

**US. Statement on Agenda Item 11.1: Implementation of the FAO Strategy on Biodiversity
Mainstreaming across fisheries and aquaculture:**

- The United States supports efforts to integrate biodiversity considerations into fisheries and aquaculture, recognizing the importance of conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity in providing critical ecosystem services and food security.
- We are pleased to see the publication of the “Guidelines to Prevent and Reduce the Capture of Marine Mammals in Capture Fisheries” and thank the FAO for their work on these important guidelines.
- We further note that unsustainable fisheries and aquaculture practices are one of the main drivers of marine biodiversity loss.
- Given the importance of this issue, the United States is pleased to note FAO’s activities on mainstreaming biodiversity across fisheries and aquaculture.
- The draft 2021-2023 action plan presents an ambitious and comprehensive roadmap of work to advance the mainstreaming of biodiversity across agricultural sectors including fisheries and aquaculture.
- However, our delegation has serious concerns about the action plan’s references to Geographical Indications because a Geographical Indicator provides intellectual property protection but does not confer, or imply by itself, product grading, healthfulness or sustainability, including biodiversity preservation.
- We are not aware of any peer reviewed evidence to support the linkage between GIs and improved biodiversity outcomes, and we reject the key action to “Raise awareness on the potential of GIs to preserve biodiversity and contribute to nutrition and healthy diets.”
- In addition, our delegation has concerns about the action plan’s references to mainstreaming FAO’s current biosecurity work to include human and animal disease burden linked to trade, changing climate, and antibiotic/antimicrobial-resistant (AMR) infections and shifts in aquaculture and trade practices. Our recommendation is to remove reference to “trade” and “trade practices” in this statement.
- In February 2021, the United States will submit comprehensive comments and edits on the action plan to the FAO Office of Climate Change, Biodiversity and Environment (OCB) and the COAG and COFI Secretariats.

- We emphasize that the WTO is the appropriate body for dealing with the rules of trade between nations and ensuring that policies related to human and animal disease burden be consistent with international trade rules and obligations.