

**166th Session of the Council**  
**Written Correspondence Procedure – inputs from Members - original version**  
Item 7.2 - Report of the 34th Session of the Committee on Fisheries

Member Name	Comments
<p><b>Zimbabwe - Member</b> (Wed 14/04/2021 09:37)</p>	<p>Zimbabwe expresses its appreciation for the document which highlights the importance of fisheries, particularly in the lives of the world’s poorest populations. Fisheries are a source of much needed nutritious food as well as a source of employment. The document is rich in observations, plans, solutions and recommendations to promote sustainable, organised, registered and legal fishing on both small and large scales. Zimbabwe welcomes the Committee’s request for increased support for small scale and artisanal fisheries and promoting the importance of small scale and artisanal fisheries and aquaculture in relevant countries during the International Year of Artisanal Fisheries and Aquaculture in 2022.</p> <p>Zimbabwe commends the Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO) on its work in achieving sustainable fisheries and aquaculture through collaborative approaches with relevant stakeholders that include Member States, regional organisations, civil organisations and other initiatives. The country is a beneficiary of this invaluable cooperation. Recently, with the support of FAO, Zimbabwe launched a project for small scale fisheries to enhance community resilience and the sustainability of small-scale fisheries for communities around Lake Kariba and the Zambezi River. The ecosystem-based management project aims to utilise inland fisheries resources for enhanced food security in the country. The project is set to contribute towards poverty reduction at the grassroots level and plays a critical role in generating household incomes and contributing to food and nutrition security. Zimbabwe appreciates the technical support it is receiving from the FAO.</p> <p>Zimbabwe supports the recommendations to grow blue economies in countries with this potential. It further supports initiatives to overcome challenges faced in the fisheries sector, including the reduction and elimination of Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated fishing.</p> <p>Zimbabwe supports and endorses the findings and recommendations of the 34<sup>th</sup> Committee on Fisheries as outlined in document C 2021/23.</p>
<p><b>Dominican Republic – Member</b> (Wed 14/04/2021 16:00)</p>	<p>República Dominicana acoge con satisfacción el informe.</p> <p>Reconocemos el trabajo de la FAO en la realización de la edición de 2020 de El estado mundial de la pesca y la acuicultura (SOFIA), que tomó en cuenta los preocupantes efectos del covid-19 en este sector.</p> <p>En relación a la contribución de la pesca y la <b>acuicultura a la aplicación de la Agenda 2030 para el desarrollo sostenible</b>, el pasado mes de diciembre de 2020 el Consejo de Ministros de OSPESCA aprobó la Estrategia Regional para el Crecimiento Azul en los países del SICA, con el objetivo de establecer las bases para la generación de un crecimiento basado en el aprovechamiento sostenible de los recursos marinos y costeros, contribuyendo de este modo a la mejora de la calidad de vida y en línea con la agenda 2030.</p>

	<p>República Dominicana reitera su reconocimiento y apoyo a la <b>pesca en pequeña escala y artesanal</b>, reflejándose en los esfuerzos que se vienen realizando tanto a nivel nacional como regional en la implementación de las Directrices PPE.</p> <p>En ese sentido, expresamos nuestro apoyo a la celebración del <b>Año Internacional de la Pesca y Acuicultura Artesanales 2022</b> para dirigir la atención internacional a reconocer el importante papel de los pequeños pescadores, acuicultores y trabajadores del pescado en la seguridad alimentaria y la nutrición.</p> <p>Reconocemos como ejes prioritarios la formulación de proyectos de desarrollo rural sostenible basados en la producción y el comercio pesqueros que garanticen la creación de oportunidades de empleo en ese importante renglón de la economía.</p> <p>Así mismo, agradecemos la asistencia técnica que recibimos de la FAO para desarrollar políticas <b>contra la pesca ilegal no declarada y no reglamentada</b>.</p> <p>Elogiamos la labor que realiza la FAO con relación al <b>impacto del cambio climático</b> en la pesca y la acuicultura y le exhortamos a seguir apoyando las acciones hacia la adaptación, resiliencia y mitigación de los países, con particular atención a los pequeños Estados insulares en desarrollo.</p>
<p><b>The United States of America</b> (Wed 14/04/2021 16:56)</p>	<p>Fisheries and aquaculture are a vital source of food and nutrition in the diets of many around the world - supplying both critical protein and high-quality nutrition to billions around the world. This is particularly true in small scale and artisanal fisheries. They are crucial components in sustainable development: key to food security, livelihoods, biodiversity conservation, supporting trade and more, throughout the world. The disruptions we have all seen from COVID-19 have only underscored this point.</p> <p>They also play an important role in developing climate-resilient food systems. In particular, aquaculture with sustainable inputs can be both an additional source of seafood to strengthen nutrition and food security and a tool for economic diversification in coastal communities.</p> <p>Twenty-five years after its adoption, the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries remains the gold standard for sustainably managing our fisheries and aquaculture sectors and supporting sustainable development.</p> <p>To that end, the United States welcomes the COFI Declaration for Sustainable Fisheries and Aquaculture, which sets a clear path for our next 25 years of collaborative efforts under the Code for fisheries and aquaculture, while highlighting the sector's essential contributions in the fight against poverty, hunger and all forms of malnutrition.</p> <p>At COFI, the United States highlighted key priorities for the Programme of Work and Strategic Framework, notably that seafood is a critical part of food security, nutrition, and sustainable development and urged FAO to further incorporate fisheries and aquaculture issues into its internal and external-facing work on food security and nutrition.</p> <p>In particular, we want to reiterate COFI's call on FAO and COFI Members, consistent with the COFI Declaration for Sustainable Fisheries and Aquaculture, for the UN Food Systems Summit to recognize the unique role of fisheries and aquaculture in the global food system and promote actions to safeguard the important contributions of fisheries and aquaculture to global food security.</p>

