

## **U.S. Statement on Agenda item 10: Developments in global and regional processes related to fisheries and aquaculture**

- There is a lot of international work being undertaken on fisheries and ocean issues, and we greatly appreciate FAO's technical expertise and cooperation in the relevant fora across the United Nations.
- We remain concerned that the Part VII Assistance Fund under the Fish Stocks Agreement remains underfunded and thank Norway for its efforts to revise the Terms of Reference to help modernize the fund.
- We welcome the continued participation of the FAO and its RFMO partners in the BBNJ process.
- While a new BBNJ agreement may have implications for fisheries instruments and institutions, including FAO and the RFMOs, many questions are still unresolved, and there is not yet sufficient detail to understand and advise on these potential implications. Likewise, we would not want any discussion at COFI to prejudice any outcome of the BBNJ process.
- As these negotiations progress, the Secretariat can continue to add value by attending the intergovernmental conference and providing factual information regarding FAO's ongoing work and existing fisheries instruments, as well as and the respective mandates, competencies, and relevant management measures of the RFMOs.
- FAO can play an important role as both a source and a convener of technical expertise. To this end, we also note the "International Workshop on Area-Based Management of Blue Water Fisheries" held June 15-17, 2020, hosted by the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council and Co-Chaired by the FAO. The meeting documents can be found here: <http://www.wpcouncil.org/Blue-Water-ABMT-workshop/>
- Finally, the United States would like to highlight the FAO regional fisheries bodies, which serve a key role in supporting and strengthening fisheries science and management at both the national and regional level. We have been disappointed to see the erosion in support for these bodies and their de-emphasis within FAO's strategic planning over the years.
- We would particularly note the work of Western Central Atlantic Fisheries Commission (WECAFC), which has made vital contributions towards strengthened regional collaboration and improved fisheries management in the wider Caribbean region.
- We strongly encourage FAO to enhance its support for WECAFC to help ensure it can continue its valuable work towards advancing scientific data collection, achieving sustainable fisheries, and combating IUU fishing.