

2 February 2021

Global Sustainable Seafood Initiative Statement related to Agenda item 6 of the 34th Session of the Committee on Fisheries

Thank you Mr. Chair, distinguished delegates. I would like to make use of this opportunity to provide a brief update on the work of the Global Sustainable Seafood Initiative, or GSSI as discussed in 17th session of Subcommittee on FT in Vigo.

GSSI is a public-private partnership working towards more sustainable seafood for everyone. Our partnership consists of over 90 organizations and represents the full seafood value chain, companies, NGOs, governments and international organizations, including the FAO and UNIDO. GSSI successfully developed and operates a benchmark for seafood certification programs, based on the FAO Guidelines on Aquaculture Certification and ecolabelling of Marine and Inland capture fisheries.

The GSSI Global Benchmark Tool, launched at the 20th anniversary of the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries in Vigo in 2015, helping to create a level playing field for seafood certification, helping to prevent unnecessary and harmful barriers to trade and increasing opportunities for market access for developing countries.

Today there are nine GSSI recognized seafood certifications, including Alaska Responsible Fisheries Management (RFM) Certification Program, Audubon Gulf United for Lasting Fisheries (G.U.L.F.) Responsible Fisheries Management (RFM) Certification Program, Aquaculture Stewardship Council (ASC), Best Aquaculture Practices (BAP) Certification, BIM Certified Quality Aquaculture (CQA) scheme, GLOBALG.A.P. Aquaculture Certification System, Iceland Responsible Fisheries Management (IRFM) Certification Programme, Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) and Marine Eco-Label Japan (MEL) V2 Scheme for Aquaculture and Fisheries. The GSSI Benchmark Tool is now widely recognized and referenced in responsible sourcing policies across the globe. In 2021 GSSI aims to launch version 2.0 of its Global Benchmark Tool.

GSSI has supported FAO's important work on capacity building related to seafood certification and ecolabelling, making contributions to regional workshops in Zhuhai, China; Bangkok, Thailand; and Manta, Ecuador. The GSSI Benchmark Tool is also used as a capacity building tool and today various nations, including Ecuador, Ireland, Indonesia, and Japan are using or have used the GSSI Global Benchmark Tool develop certifications which are locally applicable and globally accepted.

On behalf of the GSSI Steering Board and Partners I would like to express our gratitude to all member states that have provided their technical expertise and support to the initiative.

GSSI considers its collaboration with FAO and its Member States and UNIDO essential and looks forward to work together on the successful implementation of version 2.0 of the Global Benchmark Tool, as well as to extend our value chain approach to support the implementation of other FAO Instruments, in particular those related to Small Scale Fisheries, IUU and socially responsible value chains, through our successful public-private partnership.

Thank you mr chair.