

March 25, 2022

Comments from the Environmental Defense Fund to the revised zero draft of the United Nations Oceans Conference Political Declaration

On behalf of Environmental Defense Fund, we are grateful for the opportunity to provide inputs for the zero draft of the UN Ocean Conference political declaration, as well as for the opportunity we had to provide an abridged version of this input verbally, last March 23rd, during the online stakeholder briefing held to that effect.

We applaud the current draft's reference to the International Year of Artisanal Fisheries and Aquaculture and inclusion of small-scale actors in decision making given their role as stewards of biodiverse ecosystems and their significant contribution towards food security and nutrition, and livelihoods.

We have two concrete recommendations:

- In Paragraph 12, we recommend the inclusion of language that adopts a strong commitment to sustainable management of small-scale fisheries through the timely implementation of the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication. In so doing, we enthusiastically support submissions that have also been made to that same effect by other civil society groups, such as CoopeSoliDar, from Costa Rica. We feel this is especially appropriate, given the occurrence of this conference during the International Year of Artisanal Fisheries and Aquaculture.
- Blue/aquatic foods are essential to human health, food security, biodiversity and livelihoods and can help progress 9 of the SDGs. We need to put them at the center of decision-making for policy and budgetary priorities. We support the language addition proposed by Ambassador Stefan Jon Hafstein for a new Section g. in Paragraph 11 "Mobilizing actions for sustainable fisheries and aquaculture to deliver sufficient, safe and nutritious food, recognizing SDG 14 as vital for sustainable food systems and for achieving SDG 2 by 2030, while supporting a healthy ocean, marine ecosystems and a vibrant ocean-based economy." This will highlight more explicitly that fish is food.

Thank you again for the opportunity to make this contribution.

Karly Kelso

Director, Climate Resilient Food Systems
Environmental Defense Fund

Pedro Zapata

Senior Director, Global Fisheries and Oceans
Initiatives
Environmental Defense Fund