	<p>Fisheries and aquaculture products represent a significant portion of animal protein consumed by humans globally (up to 17 percent in 2015, according to the FAO), and this percentage continues to rise. Although some similarities to agriculture exist, there are significant differences relative to both the challenges and the solutions to ensuring that the important contributions of fisheries and aquaculture to global food security continue in the future. These differences merit consideration and specific action in the context of the Summit.</p> <p>Finally, the United States strongly supports the initiation of an open, transparent, and information-driven process to continue to explore the proposal for creating an additional COFI Sub-Committee on Fisheries Management through a Friends of the Chair process, organized through COFI Bureau.</p> <p><u>2021-23 Action Plan for the Implementation of the FAO Strategy on Mainstreaming Biodiversity across Agricultural Sectors</u></p> <p>We listened carefully to members’ discussions in the 34th Committee on Fisheries on the biodiversity strategy and its use of geographical indications. Members were concerned that GIs continue to be listed as a method of ensuring biodiversity despite a lack of evidence and despite conclusions from technical and expert meetings that expressed the same.</p> <p>Paragraph 17 (b) of the Report of the 34th Session of the Committee on Fisheries expressed concerns with the proposed Action Plan; in particular, over actions included in geographical indications and market-oriented biosecurity. Additionally, following the 34th COFI, in two other subsequent documents, the 130th Programme Committee (PC 130/7 Inf. Note 1) in paragraph 10 (d) and the Report of the First Part of the Second Meeting of the Group of National Focal Points for Biodiversity for Food and Agriculture (CGRFA/NFP-BFA-2.1/21/Report) in paragraph 19 (d) -- highlighted that there is no peer-reviewed evidence demonstrating that geographical indications contribute to the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity.</p> <p>United States requests FAO to explain why on the conclusions of the Group of National Focal Points for Biodiversity for Food and Agriculture and COFI Member requests that the four references to “geographic indications” in FAO Strategy on Mainstreaming Biodiversity across Agricultural Sectors on page 24 in FAO Core Function 7 be addressed, yet these references remained in the version of this FAO strategy that was presented to Members of the Programme Committee.</p>
<p><b>Argentina – Member</b> (Wed 14/04/2021 16:58)</p>	<p>La Argentina participó activamente del 34.º período de sesiones del Comité de Pesca (COFI) y se congratula de las conclusiones allí alcanzadas.</p> <p>En particular la Argentina destaca que respecto a futuras ediciones de “El estado mundial de la pesca y la acuicultura” (SOFIA), se solicitó a la FAO que considerara información adicional y mejoras metodológicas a fin de reflejar mejor el estado regional de las poblaciones de peces, reconociendo las iniciativas para restablecer las poblaciones y aumentando el número de poblaciones objeto de evaluaciones, sin menoscabo de la integridad de las series cronológicas. Además, la Argentina se congratula que el Comité también recomendó llevar a cabo un proceso de revisión por pares más sólido y participativo y distribuir el informe SOFIA a los Miembros bastante antes de su publicación.</p>

Asimismo, la Argentina ratifica sus observaciones en relación con las recomendaciones incluidas en diversos documentos de trabajo de COFI relativas a que todos los Estados de pabellón, del puerto, ribereños y de mercado deben ratificar y aplicar el Acuerdo sobre medidas del Estado Rector del Puerto Destinadas a Combatir la Pesca INDNR (Acuerdo MERP), aclarando que la decisión de ratificar o no un instrumento internacional es una decisión soberana de cada Estado y que por esta razón debe evitarse la inclusión de expresiones prescriptivas en ese sentido. Por ello, damos la bienvenida al lenguaje utilizado en el párrafo 67 del informe final.

