Economic Commission for Europe

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New developments and follow-up

Use of United Nations Code for Trade and Transport Locations (UN/LOCODE) for the Global Record of Fishing Vessels, Refrigerated Transport Vessels and Supply Vessels (Global Record)

I.   About UN/LOCODE

1.   The United Nations Code for Trade and Transport Locations (UN/LOCODE) is an international standard to identify locations in a unique and unambiguous way.

2.   UN/LOCODE is specified in UNECE Recommendation No. 16[1] . This five-character code system is used to identify locations along the international supply chain, such as place of departure, place of origin, place of entry, place of destination. The first-two code is for the country/territory code based on ISO 3166-1 and the last-three code is for the location, which is unique and unambiguous in the country/territory.

3.   UN/LOCODE is not only used for international trade and transport but also in other areas, for example, sustainable fishing, maritime security and environmental protection. It is adopted by international organizations and industry associations. Some industry associations further expand UN/LOCODE for their purposes and introduce child codes based on UN/LOCODE. For example:

- Bureau International des Containers (BIC) Container Facility Code

- International Maritime Organization (IMO) Port Facility Number

- Ship Planning Message Development Group (SMDG) Master Terminal List

4.   UN/LOCODE is currently managed, maintained and published by the UNECE secretariat with the support of the UN/LOCODE Advisory Group, including the UN/LOCODE Focal Point Network and the UN/LOCODE Maintenance Team. The UN/LOCODE directory is currently released twice per year on the UNECE website free of charge[2].

II.   About the FAO Global Record

5.   Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing is a global challenge hindering fisheries management, impacting the biological, social and economic sustainability of fisheries. Although driven mainly by economic incentives, IUU fishing, owes its resilience to the lack of transparency within the global fishing industry and the absence of cooperation between States. Factors, which are often exploited by IUU perpetrators to

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[1] UNECE Recommendation No. 16: United Nations Code for Trade and Transport Locations (https://unece.org/trade/publications/recommendation-ndeg16-united-nations-code-trade-and-transport-locations). The fourth edition was approved by the UN/CEFACT Plenary in 2020.
[2] https://www.unece.org/cefact/locode/welcome.html

conceal their unlawful activities and to escape prosecution through changes of flags, vessel identifiers or using shell companies. Consequently, to shed light on fishing activities and coordinate actions to combat IUU fishing, information sharing at national, regional and global levels, is essential.

6.   In this context, the FAO Global Record of Fishing Vessels, Refrigerated Transport Vessels and Supply Vessels (FAO Global Record), is conceived to provide a useful and powerful tool to deter and eliminate IUU fishing by means of increased transparency on the global fishing and fishing-related fleet and enhanced traceability of fish products. To this end, the FAO Global Record collects and disseminates through a unique access point, certified data primarily from States and Regional Fisheries Management Organizations (RFMOs), about ships' identities and activities.

7.   Thanks to the IMO number, the permanent and unique vessel identifier of the FAO Global Record, States' authorities are allowed to unambiguously verify the identity of any vessel along its entire life spam, despite changes of its flag, name, owner and operator. Additionally, the IMO number will support traceability of the information, and enable linking with other relevant information systems and sources of information.

8.   The FAO Global Record is to become the backbone of international fisheries management, as it provides the fleet record to which all other information for fisheries management and control will have to be invariably connected. It is thus expected to support the implementation of the PSMA as well as other international agreements such as the United Nations Fish Stock Agreement (UNFSA).

9.   Currently, the FAO Global Record[3] contains fishing vessels and vessels involved in fishing-related activities from 66 States, totaling over 11,845 vessel records from all sizes, types and regions.

III.   Why does the FAO Global Record need UN/LOCODEs?

10.   The combat against IUU fishing needs a global information system. In the context of the FAO Global Record, the identification of a particular location constitutes a key piece of information that allows reporting information about ports where landings, vessel registration, inspection and control activities occur. Frequently, such locations are given multiple names, spelt differently in other languages or/and possess accents or diacritic marks that could create confusion and hamper data exchange. Therefore, the identification of ports in a standardized way is of great use within the Global Record Information System to ensure accurate exchange of Port related data.

11.   In particular, the FAO Global Record compiles ports data through the following data fields:

- Port of registration of the vessel

- Location: when submitting information on the results of a port inspection

- Port: where a vessel has been denied entry or its use

12.   For the sake of improved data quality, harmonization of data formats and data exchange the Global Record Working Group (GRWG) regards UN/LOCODE as the preferred option. Concretely, according to the conclusions of the fifth meeting of the Global Record Working Group (GRWG5[4]), the importance of using standardized reference lists for the submission of data within the Global Record Information System is highlighted. Moreover, the group saw the potential of the UN/LOCODE as a suitable international standard for identifying ports in the system and encouraged States, where not available, to request the creation of new UN/LOCODEs.

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[3] http://www.fao.org/global-record/information-system/en/
[4] http://www.fao.org/global-record/meetings/grwg5-meeting-documents/en/

IV. Characteristics of FAO Global Record ports

13.   Generally, the FAO Global Record comprehends primarily all ports where vessels eligible to be included in the FAO Global Record are registered or subjected to control activities. Where eligible vessel refers to fishing vessels and vessels involved in fishing related activities of over 24 meters in length overall, or of 12 meters or above that operate in waters beyond their national jurisdiction or that export their fish products into international markets.

