

New Zealand Statements
Committee on Fisheries
Thirty-fifth Session, 5-9 September 2022

Item 4: State of world fisheries and aquaculture and progress in the implementation of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries and the related instruments

- New Zealand thanks the Secretariat for the concise summary of its comprehensive SOFIA report in its paper and today's presentation.
- As registered by others, it confirms that the SOFIA reporting provides an important and increasingly well received perspective on the state of fisheries and aquaculture to inform decision makers.
- Members are invited to advise on how to improve SOFIA.
- The paper notes that the *World Review* section attracts most attention, relating mainly to trends; fishery resource status; and trade. New Zealand therefore suggests a continuation and enhancement of this work in future SOFIA reports.
- From our experience in the SW Pacific, including the challenges faced by SIDS, such work could cover three areas:
 - Firstly, the continued decline of fisheries reinforces the need for collective and individual action against forces which add to the deterioration of fish stocks – such as IUU fishing and harmful fisheries subsidies.
 - Secondly, efficient trade, without unnecessary barriers, is going to be essential in delivering the SDG targets, in particular around food security – because it generates wealth and gets product to where it is needed.
 - Thirdly, climate change is an ever growing, indeed existential, issue.
- SOFIA reporting should thoroughly cover these enduring issues and do so by drawing on the work done by other institutions, including the OECD which the FAO often contributes to or even does jointly to good effect.
- Finally, the success of SOFIA reporting is not just that it's a good read. It's about who writes it. It was no accident that the 2021 COFI Declaration for Sustainable Fisheries and Aquaculture commented that the FAO is the *main global forum for discussions and decisions on fisheries and aquaculture-related issues*. This needs to continue and therefore we echo Iceland/others on the importance of the FAO ensuring that its fisheries division is sufficiently prioritised and resourced.

Item 5: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

- New Zealand thanks the Secretariat for providing the paper and the WTO for its report.
- With respect to SDG 14.4, we reiterate the key message that all members need to take collective action to achieve globally sustainable fisheries. This needs to include implementing best practices in fisheries management such as through an ecosystem-based approach.
- This is not easy and has only got harder in the face of the impacts of COVID, which have been felt very acutely in the South West Pacific, particularly for SIDS where fisheries are extremely important.
- While the situation remains very challenging, we look forward with some optimism. Cooperation has been maintained through virtual platforms and only two weeks ago Ministers of the Forum Fisheries Agency reconvened *in person* for their annual meeting for the first time since 2019, highlighting the importance of fisheries to COVID recovery.
- With respect to SDG 14.6, the WTO Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies has rightly been highlighted as a significant development in sustainable fisheries governance.
- We echo the calls from H.E. Peter Thomson for members to *speedily* complete domestic processes to Accept the Agreement.
- New Zealand similarly calls on the FAO to fully support the next steps, including the ongoing negotiations and the implementation of the Agreement.
- This includes working with the WTO and its members and working with other international organisations such as the OECD.
- As the COFI Sub Committee on Fish Trade noted, progress towards SDG Target 14.6 has also been made in a number of countries' regional trade agreements with binding fisheries subsidy disciplines.
- We are now seeing real momentum. With this progress, the related 14.6.1 indicator and related methodology will need updating to better monitor the nature and quantity of subsidies. Again, this demands that the FAO engage with other organisations.

Item 7: Combating Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing

- We are hearing an impressive amount of work being done by members from all regions on combatting IUU, which as one delegation well reminded us yesterday is not simple.

- I can also attest from New Zealand's own efforts domestically and in the region, and current process to strengthen our legislation, that this work is extremely challenging.
- I therefore echo the EU in that it is important we learn from and cooperate with each other, and future sessions of COFI and its fisheries management sub-committee should be effectively used for lesson sharing.
- I thank the secretariat, including Mr. Matthew Camilleri, for the contributions to the Pacific region, including to New Zealand's Port States Measures work in APEC during our host year in 2021. [This is available online for those interested.](#)
- One of the challenges in combatting IUU fishing is our resource constraints, so we need to prioritise our efforts and make current processes and institutions work.
- With this in mind, priority needs to be assigned to the further development of the GIES, specifically its integration with RFMOs databases.
- Getting the GIES implemented is a pressing need, will strengthen the PSMA and ultimately help combat IUU fishing.
- New Zealand also supports the continued work in implementing the FAO Global Record.
- We also welcome the voluntary guidelines for transshipment. Like others, we look forward to implementation by States and RFMOs.
- New Zealand recalls, and reiterates a specific point of the recent Sub Committee on Fish Trade. In supporting Members develop IUU-NPOAs, FAO was encouraged to provide technical assistance to Members to analyse and account for fisheries related subsidies and programmes to support the identification and the elimination of subsidies related to IUU fishing activities. This would be useful in its own right and could contribute to WTO transparency requirements.
- New Zealand also thanks Norway for its suggestion of a technical workshop on VMS. This is an important issue and so we also support further exploratory work along the lines suggested.

