



STATEMENT: Taking Small Scale Fisheries into consideration in fisheries management through a human rights based approach

Current fisheries management practices with special considerations for small-scale fisheries - sub-committee on fisheries management, first session, 15-18 January 2024

We welcome the proposed focus by the FAO Sub Committee on Fisheries Management on identifying and understanding which management approaches and tools are most suitable for sustainable small-scale fisheries (SSF). In our view, this calls for a human rights' based approach, as developed in the VGSSF, ensuring not only responsible fisheries management but also social development, gender equity, and the recognition of fishers and fish workers' rights, including in terms of access to resources. In this regard, we believe that the most appropriate approach is to prioritize **transparent, gender sensitive, collaborative management schemes**, whilst ensuring at the same time that the artisanal fishing communities' tenure and access rights are respected and secured.

To address over-exploitation of resources and destruction of ecosystems, particularly in coastal areas, artisanal fishers have [called for](#)¹ closing inshore areas to industrial fishing and to other destructive and polluting activities – such as offshore energy production, tourism, large-scale aquaculture and fishmeal factories. These areas reserved for artisanal fishers should further be fully co-managed, putting in place specific legal frameworks that clearly define the roles and responsibilities of the authorities and fishers. Sufficient and appropriate support should be provided for fishing communities to engage in co-management (including compensation for expenses incurred related to participatory surveillance and closed fishing seasons) and for protecting these zones from other competing industries.

¹ A Call to Action from Small-Scale Fishers, June 2022. Available at: <https://caopa.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/Call-to-action-online-pdf.pdf>

Recognizing the key role of women in fisheries and co-management and enhancing their status and capabilities, are essential. It is also vital to ensure they are given equal opportunities for effective and meaningful participation in fisheries management, including in the drafting of national and regional fisheries management policies.

Fisheries management on its own will not ensure sustainable fisheries

However, in a context where blue economy is booming, fisheries management on its own will not guarantee sustainable fisheries. The precautionary approach, transparency and effective participation of small scale fishing communities should guide any new ocean use. This means any new ocean use that will negatively impact ecosystems and the local communities that depend on them for their livelihoods should not be welcomed. When it comes to maritime spatial planning, which is promoted as a way to organize and manage the occupation and use of the ocean by the various users, it will be key to develop, with the utmost transparency and with the meaningful and effective participation of affected coastal communities, mechanisms for: (1) independent social and environmental impact assessments, (2) consultation which allows for informed and active participation of affected fishing communities, (3) conflict resolution between users of maritime spaces, and (4) grievance redress. To support this, adequate provision should be included in national budgets for enforcement of environmental regulation, including the implementation of international and regional laws and conventions, before any new ocean use is allowed.

Improving data collection on environmental and social aspects of SSF

We welcome the emphasis proposed on the need to broaden current practices of fisheries management to include ecological, social, economic, nutritional and gender objectives. A first step to achieve this will be to collect gender disaggregated data to, on the one hand, highlight the contributions of small scale fisheries to food and nutrition security, livelihoods, conservation. On the other hand, data should also be collected to highlight specific needs to be met to enhance the social well-being of communities, like casualties at sea and in processing activities, to enhance work safety and overall working conditions and social protection, including availability of child care, sanitation and rest facilities.

The lack of data is also apparent in inland small-scale fisheries. Thus, there is a need to better document these fisheries, their contributions and the challenges they face, so that they can be recognized and supported at a national and international level.

In case data of importance to fisheries management already exists, such as information related to various access arrangements entered into by coastal countries with fleets of foreign origin, the publication, to the minimum standards of the Fisheries Transparency Initiative (FiTI), of all relevant information, including legislation, fishing authorizations, data on performance and the rationale for management regulations is important.

RFMO for small pelagics

We fully support the proposal to develop a roadmap for ensuring that one hundred percent of marine and inland fisheries are placed under effective management, with the objective to deliver healthy fish stocks and secure equitable livelihoods. We recall, given the looming food

crisis, in particular in developing countries, and the key role fish plays in human nutrition, an additional objective should be to maximize the contribution of these fisheries to food security.

In the light of this, we call for resource access allocation systems to give priority access to those who fish most sustainably from an environmental and social point of view, and contribute most to food security, prioritizing fish for human consumption rather than for the reduction value chain (for fishmeal and fish oil).

In its efforts to ensure all fisheries are under effective management, we believe that the establishment of a new RFMO for the management of small pelagics in West Africa should be a priority, as these shared resources, some of which are considered over-exploited, constitute an essential pillar of food security in the region.

Signatory organizations:

Afrifish

CAOPA (African Confederation of Professional Artisanal Fisheries Organisations)

CFFA (Coalition for Fair Fisheries Arrangements)

Coopesolidar

RAMPR (La Red de áreas marinas de pesca responsable)

SSNC (Swedish Society for Nature Conservation)



Statement

Addressing illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing in the context of effective fisheries management, FAO COFI Sub Committee on Fisheries Management, January 2024

We agree with the FAO that combating IUU fishing in all types of fisheries, including small-scale fisheries, is crucial to effective fisheries management. For Africa's small-scale fisheries, IUU fishing, in particular incursions by vessels using destructive gear in coastal areas, such as coastal trawlers, remains a scourge as it is directly linked to overfishing and therefore poses a risk to food security.

To combat these incursions, participatory surveillance has been touted for several decades in Africa, but it has not been legally defined in most countries and generally lacks administrative, logistical and financial support. Among the problems reported by fishers involved in participatory surveillance are the lack of boats, the fact that fishers have to provide their own fuel for surveillance trips, and the frequent lack of reaction from the authorities when it comes to enforcing regulations on boats identified by artisanal fishers as being involved in IUU fishing.

This means that artisanal fishers who try to defend their local fisheries do so at their own expense and at considerable risk, often with no guarantee that the authorities will actually arrest the offenders.

For the system to work, artisanal fishers must be provided with adequate equipment to enable them to inform the authorities directly of suspicious activities, and the respective roles and responsibilities of fishers and the authorities must be clearly defined. **We call on the FAO to organize a discussion, with interested members and fishers, on how to promote efficient participatory surveillance.**

We also agree with the FAO that, in order to combat IUU fishing in small-scale fisheries, it is necessary to design and implement solutions tailored to the socio-economic and cultural contexts in which small-scale fisheries operate.

This means ensuring that the informal, traditional management that exists in many small-scale fisheries is recognised and taken into account when designing new regulations. In some cases, when new regulations are introduced without sufficient consultation, artisanal fishers who are doing what they have always done come to be regarded as illegal fishers, as criminals. In the past, some fishers have been the victims of violence for fishing in their traditional fishing zone, which had been declared a closed area without consultation. This has serious consequences for communities, including fishers, women fish processors, and for food security.

To avoid criminalising the traditional behavior of fishers, the solution lies in involving them in fisheries management, including for the design and introduction of mechanisms to combat IUU fishing in small-scale fisheries. Fishers themselves can contribute to this fight, in particular by using inexpensive digital technologies on vessels and at landing sites, for example, to record their catches and thus avoid their fishing being considered undocumented.



STATEMENT

MAINSTREAMING BIODIVERSITY IN FISHERIES MANAGEMENT IN THE CONTEXT OF THE KUNMING-MONTREAL GLOBAL BIODIVERSITY FRAMEWORK – FAO Sub Committee Fisheries Management, January 2024

For hundreds of years, small scale fishing communities, as well as Indigenous Peoples all over the world, have governed, conserved and sustainably managed ecosystems, habitats, fish stocks and other natural resources they depend on. Their contributions to a healthy aquatic environment are deeply rooted in their culture, knowledge and practices. Their intimate knowledge of the aquatic environment and the resources contained therein, based on ancestral and experiential knowledge, is itself a vital resource and source of information, and forms an integral part of an important biocultural diversity. Today, about 90 per cent of all fishers and fish workers are involved in small-scale fisheries and their catch accounts for at least 40% of the total capture fisheries, through operations that often take place in areas with high biodiversity. For all these reasons, small-scale fishing communities as well as Indigenous Peoples deserve special consideration when looking at how to mainstream biodiversity in fisheries management.

Importantly, the new Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF), through several targets, shall ensure the full recognition and respect for human rights, for communities, including artisanal fishing communities', rights to resources, to meaningful participation, and access to justice and information related to biodiversity. It also establishes a special safeguard for the protection of the rights of Indigenous Peoples, (as laid out in UNDRIP), especially to their territories, their culture and ancestral traditional knowledge, their full and effective participation, as well as their right to free, prior and informed consent. The GBF shall also guarantee the protection of environmental and human rights defenders.

The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) is also the first environmental treaty to have a specific target on women's rights and embeds a gender-responsive approach in which all women and girls have equal opportunities and capacity to contribute to the GBF's objectives. However, it is the States responsibility to design national plans of actions and policies that take these aspects into account, and we strongly believe that FAO can play a key role in supporting the implementation of human-rights based conservation and fisheries management.

Small-scale fishers, including Indigenous Fishing Peoples, welcome efforts to recover lost productivity mostly caused by industrial overfishing exacerbated by pollution and climate change. When deprived of their means of subsistence and development, they are entitled to just and fair redress. This is essential for ensuring future well-being and continued assurance of healthy aquatic food from healthy aquatic ecosystems.

In that context, we welcome the commitment by FAO to expand its support to small-scale fisheries actors in their role as resource stewards that conserve and sustainably use aquatic biodiversity, in line with the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication (SSF Guidelines). We believe this should be done through the elaboration and implementation of **transparent, participatory, gender-sensitive National Action Plans that recognize the essential role of local fishing communities and Indigenous Peoples for biodiversity conservation**. This would provide an opportunity for the Parties to the Convention to design and implement conservation strategies, to improve policy coherence, whilst ensuring the full and effective participation and contribution of small-scale fishing communities, as well as Indigenous Peoples (men, women and youth).

With respect to Marine Protected Areas (MPAs), we welcome FAO's emphasis on participatory approaches, and we would like to further emphasize the important role that artisanal fishing communities as well as Indigenous Peoples play in the implementation of any conservation measure. It needs also to be recognized that in many countries, there are already existing marine/coastal territories and areas governed and conserved by small-scale fishing communities, as well as by Indigenous Peoples (such as Indigenous and Community Conserved Areas, ICCAs, or Locally Managed Marine Areas, LMMAs).

The FAO should support its members to **1) identify and recognize both existing and new community conservation initiatives, 2) improve information, monitoring, evaluation and reporting mechanisms, and 3) mobilize resources to initiate and sustain these efforts**.

These conservation initiatives should not take place in isolation, but should be considered as part of wider transparent, participative management processes which artisanal fishers are calling for. This for us, is essential for ensuring the objectives of the GBF while respecting and ensuring the rights of small-scale fishing communities, as well as Indigenous Peoples, and securing the future of their livelihoods.

