



Statement on behalf of the European Union and its 27 Member States

171st session of the FAO Council

(5-9 December 2022)

Item 6.3 - Report of the 35th Session of the Committee on Fisheries (5-9 September 2022)

Madam/Mr Chair,

1. I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union and its 27 Member States.
2. Iceland, Montenegro, San Marino, Türkiye and Ukraine align themselves with this statement.
3. The EU and its Member States are very satisfied with the outcomes of the 35th session of the FAO Committee on Fisheries, which confirmed FAO's essential role in relation to fisheries and aquaculture, including in reporting on the state of world fisheries and aquaculture. Fisheries and aquaculture have a critical contribution to make with regard to food security and nutrition. They also remain extremely important for FAO's mandate.
4. We regret however that the working methods of this COFI session did not allow for adequate preparation and fruitful exchanges. We trust that this will be remedied in the next session, in particular to ensure adequate speaking time for both members and observers.
5. We commend FAO for the timely launch of the 2022 SOFIA publication at the UN Ocean Conference in Lisbon last June. This report provided an important basis to support our discussion in COFI. The SOFIA will also be an important framework for present and future policy decisions on fisheries and aquaculture.
6. The EU and its Member States welcome the endorsement of the FAO Voluntary Guidelines on Transshipment. These guidelines will constitute an ambitious and practical reference document for the international community to regulate, monitor and control transshipment operations, and will contribute to the fight against IUU fishing. The EU

stands ready to cooperate with FAO and other members to promote their implementation, including through capacity building for developing countries.

7. The EU and its Member States fully support the proposal for a new COFI sub-committee on fisheries management and is now looking forward to its implementation. We are convinced that the new sub-committee has the potential to ensure better preparation of COFI meetings on fisheries management issues and to contribute to improving COFI working methods. The EU takes this opportunity to confirm its commitment to financially support the organisation of the first sub-committee meeting in 2023, including the participation of developing countries.
8. The EU and its Member States welcome the special attention provided by COFI to small-scale fisheries and aquaculture. The essential role of small-scale fisheries and aquaculture, its key contribution to food security and nutrition, and its need for political and financial support should be given prominent attention beyond the 2022 International Year of Artisanal Fisheries and Aquaculture. Therefore, we support having small-scale fisheries on the agenda of the first meeting of the new sub-committee on fisheries management.
9. We hope that the strong call, launched by the EU and other FAO members at this COFI meeting to finalise ambitious FAO guidelines on sustainable aquaculture as soon as possible, will be heard. The potential of aquaculture is enormous, but we cannot take advantage of it at the expense of the economic, environmental and social conditions.
10. We are pleased that COFI also broached a series of other important topics, such as the implementation of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries, the fight against IUU fishing, the mainstreaming of climate change and biodiversity in fisheries and aquaculture and the implementation of Agenda 2030.
11. With these observations, the EU and its Member States endorse the report of the 35th session of the Committee on Fisheries.

Thank you, Madam/ Mr. Chair.
