



**Food and Agriculture Organization
of the United Nations**

FAO Statement on the on the elements for a Call for Action

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Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

**United Nations Conference to Support the Implementation of Sustainable
Development Goal 14: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and
marine resources for sustainable development**

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Thank you Chair,

The UN Food and Agricultural Organization, through input by its Members, has been monitoring world capture production since 1950 and as the mandated UN body for fisheries, assesses the status of global fisheries for biennial reporting. These assessments show that approximately 31 percent of commercially important marine fish stocks are fished at biologically unsustainable levels while 68 percent remain within biologically sustainable levels. FAO recognizes that overfishing, illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing, destructive fishing practices, pollution, and habitat and climate change, threaten fish stocks, while unmanaged expansion of aquaculture can have adverse impacts on the marine environment.

The Call for Action will help to spur FAO and others to work on strengthening global fisheries governance, to focus attention on particular managerial and technical actions that need to be supported in member States. In the delivery of its actions, FAO seeks consensus-building in policy and actions towards improved conservation and utilization of aquatic resources. FAO's actions are advised by its Committee on Fisheries (COFI) and through recognition of and collaboration with Regional Fisheries Bodies (RFBs). The FAO activities are performed under its Blue Growth Initiative which aims at balancing the environmental, social and economic aspects of living aquatic resources to ensure equitable benefits for communities. It balances growth and conservation, across larger commercial and small-scale artisanal fisheries and aquaculture.

The Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries, adopted by the FAO Conference in 1995 and its related instruments provide a robust framework for national and international efforts, including in the formulation of policies and other legal and institutional frameworks and instruments, to ensure sustainable fishing and use of aquatic living resources.

As mentioned, today many fisheries around the world are characterized by excessive fishing effort, low productivity and inadequate profitability. It has been estimated that rebuilding these overfished stocks could increase fishery production by approximately 16.5 million tons, worth at least US\$32 billion. This would not only increase the well-being of coastal communities, but it would lead to healthier ecosystems that have greater resilience to climate change and ocean acidification.

FAO amongst others, recognizes that considerable benefits would be derived from 'rebuilding' fisheries through the strengthening of existing conservation and management mechanisms, while working together on new opportunities to combat illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing. In this regard, FAO wishes to take this opportunity to invite States that have not yet done so, to become party to the FAO Port State Measures Agreement (PSMA) which entered into force in June 2016. The effective implementation of this instrument will reduce the incentive to engage in IUU fishing and block fishery products derived from such activities from entering national and international markets, thereby bolstering international efforts to combat illegal fishing and contributing to strengthening fisheries management and governance at all levels.

Sustainable management of ocean ecosystems is imperative for ensuring sufficient fisheries production to sustain human well-being, food security and nutrition, and livelihoods. FAO recognizes the need to



Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

accelerate its work in supporting sustainable management of living aquatic resources, and to balance use and conservation in an economically, socially and environmentally responsible manner.

For instance, the Call for Action could be used to focus on and strengthen support for small-scale fisheries that are crucial to food security and livelihoods in coastal communities, especially those of LDCs and SIDS. In this regard, the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-scale fisheries in the context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication (SSF Guidelines) set out principles and guidelines for securing sustainable small scale fisheries governance and development.

The sustainable use of oceans and seas requires global and regional cooperation in the conservation and management of shared genetic resources, which is the focus of the BBNJ process for the high seas. FAO's ABNJ Common Oceans programme offers insights into the challenges and opportunities that we now face and welcomes the Call for Actions recognition of initiatives and related processes working on these questions.

FAO also welcomes the Call for Action's recognition that access to productive resources from oceans and seas is supported by good governance, participatory decision-making processes, robust implementation of existing negotiated guidance and legal frameworks, including the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea and its subsidiary agreements.

Lastly, FAO welcomes any opportunity to give further input to the finer elements of the development of the Call for Action, to achieve SDG14 as an integral part of the 2030 Agenda.

Thank you, Chair.

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