

General Statement

The Pew Charitable Trusts (Pew) would like to thank the FAO for inviting us to participate in this session of the Committee on Fisheries (COFI). As long-standing Observers, we greatly appreciate the opportunity to contribute to this direction-setting meeting, which includes a number of our priority issues on the agenda.

Pew believes that effective, and sustainable, fisheries management is enabled by strong governance, based on and informed by the best-available science.

We appreciate the commitment of Members to improve policies and enforce compliance to counter the various threats facing marine life, in particular the critical problem of illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing. We urge further work to address this, especially through the development of international guidelines on regulating, monitoring, and controlling transshipment, and we welcome the FAO's inclusion of this work as a priority area within the programme of work for the upcoming biennium. We look to Members to commit to strengthening surveillance measures and the FAO to provide technical advice on remote monitoring and other relevant technologies to mitigate the negative effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on monitoring, control, and surveillance efforts, and the fight against IUU fishing. We also recognize the links between IUU fishing, safety and labour issues, and commend the ongoing joint efforts by the FAO, International Maritime Organization (IMO) and International Labour Organization (ILO), particularly in raising awareness of the importance of bringing the IMO Cape Town Agreement into force.

The FAO Secretariat and its Members play a vital role in achieving global food and economic security goals and guaranteeing the health of the world's oceans. Pew strongly encourages alignment of work carried out within the context of COFI with efforts within other relevant fora. This includes fisheries management efforts within the regional fisheries management organizations (RFMOs); the negotiations to end harmful fisheries subsidies under the World Trade Organization; the negotiations for a new treaty to promote the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction (BBNJ); and the efforts to produce guidance on other effective area-based conservation measures (OECMs).

We take this opportunity to note the lack of transparency surrounding the discussions about 2020 Declaration for Sustainable Fisheries and Aquaculture – and highlight that the draft text was posted late to the COFI website and that input from Observers to the informal consultation that took place prior to COFI was not sought. We encourage consultation with all relevant stakeholders on all matters being put forward to COFI.

Thank you.