



International Ocean Noise Coalition Statement

**34th Session of the FAO Committee on Fisheries
FAO Headquarters, Online, February 1 – 5, 2021**

Agenda Item 10: Developments in global and regional processes related to fisheries and aquaculture

Dear Chairperson,

I have the honour to address you on behalf of the International Ocean Noise Coalition representing more than 150 non-governmental organisations, including OceanCare, one of its founding members.

Human-made noise in the Ocean can inflict irreversible damage to marine wildlife, leading to deafness, habitat displacement and reduced reproduction. Such effects to fish, fish stocks and fish catch rates are undermining efforts to achieve a healthy and sustainable Ocean, which is a priority outlined by the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The inability to address ocean noise pollution will have serious implications for achieving the objectives outlined in SDG1, SDG2, SDG13 and SDG14.

One important tool to mitigate the impact of underwater noise on fisheries, and transboundary pollution in general, is the use of environmental impact assessments for all activities. This necessity is well-understood within international fora, most notably within the CMS Family Guidelines on Environmental Impact Assessment for Marine Noise-generating Activities and in the most recent UNGA Oceans Resolution. More specifically, UNGA Oceans Resolution 75/239 encourages States to apply environmental impact assessment processes to planned activities that “may cause substantial pollution of or significant and harmful changes to the marine environment”.

As the international community is set to meet for the final intergovernmental conference on an international legally binding instrument on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction (BBNJ IGC4) later this year, we encourage COFI members, individually and collectively, to implement management measures and increase efforts to conserve biodiversity in the high seas. In this regard, it is important to

advocate for robust and consistent environmental impact assessments to mitigate the harmful impacts of transboundary pollution on fisheries.

Thank you Chair.

International Ocean Noise Coalition (IONC) Representatives attending COFI:

Mrs Sigrid Lüber (slueber@oceancare.org), Focal Point of IONC

Mrs Fabienne McLellan (fmclellan@oceancare.org), Representative IONC Europe, Middle East and Africa

Dr. Johannes Müller (jmueller@oceancare.org), Ocean Policy Expert and OceanCare Focal Point for socio-economic study on noise impact on fisheries

Dr. Kerstin Glaus, (klaus@oceancare.org), Scientific Officer at OceanCare