Por otro lado, la Argentina entiende necesario una vez más expresar ante su mención en diversos documentos de COFI pero también de la FAO –elaborados posteriormente al 34COFI- que la referencia a "economía azul" no debería utilizarse atento no existe acuerdo a nivel internacional en relación ese concepto ni figura como tal en la Agenda 2030. Al respecto, se manifiesta que la Argentina se encuentra comprometida a continuar abordando aspectos relativos a "economías marinas sostenibles e inclusivas", siendo este lenguaje acordado de la Declaración de Pesca y Acuicultura Sostenibles adoptado para la sesión del COFI de referencia, incorporado a lo largo del texto del informe final del Comité en reemplazo de la expresión objetada por nuestro país.

Bajo este punto de agenda, la Argentina también desea expresar su compromiso para el establecimiento de disciplinas para eliminar los subsidios a la pesca en el marco de la OMC, presentando propuestas a nivel regional, y en colaboración también con países extra-región. Asimismo, nuestro país ve con agrado y agradece el apoyo y asesoramiento técnico brindado por FAO a las negociaciones sobre subsidios a la pesca en la OMC, y aspira pronto se pueda alcanzar un acuerdo.

Con respecto a la recomendación relativa a las pérdidas y desperdicios de alimentos se recuerda que la longitud de la cadena no necesariamente es un factor sino que ello depende de las buenas prácticas que se apliquen (o no). Por lo tanto, se sugiere alentar el fortalecimiento de todas las cadenas, independientemente de su longitud, a fin de impulsar también la producción y provisión de alimentos sanos y nutritivos desde zonas más alejadas de los principales centros de consumo.

Por otro lado, la Argentina al igual que el COFI, coinciden en alertar que toda medida comercial, ya sea en la forma de una restricción a la importación, una suba de aranceles, el establecimiento de cupos o una medida sanitaria, deberá ser compatible con las normas de la OMC. Dichas medidas no deberán ser aplicadas en forma que constituya un medio de discriminación arbitrario o injustificable o una restricción encubierta al comercio internacional. En particular, las medidas sanitarias deben cumplir con lo reglado por el "Acuerdo sobre la Aplicación de Medidas Sanitarias y Fitosanitarias" de la OMC, estar fundadas en evidencia científica respaldatoria y no discriminar de manera arbitraria o injustificable entre Miembros en que prevalezcan condiciones idénticas o similares. Asimismo, cabe recordarse que los cambios de los tipos arancelarios consolidados deben respetar los procedimientos establecidos para la "Modificación de las listas" en el Acuerdo GATT.

En cuanto al Año Internacional de la Pesca y la Acuicultura Artesanales (IYAFA 2022), la Argentina reitera su apoyo a la iniciativa y señala que se está trabajando, conjuntamente con la Coordinación de Pesca Artesanal de la Secretaría de Agricultura Familiar, del Ministerio de Agricultura, Ganadería y Pesca, en la elaboración de una agenda de eventos para incrementar el reconocimiento del sector, y profundizar el trabajo con las comunidades de pescadores. Asimismo,

