

ICSP17/UNFSA/INF.3

15-17 May 2024



Seventeenth round of Informal Consultations of States Parties to the Agreement for the Implementation of the Provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea of 10 December 1982 relating to the Conservation and Management of Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks

(New York, 15-17 May 2024)

DRAFT REPORT: Delegations are kindly invited to provide any comments via email to [doalos@un.org](mailto:doalos@un.org), with a copy to [amerim@un.org](mailto:amerim@un.org), by 1 July 2024

## SUMMARY

The present document contains the report of the seventeenth round of Informal Consultations of States Parties to the Agreement for the Implementation of the Provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea of 10 December 1982 relating to the Conservation and Management of Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks (the Agreement), which was held in New York, from 15 to 17 May 2024.

As provided in paragraph 72 of General Assembly resolution 78/68 of 5 December 2023, the seventeenth round of Informal Consultations was convened for three days in 2024 to focus its discussions on the topic “Sustainable fisheries management in the face of climate change”.

## Contents

### I. Introduction

## I. Introduction

1. Pursuant to paragraph 72 of General Assembly resolution 78/68 of 5 December 2023, on *Sustainable fisheries, including through the 1995 Agreement for the Implementation of the Provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea of 10 December 1982 relating to the Conservation and Management of Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks, and related instruments*, the Secretary-General convened the seventeenth round of Informal Consultations of States Parties to the Agreement for the Implementation of the Provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea of 10 December 1982 relating to the Conservation and Management of Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks (the “Agreement”), at United Nations Headquarters in New York, from 15 to 17 May 2024.

2. In paragraph 70 of resolution 78/68, the General Assembly recalled the recommendation of the resumed Review Conference in 2016 that the I4..(sev)1s(t)-e2e17.57May4. 9.

6. Mr. Mathias recalled that it was the first round of Informal Consultations of States Parties to the Agreement to be held since the resumption of the Review Conference on the Agreement in May 2023, and noted that the General Assembly decided that the Informal Consultations would focus, during the seventeenth round, on the topic “Sustainable fisheries management in the face of climate change”. Given the current triple global crisis of climate change, pollution and biodiversity loss, Mr. Mathias highlighted the cumulative effects of this crisis on the health a

b. Specialized agencies, related organizations and offices of the United Nations: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), Secretariat of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), and United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD);

c. Inter-governmental organisations: Bay of Bengal Programme Intergovernmental Organisation, International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT), International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES), North East Atlantic Fisheries Commission (NEAFC), North Pacific Marine Science Organization (PICES), Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA), and Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC);

d. Non-governmental organizations: Environmental Defense Fund (EDF), Marine Stewardship Council (MSC), Pew Charitable Trust, and World Wildlife Fund for Nature (WWF).

D. Opening statement of the Chairperson

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and assessments, adaptive management, the need for flexibility, the need for involvement of stakeholders and many different available tools to address challenges.

14. Finally, the Chairperson expressed the expectation that presentations by experts during the different panel segments would spark substantive and interactive discussions amongst States Parties and States non-Parties alike.

#### E. Adoption of the meeting documents

15. The Informal Consultations considered and adopted the provisional agenda of the meeting (see annex) and draft organization of work for the meeting as proposed.

### III. General statements

16. Delegations reiterated the importance of the Agreement as the international legal framework for ensuring the conservation and management of straddling fish stocks and highly migratory fish stocks. Delegations reaffirmed their support for the Informal Consultations, including as a preparatory step for the next resumed Review Conference. The importance of other instruments, such as the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, the recently adopted Agreement under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity of Areas beyond National Jurisdiction and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, was also highlighted with respect to the topic of focus. Saudi Arabia was welcomed as the newest State Party to the Agreement since the last resumption of the Review Conference.

17. The topic of focus for the seventeenth meeting was welcomed as climate change impacts on fisheries represented a significant challenge, particularly for coastal communities and fishing industries. The meeting was seen as an important contribution to ongoing international dialogue on this topic. Delegations highlighted the importance of addressing climate change impacts on fisheries and the timeliness of this topic. In this respect, it was noted that the upcoming session of the Committee on Fisheries (COFI) of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) would include this topic in its agenda and that the forthcoming meeting of the United Nations Open-ended Informal Consultative Process on Oceans and the Law of



Assistance Fund established under Part VII of the Agreement affected participation at the meeting particularly given that since COVID-19, there had been a rise in between-country inequalities. Additionally, the importance of collaborating with the private sector was noted.