[Item 8: Enhancing COFI discussions including recommendations of the Working Group on the Proposal of the Establishment of the Sub-Committee on Fisheries Management.](#)

- New Zealand supports the establishment of a new fisheries management sub-committee as proposed.

- Like many others, New Zealand and the wider South-West Pacific group have had concerns around the resource implications, in particular the ability for members to participate. This is a challenge in New Zealand and even more so for Pacific SIDS.
- While we still harbour some of these concerns, we welcome the efforts made by the working group to accommodate these concerns, and Norway's announcement of a substantial funding contribution and other related positive indications.
- The future review of the sub-committee will be important. But equally important is that members invest in the process to make it work. Success is in our hands.
- This should include creative consideration for how to ensure the meetings provide for a meaningful exchange. This will need to be more than a series of individual 2-minute statements.
- So, looking forward, as others have said, we should give it a try.

[Item 9: Addressing climate change in fisheries and aquaculture: reporting on progress and elements for comment on the Action Plan for the implementation of the FAO Strategy on Climate Change.](#)

- New Zealand commends the FAO for its important work on climate change.
- In terms of the guidance that the FAO paper seeks there is little we can add to what has come before me.
- We take the opportunity to convey the strong call by Pacific Forum Leaders in July to scale up ambition and turn pledges into *action* to respond to the Climate Emergency.
- They further called for prioritisation in “expanding climate change impact adaptation and mitigation support”, which we ask that the FAO translates into its work.
- Pacific Fisheries Ministers are accordingly united in urgently calling for enhanced ambition and action to support adaptive management that ensures the ongoing sustainability of tuna fisheries in the face of climate change.
- We underline therefore the importance of the FAO working closely with RFMOs and RFABs in progressing its work on climate and fisheries. The earlier suggestion of bringing RFMOs together on this therefore has merit, as does taking this work forward in the new FM SC.

- New Zealand echoes the early point about maintaining the fisheries focus in the FAO's work including the Action Plan, and the importance of a strong science basis to inform good decisions and identifying adaptation opportunities be they in capture fisheries or aquaculture.

Item 10: Mainstreaming biodiversity in fisheries and aquaculture

- New Zealand welcomes progress made on the implementation of the FAO Strategy.
- In taking this forward, it is important that FAO and members engage in relevant multilateral environmental agreements processes to ensure policy coherence between fisheries and biodiversity governance.
- As noted by others, the important social, economic, and practical realities around fisheries need to be considered for good biodiversity policy making, while biodiversity needs to integrate into fisheries policy and management.
- We note the FAO's fundamental role in ensuring science-based policy and decision making with respect to CITES listings and join others in recommending the FAO continue to provide robust advice on species listing proposals in line with the CITES criteria.
- Given the number of aquatic species on the table now proposed for CITES listing it will be important to ensure the CoP processes are orderly and well aligned to previously negotiated CITES listing criteria.
- I also pick up on a point in the Secretariat's paper on the challenges around prioritising its work on national and regional plans of action on seabirds and sharks.
- While all this work is important, New Zealand is particularly concerned that a number of seabirds are at imminent risk of extinction, including the antipodean Albatross which was listed on Appendix 1 of the CMS following a proposal from New Zealand, Chile and Australia.
- Fisheries bycatch is largely driving the 5% per annum decline in the antipodean Albatross and threatening many other seabird species. We therefore call on the FAO to attach priority to their work supporting members to develop and implement effective seabird-NPOAs.
- This is an issue that New Zealand is actively cooperating with others on, including Australia, Chile, China, Ecuador, EU, Peru, Spain, and the US. And we stand ready to engage with others bilaterally, regionally, or as appropriate to address seabird bycatch.