



CFFA Comments on the zero draft of the declaration of the UN Ocean Conference 202

Esteemed co-facilitators,

The Coalition for Fair Fisheries Arrangements (CFFA), a platform of European and African-based organizations that raises awareness about the impacts of EU policies on third countries artisanal fishing communities, welcomes the zero draft of the declaration of the UN Ocean Conference 2022, and the opportunity for civil society to provide comments.

In African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries, artisanal fisheries are the most important sector of the ocean economy, providing livelihoods, employment, food security and revenue to ACP populations. They rely on access to healthy oceans and ecosystems but their survival is threatened by the negative impacts of climate change, poor management of fisheries, land based and sea based pollution and competition from other blue economy sectors.

Despite their importance, men and women from ACP small scale fishing communities also remain marginalized in decision making processes and their essential contribution to food security, nutrition, ecosystems conservation and sustainable management of marine resources is undervalued and goes unrecognized.

Noting that the theme of the 2022 Ocean Conference is on increasing ocean science and innovation, a general comment is that the zero draft could better highlight specific areas that need increased attention, such as better science, developed in a participative, transparent and gender sensitive way, on the contribution of small scale fisheries to national economies, food security, poverty eradication, and sustainable fisheries.

The focus on innovation should recognize the effective innovations, based on local and traditional knowledge, introduced by artisanal fishing communities, to tackle key challenges such as improving fisheries management, improving working and living conditions, accessing good quality raw material, or making better use of renewable energy, particularly for fish processing activities. These innovations are helping coastal fisheries dependent communities to become more resilient.

To take better account of these issues, we would like to propose a serie of modifications to the declaration text, here after detailed.

Paragraph 1:

We suggest the following addition:

*Greater ambition is required at all levels to address the dire state of the ocean. As leaders and representatives of our Governments, we are determined to act decisively and urgently to improve the health and productivity of the ocean, **and the resilience of coastal communities in face of climate change***

This language is in line with the FAO Voluntary Guidelines on Sustainable Small Scale Fisheries - VGSSF, in particular chapter 9 on climate change.

Paragraph 3

We suggest the following change, to recognize the essential role played by the oceans to provide, mainly through small scale fisheries, essential nutrients and food, particularly to poor populations and livelihoods to millions:

*The ocean is an important source of the planet's biodiversity and plays a vital role in the climate system and water cycle. The ocean supplies us with oxygen to breathe, ~~contributes~~ **is essential** to food security, nutrition, and to decent jobs and livelihoods, acts as a sink and reservoir of greenhouse gases and protects biodiversity, provides a means for maritime transportation, forms an important part of our natural and cultural heritage, and plays an essential role in sustainable development, a sustainable ocean based economy and poverty eradication.*

Paragraph 4

We feel the commitment may be a bit vague in terms of timing, and doesn't fully recognize the urgent need to implement SDGs, including SDG 14 b, which calls states to guarantee access to fish resources and markets for small scale fisheries. We suggest the following change:

*We deeply regret our collective failure to achieve the four targets under Goal 14 that matured in 2020, and we commit to taking urgent action to achieve all targets **set for 2020** as soon as possible ~~without undue delay~~, **and to speed up action to achieve all targets by 2030.***

Paragraph 6:

We are deeply concerned about the blue acceleration, i.e., the race among diverse and often competing interests for ocean food, resources, and space. We are particularly concerned about the fact the the voice of artisanal fishers is often dismissed due to epistemic injustice.

At the same time, artisanal fisheries are the biggest sector of the ocean economy, in terms of livelihoods and jobs, providing nutritious food at affordable prices, particularly in developing countries. Artisanal fishers are greatly concerned about the growing cumulated negative impacts of more powerful sea and land-based sectors, promoted in blue economy strategies (oil and gas exploitation, deep-sea mining, tourism, fishmeal factories), that jeopardize their future. They call for

a precautionary approach to be implemented when it comes to new developments and projects undertaken as part of the blue economy.

On protection and conservation, although ambitions to protect larger marine areas is positive, it is of utmost importance to recognize, respect and ensure the full and effective participation of indigenous peoples and local communities, to take duly into account their knowledge and traditional conservation and management methods, and to ensure that human rights are placed at the center of all conservation initiatives. This has been given a particular attention in the 2019 UN Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) global assessment which highlights the importance of Indigenous and Local Knowledge (ILK) and issues concerning Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (IPLCs). The importance to put human rights at the center of United Nations efforts to preserve and protect nature has been recently underlined by the UN special rapporteur on human rights and environment

<https://reliefweb.int/report/world/human-rights-must-be-heart-un-plan-save-planet-expert> .