IV .



27. In a pre-recorded presentation, Mr. Zhang Fan, Professor, College of Marine Living

productivity. In terms of species distribution shifts, Ms. Mills noted that many species are shifting poleward and to deeper waters to escape rising temperatures. Moreover, warmer waters tended to lead to faster juvenile growth but reduced adult sizes, resulting in

indicative of future yields, noting that the climate system could no longer be considered stationary. Mr. Lordan also noted that cross-disciplinary science could guide decision-making but that new approaches and resources were required. He emphasized that the approach of “business as usual” was not an option, explaining that governance and management systems would need to be adaptive. Mr. Lordan shared examples of changes in productivity of certain stocks evident from ICES surveys, highlighting the importance of long-term monitoring programs in order to adapt reference points and management. He concluded with the recommendation that when considering management of fisheries in a socio-ecological system, we should evaluate risks and measures collectively.

32. The Chairperson thanked the presenters for providing a better understanding of the complex relationship between the effects of climate change and sustainable fisheries management, which differed from region to region and from species to species. He noted that presenters had commonly emphasized the need for communication with all relevant stakeholders, including the general public, as well as the importance of combining insights from natural sciences with socio-economic studies, to highlight the human dimension. No simple solutions were at hand; responses to the challenges identified would require a combination of old and new tools, including adaptive conservation measures, international and regional cooperation, enhancing the science-policy interface, including by the integration of traditional knowledge, and a focus on vulnerable communities. The Chairperson noted that the presentations reaffirmed the importance of the principles and approaches set out in the Agreement in this context, including the precautionary principle and the ecosystem approach to fisheries management.

33. Responding to a question on the impact of the El Niño Southern Oscillation on fisheries, Ms. Guijarro responded that studies on this were ongoing in relation to several stocks and species in the Western Mediterranean, and that an influence of such events on crustaceans had already been detected. Mr. Curchitser referred to PICES studies of the Pacific Decadal Oscillation and the North Pacific Oscillation, pointing out that as a result of the recent North Pacific heatwave, the albacore tuna appeared to have performed particularly well but the blue fin tuna stock did not.

34. In response to a question on the effects of climate change on fish size, Mr. Curchitser and Ms. Mills pointed to research which suggested that warmer temperatures had a major influence on species growth, including in early years. The Chairperson added that this might differ from species to species and from area to area.

35. Several delegations questioned whether traditional approaches to fisheries management were intrinsically adaptive or adequate to respond to the effects of climate change and whether new tools were required. With respect to the role of static area-based management tools, such as marine protected areas, Mr. Lordan noted that such tools may be particularly important if other fisheries management tools proved ineffective. Ms. Chuenpagdee added that fish stock resilience could be enhanced through a mixture of tools,

importance of reducing spoilage and waste in fisheries, often caused by inadequate infrastructure, such as a lack of cooling equipment.

36. In response to a question on how to account for distributional shifts in fisheries management, Mr. Lordan emphasized the importance of the science-policy interface, noting that, since species distribution modelling could not provide conclusive answers, fisheries management would have to take into account scientific uncertainties and differences in interpretation of data. Ms. Glaser added that regional frameworks could help distribute catch allocation in cases where climate change affected cross-border stock distribution. She also noted that catch allocation flexibility could be built in before changes were evident, allowing States to anticipate distributional uncertainty in future negotiations.

37. In this regard, the Chairperson noted that some RFMO/A member States might find it hard to accept allocation of catches prior to the identification of observable changes in distribution of fish and noted that applying the precautionary approach and management strategy evaluation exercises could be seen as part of adaptive management. Ms. Mills noted the importance of dynamic evaluation and assessment processes to ensure that more recent observations were not discounted against older data. She also suggested that considering ecosystem information in parallel with stock assessments could enhance understanding of the risks that ecosystem changes posed to stocks.

38. A delegation affirmed the importance of integrating science in policy-making and in negotiations, but noted the challenges involved in doing so. This delegation further observed that adaptive fisheries management should take into account circumstances at sea as well as on land, which could be facilitated through community-based management, and that climate change was no excuse to ignore or neglect the need for strengthening fisheries management.

