

Ocean Action Panel 5:

Fostering Sustainable Fisheries Management, including Supporting Small-scale Fishers

The Philippines recognizes the vital role of fisheries in achieving sustainable food production, alleviating poverty, and driving economic development. As an archipelagic nation, we understand the central importance of our marine resources to the well-being of millions of Filipinos, particularly those in coastal communities who rely directly on fisheries for their livelihoods.

At the same time, we acknowledge the significant challenges confronting the fisheries sector today, among them are Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated (IUU) fishing, harmful subsidies, marine pollution, biodiversity loss, and the far-reaching impacts of climate change. Addressing these threats is essential to safeguarding food security, strengthening the resilience of fishing communities, and achieving long-term sustainable growth.

In our efforts to combat IUU fishing, the Philippines continues to enhance its Monitoring, Control, and Surveillance (MCS) systems. Key measures include the operationalization of a Vessel Monitoring System (VMS), implementation of Port State Measures, and reinforcement of fisheries law enforcement. These initiatives help ensure that effective controls are in place, continuously monitored, and regularly updated across critical points in the fish supply chain to promote transparency, compliance, and accountability.

In line with global efforts to eliminate harmful fisheries subsidies, the Philippines ratified the WTO Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies in February 2024. As we await its entry into force, we remain actively engaged in ongoing negotiations on subsidies that contribute to overcapacity and overfishing (OCOF). We emphasize the importance of a balanced and equitable outcome, including effective and appropriate Special and Differential Treatment (SDT) for least-developed and developing countries.

To further strengthen fisheries governance, the Philippines upholds its commitments under multilateral agreements and actively participates in Regional Fisheries Management Organizations (RFMOs). We ensure compliance with conservation and management measures through the enforcement of Fisheries Administrative Orders within our national jurisdiction and Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), which are aligned with and considered compatible with RFMO frameworks.

Furthermore, we underscore the importance of empowering local communities, including Indigenous Peoples (IPs). Their meaningful involvement in fisheries governance and decision-making processes is critical to ensuring inclusive, accountable, and participatory management of marine resources. We also recognize that conservation measures and environmental safeguards, strengthened by science-based data, are vital to our initiatives in sustainably managing the country's marine ecosystems contributing to effective fisheries management.

The Philippines reaffirms its commitment to international cooperation and collective stewardship to protect our shared marine resources, now and for future generations.

Thank you.