In that context, FAO should also support member States, especially developing country Parties, with capacity building and appropriate technology transfer that can assist collective actions and community- and Indigenous Peoples-based monitoring and information systems and implement the [SSF call to action](#)¹ and [rules of conduct](#)² that emphasized the above requests.

Signatory organizations:

Afrifish

APAS-Santo Cristo (Associação De Produtores De Amêijoa Da Fajã De Santo Cristo)

Aprapam (Association pour la Promotion et la Responsabilisation des Acteurs de la Pêche Artisanale Maritime)

Blue Ventures

CaFGOAG (Canoe Owners Association of Ghana)

CAOPA (African Confederation of Professional Artisanal Fisheries Organisations)

CFFA (Coalition for Fair Fisheries Arrangements)

CoopeSoliDar

IITC (International Indian Treaty Council)

Mundus Maris

SFBOA (Seychelles Fishing Boat Owners Association)

SSNC (Swedish Society for Nature Conservation)

WWF (World Wide Fund for Nature)

¹ A Call to Action from Small-Scale Fishers, June 2022. Available at: <https://caopa.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/Call-to-action-online-pdf.pdf>

² Rules of Conduct for Working with Small-Scale Fishers and Fishworkers to Save Our Ocean, February 2023. Available at: <https://caopa.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/Copy-of-Rules-of-conduct.pdf>

Muchas gracias Señor Presidente, Buena jornada para todos

Deseo aprovechar esta primera intervención para felicitar al Secretariado de la FAO por el excelente trabajo volcado en la preparación de esta Primera Sesión del Sub Comité de Ordenación Pesquera de la FAO y por permitirnos participar en calidad de Observador de este foro del que confiamos en recibir orientación que nos permita avanzar en el camino iniciado hace ya cinco décadas en la gestión sostenible de los recursos pesqueros compartidas entre Argentina y Uruguay en las aguas de interés común.

El trabajo de gestión pesquera de la CTMFM, realizado a partir del asesoramiento científico provisto por los Grupos Técnicos Asesores está basado en un criterio ecosistémico y precautorio. La CTMFM establece medidas de manejo de carácter vinculante. Más del 90% de los recursos desembarcados cuentan con medidas de manejo específico. Por otra parte, los índices que miden el estado de los stocks explotados indican que el 70% de los mismos se encuentran dentro de los límites del máximo desarrollo sostenible. Se han implementado dos planes de recuperación para recursos sobreexplotados en el pasado, a fin de restablecer las biomasa poblaciones en un nivel que permita su máximo desarrollo sostenible Finalmente cabe mencionar dos iniciativas importantes adoptadas en el marco del enfoque ecosistémico para la conservación de la megafauna: los Planes de Acción Regional para Tiburones y Aves Marinas.

En 2023, en ocasión de celebrar medio siglo de vida, la CTMFM lanzó un Programa quinquenal para el Monitoreo Ambiental de su área de incumbencia, la que ha sido reconocida como una región del océano mundial en la que el impacto del cambio climático excede los valores medios. El Programa apunta a crear sinergias entre las instituciones de ambos países a fin de optimizar el uso de las plataformas de investigación y equipamiento disponibles en cada una de ellos, intercambiar capacidades y potenciar el conocimiento sobre el ambiente marino. Entre otras actividades se ha programado la realización conjunta de cruceros oceanográficos en buques de investigación y la instalación de sensores para mediciones meteorológicas, oceanográficas y de acústica submarina a fin de incorporar el área de estudio a la red de sensores ya instalados en la región. El objetivo final del Programa es integrar la información ambiental en el manejo pesquero a partir de la construcción de índices e indicadores de la variabilidad ambiental que impacta sobre la distribución y abundancia de los recursos pesqueros a fin de su incorporación a los modelos de evaluación de biomasa y el establecimiento de pautas de explotación ante distintos escenarios ambientales.

Muchas gracias Sr. Presidente

Fauna & Flora
Spoken NGO statement to the COFI Sub-Committee on Fisheries Management
First Session
15th January 2024

Fauna & Flora welcomes FAO's commitment to improve the effectiveness of fisheries management based on the precautionary principle and ecosystem approach as well as the recognition that fisheries management needs to look beyond just maximising production.

A key aim of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries and other policy instruments - and indeed the Sustainable Development Goals - is to prohibit destructive fishing practices. The review of the implementation of the Code of Conduct presented in the meeting documents identified that prohibiting destructive fishing methods and practices are some of the most common management tools or processes implemented by Members. However, the term 'destructive fishing' does not yet have a [globally accepted definition](#), which hinders its effective use in policy, the implementation of management solutions and the measurement of progress towards ending these practices. As with the work the FAO is doing on IUU fishing, clarifying the meaning of 'destructive fishing' can help to gain a better assessment of the magnitude and impact of these fishing practices globally and can help Members identify areas where management should be prioritised. Having an operational definition of 'destructive fishing' can also help support the application of the ecosystem approach to fisheries management, looking at the impact of practices beyond production and support the measurement of whether fisheries management solutions are having the intended result.

We therefore call for fisheries actors and decision-makers to increase the global dialogue around "destructive fishing" and call for the term to be better defined and measured. This new sub-committee on fisheries management could provide an important forum to lead this work and to further understand how social and economic concepts could also fit into a definition, helping to eliminate destructive fishing practices across all scales. Fauna & Flora has already begun working on defining 'destructive fishing' and has developed, in collaboration with BirdLife International, UNEP-WCMC and the University of Cambridge, an illustrative global-level [monitoring framework](#). Fauna & Flora would be willing to work with any Member that wanted to lead an initiative on destructive fishing within the sub-committee.

Thank you for this opportunity to speak.

Contact: *Hannah Richardson*
Technical Specialist (destructive fisheries)
Hannah.Richardson@fauna-flora.org

1st session of the FAO Sub-Committee on Fisheries Management (SCFM)

Statement of the Fisheries Transparency Initiative (FiTI) on Agenda item No. 3 *‘Illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing in the context of effective fisheries management’*

Thank you, Mr Chair, for giving me the virtual floor, and since this is the first time, I would like to thank the FAO for the excellent preparation of this meeting, and congratulations to you, Mr Chair, for your election.

I am representing the Fisheries Transparency Initiative (or short FiTI), which is a global multi-stakeholder partnership that seeks to increase the public accessibility, quality and understandability of marine fisheries management information. And I would like to express my appreciation to the FAO for being a permanent observer to the FiTI process from its beginning.

Transparency is a concept that is seemingly hard to disagree with. However, while still not a priority for many governments (even though we are seeing improvements), it is also often used in ways that could be confusing or misleading. With regards to the matter at hand of IUU fisheries I would like to make the following three remarks related to transparency:

First, we appreciate very much the opening remarks for this session, which reminded us to at the term IUU lumps three often different aspects together into one admittedly handy acronym. What is worrisome is that the discussions around IUU is currently clearly dominated by the first letter (‘I’), often branding the entire term as a synonym for illegality or for fighting crime. Unfortunately, with this negative branding comes one additional twist, and that is that IUU is too frequently

depicted as primarily an external threat to legal fisheries and nation states, which neglects the issue of internal governance struggles.

Second, when we talk about transparency as a tool to combat illegal fishing, as well as unreported or unregulated fishing we should not lose sight of the fact that transparency in fisheries requires a multi-purpose approach – utilising transparency for scientific, management and compliance purposes. So in addition to ocean-based transparency efforts to counter illegal activities at sea, such as technology-supported vessel tracking and monitoring, we also need to strengthen national frameworks for transparency of fisheries management, so that governments publish regularly important information in this particular regard, such as vessel registries, licence lists or catch and discard data. Without such basic information, it is often not even clear what is illegal and what is not. And I would like to applaud the efforts of several of FiTI implementing countries, such as Seychelles, Mauritania, Madagascar and Cabo Verde – who are now regularly publishing such information in the public domain, and continuously improving this data for public understanding. And we are expecting similar endeavours from Ecuador, Sao Tome and Principe and Guinea during 2024.

Third and finally, we at the Fisheries Transparency Initiative firmly believe that transparency is a process that must be coupled with participatory governance, involving national stakeholders from public authorities, industrial and artisanal fisheries as well as civil society organisations, and we are committed to support our FiTI implementing countries in establish national multi-stakeholder groups, so that the best available data is available to contribute to better and more inclusive decision-making, as well as to enable all stakeholders in exercising effective oversight and engage in public dialogue. Thank you very much Mister Chair.

COMMITTEE ON FISHERIES
Sub-Committee on Fisheries Management
First Session

Written Correspondence Procedure: 22 November – 22 December 2023
Virtual Plenary Sessions: 15 – 18 January 2024

INFOFISH STATEMENT

Introductory Remarks

Firstly I would like to join in congratulating the Chair on your appointment and we would like to wish you all the very best over the course of your tenure. I would also like to acknowledge FAO COFI and this Sub-Committee on Fisheries Management and thank you for our participation here at the convening of this First Session as an observer. INFOFISH would like to also acknowledge, thank and congratulate FAO for the extensive work carried out in the areas of sustainable aquaculture, the promotion of small-scale fisheries and aquaculture and the wide-ranging normative work at the global level including the Blue Transformation and that as a regional organization, INFOFISH very much supports these activities.

INFOFISH is an intergovernmental organization that was initially set up by the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) in 1981 and is hosted by the Government of Malaysia providing marketing and technical advisory support to the fishery industry in the Asia Pacific region and beyond. Since it was established, the organization's expertise and grasp of global fisheries market situations have been instrumental in achieving this mission and fulfilling its mandate while maintaining a close rapport with the global fishery industry over these 40 years.

Over the past 40 years we have partnered and collaborated with FAO and other international agencies for activities such as the FishVet Dialogue, the Tilapia Health Dialogue, workshops on Biosecurity, the GSA, the series of events celebrating the IYAFA 2022 both in Asia and in the Pacific, as well as the opportunity to share on the Women in Aquaculture in Asia at the COFI SCA 2022 in Mexico.

As concerning the FAO COFI Sub-Committee on Fisheries Management and its first session, I would like to say thank you for the opportunity to convey this statement and to share reflections on the following agenda items as follows;

Agenda Item 2: Current fisheries management practices with special consideration for Small Scale Fisheries

In speaking to our INFOFISH member countries in what is a very diverse Asia Pacific region, it is appreciated and acknowledged that Small Scale Fisheries (SSF) is a very important part of local livelihoods and industry for member countries, as it is also recognised so globally. SSF is where small fisher folk or coastal and inland communities, continue to be able to harness and elevate benefit from local fish and fishery resources and their surrounding environment. As well this is

a vitally important subsistence, semi-subsistence and industry in terms of food security, poverty alleviation, livelihoods, derived socio-economic benefit and sustainable development for households, communities and the country at large. SSF has the significant potential to improve and transform communities for the better if harnessed responsibly and sustainably, and also where effective market value chain linkages can be drawn, encouraged and maintained.

