

4. Status, trends, emerging issues and innovative responses to ensure responsible and sustainable fisheries and aquaculture: Building back better

We thank FAO for the work performed in order to carried out the 34th Session of the Committee on Fisheries, in the difficult context of the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as the participatory format used, recognising the inclusion of the contributions made by Members in the interest in pursuit of enrichment and improvement the work done by the Committee and consequently its effectiveness towards its objectives.

Regarding point 4 “Status, trends, emerging issues and innovative responses to ensure responsible and sustainable fisheries and aquaculture: Building back better”, the Delegation of Ecuador would like to mention and to submit the following to the Committee's consideration:

The current situation of sustainable fisheries is a matter of concern for the scientific community, governmental and non-governmental organisations, and consumers; it is therefore pertinent to collaborate responding to this concern and it must be disseminated in a global way about the sustainability of fisheries and aquaculture resources.

Nations linked to these activities must have sufficient information on their exploited fisheries resources, in order to conduct scientific evaluation to determine the current status of resources, allowing the establishment of management measures in order that these activities in aquaculture and fisheries are implemented and maintained in time.

Ecuador, welcoming the concern of the scientific community, governmental and non-governmental organisations, and consumers; collaborates in view of the need to disseminate about the sustainability of fishery resources, for this, the Fisheries Authority of Ecuador has sufficient information on fishery resources, which allows scientific evaluation to be conducted in order to deter the current status of the resource, enabling to establish catch quotas and fisheries being maintained over time.

This evaluation is conduced by the Public Institute for Aquaculture and Fisheries Research (IPIAP). Thus, IPIAP recommends to the Fisheries Authority the amount of allowable biologically catches and measures that accompany a good fisheries management. According to the regulation, the fisheries sector catches what is authorized, and if authorized it is exported in regular basis.

Among its objectives, sustainable fisheries seek to ensure the population permanence over time, without damaging the target species with which it interacts and the surrounding habitat where the

fishing manoeuvres are being carried out. Depending on the fishery, authorized fishing landings have selectivity devices that modify the fishing gear and allow the escape of small specimens that must remain in the population for its reproduction, and of certain non-objective species, such as sea turtles.

Through this scientific information, updates on management measures are made, which are applied to the different fisheries, as a result of monitoring the authorized fishery resources for capture, this information is complemented with applied traceability in the landings of catches by the Fisheries Control body of the Undersecretariat of Fisheries Resources. There are management measures established by the Fisheries Authority that prohibit the retention of group species with major conservation problems, such as sharks, birds and mammals.

Likewise, Ecuador participates actively in four of the regional fisheries management organisations and promotes the implementation of good practices of its fleet fishing activity. Ecuador considers that this is an essential step for the correct management of fisheries, in addition it fosters international cooperation against illegal, nonreported and nonregulated fishing and associated crimes.

The new Organic Law for the Development of Aquaculture and Fisheries, welcomes in its provision the fisheries ecosystem approach, the implementation of this approach is conceived in a way that the sustainable development is achieved to ensure food access, in harmony with principles and rights established in the Constitution of the Republic, and to respect traditional and ancestral knowledge and forms of production. It is intended to ensure that the resources are extracted causing the least possible damage to the ecosystem, generating the greatest benefit for people and valuing the work of fishermen, considering one of the most risky, not only for the condition in which they work, but for the economic uncertainty of the activity.

Within the Responsibility and Sustainability framework, the Ministry of Production, Foreign Trade, Investments and Fisheries executes the Fisheries Improvement Projects (FIP), as a joint effort between the actors of the supply chain, seeking to improve fisheries sustainability, which are part of a simple and replicable process that must be suitable in order to involve fisheries coming from different geographic, governmental, cultural and ecosystem contexts.

The main FIPs that are implemented in Ecuador present actions framed in international standards on sustainable fisheries, in order to achieve “Eco-labelling” of global impact:

- **Coastal Fisheries Initiatives Project of the dolphinfish resource (*Coryphaena hippurus*).** – Traceability pilot project for artisanal fisheries of the dolphinfish resource, its main objective is to design and implement a traceability system for artisanal fisheries of the dolphinfish resources (*Coryphaena hippurus*) in Ecuador.

- **FIP of dolphinfish.** – it met its objectives and is in the final evaluation process of the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) Standard, which is considered the most rigorous sustainable fisheries standard worldwide

- **Improvement Project FIP of Small Pelagics Fish.** – The small pelagic fish FIPP seeks the sustainability of fishery resources through the governance improvement of this fishery, monitoring and control, generation of information and updated evaluations of the PPP fishery resources; actions that are carried out within the framework of the IFFO RS (Organization of Marine Ingredients) sustainability standard.

- **FIP of Tunacons (for tuna)**

- As incipient problems, it should be considered that not all countries accept in their legal framework the necessary basis for the execution of the implementation of FIP, therefore it is recommended to managed from a responsible point of view, the implementation of activities that direct us to safeguard natural resources in its entirety, considering the aquaculture and fisheries resources according to the food Sovereignty established in accordance with the regulatory framework of each country.

Innovative Responses. –

Directed by the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries, innovation can be mentioned that is obtained under the application of the Action Plan for certain resources, which establish as a Policy of the Ecuadorian State, the conservation and management of resources directed to fishing exploitation.

Guidelines can be established in order to implement guideline tools that allow to enforce fisheries management measures between all sectors that benefit from Titi Shrimp resource, improve the level of scientific knowledge and compliance with current regulation, and encourage user participation in the resource management, research and control by introducing the element of actors' responsibility, throughout the assignment of well-defined fishing rights.

Finally, Ecuador supports FAO work on fisheries and aquaculture, hoping that our comments will be duly taken into account, while showing our willingness to continue a close dialogue with FAO and its applications.