

## **FAO COFI – 8-12 July 2024**

### **Agenda item 4**

#### **State of world fisheries and aquaculture and progress in the implementation of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries and related instruments (for information and discussion)**

##### **Statement of Iceland**

Mr Chair

Iceland welcomes the publication of the latest SOFIA report, which continues to be an important document for fisheries and aquaculture – and reaffirms the important role that FAO has as the preeminent global body when it comes to fisheries and aquaculture.

To ensure FAO maintains this role, and continues to be in a position to carry it out well, the position of the Fisheries and Aquaculture Division must be strong within the overall framework of FAO. This Committee, and its Members, must send out a strong call to FAO generally that we feel that it is important to strengthen the Division further – as no other global body can take on these vital tasks.

FAO also needs to ensure they maintain a substantive emphasis on Fisheries Management, on the fight against IUU, and on other core issues, including by ensuring the Secretariat has excellent expertise and avoids going too far in the direction of focusing on managing projects, and thereby largely relying on outside expertise.

Iceland stresses that FAO has a vital role regarding the tasks where action, cooperation and coordination at the global level is needed. New tasks, including those related to topics such as biodiversity and climate change, demonstrate that the importance of these tasks is only going to grow into the future for FAO. Of course, FAO must continue to stress the fact that fisheries management is for the national, sub-regional and regional levels – and must support the work at these levels. However, work at the global level continues to be important and FAO must continue to be able to play its role there well.

Iceland welcomes the new report of FAO on “Institutional and economic perspectives on distant-water fisheries access arrangements”. The issue of the relationship between developing Coastal States and foreign fishing fleets needs more attention, and this document is helpful for focusing that attention on the most important aspects. Iceland believes there are important points and lessons learned in the report that merit continued focus of governments, so we propose and are willing to fully fund FAO in making a simpler follow-up document – a summary for policy makers – and hope that useful projects will be formulated on these issues.

As I will also mention under agenda item 12, Iceland welcomes the efforts of FAO to attend various international meetings to present what is happening in the world of fisheries – and we encourage that this continues. Iceland feels it is also important for FAO to take a more strategic view and make carefully planned medium and long term efforts to improve the knowledge and understanding of fisheries issues among those taking part in CBD and other comparable fora.

Thank you, Mr Chair