14.   Designated ports are ports where eligible vessels will be subjected to inspections or port denials, will correspond to the designated ports under the PSMA if the port State is a Party to the Agreement. The characteristics of ports might differ from country to country depending on the level of development but also on the level and relevance of international trade which might depend, inter alia, on the value and quantity of commercial species caught in the country's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) or on its role for international trade. A typical designated port would have landing facilities for the fish and spaces available for storage, sale and/or processing of fish. It would very likely have other facilities to resupply the vessel before its departure. The port size can vary enormously from country to country. There are ports that act as regional hubs and others very specialized for a particular maritime species or group of maritime species.

15.   Contrary to designated ports, ports where eligible vessels are registered, are vast in numbers, very diverse, and go far beyond in scope than the PSMA-designated ports. Due to the broad coverage of this criteria, these ports might vary from a small port with a reduced fleet of vessels targeting migratory species to international ports which also accommodate vessels for fish trade.

16.   The size, numbers and possible proximity of FAO Global Record ports will require a high number; it sounds scary of new requests for UN/LOCODE and greater geographical resolution to distinguish between ports within the same area.

V. Proposed solution for inclusion and maintenance of Global Record ports in UN/LOCODE

17.   The UNECE secretariat proposes to the UN/LOCODE Advisory Group to:

- recognize the importance of UN/LOCODE to combat IUU fishing; and
- agree to include all FAO Global Record-ports in UN/LOCODE, i.e. assign in addition to UN/LOOCDES for PSMA-designated ports, UN/LOCODEs to those ports for vessel included in the FAO Global Record.

18.   Upon the agreement to this policy, the UN/LOCODE maintenance procedure for PSMA-designated ports approved at the fourth annual meeting of the UN/LOCODE Advisory Group (ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2021/20[5]) ,will be also applied to those FAO Global Record ports in UN/LOCODE. Under this maintenance procedure,

- the National Focal Point designated for the FAO Global Record will be registered as a UN/LOCODE Data Maintenance Request (DMR) submitter in the new UN/LOCODE maintenance system.
- When a national port is entered into the FAO Global Record System, the National Focal Point designated for the FAO Global Record should use the UN/LOCODE as the port identifier and code.
- If no such UN/LOCODE exists, the National Focal Point designated for the FAO Global Record will be able to submit a UN/LOCODE Data Maintenance Request (DMR) for a new UN/LOCODE.

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[5] https://unece.org/sites/default/files/2021-02/ECE_TRADE_C_CEFACT_2021_20E-UNLOCODE-AG-Report.pdf

- The UN/LOCODE Maintenance Team will offer priority to validate DMRs related to FAO Global Record ports.
- Once the National Focal Point designated for the FAO Global Record has received the new UN/LOCODE, he or she would be able to update the new port information into the FAO Global Record Information System.

19. In identifying UN/LOCODEs for FAO Global Record ports, the National Focal Point designated for the FAO Global Record should consult with the UN/LOCODE National Focal Point (NFP) if it is nominated. Both UNECE and FAO secretariats recognize the importance of the internal coordination between the UN/LOCODE NFPs and the National Focal Point designated for the FAO Global Record and will provide information and assistance to the contact persons.

20. For those ports that have already been registered in the FAO Global Record database, the UNECE and FAO secretariats will endeavor to work together with the National Focal Point designated for the FAO Global Record and the NFPs to resolve discrepancies and raise UN/LOCODE Data Maintenance Requests (DMRs) if necessary.

21. In case of dysfunction of a port, the contact persons need to submit a DMR to inform the UN/LOCODE Maintenance Team of this modification.

22. All FAO Global Record ports are flagged in the UN/LOCODE database. If a DMR submitted by a non-FAO stakeholder affects the UN/LOCODE used by those ports, the UN/LOCODE Maintenance Team will pay attention to the validation of the DMR to avoid the negative impacts on the FAO Global Record ports.

23. The FAO will update its members on this arrangement during the next meeting of the Global Record Working Group.

Annex I: Guide[6] on maintenance of UN/LOCODE used for FAO Global Record ports[7]

1.   Sign up in the new UN/LOCODE system[8] (http://unlocode.unece.org).

2.   Contact the UN/LOCODE secretariat by email (locode@un.org) to indicate:

- Your registered email; and
- Whether you are a National Focal Point designated for the FAO Global Record, and for which country.

3.   This step is very important to provide a clue to the system to identify the relevance and the priority of Data Maintenance Requests (DMRs) submitted by you.

4.   After signing into the UN/LOCODE system, go to "Real-time Search" to look up the UN/LOCODE for a location in question. Please search with the location name of the city or the town where the port is located instead of the port name.

5.   If the search result shows that no UN/LOCODE has been assigned to that location, please submit a DMR to request a new code to identify that location.

6.   If the search result shows that a UN/LOCODE exists for that location but you think it necessary to update its attributes, such as the location name, subdivision, function(s), coordinates, you are welcome to submit a DMR to modify the existing UN/LOCODE entry.

7.   It is recommended that you contact the UN/LOCODE National Focal Point[9] to clarify the necessity and accuracy of your DMR before your submission.

8.   As a DMR submitter, you will be invited to attend at least one UN/LOCODE maintenance meeting at your convenience to explain your DMR. Your participation will facilitate the validation of your DMR. If necessary, you will be contacted to justify your request by providing further information.

9.   After your DMR is validated by the UN/LOCODE Maintenance Team, you will be informed of the validation result.

10.   When your requested UN/LOCODE is ready, you can go to the FAO Global Record Information System to update the port list.

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[6] This guide is for the National Focal Points of the FAO Global Record.

[7] The procedure described in the Annex can be supported only after the launch of the new UN/LOCODE system.

[8] For further information, please refer to the User Manual of the new UN/LOCODE system.

[9] Please refer to the contact of the NFP published on the website (https://unece.org/trade/trade-facilitation-and-e-businessuncefact/unlocode-national-focal-points).