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The world’s major powers have been gobbling up so much fish with their mammoth fleets that the United Nations has coined a new term: “Ocean grabbing.”

In a new report from Olivier de Schutter, the UN’s special rapporteur on food, the U.S., China, Russia, Japan, and members of the European Union were blasted for aggressive industrial fishing that has amounted to “ocean grabbing,” a practice that threatens the food security of developing countries.

De Schutter said “shady access agreements” have allowed bigger nations to take advantage of poorer ones’ ocean resources. The report provided examples of Pacific island countries receiving only about 6% of the $3 billion in tuna harvested off their coasts.

Governments of emerging nations were urged to tighten access to their waters in order to reduce overfishing.

“It is clear that as fish are becoming less abundant, fishing vessels are tempted to evade rules and conservation strategies... without rapid action to claw back waters from unsustainable practices, fisheries will no longer be able to play a critical role in securing the right to food of millions,” De Schutter told Reuters.

-Noel Brinkerhoff

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U.N. urges foreign fishing fleets to halt ‘ocean grabbing’ (by Alister Doyle, Reuters)
Ocean-grabbing ‘threatens world’s fisheries’: UN (AFP)
Plundering Pacific Ocean Fish for Short-Term Profits (by David Wallachinsky and Noel Brinkerhoff)
U.S. and the World - Rampant “Ocean Grabbing” by Major Powers Threatens Food S...