

Thank you Chair.

The role of artisanal and small-scale fisheries and aquaculture are important in contributing to food and nutrient security, and in the sustaining of the livelihood of the fishers and that of their family.

The importance of small-scale fisheries was more evident in Seychelles especially during the COVID pandemic, where our small-scale artisanal fishers did not lose a day of work to ensure that our population is fed during that challenging time, and we are sure this was the same in other regions.

For this we join other distinguish delegates in thanking the FAO for declaring the International Year of Artisanal Fisheries and Aquaculture and for the recognition of the value of small-scale fishers and aquaculture.

In Seychelles we are perusing efforts to empower our small-scale fishers and to improve their quality of life, to ensure that their profession are respected and remains sustainable. Our objective is also aim at attracting youth and women and we also commends the FAO on all effort being made in this domain.

This is done through appropriate infrastructure development and other support, including training in post-harvest handling to ensure the quality of their harvest is maintained.

We encourage their participation in the management of fisheries resources through co-management approach of fisheries management plan where they are also given a voice in the management and conservation of their fisheries resources as primary stakeholders.

Seychelles thanks the FAO for the support provided through the regional ReefFish project of the Southwest Indian Ocean coastal States, for which Seychelles is a beneficiary, as this project specifically target small-scale artisanal fisheries and their empowerment and resilience.

Seychelles commends the FAO in the work and in all effort in promoting the importance and enhancing the visibility of small-scale fisheries and we join others in celebrating the International Year of Artisanal Fisheries and Aquaculture.

Thank you chair.