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Committee on Fisheries 34th Session

IUCN Statement

ITEM 4: STATUS, TRENDS AND EMERGING ISSUES

Mr Chair, as it is our first opportunity to talk, please accept IUCN's congratulations to you and FAO for organizing this important meeting.

IUCN recognizes that the task of rebuilding overfished resources and reducing the collateral impact of fishing on biodiversity is essential, urgent, and complicated by the ongoing climate change and IUU. The rebuilding efforts made in the most advanced countries is appreciable but more than one third of the world stocks are still overfished, mainly but not only in the developing world. IUCN would like to stress that the transfer of the fishing pressure on the resources of developing countries, by long-range fleets or through international fish trade is neither ethical nor equitable. It is threatening for many local and small-scale fisheries, coastal economies, food security and biodiversity. It is also an economic boomerang that will badly hit back the main markets in the Northern hemisphere if overfishing and IUU are not stopped in the source areas.

IUCN congratulates FAO and its members for the principles and intentions that the Declaration for Sustainable Fisheries and Aquaculture contains regarding sustainable fisheries and aquaculture, and the reduction of overfishing and the restoration of ecosystems and biodiversity through a science-based and participative ecosystem approach. IUCN looks forward to an effective implementation of the Declaration and improved ecological performance of the fisheries and aquaculture sectors.

The International Symposium on Fisheries Sustainability has provided a landmark review and a refreshing vision of the situation of fisheries; fishery science; state of stocks; development policies; management strategies; biodiversity impacts; conservation and food security; and a useful perspective on the challenges posed by climate change within a sustainable Blue Economy perspective.

IUCN supports the conclusions of the Symposium, stressing the need to jointly consider the needs for food security and for the conservation of biodiversity that is necessary to satisfy these needs on the long term. The need to eliminate perverse subsidies and IUU and to develop international collaborations cannot be overstated and remains urgent.



IUCN finally recommends a more sustained effort towards capacity-building of fisheries management, biodiversity-impact reduction, and ecosystem restoration, in the developing world but also in most Regional fishery bodies.

ITEM 7: FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE CONTRIBUTION TO SDGS

Thank you, Chair,

The role of fisheries in fulfilling many ecological and socioeconomic dimensions of SDGs is important. The FAO role and guidance for SDG 14 is particularly relevant in that respect, *inter alia* for supporting and monitoring progress in the sustainable use and protection of coastal ecosystems used by fisheries (14.2), restoration of overfished stocks (14.4), elimination of perverse subsidies and IUU (14.6), and more compliant implementation of UNCLOS and other international regulations (14.c).

IUCN recommends to FAO to pursue its efforts at national and regional levels to improve governance and management capacity, data collection, assessment of impacts on stocks and biodiversity, mitigation of these impacts, monitoring and compliance. It also encourages FAO members and the fishery sector to collaborate fully and assist FAO in that task.

IUCN acknowledges the global importance of aquaculture in terms of its contribution to sustainable food production and consumption (SDG 12) and food security (SDG 2 Zero hunger). However, IUCN is aware of the diverse issues that aquaculture is meeting in terms of environmental and social sustainability. Regarding large scale aquaculture, for example, it is important and urgent to agree on sustainability criteria and established global standards. On another hand, small-scale aquaculture needs to be recognized as a key local economic activity, and its interactions with local resources and local fisheries need to be identified and addressed in order to support its sustainability.

Therefore, IUCN recommends to FAO, its members, and the global and regional organizations in charge of aquaculture development, to work on sustainability issues, in particular in relation to marine biodiversity conservation. In this respect, IUCN recognizes that there are opportunities and synergies between aquaculture and marine conservation that deserve to be explored, identified, and promoted, in the framework of a resilient blue economy and implementing nature-based solutions.