

FAO COFI 2022
Statement of Iceland under agenda item 10
Mainstreaming biodiversity in fisheries and aquaculture

Mr Chair

Iceland welcomes the work of FAO regarding mainstreaming biodiversity in fisheries and aquaculture. I will focus on one issue here, although several others are important.

The CBD Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework will be a political commitment of direct relevance for COFI members. It will likely continue to include a goal on marine area management that will include the term “other effective area-based conservation measures”, commonly known as “OECMs”.

The report in document 8 notes that on targets for area-based measures “the use of OECMs is likely to be a preferred mechanism for sectoral delivery”. It is therefore important to prioritise work relating to OECMs and fisheries management.

The fact is that area-based measures have always been an important part of fisheries management, so we don’t need to drastically change what we are doing. Rather, the priority is exactly how the term “OECMs” should be understood and how the different types of area-based measures familiar to fisheries managers relate to the OECM concept.

To conclude, Mr Chair

Much work has been done on this already, at both national and regional level. Iceland has participated in work within NEAFC, largely based on work by the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea, ICES. FAO is the only global organisation fit to examine OECMs as a part of fisheries management. We trust that FAO will ensure that this work takes full account of relevant work that has already been done at national and regional level, including in NEAFC and ICES.