(a) the vulnerability of developing States bordering the Area, in particular the least-developed among them and small island developing States, that are dependent on the exploitation of fishery resources, including for meeting the nutritional requirements of their populations or parts thereof;

(b) the need to avoid adverse impacts on, and ensure access to fisheries by, subsistence, small-scale and artisanal fishers and fishworkers; and

(c) the need to ensure that conservation and management measures adopted by the Meeting of the Parties do not result in transferring, directly or indirectly, a disproportionate burden of conservation action onto developing States bordering the Area, in particular the least-developed among them and small island developing States.

3. Cooperation by the Contracting Parties under the provisions of this Agreement and through other subregional or regional organizations involved in the management of marine living resources should include action for the purposes of:

(a) enhancing the ability of developing States bordering the Area, in particular the least-developed among them and small island developing States, to conserve and manage fishery resources and to develop their own fisheries for such resources; and

(b) assisting developing States bordering the Area, in particular the least-developed among them and small island developing States, to enable them to participate in fisheries for such resources, including facilitating access in accordance with this Agreement.

4. Cooperation with developing States bordering the Area, in particular the least-developed among them and small island developing States, for the purposes set out in this article should include the provision of financial assistance, assistance relating to human resources development, technical assistance, transfer of technology, and activities directed specifically towards:

(a) improved conservation and management of the fishery resources and of straddling stocks occurring in waters under national jurisdiction adjacent to the Area, which can include the collection, reporting, verification, exchange and analysis of fisheries data and related information;

(b) improved information collection and management of the impact of fishing activities on the marine environment;

(c) stock assessment and scientific research;

(d) monitoring, control, surveillance, compliance and enforcement, including training and capacity-building at the local level, development and funding of national and regional observer programmes and access to technology; and

(e) participation in the Meeting of the Parties and meetings of its subsidiary bodies as well as in the settlement of disputes.

## ARTICLE 14 – TRANSPARENCY

1. The Contracting Parties shall promote transparency in decision making processes and other activities carried out under this Agreement.

2. Coastal States with waters under national jurisdiction adjacent to the Area that are not Contracting Parties to this Agreement shall be entitled to participate as observers in the Meeting of the Parties and meetings of its subsidiary bodies.

3. Non-Contracting Parties to this Agreement shall be entitled to participate as observers in the Meeting of the Parties and meetings of its subsidiary bodies.

4. Intergovernmental organizations concerned with matters relevant to the implementation of this Agreement, in particular the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the South West Indian Ocean Fisheries Commission, and regional fisheries management organizations with competence over high seas waters adjacent to the Area, shall be entitled to participate as observers in the Meeting of the Parties and meetings of its subsidiary bodies.

5. Representatives from non-governmental organizations concerned with matters relevant to the implementation of this Agreement shall be afforded the opportunity to participate in the Meeting of the Parties and meetings of its subsidiary bodies as observers or otherwise as determined by the Meeting of the Parties. The Rules of Procedure of the Meeting of the Parties and its subsidiary bodies shall provide for such participation. The procedures shall not be unduly restrictive in this respect.

6. Observers shall be given timely access to pertinent information subject to the Rules of Procedure, including those concerning confidentiality requirements, which the Meeting of the Parties may adopt.

## ARTICLE 15 – FISHING ENTITIES

1. After the entry into force of this Agreement any fishing entity whose vessels have fished or intend to fish for fishery resources in the Area may, by a written instrument delivered to the Chairperson of the Meeting of the Parties, in accordance with such procedures as may be established by the Meeting of the Parties, express its firm commitment to be bound by the terms of this Agreement. Such commitment shall become effective thirty (30) days from the date of receipt of the instrument. Any such fishing entity may withdraw such commitment by written notification addressed to the Chairperson of the Meeting of the Parties. Notice of withdrawal shall become effective ninety (90) days from the date of its receipt by the Chairperson of the Meeting of the Parties.

2. A fishing entity which has expressed its commitment to be bound by the terms of this Agreement may participate in the Meeting of the Parties and its subsidiary bodies, and partake in decision making, in accordance with the Rules of Procedure adopted by the Meeting of the Parties. Articles 1 to 18 and 20.2 apply, *mutatis mutandis*, to such a fishing entity.