This is an industry/segment which is very much bottom-up in terms of sourcing supply occurring largely at the small fisherfolk or community level and where INFOFISH is very supportive of FAO COFI's agenda and the call by many member countries to progress the adoption of the voluntary guidelines on Small Scale Fisheries, the implementation of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries and an improvement in fisheries management systems overall, with the view to encourage sustainable development as consistent with SDG 14. We also join in encouraging and supporting FAO COFI interventions in continuing to foster greater participation in both the informing and adoption of these guidelines, codes and systems, this includes national strategies, as well as the cascading of this to more local levels of governance and to the community level. This in acknowledging and appreciating the diverse contexts and environs under which small-scale fisheries or small-scale fisher folk effectively live and operate.

The call for customised education, training and experiential learning on SSF guidelines are also important and an integrated approach alongside technical en-skilling or up skilling could be beneficial in the advocacy and embracing of these guidelines. In this regard we would acknowledge that greater partnership and participation at all levels is very necessary. This is a part of where INFOFISH has strived to contribute interventions in supporting training, as well as in using our programs, publications and platforms to ensure that all voices are heard and that we continue to support advocacy for sustainable small fisheries for all stakeholders across the market value chain. This includes how we can also work in support of and in collaboration and partnership with member countries, industry, institutions and regional organisations in disseminating information, creating awareness and promoting and fostering dialogue on SSF.

Agenda Item 3: Illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing in the context of effective fisheries management

For INFOFISH member countries IUU fishing remains a matter of deep concern, for the sustainability of fish and fishery produce and products. INFOFISH as such is very supportive of agenda items that concern the broad spectrum in combating IUU fishing. In a recent high level dialogue on greater sustainability, industry engagement and enhancing value retention in the Blue Pacific Continent held on the margins of the 8th Pacific Tuna Forum (PTF) in Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea, representatives of government and industry called for 'a renewal of commitment to combat IUU fishing and implementation of Port State Measures and the Voluntary Guidelines on Transshipment, to strengthen implementation of catch documentation schemes as well as monitoring, control and surveillance (MCS) initiatives. At the same time, to improve the sharing of relevant catch information and transparency to forge greater engagement, understanding and cooperation at all levels of the supply chain in the tuna industry'.

While this call was made within the context of a Tuna Forum, the call was encompassing in terms of a collective call in addressing IUU fishing and its net affect on the marine ecology, as well as ensuring the sustainability of the industry and livelihoods of small fisher folk at the community level. In terms of considerations and interventions it would be understood that these are well shared by FAO COFI and its member countries, and INFOFISH would be very supportive of such endeavours. This includes also from a trade and market perspective, in terms of informed consumer behaviour in the purchasing of fish and fisheries produce that are eco-labelled and certified in terms of being caught in a sustainably and responsibly manner, as also a part of ensuring that the market supply chain also supports the filtering out of such IUU fishing produce and the markets that support such illegal sourcing and trade. This also comes back to national legislation and capability in terms of enforcement. The capacity building and empowering of local communities and agencies, as well as national, regional and international partnerships and cooperation are also recognised as essential drivers in striving to combat IUU fishing at all levels.

Overall IUU fishing is an area of advocacy and dialogue that INFOFISH continues to put forward in all its programs and platforms in ensuring that all voices are heard across the market supply chain and in ensuring that this agenda continue to remain at the fore as an industry concern and in supporting the advancement of partnership and cooperation in addressing this. The 18th INFOFISH World Tuna Trade Conference & Exhibition (May 20 – 22, 2024), as a case in point will provide another opportunity under the theme ‘Advancing Blue Transformation, Sustainable Development and Innovation through the Global Tuna Industry’, for the industry at all levels and on all fronts to come together on key industry issues such as IUU fishing. As we continue to encourage dialogue and advocate for, partnership and cooperation from the small fisher folk to industry, policy makers and regional organisations are particularly important and integral in progressing coordinated and effective action on IUU fishing, ensuring resource sustainability, the vibrancy of the ecosystem, contributing to global food security, livelihoods, community building and benefit to all stakeholders across the market supply chain. This includes considerations on traditional methods of conservation and fishing management, alongside the integration of technology in better informing small scale fisheries as an industry/segment and the SSF Guidelines that FAO COFI as an important global intergovernmental forum, alongside many other regional/international partners and stakeholders continues to champion and advocate in fostering sustainable development.

Agenda Item 5: Climate Change and fisheries management

The adoption of a precautionary approach to fisheries management is welcomed and is of course a hand in hand approach to addressing climate change. Climate change and the threat of rising sea levels pose significant threats to our planet and people, aquatic ecosystems and fisheries. This is an industry that many people derive their sustenance and livelihood from and where mechanisms that support climate resilience, adaptation and innovation are greatly encouraged at all levels of governance and industry, when it comes to small scale fisheries in particular. This includes a policy and regulatory environment that supports ‘blue

transformation' in terms of a greener or bluer industry, food security, poverty alleviation and the fostering of resilient industries and communities. From a trade and market perspective, this speaks to the integration of technology; product diversification and maintaining sustainable supply chains over the longer term in a changing environment.

Concluding Remarks.

Thank you once again Chair for this opportunity to share this statement and to add to the reflections being shared at this FAO COFI Sub Committee on Fisheries Management first session. Once again we wish you all the very best in your tenure as Chair and wish all the FAO COFI member countries all the very best as you continue to advocate for the implementation of the voluntary guidelines on SSF, the implementation of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries and an improvement in fisheries management systems overall. INFOFISH looks forward to further opportunities to work in support of FAO COFI in this endeavour.

Good morning to all Members and Observers. Thank you for this opportunity to contribute to this dialogue on mainstreaming biodiversity. I am Chair of the International Coalition of Fisheries Associations (ICFA) and represent the Canadian fishery sector.

The International Coalition of Fisheries Associations (ICFA) appreciates the opportunity to address this gathering on the crucial matter of sustainable fisheries management. We firmly believe that a collaborative approach involving policymakers, the economic sector, and the fisheries industry is indispensable to finding pragmatic and implementable solutions for a sustainable future.

Key Points:

1. Fisheries and Biodiversity Conservation:

- I would like to commend FAO for its excellent presentation this morning. ICFA is in strong support of what was presented.
- ICFA underscores the fisheries sector's potential as a positive force in biodiversity conservation. We welcome the ongoing efforts to enhance collaboration between fisheries and biodiversity conservation, particularly through the CBD Sustainable Ocean Initiative (SOI) Global Dialogue between Regional Seas Conventions and Regional Fisheries Management Organizations.
- Recognizing the significance of Other Effective Area-based Conservation Measures (OECMs), ICFA advocates for their integration as an effective instrument for cross-sectoral collaboration between fisheries and biodiversity conservation.

2. Climate Resilience:

- ICFA expresses its commitment to being an active participant in solutions for climate resilience. It is crucial to recognize that fisheries products, with their low carbon footprint and essential nutritional value, play a pivotal role in achieving global climate objectives. Fisheries can be part of the solution for a sustainable and healthy future.

3. IUU (Illegal, Unreported, Unregulated) Fishing:

- Addressing the challenge of illegal fishing requires comprehensive and meaningful actions. ICFA emphasizes the need for supply chain transparency and encourages government-to-government actions, a focus on national fishery management systems as a whole and utilizing existing authorities to combat IUU fishing effectively.

FAO plays a critical role to inform the myriad of international negotiations and discussions that relate to fisheries and aquaculture. We are heartened to hear many members' interventions thus far recognizing this role. ICFA urges member countries to direct FAO to be a proactive participant in such discussions as it was with the GBF. Further, member countries are encouraged to work collaboratively across relevant government departments.

In conclusion, we stand ready to actively contribute to the ongoing discussions and collaborate with all stakeholders to ensure a balanced and prosperous future for fisheries, coastal communities, and the broader marine environment. Thank you.

International Collective in Support of Fishworkers (ICSF)

FAO Sub-Committee on Fisheries Management: First Session

Agenda Item 2

Current fisheries management practices with special consideration for small-scale fisheries

Statement

The International Collective in Support of Fishworkers (ICSF) welcomes the agenda paper COFI:FM/I/2024/2 and recognizes the outstanding quality of information papers INF.5, INF.6, INF.7 and SBD/1. ICSF supports the COFI decision to improve fishery management based on the precautionary and ecosystem approaches. In regard to small-scale fisheries, ICSF appreciates the recognition of collaborative management and community-based management in the agenda paper.

ICSF would very much like collaborative and community-based or customary marine and inland fishery management approaches to be tailored to become participatory management systems, consistent with para 5.16 of the SSF Guidelines, particularly in a gender-responsive manner. Participatory management approaches and systems, needless to say, would draw strength from the promotion and protection of a human rights-based approach as upheld in the SSF Guidelines, and by protecting tenure rights to fishing areas of small-scale fishing communities, and to territories of Indigenous Peoples. A human rights-based approach and secure tenure rights can be tailored to empower fishing communities, both men and women, Indigenous Peoples and local communities to participate in decision-making processes and to assume responsibilities for sustainable use of fishery resources (para 1.2 of the SSF Guidelines).

Participatory management systems need further strengthening to deliver on conservation benefits, including the protection of biodiversity of ecosystems and the aquatic habitat, and to transform to effective fishery management systems. At the institutional level, in addition to greater devolution of management through legislation at the subnational level to fishing gear groups, cooperatives or unions, Indigenous Peoples or local communities, the capacity of these actors needs to be enhanced to mainstream and sustain precautionary and ecosystem approaches and to bring a judicious balance between conservation and sharing of resource benefits.

Effective fisheries management systems should include responsible post-harvest practices as well, consistent with para 7.8 of the SSF Guidelines, to prevent overexploitation, driven by market demand, threatening the sustainability of fisheries resources, food security and nutrition. In this context, income from fish trade should be enabled to benefit small-scale fishers in an equitable manner throughout the value chain. Separate institutional arrangements may be made to monitor and evaluate the efficacy of all management systems.

To further improve conservation efforts under fishery management systems, social protection instruments are to be introduced at the sectoral and universal level to reduce overfishing pressures. This will benefit fishers, fishworkers and their families, particularly in the face of food insecurity and poverty, and the impact of climate change. It would resonate well with para 63 (f), the Outcome of the *First*

Global Stocktake, UNFCCC, UAE, dated, 13 Dec 2023, that urges Parties to promote the use of adaptive social protection measures for all to reduce the adverse effects of climate change on poverty eradication and livelihoods.

In addition, improving access to social development such as education, health, housing and sanitation, and guaranteeing decent work, can positively improve the outcome of fishery management by providing disincentives to overexploit fishery resources.

