

34th Session of the FAO Committee on Fisheries, Rome, 1-5 February 2021

Statement by the Republic of South Africa

Agenda item 4: High-level Special Event celebrating the 25th Anniversary of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries

Chairperson, thank you for giving us the floor, and congratulations on your election as the Chairperson of the 34th Session of COFI.

Excellencies,

Distinguished delegates,

Observers,

Ladies and gentlemen,

South Africa's fisheries legal framework is the Marine Living Resources Act, 1998 (Act No. 18 of 1998) ("the MLRA") and regulations promulgated thereunder. It is founded upon the constitutional principle that all the countries marine resources are a National asset and heritage of its citizen that should be developed for the benefit of present and future generations. It aims to ensure the sustainable utilisation and equitable and orderly access to marine living resources through improved management and regulation.

We are currently developing a dedicated Aquaculture legislation that will guide the sustainable development of the sector in South Africa. In recognition of the importance of inland fisheries towards the food security and livelihoods for our people, we are developing a dedicated inland fisheries policy. All our legislations are aligned to the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) Fisheries Protocol and this protocol is aligned to the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries (CCRF).

Our Fisheries are managed using Ecosystem approach to Fisheries and Permits are issued annually with Conditions to limit harvesting of particular fish species and restrict Permit Holders to fish in particular areas

South Africa is a Cooperating Contracting Party to three tuna Regional Fisheries Management Organisations (RFMOs), the Commission for the Conservation of Southern Bluefin Tuna (CCSBT), the International Convention for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT) and the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC). In addition, South Africa is a founding member of the Convention for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR). As such, South Africa is obligated to comply with all relevant Conservation Management Measures adopted by the afore said RFMOs and Antarctic Treaty (CCAMLR).

In Combating Illegal Unregulated and Unreported (IUU) fishing, South Africa has Catch Documentation Schemes (CDS). FAO defines CDS as "A system that tracks and traces fish from the point of capture through unloading and throughout the supply chain". A CDS records and certifies information that identifies the origin of fish caught and ensures they are harvested in a manner consistent with relevant national, regional and international conservation and management measures. The objective of the CDS is to combat IUU fishing by limiting access of IUU fish and fishery products to markets. The IUU within our EEZ and high seas remains a challenge in our region and will require effort by Member States. It is for this reason South Africa together with other SADC Member States joint forces to establish a regional MCS Centre in Mozambique.

South Africa ratified the FAO's Port State Measure Agreement and we are currently implementing the IOTC resolutions and conservation measures and we have been on-board in terms of training and capacity building and to date South Africa has conducted no less than five trainings and workshops on Port State Measures. Notwithstanding the fact that most elements of the PSM are covered by the IOTC's Resolutions, which South Africa adheres to.

All foreign fishing vessels requiring entry into South Africa's Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZ) and subsequently to her Ports are required to adhere to certain conditions such as, but not limited to:

- i. Application for and be issued with a permit to enter SA's EEZ and ports;
- ii. Prior notification of port entry,
- iii. Use of designated ports (Cape Town, Durban and Port Elizabeth), restrictions on port entry and landing/transshipment of fish,
- iv. Documentation requirements and port inspections,
- v. We also Check with other Regional Fisheries Bodies, whether the vessel is not on the IUU Fishing vessel list

I thank you, Chairperson.

34th Session of the FAO Committee on Fisheries, Rome, 1-5 February 2021

Statement by the Republic of South Africa

Agenda item 5: Decisions and recommendations of the Tenth Session of the COFI Sub-Committee on Aquaculture, Trondheim, Norway, 23-27 August 2019

Chairperson,

South Africa participated and was on the report drafting team at the 10th Session of the COFI Sub-Committee on Aquaculture. We therefore support outcomes and recommendation that came out of the session.

South Africa further welcomes the publication of the report on the State of the World's Aquatic Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture and takes note of the ongoing development of a draft Global Plan of Action for Aquatic Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture.

I thank you, Chairperson.