39. A delegation expressed concern that increasing the number of factors to be taken into account in fisheries management, including environmental factors, could slow down decision-making. In this regard, Ms. Chuenpagdee noted that partnerships between scientists and policy-makers, including through the integration of social scientists into fisheries departments, could speed up decision-making by building trust and developing relationships between different stakeholders, including indigenous peoples.

40. Delegations also raised questions regarding gender equality in fisheries, and differences between industrial and small-scale fisheries, as well as overcoming differences in access to technology and financing. On the first issue, Ms. Chuenpagdee noted that women could be in a disadvantaged situation when trading fish. On latter issue, Ms. Guijarro noted that there was no single strategy to face the challenges ahead, but that each situation required its own approach.

## B. Segment 2: Overview of the legal framework for sustainable fisheries management in the face of climate change

41. Ms. Jasdeep Randhawa, Programme Officer at the Intergovernmental Support and

sustainable fisheries and recognized the priority of safeguarding food production systems while aiming to meet temperature goals and enhancing climate resilience. She recalled that the Paris Agreement also emphasized marine conservation and biodiversity protection for sustainable fisheries. Ms. Randhawa explained that fisheries, while not treated separately under the UNFCCC and the Paris Agreement, were addressed as a cross-cutting issue within mitigation-based and adaptation-based commitments of the parties to the UNFCCC. In this regard, the UNFCCC and the Paris Agreement included obligations on parties to enhance mitigation and adaptation actions across all sectors, and she stressed that capacity-building, finance, technology, and cooperation measures were crucial for parties to implement their adaptation and mitigation actions. Ms. Randhawa highlighted that new or updated Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) reflected an increased recognition of the role of the ocean in climate action, with many countries integrating coastal and marine solutions. Ms. Randhawa emphasized that the UNFCCC and the Paris Agreement facilitate reporting on fisheries targets by the parties through national actions and plans, including NDCs, National Adaptation Plans (NAPs) and the transparency framework, which was enhanced during the first global stocktake and will serve to build trust, credibility and accountability. The global stocktake, which is conducted every five years, will enable parties to assess collective progress and adjust economy-wide emission reduction targets, covering all sectors and categories that include fisheries.

42. Ms. Valentina Germani, Senior Legal Officer at the United Nations Office of Legal Affairs (OLA), Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea (DOALOS), described the role of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea and the Agreement in sustainable fisheries management in the face of climate change, while also emphasizing the significant impacts of climate change on the oceans due to ocean warming, acidification, and deoxygenation, which has resulted in biodiversity loss and socioeconomic consequences, particularly for developing countries, least developed countries and small island developing States (SIDS). She highlighted particular provisions in UNCLOS and UNFSA relevant to climate change and the obligations on Parties to conserve and manage fisheries resources. She also noted that the resumed Review Conferences under the

pandemic, and emphasized the crucial role of aquatic animal foods in food security, noting that the consumption growth rate was twice the growth rate of the human population and provided high conversion efficiency rates and low greenhouse gas emissions compared to other animal proteins. Ms. Bahri explained that FAO's strategic actions, guided by its Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries and the Blue Transformation strategy, aimed to address food security and climate change, including by strengthening the knowledge base and policy guidance, developing and implementing field projects, and integrating aquatic foods into global frameworks such as the UNFCCC. S

fish stocks from historic areas in Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZ) to the high seas and vice versa due to warming oceans, and proposed a new mechanism, drawing from the experience of the Warsaw Implementation Mechanism, to assist States, particularly developing countries, with regard to adaptation and loss and damage due to extreme climate events. The proposal entailed establishing globally tradable instruments for harvest rights for fish stocks that historically occurred in one State or in the regulatory area of an RFMO/A and were migrating to other areas, and a mechanism that could provide funding as a form of offset for lost fishing allocations. Ms. Telesetsky highlighted the importance of adaptive management and suggested that improved scientific models and increased data collection could help manage changes in proposed fishing entitlements. She concluded by emphasizing the need for actionable climate justice to support vulnerable communities that lacked alternatives.