In the context of effective management of small-scale fisheries from an innovative, multi-dimensional approach, the Sub-Committee may advise FAO Members to reinforce their efforts to implement the SSF Guidelines, to develop national plans of action consistent with the SSF Guidelines, and to develop appropriate SSF legislation and policies in consultation with fishing communities, in particular.

To safeguard frontline marine area-based fisheries management measures, the FAO Members should be called upon to strengthen MCS measures, especially to stop incursion of large-scale, industrial fishing vessels, particularly bottom trawlers, into areas reserved for small-scale artisanal fishers using passive gear.

The Sub-Committee may develop guidance for fishery management and governance: (i) to assess how the status of targeted fish stocks varies according to the type of the management systems the stocks are under; (ii) to examine if fish stocks under participatory management such as collaborative, community-based or customary management systems pertaining to small-scale fisheries, or enjoying secure tenure rights, are better managed; and (iii) to investigate how social protection, social development and decent work contribute to better fishery management.

The Sub-Committee—to reduce errors and to achieve greater coherence across national and subnational definitions or characterizations of “small-scale”, “large-scale” or “industrial” fisheries, and to help draw meaningful inferences for effective fisheries management—may further develop a cost-effective reporting format for fishing fleet composition based on relevant factors and best practices around the world, and in consultation with relevant stakeholders, including fishers and fishworkers.

Thank you Chair.

International Collective in Support of Fishworkers (ICSF)

FAO Sub-Committee on Fisheries Management: First Session

Agenda Item 4

MAINSTREAMING BIODIVERSITY IN FISHERIES MANAGEMENT IN THE CONTEXT OF THE KUNMING-MONTREAL GLOBAL BIODIVERSITY FRAMEWORK

Statement

ICSF welcome this agenda item. Considering the contributions made by SSF to global food security and nutrition, livelihood protection and their reliance on marine, coastal and inland biodiversity for survival and sustenance, we stand here emphasizing the critical concerns of the small-scale and artisanal fishers on mainstreaming biodiversity in fisheries management. Conservation of aquatic ecosystems (Marine and Inland) are vital for the sustainability of SSF. We deeply appreciate the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework that is drafted within the framework of a human rights-based approach ensuring effective and meaningful participation of Indigenous peoples, local communities, women and youth in the conservation of biodiversity, its sustainable use and the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits.

In relation to fulfilment of targets 1-3- spatial planning, restoration and protection of aquatic species, we call for the recognition and consideration of formal and informal tenure and governance practices. It has to be guaranteed that parties take into account the existing guidelines on tenure and the SSF Guidelines and ensure that the small-scale fishers and fishworkers are made an integral part of decision-making and management processes taking into account the tenets of United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) and ILO 169. Within the implementation of Target 3, we emphasise that while considering conservation outcomes, an ecosystem-based approach be ensured taking into consideration the cultural, social and economic value of these ecosystems to the communities. The local and traditional knowledge towards conservation, management and sustainable use of resources be respected and be taken into consideration while planning and implementing area-based management measures.

Other effective area-based conservation measures (OECMs) or traditional territories be acknowledged for their contribution to sustainable management of resources and participatory approaches be adopted in the spatial management practices- for both inland and marine ecosystems.

Participatory and community-based marine and inland fishery management practices be deployed towards sustainable management of fisheries as spelt in Target 10. Appropriate legislative reforms be made to offer spaces of participation for communities in this process. Community level and institutional level capacity building be enhanced to ensure effective and meaningful participation. Legislations be framed at the national and subnational level to ensure that the social, economic and environmental benefits of sustainable use and management of fishery resources are fairly and equitably shared with the local communities as envisaged in Target 9.

In addition to incorporating target 23 on gender equality and gender responsive approach, we also call for integrating the Gender Plan of Action as adopted by COP15 along with the KM-GBF. This will safeguard the gender concerns of SSF and make the mainstreaming of biodiversity within the fisheries management an equitable and just endeavour. We also urge that the monitoring framework of the GBF be thoroughly used to monitor the fisheries management practices adopted and detailed through the NBSAPs to ensure HRBA.

In the pursuit of the Global Biodiversity Framework's goals within fisheries management, we must recognize and address the unique challenges faced by small-scale fisheries. This entails adopting policies and management strategies that promote sustainable practices, enhance resilience, and empower local communities. It is crucial to integrate traditional knowledge, engage stakeholders, and ensure the inclusion of small-scale fisheries in decision-making processes at local, national, and international levels. By fostering collaboration, knowledge-sharing, and capacity-building, we can create a more inclusive and effective framework that safeguards both biodiversity and the livelihoods of those who depend on small-scale fisheries.

As we strive to address the pressing challenges facing our environment, it is imperative that we recognize and integrate the needs of small-scale fisheries into the broader framework of global biodiversity conservation.

International Collective in Support of Fishworkers (ICSF)

FAO Sub-Committee on Fisheries Management: First Session

Agenda Item 5: Climate Resilient Fisheries

Statement

The International Collective in Support of Fishworkers (ICSF) welcomes the agenda paper on climate resilient fisheries and the attention given to reducing vulnerability of small-scale fisheries to the impacts of climate change through adaptive, mitigation and financial interventions such as improving sea safety of small-scale fishing vessels, exploring renewable energy opportunities and ensuring access to climate finance for small-scale aquatic food producers. These interventions can potentially contribute to a just transition.

ICSF further welcomes FAO efforts to providing guidance on building resilience to climate change and disaster risks for small-scale fisheries, with special attention to a human rights-based approach.

ICSF encourages FAO to integrate these efforts into ocean-based adaptation and resilience measures and to recognize that adaptation can contribute to mitigating impacts and losses as highlighted in the First Global Stocktake of the UNFCCC.

In regard to adaptation, FAO can assist the Early Warnings for All initiative of the United Nations to protect everyone, including fishing communities in remote areas, through universal coverage of early warning systems against extreme weather and climate change by 2027.

FAO can also extend its engagement with early warning systems and shock-responsive social protection programmes to all coastal fishing communities in need of urgent support and mainstream fishing communities into adaptive social protection measures. In this context, ICSF supports the intervention made by Indonesia. Such social protection measures ought to include alternative livelihoods, and to benefit men and women along the value chain.

ICSF welcomes India's statement on reducing carbon footprint towards climate resilient fisheries in marine capture fisheries, and the role of seaweed and mangroves in carbon sequestration. In this context,

ICSF supports the call to generate financial resources for climate resilient management measures, keeping in mind the U.S. warning that what works for industrial fisheries may not work well for small-scale fisheries, and to shift from a short-term to long-term perspective on fisheries management, while mainstreaming climate change.

ICSF supports the interventions of several delegations, especially Australia and New Zealand, in support of Indigenous and local culture and knowledge. Under knowledge management, in the wake of climate change impacts redrawing marine and inland fishing grounds, shorelines, and redistributing resources away from traditional fishing grounds, after documenting such serious instances, FAO may look into how Indigenous and traditional knowledge can still be made relevant for fisheries management by helping it to adapt to new realities.

Last but not the least, any financial assistance to adapt to evidence-based climate change impacts is to be treated as non-actionable fisheries subsidies, contributing to improved resilience and well-being of fishing communities.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.



International Planning Committee for Food Sovereignty Working Group on Fisheries

IPC statement in response to COFI Sub-Committee On Fisheries Management Item 3 - ADDRESSING ILLEGAL, UNREPORTED AND UNREGULATED FISHING IN THE CONTEXT OF EFFECTIVE

Esteemed members of the Governmental Delegations,

We, the World Forum of Fish Harvesters and Fish Workers (WFF), the World Forum of Fisher Peoples (WFFP), the International Indian Treaty Council (IITC), La Via Campesina (LVC), and members of the International Planning Committee for Food Sovereignty (IPC), represent millions of small-scale fishers and Indigenous Peoples from coastal and inland regions worldwide.

- **We acknowledge the FAO's commendable efforts in enhancing monitoring, control, and surveillance to combat Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated (IUU) fishing.** However, we call on the members of the sub-committee to recognize, support and actively engage with small-scale fishers and Indigenous Peoples in combating IUU fishing, in collaboration with national governments. We also call to implement the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries and the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure as inestimable tool to guide Governments' direction on IUU.
- Despite employing 90% of global fishers, with women constituting nearly half of the workforce, small-scale and artisanal fisheries lack the recognition and support afforded to other industries. This disparity exacerbates challenges from the "blue economy" and heightened competition for marine resources, impacting People's Food Sovereignty. **Governments should play a central role in defining and recognizing SSF at both national and regional levels. Recognition of SSF and their tenure and customary rights is key to combatting illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing.** The IPC's ongoing people-centered assessment of the SSF Guidelines sheds light on SSF management practices and SSF's call for recognition, reflecting nuances between inland and ocean small scale fisheries.
- It is crucial to recognize the **pivotal role small scale fisheries communities and Indigenous Peoples play as guardians of coasts, seas, and inland waters.**
- We are concerned on the current approaches to combatting IUU fishing, which focus on technical and legal aspects, without considering the social, economic, and cultural dimensions. For that reason, **we stress the importance of qualitative data and people-centered analysis, positioning SSF as**



invaluable contributors to maintaining ecosystem equilibrium and contributing to fight IUU fisheries.

- We also denounces the negative impact of international fishing agreements, subsidies for industrial fishing, and the privatization of fishery resources on the livelihoods of small-scale fishers and Indigenous Peoples. **We therefore propose concrete measures to enhance the participation of small-scale fishers and Indigenous Peoples in fisheries governance, such as the establishment of local co-management committees, recognition of customary and collective rights, promotion of participatory traceability and certification, and public awareness of the value of small-scale fishing.**
- We emphasize our commitment as IPC to closely collaborate with Governments and the FAO to mitigate IUU fisheries. We urge FAO to work with SSF organizations and movements, ensuring meaningful participation in projects like the new project proposed regarding tracking vessels. A bottom-up approach is vital for involving SSF at all levels and follow a human rights-based approach and the right of participation, as mentioned in the SSF Guidelines.

In conclusion, we emphasize the valuable role and significance of Governments in implementing the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-scale Fisheries (SSF Guidelines) to adress the challenges of IUU fishing and strengthening the sustainability of small-scale fisheries and the livelihoods of local communities.

International Planning Committee for Food Sovereignty

Working Group on Fisheries

IPC statement in response to COFI Sub-Committee On Fisheries Management Item 4 - MAINSTREAMING BIODIVERSITY IN FISHERIES MANAGEMENT

Esteemed members of the Governmental Delegations,

We, the World Forum of Fish Harvesters and Fish Workers (WFF), the World Forum of Fisher Peoples (WFFP), the International Indian Treaty Council (IITC), La Via Campesina (LVC), and members of the International Planning Committee for Food Sovereignty (IPC), represent millions of small-scale fishers and Indigenous Peoples from coastal and inland regions worldwide.

