

Thank you for recognizing WWF, Mr Chair.

World Wildlife Fund appreciates the efforts made by many governments to tackle IUU fishing, as numerous speakers have already acknowledged, but so much more work is needed to effectively address this challenge.

WWF welcomes the strong approaches adopted by many of the largest importing markets, including the EU for its ground-breaking program and the U.S. and Japan for their seafood import laws, and we encourage others, including trade blocs and RFMOs, which are at an earlier stage or considering such import control programs. Using the three Ts: transparency, traceability and technology, we have a roadmap of what is needed and how to move forward. Reliance on this roadmap, better alignment among import control programs and allowing key data to be easily exchanged electronically, should be significant factors in program design, so States can more readily achieve the cooperation they frequently talk about.

RFMOs are major change agents. They catalyze advancements by States by adopting and implementing more effective anti-IUU measures. But RFMOs' arrangements diverge widely, with some not aligning with the IMO's vessel numbering practices and many still not implementing electronic CDS.

In addition to the three Ts, stronger political will, more ratifications and implementation of key instruments like PSMA (e.g., Russia and Brazil) and initiatives like the Global Record, and electronic catch documentation schemes and RFMO advancements as listed above, and overall better governance are needed. In short, more by more.

WWF would add two time-critical topics to this list: harmful fisheries subsidies and transhipment.

As a key goal for all countries for 2021, WWF urges governments to end the harmful fisheries subsidies fueling overfishing and facilitating IUU by completing a comprehensive, binding and effective agreement at the WTO this year. While WWF's written statement provides more details, we recommend a strong component of technical assistance and capacity building to help countries, in particular Least Developed Countries. This will address their capacity constraints and help implement disciplines, ensuring that they establish the necessary legislation and control mechanisms. Broad exemptions from the rules should not be carved out.

And, finally regarding transhipment, the research done by FAO has helped shape an improved understanding of this practice. It has highlighted the urgent need for better transhipment controls to address the serious problems it causes for fisheries and human rights. While the recommended international voluntary guidelines will be helpful and perhaps easier to achieve, the serious nature of the transhipment problems for fish, the ocean and people, also necessitates consideration of a stronger response than just voluntary guidelines.

WWF looks forward to engaging with many collaborators to effectively end IUU perpetrators' ability to go on with these activities and help us all achieve a healthier, more sustainable ocean. Thank you, Mr Chair.