	<p>se invita a todos los Miembros a participar activamente en su desarrollo a partir de sus contribuciones en especie y financieras.</p> <p>El combate a la pesca INDNR debe ser una prioridad para todos a fin de garantizar la debida conservación de los recursos pesqueros. La Argentina se encuentra comprometida en la lucha contra este flagelo. En ese sentido, nuestro país recibe con beneplácito el atinado y pertinente concepto de “Otras medidas de conservación eficaces basadas en zonas geográficas (OMCE)” y subraya el papel fundamental que tiene la pesca en la conservación de la biodiversidad de los océanos y en la contribución al bienestar de los seres humanos, de manera mucho más amplia que las áreas marinas protegidas.</p> <p>El concepto de OMCE tal como ha sido definido en la COP/CBD de 2018, representa una oportunidad importante para que países como la Argentina, con sólido manejo pesquero, que han establecido fehacientemente y con control estricto y demostrado, vastas áreas cerradas a la pesca con el objetivo de proteger procesos biológicos relevantes a la sostenibilidad de las poblaciones que constituyen sus principales recursos pesqueros, puedan dar acabado cumplimiento a los compromisos impuestos en relación con la Meta 11 de Aichi y el ODS 14.5.</p> <p>Con estos comentarios, la Argentina invita al Consejo a hacer suyas las conclusiones y recomendaciones del Comité de Pesca en su 34° período de sesiones.</p>
<p><b>Australia – Member</b> (Wed 14/04/2021 17:09)</p>	<p>Australia highlights the significance of fisheries issues for the South West Pacific Region, in particular the Pacific Small Island Developing States (SIDS), and we welcome the FAO’s on-going commitment to fisheries matters. We note the findings and recommendations of the 34th Session of the Committee on Fisheries (COFI), and we respectfully highlight the following points:</p> <p>We welcome the endorsement of the 2021 COFI Declaration for Sustainable Fisheries and Aquaculture and support the calls, consistent with this Declaration, to ensure fisheries and aquaculture are fully integrated into the preparations for the UN Food Systems Summit.</p> <p>We underline the importance of FAO continuing to support Members in the framework of negotiations on fisheries subsidies carried out in the World Trade Organization (WTO).</p> <p>We highlight the importance of the FAO continuing to work closely with Pacific SIDS in building their statistical capacity and delivery of data, and in their Monitoring, Control and Surveillance efforts, including in implementation of Port State Measures and in the management of high seas transshipment.</p> <p>With regard to the proposal to establish a COFI Sub-committee on Fisheries Management:</p> <p>Australia welcomes further transparent and inclusive discussion on the proposal to establish a sub-committee under the leadership of the Chairperson of COFI.</p> <p>We consider that it will be particularly important to explore:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What global fisheries issues would be best addressed at the international level, as opposed to what are regional issues or national issues.</li> <li>• How issues of participation can be addressed, noting barriers of attendance (for both physical and virtual meetings) especially for Pacific Island countries.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Budgetary implications.</li> </ul>
<p><b>European Union – Member</b> (Wed 14/04/2021 23:10)</p>	<p>The EU welcomes the report of the 34th session of the FAO Committee on Fisheries (COFI), in which the EU actively participated, promoting a post-COVID 19 recovery for the fisheries and aquaculture sectors based on enhanced resilience and sustainability.</p> <p>Given the circumstances, in particular the fact that this was the first virtual COFI meeting, the EU and its Member States appreciate positively the outcome of the COFI session as reflected in its meeting report, and are resolutely engaged in the follow-up work for the achievement of its decisions.</p> <p>However, the EU and its Member States take this opportunity to share their frustration that the time devoted to discussing substantial issues was insufficient in view of their importance and did not allow the appropriate involvement of observers. We hope that these concerns will be taken into account in the organisation of the 35th session of the FAO Committee on Fisheries, regardless of its format.</p> <p>Moreover, the EU and its Member States wish to express one more time their disappointment with the late availability of the COFI session documents, although the virtual nature of the meeting made them even more necessary for an adequate preparation. We consider that this has seriously impeded the preparation of the EU and its Member States, as well as other delegations. In our view, this has also been detrimental to the quality of the discussion on certain agenda items.</p> <p>We note that it is intended to hold the next session of the COFI from 5 to 9 September 2022, i.e. right after the month of August, which, for many delegations, coincides with reduced availability. Considering this, we believe that even if respected by FAO, the four weeks’ deadline for circulating the COFI documents would not be enough for allowing many COFI members to adequately prepare for the meeting, be it in virtual or in-person mode. Therefore, we reiterate our wish to the FAO Secretariat to make available a detailed draft provisional agenda of the COFI meeting at least 8 weeks before the COFI 35 Session.</p> <p>To summarise, although we fully subscribe to the content of the COFI 34 report and commit to supporting the implementation of its decisions, and we urge FAO to pay particular attention to improve the preparation of future COFI discussions.</p>
<p><b>Japan – Member</b> (Thu 15/04/2021 14:32)</p>	<p>Japan welcomes the reports from the Technical Committees. Nonetheless, we would like to make the following comments.</p> <p>Report of the 34th Session of the Committee on Fisheries (COFI)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Japan would like to express its sincere appreciation to FAO, especially the Fisheries division, and its Members for their efforts and cooperation in the preparation and organization of COFI 34 and welcomes good results of COFI 34 toward sustainable use of fishery resources. Japan however, would also like to draw the attention of the Council that the virtual format of COFI 34 was quite challenging and exposed Members to difficult situations with multiple problems. Especially, East Asian countries, including Japan, faced a lot of difficulties due to the irrelevant meeting arrangement without considering the time difference. Japan would therefore</li> </ul>