We are concerned about addressing biodiversity, specifically the expansion of conservation efforts, without due consideration for people and the imperative for meaningful Indigenous Peoples' participation.

- Governments has the responsibility to conduct impact and damage studies with the direct participation of affected small-scale fishing communities and Indigenous Peoples. These studies should prioritize community benefits and recognize the pivotal role of small-scale fisheries people and Indigenous Peoples as stewards of coastal and inland ecosystems and biodiversity.
- Small-scale fishing communities and Indigenous Peoples should also have access to adaptation, mitigation and restoration funds, social development projects and legal guarantees in defense of the coastal and inland territories where they operate
- **We urge for a paradigm shift towards comprehensive biodiversity consideration in fisheries management, emphasizing a holistic perspective** that prioritize resilience, cultural diversity, and the overall well-being of both ecosystems and small-scale fisheries (SSF) communities.

States and relevant bodies must actively engage in this transformation to ensure the sustainability of our shared environment and the livelihoods of SSF communities.

International Planning Committee for Food Sovereignty
Working Group on Fisheries

IPC statement in response to COFI Sub-Committee On Fisheries Management Item 2
Current Fisheries Management Practices With Special
Considerations For Small-Scale Fisheries

Esteemed members of the Governmental Delegations,

Representing the World Forum of Fish Harvesters and Fish Workers (WFF), the World Forum of Fisher Peoples (WFFP), the International Indian Treaty Council (IITC), La Via Campesina (LVC), and contributing to the Fisheries Group of the International Planning Committee for Food Sovereignty (IPC), we voice the collective concerns of millions of small-scale fishers and Indigenous Peoples globally.

- First, in relation to SSF management, **we urge Governments to formally recognize small-scale fishers and Indigenous Peoples.**
- **Fishing communities and Indigenous Peoples should have access to social protection and insurances, allowing them to enjoy and engage in secure livelihoods.** Particular support and protection should be given to **youth working in fisheries**, in order to ensure generational renewal in the sector, by creating spaces for youth training and participation, and supporting the development of a sector in which young people see a future in fisheries that enables them to stay in and contribute to their communities.
- We demand to address **socio-economic welfare by including direct and fair redistribution of profits from fisheries export revenue.** Governments must involve small-scale fishing communities in decision-making processes related to fisheries management, ensuring their livelihoods are considered without compromising food sovereignty. The establishment of **Fisheries Levy tax systems**, along with collective management of the SSF-related market by SSF organizations, is crucial for the equitable and sustainable development of this sector.
- We reiterate **the need to recognize the intrinsic value of traditional knowledge and practices, and demand the seamless integration of these elements into fisheries management strategies.** Acknowledging our contribution to sustainable resource use and community resilience, this integration is pivotal in fostering effective and culturally sensitive management approaches. In the realm of tenure systems, we emphasize **the importance of recognizing and protecting customary tenure rights in small-scale fisheries.** Aligned with the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure and the SSF Guidelines, this includes safeguarding against forced evictions

through robust Environmental and Social Impact Assessments and upholding the principles of Free, Prior, and Informed Consent. It is imperative to acknowledge the gender-specific aspects of tenure governance and prioritize the rights of both men and women in the process. To enhance coherence between the Small-Scale Fisheries (SSF) Guidelines and the Voluntary Guidelines on Responsible Governance of Tenure, policymakers should undergo training that bridges these frameworks. This training should illuminate the interconnected principles of tenure governance and small-scale fisheries management, leading to policies that respect customary tenure rights while promoting sustainability.

- The complexity introduced by **Marine Spatial Planning (MSP)** necessitates a redesign that is inclusive and participatory. Small-scale fishers, men and women alike, must actively engage in planning and decision-making processes, ensuring the incorporation of local knowledge and gender dynamics. Fishers should be involved in MSP's planning and decision-making processes and be provided with the necessary resources and capacity- building opportunities to participate effectively.
- **Forced evictions threaten small-scale fishing communities, causing displacement and loss of livelihoods. States must protect tenure rights through consultation and measures to prevent such actions.**

We, IPC members, are carrying out a people-centred methodology for monitoring the implementation of the SSF Guidelines, involving a bottom-up process led by fishers' organisations and coastal communities themselves. Two reports are already available, one global and one for Asia which include specific regional recommendation about fisheries management, we demand governments and FAO to take them into consideration for future programming.

Comité international de planification pour la souveraineté alimentaire
Groupe de travail sur la pêche

Déclaration du CIP en réponse au point 5 du sous-comité de la gestion de la pêche du COFI -
PÊCHES RÉSILIENTES AU CLIMAT

Chers membres des délégations gouvernementales,

Nous, le Forum mondial des pêcheurs et des travailleurs de la pêche (WFF), le Forum mondial des peuples de pêcheurs (WFFP), le Conseil international des traités indiens (IITC), La Via Campesina (LVC), en tant que membres du Groupe Pêche du Comité international de planification pour la souveraineté alimentaire (IPC), et représentant des millions de pêcheurs artisanaux et de peuples autochtones des régions côtières et intérieures du monde entier.

Dans le monde entier, nos communautés sont confrontées à une menace critique pour leur existence en raison du changement climatique, de la dégradation de l'environnement et de la pollution. Les petits pêcheurs et les peuples autochtones sont particulièrement vulnérables et subissent les conséquences de la montée des eaux, des changements de température, de la sécheresse, de la réduction des stocks de poissons, de la modification des schémas migratoires des poissons, des inondations et de l'augmentation de la fréquence des tempêtes.

- Nous demandons l'inclusion immédiate de la prévention des catastrophes dans les plans de gestion, au-delà du rétablissement après la catastrophe. Les États doivent donner la priorité à des mesures proactives telles que les systèmes d'alerte précoce, la réduction des risques et l'éducation des communautés afin de protéger les pêcheries artisanales et les peuples autochtones. Les États ont la responsabilité d'agir de toute urgence pour que nos communautés puissent continuer à coexister avec la nature et soutenir notre appel à la justice climatique.
- Nous avons appelé à la prudence et à ne pas adopter des solutions climatiques inefficaces telles que les crédits carbone, les zones marines protégées (ZMP) et la planification de l'espace marin (PEM). Il faudrait plutôt se concentrer sur la restauration des droits légitimes d'occupation traditionnels, coutumiers ou autochtones des communautés de pêcheurs et sur la redistribution de ces droits lorsqu'ils ont été bafoués.
- Les pêcheurs font partie des groupes les plus vulnérables lors des tempêtes et des cyclones, car ils travaillent souvent en eaux libres et sont exposés aux éléments. Il est important que l'État mette en place des systèmes d'alerte précoce plus accessibles et des opérations de recherche et de sauvetage afin de garantir la sécurité des pêcheurs lors de tels événements.

- Les États devraient donner la priorité aux solutions climatiques axées sur la communauté et basées sur les connaissances et pratiques écologiques traditionnelles des communautés de SSF, plutôt qu'aux approches technocratiques et basées sur le marché telles que les digues, les tétrapodes, le carbone bleu et les solutions de crédit carbone pour la conservation.



Sub-Committee on Fisheries Management
IPC Working Group on Fisheries General Statement

Esteemed members of the Governmental Delegations,

We, the World Forum of Fish Harvesters and Fish Workers (WFF), the World Forum of Fisher Peoples (WFFP), the International Indian Treaty Council (IITC), La Via Campesina (LVC), and members of the **International Planning Committee for Food Sovereignty (IPC)**, represent **millions of small-scale fishers and Indigenous Peoples from coastal and inland regions worldwide**.

It is truly an honor to stand before this esteemed gathering today, and we **sincerely thank you** for welcoming our global Committee to the Sub-committee on Fishery Management.

Before all, we, the IPC, **reaffirm our solidarity with our comrades and people in Palestine** and across the globe, where individuals face isolation and violations, denied the basic right to live in dignity. In our pursuit of justice, equity, and solidarity, let's remember those whose struggles often go unnoticed, reaffirming our commitment to a world where every person is acknowledged, and their rights are unequivocally recognized.

Today, we express concern about the **marginal recognition of the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries**. It's important to underscore that the essence of this Sub-committee was to allocate a distinct space and paramount importance to the progression of the SSF Guidelines in relation to fishery management, supporting small-scale and artisanal fisheries. This holds particular significance today as we celebrate the 10th anniversary of the SSF Guidelines.

Small-scale fisheries employ 90% of global fishers, with women making up nearly half of the workforce. However, small scale and artisanal fisheries' **lack of recognition** sharply diverges from the support other industries receive, intensifying challenges from the "blue economy" and increased competition for marine resources, impacting People's Food Sovereignty. The IPC's ongoing people-centered assessment of the SSF Guidelines informs the following demands, backed by global evidence from the past two years¹.

¹<https://www.foodsovereignty.org/resources-fisheries-wg/>



We appreciate the FAO's efforts in strengthening monitoring, control, and surveillance against **Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated fishing**. To effectively combat IUU, the active involvement of SSF and Indigenous Peoples, in collaboration with national governments, is imperative. Governments must play a central role in defining and recognizing Small-Scale Fisheries at the national and regional levels.

The very existence of our communities is under threat due to **climate change, environmental destruction and pollution**. Rising water levels and temperatures, drought, decreasing fish stocks, changing fish migratory patterns, floods, and the increased frequency of storms are just some of the impacts of climate change affecting small-scale fishers and Indigenous Peoples. Development projects, such as converting fertile agriculture fields and mangroves into shrimp farms, or mining in coastal and inland areas, are destroying our natural habitats, and mercury, heavy and pesticides are accumulating in our environments and poisoning our fish and our peoples. Technological fixes, carbon trading schemes, and the 30x30 conservation agenda will not address the core of these problems. We demand to incorporate disaster prevention as an integral component of management plans, extending beyond post-disaster recovery. States must prioritize proactive measures such as early warning systems, risk reduction, and community education to safeguard small-scale fisheries, Fisher Peoples and Indigenous Peoples.

Simultaneously, caution is essential against adopting false climate adaptation and mitigation solutions, such carbon credits, Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) and Marine Spatial Planning (MSP), and instead take effective measures to restore the legitimate traditional, customary, or Indigenous tenure rights of fishing communities and redistribute such rights where they have been infringed upon.

We are concerned about addressing **biodiversity**, specifically the expansion of conservation efforts, without due consideration for SSF and Indigenous Peoples and the imperative for meaningful participation. We urge for a paradigm shift towards comprehensive biodiversity consideration in fisheries management, emphasizing a holistic perspective that prioritize resilience, cultural diversity, and the overall well-being of both ecosystems and small-scale fisheries communities. States and relevant bodies must actively engage in this transformation to ensure the sustainability of our shared environment and the livelihoods of SSF communities. It is necessary for Governments to support the recognition of the important roles and contributions of Fisher Peoples, Indigenous



Peoples and SSF communities as custodians of biodiversity and as partners in its management, restoration and sustainable use. Any action on biodiversity need to recognize the values and practices and heritage knowledge from SSF communities and Indigenous Peoples.