To reflect these issues, we propose the following additions:

*We are deeply concerned by the findings about cumulative human impacts on the ocean **that is increasing as part of blue economy promotion**, including ecosystem degradation and species extinctions and we recognize the need for transformative change, as highlighted by the Second World Ocean Assessment and the Intergovernmental Science Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services Global Assessment Report. We are committed to halting and reversing the decline in the health of the ocean's ecosystems and biodiversity and, **through the implementation of a precautionary approach**, to protecting and restoring its resilience and ecological integrity, **and its capacity to provide livelihoods and food security**. We are encouraged by the commitments by more than 100 Member States to protect at least 30 percent of the global ocean within Marine Protected Areas and other effective area-based conservation measures by 2030. We also recognize the importance of the United Nations Decade of Ecosystem Restoration and its call to support and scale up efforts to prevent, halt and reverse the degradation of ecosystems worldwide. **We believe it is of utmost importance to recognize, respect and ensure the full and effective participation of indigenous peoples and local communities, to take duly into account their knowledge and traditional conservation and management methods, and to ensure that human rights are placed at the center of all ocean conservation initiatives.***

Paragraph 11:

To take better account of artisanal fisheries concerns regarding the cumulative impact of other sectors of the blue economy on their sustainable development prospects, and reflect better the SDG 14.b, and the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries (in particular art 6.18), we suggest the following additions:

*a. Informing integrated ocean management, planning and decision-making, through improving our understanding of the **environmental and social** impact of cumulative human activities on the ocean and **on coastal communities** and anticipating the impacts of planned activities and eliminating or minimizing their negative effects,*

b. Restoring fish stock to levels that produce at maximum sustainable yield in the shortest time feasible and minimizing waste, unwanted by-catch and discards, through combating illegal,

*unreported and unregulated fishing including through the use of communication tools and other technological tools for monitoring, control and surveillance, as well as through the use of an ecosystem approach to fisheries that protect essential habitats, **guarantee access rights to artisanal fisheries**, and promote collaborative processes for decision-making that include all stakeholders, including small-scale and artisanal fisheries, recognizing the importance of the International Year of Artisanal Fisheries and Aquaculture*

*e. Effectively planning and implementing area-based management tools, including marine protected areas, integrated coastal zone **co-management** and marine spatial planning, through, inter alia, assessing, **in a participative, transparent and gender sensitive way**, their ecological, social and cultural value and applying the precautionary and ecosystem-based approach, in accordance with national legislation and international law,*

Paragraph 12.d

There is no international consensus on how innovation in financial instruments is associated with positive environmental and social outcomes. As recognised in the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, international investments in developing countries are often uneven and short-term oriented, with negative impacts on the environment and poor people. Rather, we want to stress that improvements in finance should meet the goal of being effective with international development objectives, thereby reflecting the language used in the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness and other complimentary agreements.

While paragraph 12.d emphasises increasing private finance for the blue economy, this should not overlook the considerable need for additional and genuine aid to developing and small island states promised by rich nations as compensation for the effects of the climate disaster. Such commitments were established in the Paris Agreement and reaffirmed at the Cop26 Climate Summit in Scotland. We also wish to emphasise the need for due diligence in public-private investments, given the detrimental risks that such private-public investment may have on the blue economy, and suggest the inclusion of the word '*consideration*' to that end.

Equally, paragraph 12.d. refers to technical assistance to ensure countries can raise funding for new projects and address barriers to accessing financing (We suggest deleting '*and address barriers to access financing*', as it is superfluous given it is implied in the concept of bankability). Yet technical assistance is equally needed to ensure financing for the blue economy is both coherent and accountable. This also reaffirms the UNs messages on scaling up not only the quantity of financing for the attainment of the SDGs, but also the quality of investments. The quality, rather than quantity, is further stressed in the UN's Sustainable Investment Principles for the Blue Economy.

The text refers to the value of marine natural capital, but fails to recognise that the meaning of value encompasses economic and non-economic wealth. The importance of recognising non-monetary wealth, including cultural and social values, of natural resources is stressed in the international guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure, among other human rights documents, such as the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

We therefore suggest the following changes

Explore, develop and promote ~~innovative~~ **effective** financing solutions for the development of sustainable ocean-based economies, including through **increased transfers of aid from industrialised nations to meet their commitments for compensating the ecological debts owed to developing and small-island states, consideration to** public-private sector partnerships and capital market instruments, **and to** provide technical assistance to enhance the bankability, **accountability and coherence** ~~feasibility~~ of projects, as well as mainstream the **economic, social and cultural** values of marine natural capital into decision-making, ~~and address barriers to accessing financing.~~
