

## **U.S. Statement on Agenda Item 8: Supporting small-scale and artisanal fisheries**

- As noted by so many, fisheries and aquaculture play a vital role in food and livelihood security around the world. This is particularly true in small scale and artisanal fisheries.
- The United States commends FAO, as well as other organizations like the Too Big To Ignore Network, and the Oak Foundation, who are effectively raising international awareness of small-scale fisheries, and, more importantly, supporting artisanal fisherfolk in advocating for the sustainable and equitable management of their fisheries.
- We encourage FAO to continue its work in support of the implementation of the SSF Guidelines, including the regional workshops.
- The U.S. Government, through the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), works with partners around the world to strengthen the sustainability of small-scale fisheries, inspired by the vision and principles of the FAO Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication, and its focus on a human rights-based approach.
- Central to these principles is the recognition that fisheries management is more effective when it is inclusive and equitable.
- For this reason, achieving our shared global goals for sustainability in fisheries requires stronger efforts to empower women in the small-scale sector to take leading roles in management decisions.
- Toward this end, USAID and International Union for the conservation of Nature have released the publication, "[Gender in Fisheries—A Sea of Opportunities](#)," which reviews existing information about women in fisheries and offers strategies that can be implemented to further support their leadership in the sector.
- We welcome FAO's ongoing work to integrate gender and women's empowerment in their work plans and invite other Members to consider how they can support women harvesters, processors, traders, and financiers in having a voice in management decisions that is commensurate with their equities in achieving sustainability in fisheries.
- The United States also continues to support the "Illuminating Hidden Harvests" study. In addition to improving our understanding of small-scale fisheries, it will help provide a fuller understanding of the role of small scale fishers in employment, catch nutrition, and more.
- In addition to improving our understanding of small scale fisheries, many countries also need to better understand the true level of harvest taking place by foreign and domestic fleets so that licenses and access agreements can more effectively allocate fisheries resources fairly and sustainably.

- Through FAO's work, we know that over 90% of harvesters working in capture fisheries are small-scale fishers. However, despite this dominant share of the workforce, fishery management decisions often do not reflect the needs and equities of those working in the small-scale sector.
- Growing the organization of small-scale fisher associations is a key step in addressing this issue and reforming fisheries governance arrangements. We encourage FAO's ongoing work to support these national, regional, and global associations.
- We also see the potential for increased use of electronic traceability and other types of transparency to improve the sustainability, profitability, and safety of small-scale fisheries. We are working with partners to pilot and scale these technologies.
- Finally, the United States looks forward to celebrating the International Year of Artisanal Fisheries and Aquaculture next year and plans to actively engage in promoting the importance of the small-scale sector as part of this important event.
- We encourage Members to support IYAFA by bringing awareness to the year and, where possible, contributing resources to the dedicated trust fund that FAO is establishing.