It is essential to uphold the principles of Free, Prior, and Informed Consent, recognizing the gender-specific dimensions of tenure governance. We demand the prioritization of the human rights of - men and women (all gender) in fishery management processes to ensure an inclusive and equitable human rights based approach. **States are urged to allocate resources, enhance institutional capacity and global governance, and establish participatory mechanisms for the implementation of SSF guidelines and National and Regional Plan of Action in collaboration with small-scale fisher communities and Indigenous Peoples.**

Finally, we reiterate our commitment to working closely with Governments and the FAO to implement the SSF Guidelines at the national level while ensuring historical customary over fisher people resources (Fish, Land and Water). We call upon the FAO and the COFI members to continue to support the implementation of the SSF Guidelines, and reaffirm their commitment to this guidelines by allocating appropriate funds and technical support.

Intervention by the International Pole and Line Foundation – Agenda item 2.2 Inland and marine small-scale fisheries management

Good morning/afternoon to all and thank you Chair.

The International Pole and Line Foundation works with small-scale tuna fisheries globally that use low impact fishing gears such as pole & line, handline and troll lines. We promote the social and environmental benefits of these fisheries and the contributions these fisheries make to deliver progress on the Sustainable Development Goals - contributing to healthier, more sustainable and equitable food systems.

Article 6.6 of the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries specifically promotes selective and environmentally safe fishing gears and practices, recognising the contribution that fisheries using such gears make to maintaining biodiversity, to conserving population structures and to protecting aquatic ecosystems.

Today, as this First Session of the Sub-Committee on Fisheries Management considers the particular challenges and opportunities associated with small-scale fisheries, the International Pole and Line Foundation seeks to raise awareness of the inter-relationship between fisheries management and market support for small-scale fisheries using these selective and environmentally safe fishing gears and practices.

The adoption of the *Voluntary Guidelines for Small-Scale Fisheries* and the declaration of the *International Year of Artisanal Fisheries and Aquaculture* in 2022 has raised the profile of small-scale fisheries and highlighted the ongoing struggles these fisheries face in accessing equal market opportunities. Certification standards or ecolabelling schemes are supposed to provide information to consumers about the most sustainable seafood choices. In reality, these certification standards often 'tend to marginalize' small-scale fisheries' operators, which 'do not have the requisite financial, technological or human resources to meet such requirements'.

In 2005, COFI adopted the FAO Guidelines for the *Ecolabelling of Fish and Fishery Products from Marine Capture Fisheries* to provide minimum substantive requirements and criteria for these ecolabelling schemes and standards. The Ecolabelling Guidelines, which were last updated in 2009, only address small-scale fisheries in a superficial way.

SDG 14b specifically requires access to fishing opportunities and markets for small-scale fisheries. What we see in practice is that heavily subsidized, large industrial fisheries often outcompete small-scale fisheries on the back on certification schemes that give them preferential market access. Many of these fisheries have long lasting impacts on ocean biodiversity that are not aligned with visions of sustainable food production as set out at the UN Food Systems Summit in 2021.

Small-scale fisheries hold enormous potential to promote transformative changes, with positive benefits throughout global aquatic food systems. The FAO Ecolabelling Guidelines should be aligned with the FAO's vision of a 'world free from hunger and malnutrition, where food and agriculture contribute to improving the living standards of all, especially the poorest, in an economically, socially and environmentally sustainable manner'. Given the current barriers of ecolabelling certifications for small-scale fisheries, the International Pole and Line Foundation urged the COFI Sub-Committee on Fish Trade, at its 19th Session in Bergen, Norway, to include a revision of the ecolabelling guidelines among its priority action items.

Today, the International Pole and Line Foundation calls on the Sub-Committee on Fisheries Management to integrate considerations of market access into its work supporting fisheries management suited to the needs and circumstances of small-scale fisheries. Moreover, we recommend this Sub-Committee to investigate the inter-relationship between management practices designed for small-scale fisheries and the requirements of ecolabelling certification schemes, so that the FAO Ecolabelling Guidelines may be revised to fully address the varied contexts of small-scale fisheries.

Thank you for your attention.



Marine Stewardship Council

General Statement for the Sub-Committee on Fisheries Management

January 2024

The MSC celebrates and congratulates the FAO Committee on Fisheries (COFI) and all its members and participants for the adoption and launch of the Sub-Committee on Fisheries Management (SCFM). It has been proven that well-established fisheries management systems maintain stocks at healthy levels consistent with sustainable goals, whereas in fisheries with less effective management, stocks and trends are worse. Fish stocks are the ultimate renewable food resource. Sustainable fishing should be at the center of the 'blue food' revolution, as we create resilient food systems for the future.

To that end, the mandate of the SCFM to provide technical and policy guidance on fisheries governance and management for the conservation and sustainable use of fisheries resources based on the best available science as well as the ecosystem and precautionary approaches, is crucial.

The Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) expects that the SCFM and all its members and participants will help identify significant global issues and trends in fisheries management and sustainable development that require urgent measures, offering guidance and recommendations for addressing them, promoting information sharing, cooperation to support good and coordinated practices in policies and actions, and finally to integrate ecological, social, economic, nutrition and gender considerations into management plans and policies.

MSC considers and would like to recall that fisheries management is a wide topic that covers and integrates several areas. Thus, MSC believes that, to generate real impact and change through the SCFM, it is important to focus its scope recalling the mandate. Priorities should be to provide technical guidance and solutions to develop management plans, to define management goals in fishery policies, to design sustainable harvest strategies, to transform and evolve systems, not only individual tools, and to always do it with an integral understanding of modern fisheries management considering the ecosystem approach, the science evidence-based management concept and the precautionary approach. Let's not forget the goals to achieve, the conservation and sustainable use of fisheries resources.

In regard of the specific agenda of this first session of the SCFM, MSC would like to share the following findings and suggestions to the different items to be discussed.



Small-scale fisheries

Small-scale fisheries (SSF) provide around half of all global seafood catch and support the livelihoods of millions worldwide, contributing as a major source of employment, income for local economies and food security for people. Despite their scale, these fisheries can still have a significant impact on the oceans as they can interact with key habitats and species which play a fundamental role on the ecosystems.

Therefore, effective management of these fisheries towards sustainable levels is fundamental to achieve our common goals. These goals are well established in the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the FAO Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries.

To support the contribution of SSF to these goals, MSC provides tools, expertise, training and funding to help improve the sustainable management of these fisheries. However, collaboration is crucial and MSC will continue to work with governments, fishery improvement stakeholders, supply chain operators and others to make sure small-scale fisheries are supported in becoming sustainably managed.

The SCFM should play a fundamental role to achieve these goals. To that end, MSC invites the SCFM and all its members and participants to invest efforts to generate management solutions for the following challenges, among others: a) fisheries operating under open access regimes; b) single biological units (stocks) harvested by several coastal management units; c) strong fragmentation and weak organization of users; d) monitoring, control and surveillance solutions for geographically isolated fisheries; e) integration of small-scale fishers in the decision-making processes; and f) participation of small-scale fishers into the quota or other catch control systems.

Biodiversity

Fisheries management must integrate the protection of marine biodiversity to allow nature to be productive, resilient and adaptable to environmental changes so it can keep providing food, economic and cultural benefits. Overfishing and bycatch are two of the leading drivers of biodiversity loss in our oceans. Therefore, special effort must be focused on transforming the way fishing is done to minimize its impacts and safeguard biodiversity. Research shows that with effective fisheries management which considers wider ecosystem impacts, high levels of sustainable food production are possible while also maintaining biodiversity.



To monitor this progress, we need credible, measurable, science-based indicators for efforts to maintain marine biodiversity. MSC programme is recognised as an official indicator of the post-2020 Kunming – Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, and the Biodiversity Indicators Partnership. These recognitions reflect the scientific reliability of the data and the rigor of the MSC programme, and that it is helping to combat overfishing and biodiversity loss.

MSC will keep engaging with fishers, stakeholders and governments to support the protection of biodiversity and the accountability of these efforts. Certification against MSC standards offers fisheries and governments a credible tool to demonstrate that key targets under SDG14 are met. MSC will keep supporting innovative research via grants offered from our Ocean Stewardship Fund (OSF) to fisheries, to understand the impact of fisheries on marine biodiversity as well as funding research into measures which mitigate those impacts.

MSC would like to invite the SCFM and all its members and participants to contribute to these efforts, particularly developing management solutions within fisheries management plans for: a) the integration of ecosystem-based fisheries management as a principle of policies and laws; and b) a better inclusion of mitigation measures of environmental impacts of fishing non-target species, direct and indirect interactions with protected species and impacts on specific habitats.

Eradication of the illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing

The damaging impacts of illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing on marine life, ocean health, the livelihoods of those fishing legitimately, and human rights are already well known. IUU fishing is also a major global problem which undermines the international community's efforts to protect oceans for a sustainable future.

We need to develop frameworks and tools to help fishers improve the quality of data they collect and strengthen the monitoring, control, surveillance and enforcement systems to properly detect non-compliance and violations to the regulations.

Another fundamental action to combat IUU fishing is to ensure seafood is traceable back to its supply fishery, properly identified and segregated, to guarantee the information flow along the supply chain actors up to better-informed final consumers.

Fostering private-public and cross jurisdiction cooperation, can incentivize fishers to adopt best practices in harvesting, better compliance levels, increase the



transparency of fishery operations and supply chains, and accountability to suppliers and consumers.

These challenges cannot be overcome without an effective multi-stakeholder collaboration. MSC believes that the SCFM should play an important role to seek for practical solutions in several areas related to fighting IUU fishing. Facilitating adapted reporting tools such as catch documentation schemes, continuing the efforts to quantify IUU fishing and exploring the use of all technological solutions for more efficient monitoring, control, surveillance and enforcement systems at all scales, are amongst the crucial ones. MSC also invites the SCFM and its members and participants to reinforce existing Regional Fisheries Management Organizations and promote the creation of new ones where shared and transboundary stocks are harvested by several fleets, developing clear and inclusive decision-making and transparent dispute resolution rules that create trust and higher compliance, and with coordinated monitoring and enforcement measures across jurisdictions.

MSC also considers fundamental and invites the SCFM and its members and participants to work jointly with the Sub-Committee on Fish Trade to develop seafood traceability solutions. This should include providing interoperative chain of custody documentation systems to help close loopholes across jurisdictions, and promoting information exchange leading to reciprocal trust and accountability within the market and society in general. Finally, MSC believes that the SCFM should play a key role to support the expansion of the adoption of the FAO Port State Measures Agreement.