34th Session of the FAO Committee on Fisheries, Rome, 1-5 February 2021

Statement by the Republic of South Africa

Agenda item 8: Supporting small-scale and artisanal fisheries

Chairperson,

Thank you once again for giving us the floor,

As part of providing redress towards the inequalities of the past, South Africa amended its legislation to recognize small-scale fishers, to grant small-scale fishers access to fishing, to support small-scale fishers in contributing to eradicating poverty, securing their livelihoods, participating in the value chain and in promoting sustainable fishing.

South Africa has since recognized and formalized small-scale fishers and allocated long term fishing rights to majority of small-scale fishing communities in the country. This process serves to provide equitable access to marine resources by small-scale fishers.

The Small-Scale Fisheries Policy(2012) ("The Policy) acknowledges the general short-comings of the small-scale fishing communities and the need for South Africa to prioritize and provide support to the small-scale fishers in ensuring food security, participation in the value-chain, and sustainable harvesting. The Policy proposes various mechanisms to assist small-scale fishing communities to add value to the marine living resources that they harvest, including:

- i. subsidy schemes for fish storage and handling to improve fish quality;
- ii. skills training in processing, packaging, marketing and basic business skills;
- iii. subsidy schemes for establishing local and community–driven markets;
- iv. South African label of certification for fish products caught by small-scale fishing communities in an environmentally friendly manner

As South Africa is at its stages of implementing its legal framework for establishing a small-scale fishery, South Africa supports the implementation of the Voluntary Guidelines on Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries and the development of the Global Strategic framework for Small-Scale fisheries within the context of eradicating food insecurity, creating sustainable jobs and sustainable management of living aquatic resources. South Africa supports rights based approaches for fisheries management.

I thank you, Chairperson.

34th Session of the FAO Committee on Fisheries, Rome, 1-5 February 2021

Statement by the Republic of South Africa

Agenda Item 9: Combatting Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing

Chairperson,

The South African Government developed, and is implementing, strategies to unlock the oceans economy. These strategies are designed to fast track the implementation of solutions in terms of critical delivery issues, which are highlighted and, which are reflected in the National Development Plan and this encompasses an innovative and pioneering approach to translate detailed plans into concrete results through dedicated delivery and collaboration. For us to realise the benefits from our marine resources it is important to safe guard our oceans from IUU fishing.

South Africa is represented on the INTERPOL Fisheries Crime Working Group and participates in the capacity building and intelligence projects. In terms of these projects, South Africa has participated in international enforcement interventions and operations and successfully addressed some Illegal Unreported and Unregulated fishing in both preventative actions and also pursuing identified offenders. Past successes involve apprehension of IUU vessels within the South African EEZ, the forfeiture of such vessels and returning illegally smuggled marine resources and consignments back to South Africa.

South Africa's role in terms of Fisheries Regional Management Organisations and Committees, such as COFI, is key to address the sustainability of marine living resources and through this, issues such as job creation, food security and poverty.

I thank you, Chairperson

34th Session of the FAO Committee on Fisheries, Rome, 1-5 February 2021

Statement by the Republic of South Africa

Agenda item 11: Addressing Climate Change and other Environment- related matters in Fisheries and Aquaculture

Chairperson,

South Africa's has developed the National Climate Change Adaptation Strategy which aims to establish various interventions to address Climate Change issues in our country. The South African Government has established a Fisheries Climate Change Task Team (FCCTT) and a Technical Working Group on Climate Change Adaptation.

Aquaculture is perceived to be more vulnerable to climate change than fisheries in that both the organisms cultured and the farming infrastructure and operations are subject to the effects of change. Despite this vulnerability, the impacts of climate change on aquaculture in SA are not well understood, possibly owing to the fact that the sector is at an early stage of development and climate change is not considered an imminent threat by the industry.

The emission of Green House Gas (GHG) by the marine fisheries and marine aquaculture sectors is currently small in comparison to other economic sectors.

South Africa will focus on collecting relevant oceanographic data, and ensure adequate monitoring of oceanographic trends, especially in areas where large changes and major impacts on fisheries are taking place, such as the South Coast and in many inshore zones. Bioclimatic modelling to predict distribution shifts in response to changes in the environment are also to be prioritised.

The climate action plans for the marine fisheries and marine aquaculture sectors will be further developed into a more detailed and comprehensive with specific recommendations on implementation.

I thank you, Chairperson.