities in the area, our business has placed a formal prohibition on the purchase of raw materials from Coastal waters in this region.

Background

We are specifically concerned about IUU fishing in the coastal waters of United Nations Food & Agriculture Organisation Area 34 from Senegal to Liberia¹.

Whilst scientific information remains limited, several recent reports (including from Greenpeace and the EU Parliament²) have presented evidence that unregulated exploitation of fishery resources in the region represents a significant threat to the sustainability of fish stocks and the food security of many West African coastal communities; and, further, that lack of effective landing, transshipment and import controls means that some illegally caught fish are entering into the European market.

Given the risk that some illegal product from this region is entering European markets, our decision to place a formal prohibition on these materials is an internal precautionary security measure consistent with our 'Ten Principles for Responsible Fish Procurement' particularly Principle 1 (Legality) and Principle 10 (Ethics & Environment). These specifically commit us to not to buy fish which has been 'caught, landed or farmed illegally' and also prohibits any fish purchases which "...may result in irreversible ecosystem degradation and have detrimental effects on the livelihoods, social conditions and food security of local communities."

Duration

This policy may be revised when illegal fishing is no longer a problem in these fisheries, and/or when changes to the regulatory regime enables us to be confident of sourcing only legally caught product.

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Notes

1 Divisions of Major Fishing Area 34 which we believe give cause for concerns include 1.31, 1.32, 2, 3.11, 3.12, 3.13, 3.2 and 3.3. For more information please consult the FAO website at <http://www.fao.org/fishery/en>.

2 European Parliament report on the implementation of the EU action plan against illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing (2006/2225(INI)) FINAL A6-0015/2007