Effects of climate change on fishery management

Fishing provides huge potential to contribute to reduced human impacts to climate by producing blue foods, including fish, shellfish and seaweeds, which are usually both lower in carbon emissions and require fewer resources than land-based animal proteins per kg edible product.

Nevertheless, climate change, and particularly ocean global warming, is already creating changes that affect the structure and productivity of marine ecosystems and generate significant challenges for fisheries management. The combined effects of climate change, overfishing, habitat interaction, and poor fisheries management are placing unprecedented pressure on our oceans. This presents a major challenge to businesses, economies, and communities that rely on fishing for their livelihoods and nutrition.



Many fisheries are already experiencing the impacts of climate change firsthand, particularly through changes in distribution of target species, the amount of available catch, bycatch, and gear interactions with protected and endangered species. More research is needed to understand how we best manage fish stocks in unprecedented circumstances, ensuring healthy oceans and sustainable fisheries in a changing climate. This requires international collaboration and more efficient fisheries management frameworks.

To achieve and maintain sustainability in the context of climate change, fisheries managers, scientists and governments will need to think beyond the current socio-economic structures in place in the form of national regulations and traditional technologies. Thus, MSC invites the SCFM and all its members and participants to investigate how policies could be improved to ensure fairer share of fish stocks shifting across management boundaries due to climate change.

Moreover, MSC invites the SCFM to help develop dynamic and adaptive management systems with responsive harvest strategies that will make fisheries more likely to be resilient to the impacts of climate change, as well as better tools for monitoring evolving environmental conditions to adapt stock assessments considering new sources of uncertainty. Finally, the definition and adoption of transparent conflict-resolution mechanisms, not only at international level but also among different users, will be crucial for an effective fisheries management in the current changing environment.

Final considerations

As established at the last COFI session during the adoption of the SCFM, and reassured now, MSC will contribute to all the above-mentioned challenges and solutions and will provide its more than 25 years of experience on certifying sustainable fisheries and traceable supply chains. More than 600 fisheries representing circa 20% of global marine wild capture are part of the MSC programme bringing a huge, diverse, and detailed knowledge of their environmental performance and their successful fisheries management systems. MSC is keen to share and facilitate its experience and expertise to the SCFM and all its members to contribute to find practical and adapted solutions for more efficient fisheries management to achieve sustainable and resilient fisheries globally.

Statements by NEAFC

(with some additions as Co-Chair of RSN)

Item 4: Global Framework on Biodiversity:

Thank you for the opportunity to speak briefly on behalf of the North East Atlantic Fisheries Commission, and

And congratulations you on your election as Chair.....

As we have heard, GBF creates new impetus and opportunities to our existing work. I say existing as RFMOs such as NEAFC have had conservation objectives built into their conventions for decades, in the case of NEAFC since 2004.

Nevertheless, NEAFC is responding to the GBF commitment from our parties for further *and necessary* mainstreaming of biodiversity in our work. As an example, NEAFC already agreed in 2023 to report to CBD an OECM based on its area based protection for VME from bottom fishing, with further plans to report an OECM based on restricted bottom fishing areas, subject to independent scientific advice. This helps underline the role of fisheries in delivering the area based conservation targets of the GBF, and helps enhance NEAFC collaboration with other organisations such as OSPAR, the RSC for the NEA.

While OECM can highlight our existing protections, a significant initiative for NEAFC *takes us further forward*, and that is, that we are working to set out in more detail our biodiversity and ecosystem objectives. This will help focus the independent scientific advice NEAFC receives and hence further mainstream biodiversity within our ecosystem based management for sustainable use.

If I may, Chair I would also add a brief comment as Co-Chair of the Regional Fisheries Body Secretariats Network (RSN). I would highlight that the RSN is taking this issue forward in its joint activities. Next week we will meet for in Rome for an FAO- RSN workshop on supporting understanding in the Regional Fisheries bodies as they look at designating OECMs related to the area based measures that their organisations and members implement around the globe. Also in our regular meeting in the margins of COFI the RSN will be considering again not only the implications of the GBF, but also of the BBNJ, for the RSN members.

Thank you Chair

Item 5 Climate Change:

Thank You Chair

I make this brief intervention with two hats on, one as co-Chair of the RSN and another as Secretary of NEAFC.

As Tarub reported, RFMOs/RFB members of the RSN from the Pacific and Indian Ocean met in India in October last year to have a in depth discussion on their actions on climate change. As Chair of that meeting, I must say I was impressed in the progress and commitment I heard about at this meeting. And this kind of exchange of experience is a real help to RFB Secretariats to support their members to develop their thinking further on regional fisheries responses to climate change.

Although the similar RSN meeting for the Atlantic has not met, I was able to report back to my own parties in NEAFC on the meeting in India at our Commission meeting. Within NEAFC I am happy to report we have also recently made steps forward, having agreed a climate change resolution at the meeting of the Commission a couple of months ago. This commits NEAFC towards further considering climate change through its scientific and management processes as well thinking about the carbon footprint of NEAFC meetings themselves.

So, my reflection as RSN Co-Chair is that many RFMOs are very willing to get beyond the initial stages of making sure that climate change considerations are built into their processes. The real challenge will be turning an understanding of the longer term regional projections to a risk based approach to implement pragmatic changes for fisheries management in year to year decisions.

I thank FAO for the ongoing support that it is providing to RFMOs, including via the RSN, to help in our continuing exchange of information and development of our understanding on this.

Thank you

The Pew Charitable Trusts

Statement to the First Session of the Sub-Committee on Fisheries Management of the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization Committee on Fisheries

15-18 January 2024

Agenda Item 4: Mainstreaming biodiversity in fisheries management

Pew appreciates the FAO's support for the mainstreaming of biodiversity conservation into fisheries management, including the prioritisation of fisheries' contributions to the targets of the Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF), and agrees with the intent to elaborate on the actions Members can take in a level of detail that mirrors the FAO's 'Strategy on Biodiversity Mainstreaming across Agricultural Sectors.' The purpose of the GBF is to "halt and reverse biodiversity loss" and put nature on a path to recovery for the benefit of people and the planet over the long term, and it includes targets aimed at reducing threats to biodiversity, managing sustainable use, and providing implementation tools.

Target 5 offers added impetus to mainstream ecosystem approaches in fisheries management, broadening management aims where wider impacts of fishing on marine ecosystems are insufficiently accounted for. **In this regard, Pew encourages FAO to help its Members identify practical tools to mainstream biodiversity conservation in fisheries management, applying practical tools that account for interactions between marine species, impacts of fishing on ecosystems and vice versa, and building resilience to respond to changes in the marine environment.**

Target 10 introduces requirements to report spatially on areas under sustainable fisheries management that conserve and restore biodiversity, including through a substantial increase of the application of biodiversity friendly practices. This target requires management that goes further than baseline sustainable management on a single or multi species basis, contributing additional biodiversity safeguards. Although the building blocks of an ecosystem approach are outlined in existing texts such as the UN Fish Stocks Agreement, progress to operationalize this has been slow. The identification of indicators for Target 10, and subsequent identification of candidate areas, offer opportunities to elaborate on the types of additional biodiversity conservation that should be mainstreamed into management. **Pew urges that practical application of an ecosystem approach should draw on existing guidance, including from the FAO, and the tools already being applied in specific fisheries** such as: measures aimed at restoring non-target species; spatial protections to protect vulnerable habitats, species and/or life stages; innovative scientific methodologies and reference points to account for intra and inter-species dynamics, food webs, and the impacts of climate change; and planning that places fisheries in the context of wider ecosystem pressures and human activities.

Fisheries managers also have a key role to play in other targets, including those focused on protection, such as Target 3. While the GBF acknowledges that some sustainable natural resource use may be compatible with protected and conserved areas counted towards Target 3, Target 3 is intended to halt and reverse the loss of biodiversity – not just sustain current populations of harvested species. Thus, only activities that support the long-term, in situ conservation of an area and the species and ecosystems that it supports should be allowed in areas counted towards Target 3, in addition to other criteria. More specifically, the CBD's guidance on sustainable use that might continue in areas under Target 3 foresees only "*limited types of non-industrial, traditional cultural activities*", and IUCN guidance on Other Effective Conservation Measures (OECMs) contributing to Target 3 precludes any "*industrial fishing*". In other words, the scope for continued sustainable use in areas contributing to Target 3 is much more limited than the FAO's briefing paper suggests. **Pew urges the FAO to help its Members understand the criteria for OECMs, and the existing/evolving guidance, including the FAO's 2022 OECM Handbook.**

As noted in the document, countries will need support in making and measuring progress towards the GBF Targets, thus Pew encourages the FAO and its Members to focus near-term efforts on developing sector-specific indicators and guidance for country-led efforts to implement two particular targets in the “Sustainable Use” category: Target 5 and Target 10.

The Pew Charitable Trusts

Statement to the First Session of the Sub-Committee on Fisheries Management of the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization Committee on Fisheries

15-18 January 2024

Agenda Item 5: Climate change and fisheries management

Pew welcomes the inclusion of the agenda item on climate resilient fisheries, noting that climate adaptation efforts must be accompanied by rapid, large-scale emission reductions. The paper rightly emphasises that effective fisheries management is the best adaptation tool and foundation of climate-resilient fisheries, and that ineffective management systems are a barrier to building resilience. In addition to the practical support the paper outlines, Pew would like to put forward four priorities for the improvement of management systems, **and urges the FAO to help its Members prepare for these priorities in line with the following recommendations:**

1. *Governance reforms that enable international management bodies to prepare for changes in fisheries productivity and the distribution of fish populations.*

Pew reiterates the key role of regional governance processes in supporting effective climate adaptation and welcomes the FAO's recent work to convene workshops with RFBs to look at transboundary issues, including in the Indo-Pacific in 2023 and the Atlantic region (expected early 2024). Pew agrees that climate-induced changes in the geographical distribution of key fish species should be of primary concern to RFBs. **We recommend that any future workshops consider the integration of climate-related changes into management objectives, in particular harvest strategies, to support the long-term sustainability of fish populations and fisheries.**

Pew also welcomes the efforts of the FAO in addressing the threat that climate change poses to fisher safety and the potential influence it will have on IUU fishing activity. We recognize that this includes issues such as the increases in the frequency and severity of extreme weather events as well as stock shifts at sea and harvesting issues ashore, driving some communities into engaging in IUU fishing activities which put them at risk. **Pew encourages further work on this critical issue and exploration of the interlinkages between disaster risk, fisher safety, and IUU fishing.**

2. *Implementing long-term, adaptive management including comprehensive harvest strategies tested through robust and transparent management strategy evaluation.*

Harvest strategies – or management procedures – are an important tool in adaptive management, which shifts managers' perspective from short-term, reactive decision-making to longer-term objectives—most typically based on the numbers or biomass of a given fish population—and agreeing in advance how fishing rules (often quotas) will be adjusted to meet those aims. An important part of harvest strategies development is the use of detailed scientific models, called management strategy evaluation (MSE), to ensure that the adopted rules will meet the objectives, under a variety of environmental conditions. This tool provides scientists and managers with the opportunity to incorporate expected or potential impacts from climate change into their decisions.

