

STATEMENT BY WWF - Agenda Item 10: Developments in global and regional processes related to fisheries and aquaculture

WWF would like to raise three topics of the many covered under this agenda item:

1. **On Human rights and labour conditions at sea:** WWF is extremely concerned by reports of human rights abuses and labour issues in the fisheries sector, including regarding fisheries observers. We urge the FAO and its Members to: review and acknowledge the recommendations contained in the reports from Human Rights at Sea; to establish requirements for comprehensive and transparent reporting of all life-threatening injuries or deaths that occur on fishing vessels operating in RMFOs and RMOs; and work to fully implement ILO 188. WWF supports the initiative to develop international transhipment guidelines, or a stronger instrument, so unchecked transhipment can no longer facilitate abuse, and frustrate accountability.
2. **On the international legally binding agreement on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biodiversity of Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ):** Fishing is the single largest in situ activity impacting ocean health. The BBNJ negotiators still have a few fundamental issues to resolve. One of the most important is to agree upon how fisheries management on the high seas can be combined with the use of adequate area-based management tools, including marine protected areas to fulfil globally agreed standards on the conservation and sustainable use of species and habitats affected by fishing. To ensure a healthy productive ocean, full of fish and other marine life, the treaty must foster enhanced cooperation between states members of competent international bodies, such as RFMOs, to ensure that their fishery management decisions are relevant to decisions of other international bodies, like CBD, CITES and CMS, thus contributing to achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.
3. **On the UNGA Resolutions 61/105 and subsequent resolutions:** High seas fishing nations and RFMOs have made clear commitments through UNGA resolution 61/105 and subsequent resolutions, to protect deep-sea biodiversity through preventing damage to vulnerable marine ecosystems (VME) from bottom trawling and other methods of fishing. In light of the BBNJ negotiations it is all the more important that RFMOs demonstrate that they can and will fully deliver on these commitments rather than debating whether to protect some deep-sea ecosystems but not others.