COFI 35 – WRITTEN CORRESPONDENCE PROCEDURE

RECEIVED COMMENTS FROM OBSERVERS

A – BASIC INFORMATION

Document Number	COFI/2022/9
Document Title	Developments in global and regional processes related to fisheries and aquaculture
Commenting Observer	Pew Charitable Trusts
Referred paragraph numbers (if applicable)	-

B – COMMENT RECEIVED

The Pew Charitable Trusts recognizes the Food and Agriculture Organization's (FAO) important role in the development and application of fisheries governance and appreciates its efforts to engage across the UN system with relevant global and regional organizations.

As such, Pew calls on the members of the Committee on Fisheries (COFI) and delegations to actively combat the ongoing biodiversity and climate crisis by collaborating across the UN system on related work on ocean biodiversity and fisheries. **Ending overfishing and applying an ecosystem approach to fisheries management** are steps that will help to build resilience to climate impacts and other

threats. Effective **fisheries management should integrate climate change mitigation and adaptation measures as a high priority**. Climate change adaptation planning should include **the establishment of climate-responsive harvest strategies**, **climate-informed spatial management measures and investments in climate change mitigation and adaptation innovations** in the fisheries sectors to help ensure that we have resilient ecosystems and fisheries in the face of climate-driven changes.

Pew encourages the FAO to ensure that there is effective communication and collaboration between the Regional Fisheries Bodies/Regional Fisheries Management Organizations (RFMOs) and the future Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ) Conference of Parties (COP) in order to promote the conservation and sustainable use of high seas resources to the benefit of all people.

There is an ongoing effort at several RFMOs to strengthen their review of members' compliance with conservation and management measures. **Experts have identified a suite of current initiatives and other solutions** that could improve these review mechanisms (Approaches to Evaluate and Strengthen RFMO Compliance Processes and Performance). The FAO should **promote this paper** as a key resource to help members improve their compliance with RFMO rules and regulations.

As mentioned in FAO COFI/2022/INF/8/Rev.1, soon to be published research n indicates that global fisher mortality rates are well in excess of all previous assessments. While addressing fisher deaths and improving their safety will require serious global attention and action at all levels, as an immediate first step, **continued and consistent data collection and analysis of accidents and fatalities in the industry is needed** to understand the true scale and help identify drivers behind these unacceptably high figures. Moreover, **targeted and effective initiatives must be urgently developed** to improve fisher safety.

Pew welcomes the commitment by the FAO (COFI/2022/INF/8/Rev.1, paragraph 36) to collect information on accidents and fatalities in 2021 and publish these in 2022. Currently, **there are gaps in fisher mortality reporting and there is no mechanism to accurately record global fisher fatalities**. **Pew encourages the FAO to agree to a process with Members for a more transparent and coordinated approach** to ensure sufficient information is shared, such as accident reporting on fishing vessels and a global repository for fisher mortality. Pew also encourages States to cooperate on meaningful ways to help each other mitigate the significant threats posed to fishers worldwide. Pew urges members to prioritise the establishment of a data collection scheme and repository on global fisher accident and mortality data.

To conclude, Pew encourages COFI Members, as participants in many other global and regional processes, to maintain dialogue between all relevant authorities at the national level and strive for synergy and consistency across their efforts within the various forums tied to ocean governance.