When designed properly, MSE and the resulting harvest strategies can incorporate direct measures of the effects of a changing climate, like sea surface temperature, or indirect measures, like egg production, growth rates, and other biological characteristics impacted by climate. This tool can be particularly relevant for small pelagic species that form the basis of

marine food webs and for sensitive bycatch species that may be overlooked in traditional fisheries management regimes. **Now that the proof of concept for harvest strategies has been clearly demonstrated for global tuna populations, Pew recommends that the FAO invest in harvest strategy adoption, with MSE development, particularly for small pelagic species, invertebrates, and demersal fishes, and that these tools be developed to explicitly account for the effects of climate change.**

3. *Mainstreaming biodiversity conservation to bolster the resilience of fisheries and the ecosystems on which they depend.*

Climate change is already impacting marine and freshwater ecosystems, and fisheries, and further impacts are inevitable. We strongly support the FAO's efforts to understand and develop ways to adapt to these changes and enhance the resilience of fisheries and ecosystems, including the GEF-funded Common Oceans Program, which features ecosystem-based management as a central theme. **Pew welcomes the focus of this Sub-Committee on mainstreaming biodiversity conservation, and we urge the FAO to use the impetus provided by GBF targets, particularly targets 5 and 10, to broaden the application of ecosystem-based fisheries management.**

4. *Investing in scientific research to develop new management tools and reference points that account for climate change impacts.*

The FAO notes the importance of ecosystem considerations and scientific advances in adapting global fisheries to climate change, but highlights the current limitations in management systems, modelling, and context-specific information on adaptation. **To address these scientific and policy gaps, Pew supports increased investment in research that will improve modelling of physical and chemical ocean conditions, impacts on ecosystems and fish populations, and combined ecological and socio-economic implications, to help inform practical adaptation tools for fisheries managers.**

The Pew Charitable Trusts

Statement to the First Session of the Sub-Committee on Fisheries Management of the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization Committee on Fisheries

15-18 January 2024

Agenda Item 3: Illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing in the context of effective fisheries management

IUU fishing is a persistent problem that disproportionately impacts developing States, costs the global economy billions of dollars annually, and undermines the health and resilience of fish populations. Pew welcomes the discussion of IUU fishing issues at an operational level, with the understanding that effective MCS and enforcement mechanisms are required to ensure compliance with agreed rules, laws, regulations, and standards, and therefore form part of the critical chain of implementation for sustainable, science-based, long-term fisheries management.

Revisiting the terms illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing

Pew welcomes the exploration of the definition of the three components of IUU fishing, and the clarification of the multitude of situations that this term encompasses. Keeping a broad focus and ensuring that due attention is given to unreported and unregulated fishing, as well as illegal fishing, will help ascertain the relevance of the actions currently taken to tackle those components.

Assessing the magnitude and impact of IUU fishing

Pew is interested in the insights arising the development of methods for the estimation of IUU fishing, and notes that the shift from quantitative estimates to use of indicators is fully aligned with the recommendations for Pew-commissioned studies and our ongoing work to improve regional coordination to combat IUU fishing. Pew looks forward to the FAO publishing the technical guidelines on developing and using indicators of performance in fighting IUU fishing, and related tools and educational material. **We encourage Members to come forward as early adopters to test the indicators approach.**

Monitoring, control, surveillance, and enforcement

Pew echoes the critical role of MCS and enforcement in achieving effective fisheries management. MCS conversations are frequently devoid of considerations of enforcement – the act of compelling or ensuring compliance with a rule, law, regulation, or standard. The lack of enforcement mechanisms greatly limits the efficacy of various tools and frameworks meant to enable compliance.

Pew also supports the consideration of small-scale fisheries in the design and implementation of MCS and enforcement mechanisms, noting the need for increased oversight of domestic fisheries. These are often deprioritised in the implementation of MCS-related frameworks such as the PSMA, despite a clear requirement in Article 20 to ensure that States equitably and effectively implement measures on domestic as well as foreign vessels. [Recent research](#) confirms that less than 3% of vessel visits into port, in terms of number though not volume or value, are made by foreign vessels.

Capacity development needs to combat IUU fishing

Pew commends the FAO on the capacity development support delivered to Members in combatting IUU fishing, which is wide-ranging in its geographic as well as its technical reach. **We encourage Members to share the results of their capacity needs assessments with NGOs and other entities that are well placed to provide additional assistance where the FAO's resource restrictions might be an obstacle.** Recognizing that regional cooperation can create a whole that is greater than the sum of its parts, Pew itself plans to work with groups of countries facing similar risks to execute

international instruments and commitments in a synergic manner, leverage resources, and extend their impact in stopping IUU fishing and supporting effective management, for mutual benefit.

Other issues

Pew expresses disappointment the following two sections were not included in the Working Documents, despite being included in the agenda. These are critical elements to assess whether, and ensure that, fishing activities are in line with the principles of sustainable fisheries management:

1. Improving compliance with international conservation and management measures by fishing vessels on the high seas:

Fishing activities on the high seas are regulated through the framework provided by the UN Fish Stocks Agreement under the UN Convention for the Law of the Sea. The role of the flag State in ensuring compliance with measures on the high seas is at the heart of the FAO Agreement to Promote Compliance with International Conservation and Management Measures by Fishing Vessels on the High Seas (Compliance Agreement). This also comes with the right and responsibility to translate international obligations and commitments, including its requirements as enshrined in Article 20 of the FAO Port State Measures Agreement (PSMA), into a framework of rules and processes that will govern the vessels entitled to fly their flag, everywhere they go.

Pew urges revitalisation of the Compliance Agreement, through broader adoption by Members, with key flag States as the priority, and reiterates the call made by COFI, at its thirty-fifth session, for the FAO and its Members to consider options to strengthen effective implementation and enforcement of the FAO Compliance Agreement. Pew has created a [performance assessment tool to assist flag States](#) to better understand the strengths and weaknesses of relevant rules and processes in combatting IUU fishing in waters beyond national jurisdiction, including the high seas, **and encourages flag State authorities and other independent users to apply the questionnaire to evaluate a country's existing regulatory frameworks and to use the results to develop an improvement plan, as necessary.**

Lastly, while ensuring adherence with international conservation and management measures remains the exclusive right and responsibility of flag states, regional fisheries management organizations (RFMOs) have created frameworks to monitor compliance with their rules and regulations. These compliance review processes, often carried out by a compliance committee, are tasked with monitoring members' adherence to the rules, identifying problems with implementation of required management measures, and recommending solutions, including through the adoption of new RFMO measures. A [recently released toolkit](#) identifies key principles of an effective compliance review process, including transparency, impartiality, efficiency, and effectiveness, and includes recommendations on how to assess and strengthen these RFMO review procedures. **Pew urges Members to work within RFMOs to assess and strengthen their Compliance Review Processes to help more effectively identify and address non-compliance with international conservation and management measures.**

2. Global information exchange to monitor compliance and support enforcement:

Information exchange underpins effective MCS and lies at the heart of the risk assessment which enables States to make the most effective use of inspection and enforcement staff. Addressing the complex challenges of IUU fishing requires understanding fishing activity on the water. This knowledge stems from a steady flow of reliable information from the flag State of the fishing vessel to the coastal State in whose waters it fished, the RFMO governing

those waters, the port State where the fish is landed, and the market States where the products enter the market.

Flag State responsibilities, in this regard, include due diligence processes to avoid authorization of fishing vessels with a history of non-compliance. Authorities require accurate and up-to-date information to make assessments and take decisions, including the vessel's identity ownership and its history. The FAO Global Record of Fishing Vessels, Refrigerated Transport Vessels, and Supply Vessels (Global Record) is the natural repository for such information but, despite the launch of the upgraded tool, the data remains inconsistent and sometimes out of date which limits its use. **Pew encourages Members to upload information to as many data fields within the Global Record as possible in a regular manner.**

The timely and transparent exchange of information between authorities is also integral to PSMA implementation, and still largely pending. As a first step, **Pew urges Parties to submit national contact points and designate ports, as these are critical to the effective implementation of the other provisions of the PSMA. Pew welcomes the launch of the fully operational Global Information Exchange System (GIES) by the FAO and strongly encourages all Parties to use it to facilitate real time data exchange, as soon as possible.** Pew hopes that the value of its use will soon become apparent, and that Parties can agree to making it mandatory, and supports its linkage with other electronic PSM systems, especially those of RFMOs, to further improve data exchange and minimize duplication of effort.

Lastly, beneficial ownership information for fishing vessels is a key piece of information that allows enforcement officials to know who controls and profits from the fishing operations. Further, vessels known to belong to beneficial owners that are also profiting from other vessels found to be operating IUU should be afforded greater scrutiny and be given priority for investigation or inspection. **Pew encourages Members to identify a forum for in-depth discussion about beneficial ownership information in relation to fishing vessels and the risks that may imply, and identify relevant information can be shared with the authorities who need it.**

UNIDO's intervention on Impact of climate change on post-harvest operations

Respected Chair,

UNIDO recognizes that climate change has significant impacts on fisheries management and its resources;

Based on our continued work in post-harvest fisheries, UNIDO noticed that significant impact is observed in fish post-harvest practices, posing challenges to the sustainability and productivity of post-harvest fisheries operations.

UNIDO agrees with the members of this meeting that climate change has its impact on fish stocks, interrupted rain falls and migration. These issues also have significant impact on post-harvest fisheries by limiting the quantity of fish available for processing and distribution.

Warmer waters can accelerate spoilage, increase the risk of bacterial growth, and impact the shelf life of fish products. This necessitates climate resilient handling, storage, and processing techniques to maintain product quality and safety. In addition, climate change can also induce seafood supply chain disruptions such as Infrastructure damage and transportation disruptions can impact the timely delivery of fish to processing facilities and markets.

To mitigate the impacts of climate change on fish post-harvest practices, UNIDO has been working in many developing countries in implementing climate-resilient infrastructure, improving cold chain management, and capacity building in post-harvest fisheries operations.

To address the impact of climate change on fish post-harvest practices requires a multi-faceted approach involving collaboration. In this regard, UNIDO also works with national universities and linking them with policy makers and private sector operators to develop climate resilient technologies and sustainable practices, to address the impact of climate change to ensure the long-term viability of fisheries and the availability of high-quality seafood.