

Good morning to all Members and Observers. Thank you for this opportunity to contribute to this dialogue on mainstreaming biodiversity. I am Chair of the International Coalition of Fisheries Associations (ICFA) and represent the Canadian fishery sector.

The International Coalition of Fisheries Associations (ICFA) appreciates the opportunity to address this gathering on the crucial matter of sustainable fisheries management. We firmly believe that a collaborative approach involving policymakers, the economic sector, and the fisheries industry is indispensable to finding pragmatic and implementable solutions for a sustainable future.

Key Points:

1. Fisheries and Biodiversity Conservation:

- I would like to commend FAO for its excellent presentation this morning. ICFA is in strong support of what was presented.
- ICFA underscores the fisheries sector's potential as a positive force in biodiversity conservation. We welcome the ongoing efforts to enhance collaboration between fisheries and biodiversity conservation, particularly through the CBD Sustainable Ocean Initiative (SOI) Global Dialogue between Regional Seas Conventions and Regional Fisheries Management Organizations.
- Recognizing the significance of Other Effective Area-based Conservation Measures (OECMs), ICFA advocates for their integration as an effective instrument for cross-sectoral collaboration between fisheries and biodiversity conservation.

2. Climate Resilience:

- ICFA expresses its commitment to being an active participant in solutions for climate resilience. It is crucial to recognize that fisheries products, with their low carbon footprint and essential nutritional value, play a pivotal role in achieving global climate objectives. Fisheries can be part of the solution for a sustainable and healthy future.

3. IUU (Illegal, Unreported, Unregulated) Fishing:

- Addressing the challenge of illegal fishing requires comprehensive and meaningful actions. ICFA emphasizes the need for supply chain transparency and encourages government-to-government actions, a focus on national fishery management systems as a whole and utilizing existing authorities to combat IUU fishing effectively.

FAO plays a critical role to inform the myriad of international negotiations and discussions that relate to fisheries and aquaculture. We are heartened to hear many members' interventions thus far recognizing this role. ICFA urges member countries to direct FAO to be a proactive participant in such discussions as it was with the GBF. Further, member countries are encouraged to work collaboratively across relevant government departments.

In conclusion, we stand ready to actively contribute to the ongoing discussions and collaborate with all stakeholders to ensure a balanced and prosperous future for fisheries, coastal communities, and the broader marine environment. Thank you.