EUROPEAN UNION

| Item 9. Combatting illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing |

**UNION POSITION**

*(On behalf of the EU)*

- I have the honor to speak on behalf of the EU. The EU notes with pleasure that the Port State Measures Agreement has the **fastest rate of adherence** to a binding international fisheries instrument related to the Code of Conduct. We hope that this trend will continue, **while implementation is strengthened**.

- This demonstrates the commitment that most of us attach to the fight against IUU fishing, towards which we can only have a **zero tolerance approach**.

- The EU supports the **FAO's appeal to COFI members who are not yet Parties to join the PSMA** and to participate in its implementation.

- **We look forward to hosting the virtual 3rd meeting of the Parties to the PSMA** from 31 May to 4 June, which will also be the 1st review meeting of the agreement.

- We really hope that this meeting will be the opportunity for all participants – parties, non-parties, observers – to **assess and deepen their cooperation**.

- As regards **SDG target 14.6**, we emphasise the importance of applying the disciplines in its entirety to all WTO Members, without exception.

- While the EU is **favorable to special and differential treatment for developing countries** regarding other types of subsidies, we think that everybody should be very firm in **rejecting any exemption for subsidies that contribute to IUU fishing**.

- We understand that the **WTO discipline will not create new rights and obligations for members to identify IUU activities, beyond those already existing under the International Law of the Sea**. The objective is to ensure that not one cent of public money goes to vessels and operators, which engage in such activities.

- The EU remains committed to strengthening the conservation and management regime of RFMOs to contribute more effectively to the fight against IUU fishing. A large number of them have adopted efficient mechanisms of monitoring, control and surveillance, that have proven rather effective against IUU activities.

- There are still some areas where **additional efforts** could improve results:
  - The first one is **better coordination amongst RFMOs**.
• The second one is the **Catch Documentation Scheme**. The FAO Voluntary Guidelines for Catch Documentation Schemes, adopted in 2017, serve as a useful blueprint for RFMOs to develop and implement a new Catch Documentation Scheme, or harmonising or reviewing existing ones.

• The third one is **transshipments at sea**. A global strategy for the control of transshipments under the different RMFOs, using Remote Electronic Monitoring, would have a great impact on the fight against IUU fishing.

- We welcome the **FAO in-depth study on transshipment**, to which the EU provided a **substantial financial contribution**, and we **thank FAO for the work done** over the last years.

- We are very concerned that transshipments operations remain **largely unregulated and insufficiently monitored and controlled**.

- In some cases, this lack of control can be **exploited by certain operators who engage in IUU fishing activities**.

- The in-depth study provides a **valuable overview of the risks and issues associated to transshipment** and constitutes an **excellent basis for further action**.

- We therefore ask the Secretariat to undertake the **elaboration of draft international guidelines on transshipments**, for discussion and review by an Expert Consultation, which would subsequently be negotiated and adopted by a Technical Consultation. We hope that they can be finalised and **endorsed at the 35th Session of COFI**.

- We **welcome the increased submission of information** by FAO Members to the **Global Record of Fishing Vessels**. We have noticed, however, that **most Members do not update the data sent**, which is essential for this tool to be useful. We also call for **broader participation and submission of a wider range of information**.

- We **encourage FAO to keep progressing on the development of technical guidelines on methodologies and indicators for the estimation of the magnitude and impact of IUU fishing**.

- Finally, we like to stress that **transparency throughout seafood supply chains is essential**. Enhanced transparency allows government agencies, corporate actors and other stakeholders to leverage limited assets to combat effectively IUU fishing.