	<p>cordially request that substantial improvements be introduced to future sessions, if organized virtually, to avoid repeating such a severe situation we had at COFI 34.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Moreover, it should be noted that a broader range of topics and agendas COFI has than other Technical Committees do has been one of the major causes for the unexpectedly prolonged discussion and the delay of schedule at COFI. In this regard, it is essential to improve the overall COFI system's efficiency, including considering the possible establishment of a new "Sub-Committee on Fisheries Management". Since the new Chairperson of COFI is appointed from Japan, under his Chairmanship, Japan intends to make its utmost efforts in securing an efficient and effective operation of the COFI system, including through the examination on the possible establishment of a new Sub-Committee.</li> <li>• Like many other Members, Japan attaches the highest importance to combating Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing and believes that the consensus at COFI 34 on further strengthening measures against IUU fishing is a significant step forward. In this regard, Japan looks forward to an earlier elaboration of effective voluntary guidelines for regulating, monitoring, and controlling transshipment, as recommended by COFI 34.</li> <li>• Japan welcomes FAO to strengthen cooperation with Regional Fisheries Management Organizations (RFMOs) and commends FAO's active involvement and participation, as the sole UN technical agency for the fisheries management, in discussions at various global <i>fora</i> such as marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction (BBNJ), the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), and the World Trade Organization (WTO). Japan would urge FAO to further strengthen its contribution to those organizations. Especially, reinforcement of the cooperation with CITES with which FAO has concluded a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is quite important. FAO has a pivotal role in providing CITES with relevant scientific and technical advice on the listing and implementing such listing of commercially exploited aquatic species. Japan believes that the provision of such advice associated with the CITES listings is a critical responsibility of FAO and expects FAO to further strengthen its activities in this regard.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Iceland – Observer</b> (Wed 14/04/2021 15:33)</p>	<p>Iceland takes note of and welcomes important initiatives taken by the Committee on Fisheries (COFI) in February 2021. Iceland wants to highlight the 2021 Declaration for Sustainable Fisheries and Aquaculture which was endorsed by all members of the Committee on Fisheries (COFI). It is a milestone marking the 25th anniversary of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries.</p> <p>The declaration specifically notes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• that urgent targeted action is needed to ensure fish and fish products continue to provide effective and sustainable pathways to reduce poverty, secure livelihoods and underpin food security and nutrition, as a pre-requisite to achieving the goals set in Agenda 2030, and</li> </ul>

- that Members need to reinforce international and regional cooperative governance mechanisms, including the UN Agreement for the Implementation of the Provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea and the FAO Port State Measures to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated (IUU) fishing, in order to reduce overfishing, and provide adequate protection to vulnerable ecosystems.

Iceland observes that important progress is made in fisheries management globally but notes with alarm that still more than one third of fish stocks are overfished. IUU fishing remains a persistent problem, especially to low-income Small Island Developing States (SIDS).

Iceland urges all to put pressure with existing legal and agreed instruments on Members which continue this malpractice. The aim is to eliminate IUU fishing.

We support the call from low- and middle-income countries for assistance in capacity building for fisheries management and sustainable aquaculture production.

II.

Iceland supports the call of COFI and reiterates the need to bring fisheries and aquaculture (aquatic food) fully into the preparation of the UN Food Systems Summit (UNFSS).

We recognize the need to promote the consumption of fish and fish products derived from sustainable fisheries and aquaculture, reminding the global community that they are among the healthiest foods on the planet. “Blue food” (aquatic) should be an integral part of the UNFSS plan of action.

III.

Iceland supports the outcome of COFI, which highlighted the importance of reaching an outcome in World Trade Organization (WTO) negotiations to prohibit certain forms of fisheries subsidies that contribute to overcapacity and overfishing, and eliminate subsidies that contribute to Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing.

Iceland likes to encourage the COFI Bureau to continue exploring the proposal for a third Sub-Committee, on Fisheries.

Finally, Iceland reminds the Director -General and Management that FAO has been given a key role within the UN System in respect to SDG 14, Life below water. Therefore, a new management strategy for FAO needs to take full note of this responsibility and duly reflect FAO’s leading role in achieving SDG 14.