

COMMITTEE ON FISHERIES

ITEM 9: ILLEGAL, UNREPORTED AND UNREGULATED (IUU) FISHING

First, I would like to convey to you the special greet of Chancellor Luis Gallegos and wishes for the successful work of the Committee.

Ecuador is aware of the importance of the preservation of the oceans and the environment, for this reason, its national policy promotes an environmentally balanced fisheries management model that allows the sustainable of use of marine resources and the capacity of the natural generation capacity of ecosystems.

However, illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing is the biggest and only threat to marine biodiversity and delicate ecosystems.

In the fight against this type of activities, control and surveillance are fundamental elements. For this reason, Ecuador has strengthened its monitoring, control and surveillance systems, and promotes a transparent management in its Economically Exclusive Zone, for which has signed cooperation agreements for the implementation of high-tech surveillance and control platforms with the Canadian Department of Fisheries and Oceans and Global Fishing Watch.

Ecuador has a new strict legal framework to combat IUU fishing, which was reinforced with the approval of the new Organic Law for the Aquaculture and Fisheries Development, which contains rigid measures for control and sanction of IUU fishing. In 2020, after more than 40 years, Ecuador updated its legal framework on fisheries, which embraces the fisheries ecosystem approach in its provisions. 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, and nature rights.

However, despite the efforts made by the country in combatting IUU fishing in its jurisdictional waters, there are many problems that affect the Galapagos Marine Reserve originate from fishing activities of foreign vessels on the high seas in areas adjacent to the Exclusive Economic Zone.

In view of this situation, Ecuador has deployed a series of actions at national and international levels to strengthen the fight against IUU fishing and to adopt preservation measures of marine resources in the implementation of the provision of CONVEMAR and the New York Agreement. In this regard, two measures have been proposed to the Commission of the Regional Fisheries Management Organization of the South Pacific: 1) regulation on transshipments of the high seas fisheries, and 2) the gradual implementation of the On-board Observer Programme. This meeting will be taking place just in these days.

Along the same line, Ecuador supports that the Committee on Fisheries starts the work to develop international guidelines on regulation, monitoring and control of transshipments operations. We consider that an instrument of this category would be very important to combat IUU fishing.

Similarly, Ecuador has promoted that FAO strengthen its support to countries of Latin America and the Caribbean to combat IUU fishing, in this regard, the 36 FAO Regional Conference in 2020 was expressed. In addition, we highlight that Ecuador will host the 37 Regional Conference in 2022, and it has proposed that IUU fishing be the central topic of it.

In that belief, Ecuador supports the work of the Committee on Fisheries and calls to strengthen the fund of the “*Global Programme to support the implementation of the PSMA and complementary international instruments*”, in order to support the capacity development of developing countries.

Finally, Ecuador would like to highlight the need to reach an early conclusion of the negotiations that are being carried out in the WTO on fisheries subsidies, as this contributes to overfishing and overcapacity by large subsidised fleets, which leads to the depredation of marine resources, for this reason we request that the meeting report include a mention of this important matter.