

**Input for the 2025 High-level Political Forum
FAO Committee on Fisheries (COFI)**

Your assessment of the impacts of the multiple and interconnected crises on the implementation of SDGs 3, 5, 8, 14 and 17.

The 36th Session of the Committee on Fisheries (COFI) was held from 8 to 12 July 2024. In relation to the impacts of the multiple and interconnected crises on the implementation of SDG2 3, 5, 8, 17 and 14, the Committee:

- noted that for the first time, and according to the available statistics, the production of aquatic animals from aquaculture surpassed the production from capture fisheries, highlighting the importance of sustainable aquaculture in meeting food demands particularly in food deficit countries;
 - highlighted the importance of aquaculture not just for food security and nutrition, but also livelihoods, economic development and human health, and thus its broader contribution to the SDGs;
 - while noting significant variabilities between and within regions, expressed concern for the continuously degrading accumulated trends at the global level in the status of marine fish stocks, due to unsustainable practices, challenges from illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing, overcapacity and overfishing, climate change, loss of biodiversity and aquatic ecosystems degradation, and welcomed the progress made in some regions;
 - underscored the importance of sustainable fisheries and aquaculture in meeting current and future food security and sustainable growth needs, while achieving sustainable and resilient agrifood systems; and
 - stressed the crucial contribution of small-scale and artisanal fishers, fish farmers and fish workers, and the need to promote gender equity and reduce inequalities in the fisheries and aquaculture sector;
- COFI commended the 2024 edition of the State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture (SOFIA) report, which included a review of the 'Status and Trends of Sustainable Development Goal 14 indicators under FAO custodianship'.

Three key areas where sustainable, inclusive, science-and evidence-based solutions for achieving the SDGs and leaving no one behind are being effectively delivered, especially related to the cluster of SDGs under review in 2025, also bearing in mind the three dimensions of sustainable development and the interlinkages across the Goals and targets.

During its 36th Session held from 8 to 12 July 2024, the Committee on Fisheries (COFI):

- commended FAO for the 2024 edition of the State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture (SOFIA) publication including its emphasis on Blue Transformation to efficiently support Members, partners

and key stakeholders, particularly small-scale fishers, to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;

- reiterated the value of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries (the Code) for achieving sustainable fisheries and aquaculture, and recognized the progress made in its implementation further improvements in sustainable fisheries and aquaculture are needed to meet the SDGs;
- reiterated FAO's role in monitoring and reporting on the SDG 14 indicators under its custodianship, commended FAO's role in supporting Members' work to track their progress on SDG 14 indicators, and encouraged FAO to continue its integrated assessment of SDGs under its custodianship and those SDG targets that directly impact small-scale fisheries;
- acknowledged the importance of multi-sectoral and participatory management approaches in integrated water resources management that promote sustainable resource use, support biodiversity and advance climate resilience, and encouraged FAO to support Members in enhancing capacities to manage inland fisheries and aquatic environments; and
- recognized the important role of sustainable fisheries and aquaculture in achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and encouraged FAO Members to accelerate implementation of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 14.

Three examples of measures to accelerate progress towards SDGs through well-coordinated actions in key transitions to bring progress to scale (food security, energy access and affordability, digital connectivity, education, jobs and social protection, climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution), building on interlinkages between SDGs to ensure cohesive progress.

The 36th Session of the Committee on Fisheries (COFI), held from 8 to 12 July 2024:

- stressed that effective fisheries management leads to stock recovery and increases catches, and encouraged FAO and its Members to continue efforts in this direction, seize every opportunity to make fisheries management more effective; and emphasized the need to improve fisheries management measures, acknowledging the management challenges concerning fisheries undertaken by small-scale fishers, particularly multi-stock fisheries, including through strengthened collaboration with and within regional fisheries management organizations/arrangements (RFMO/As) and other relevant regional fishery bodies (RFBs), as appropriate;
- called for enhanced coordination and effective implementation of international instruments, including through RFBs, and encouraged the uptake of internationally agreed practices and standards at national and regional levels
- encouraged Members to design, implement and strengthen Monitoring, Control, and Surveillance (MCS) regimes and effective accountability frameworks to combat IUU fishing; and
- emphasized the need for a comprehensive and inclusive approach to ensuring that capture

fisheries and aquaculture are sustainable with science-based management and to support Members, especially developing countries, in improving the collection, analysis, dissemination and use of high-quality, country-specific data on the consumption and nutrient composition, including food safety risk factors of aquatic foods.

Follow-up actions and measures being undertaken by your intergovernmental body or forum to support implementation of the 2023 SDG Summit Political Declaration and the outcomes of the 2024 Summit of the Future, to advance the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The 36th Session of the Committee on Fisheries (COFI), held from 8 to 12 July 2024, discussed follow-up actions and measures to advance the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The Committee

- welcomed and supported the continued presence of fisheries and aquaculture across the FAO Strategic Framework 2022–31 Programme Priority Areas (PPAs), and its contribution to the SDGs and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;
- encouraged FAO Members to accelerate the implementation of SDG 14 taking ownership in monitoring and reporting processes of the relevant 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development indicators for sustainable fisheries and aquaculture;
- adopted the Guidelines for Sustainable Aquaculture (GSA); and highlighted the importance of aquaculture to food security and nutrition, livelihoods, economic development and human health, and its contribution to the SDGs;
- encouraged Members to advance efforts to fully consider climate change in regional fishery body conservation and management measures, encouraged FAO to facilitate information exchange and enhance regional cooperation and coordination with and among RFBs; and commended the development of a set of FAO actions on climate resilient fisheries and aquaculture, in support of the FAO Strategy on Climate Change for 2022–2031, and called upon FAO to mobilize additional resources to scale up climate change adaptation and mitigation solutions; and
- called upon Members to increase their funding towards SDG 14, given the low levels of funding currently available in the framework of SDG 17 and other relevant sources of finance.

Recommendations and key messages to be considered for inclusion in the Ministerial Declaration of the 2025 HLPF.

Recommendations and key messages arising from the 36th Session of the Committee on Fisheries (COFI), relating to SDG 2 3, 5, 8, 17, and SDG 14 in particular, include:

- While production remains stable and there has been progress in some regions, COFI expressed

concern for the continuously degrading accumulated trends at the global level in the status of marine fish stocks, undermining progress toward achieving SDG14;

- Sustainable fisheries and aquaculture play an important role in achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and COFI encouraged FAO Members to accelerate implementation of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 14; and
- Aquatic foods are an important source of protein as well as essential fatty acids and micronutrients for nutrition, food security and health, and they have a role in reducing malnutrition in vulnerable populations, including internally displaced persons and refugees.