46. In the ensuing discussions, the Chairperson noted the rapid changes fisheries faced due to the impacts of climate change, in particular vulnerable communities such as small-scale subsistence fisheries, and he emphasized the need for economic, social and cultural aspects to be taken into account in the interpretation and application of legal instruments and frameworks. Some delegations noted in this context the important role of RFMO/As as well as other bodies and frameworks in addressing the impacts of climate change on fisheries, such as the UNFCCC.

47. In response to a comment on the need to improve synergies between and among regional fisheries bodies and global frameworks and reduce duplication, Ms. Telesetsky noted that the proposal described in her presentation looked at specific synergies concerning loss and damage in fishery resources due to the impacts of climate change as a precautionary allocation. She stressed the need for inputs on loss and damage from bodies and organizations working on the implementation of fisheries conservation and management measures. Ms. Germani

action to address the impacts of climate change on fisheries, while also noting the need to adapt existing approaches to new challenges.

49. Another delegation also stressed the importance of synergies between fisheries and climate change bodies and frameworks and noted that addressing the impacts of climate change on fisheries, including climate change adaptation depended on the local conditions of coastal communities and the means of implementation of individual coastal States. This delegation welcomed information presented by Ms. Bahri on the projected needs for climate finance in fisheries and emphasized the importance of integrating oceans and fisheries in the preparation of national adaptation plans in order to mobilize sectoral action.

50. Ms. Randhawa noted in this context that the Ocean and Climate Change Dialogue would be held in Bonn on 11 and 12 June 2024 during the meetings of the Subsidiary Body for Implementation and the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA). Based on the priority topics identified by Parties to the UNFCCC and observers, the two topics of the dialogue would be “Marine biodiversity conservation and coastal resilience” and “Technology needs for the ocean - climate action, including finance links”. In addition, cross-cutting issues would address synergies, science, finance and integrating the ocean dimension into the NDCs.

51. In response to a request for more information on the partnership between FAO and the Green Climate Fund, Ms. Bahri noted ue-1.325 T-2(gi)-2(er(d ue-1.p(m)-2(a)-1(pons)4()-2(i)3(3)3(i)-2(on



noted the need for RFMO/As to consider new mechanisms and approaches in light of existing knowledge on climate change and migrating fish species. She also highlighted in this context the importance of climate justice for developing countries such as SIDS that have not contributed significantly to climate change.

54. In response to a question on the proportion of fish stocks that were expected to migrate from coastal areas and regulatory areas of RFMO/As, Ms. Bahri cited new climate change models which predicted that 45 per cent of transboundary stocks will have shifted by 2100 and 81 per cent of the world's exclusive economic zones will have at least one shifted stock by 2100.

55. One delegation noted the importance of sustainable fisheries especially for coastal communities and questioned whether existing instruments and frameworks were sufficient to ensure sustainable fisheries in the face of climate change. Ms. Germani emphasized in this context the need to first better understand the impacts of climate change on fisheries, as well as assessment of the effectiveness of existing conservation and management measures and interactions between frameworks on fisheries and climate change. She also noted, in this regard, the framework set out in UNCLOS and provisions that provided for the integration of the Convention with other instruments. The need for integration of the impacts of climate change on fisheries in the implementation of provisions in UNCLOS and UNFSA and in decisions on fisheries management was highlighted in this regard. The potential role of the recently adopted Agreement under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the conservation and sustainable u(es is) 0.1381.32 Tdr64Ac[nto( )]TJ 0.1Tw (c[n]6(to.1381.32 Tdl)-1(iw





in equatorial Pacific Island Countries and Territories. The speaker observed that WCPFC had adopted a resolution on climate change in 2019 and the subject was a standing agenda item at the Commission and its subsidiary bodies. Pertinent assessments and an adaptive management approach were being considered, and awareness-raising was ongoing. At the same time, as Ms. Garvilles noted, resources were limited and commitment from members, and collaboration with other tuna RFMOs, were needed. Challenges also arose in relation to research and data needs, as well as from the fact that decisions were taken at the national level in relation to a regional problem. Concluding her remarks, Ms. Garvilles noted that these challenges called for a multifaceted approach that also recognized the specific requirements of SIDS.

65. Mr. Piero Mannini, Senior Liaison Officer and Secretary of the Regional Fishery Body Secretariats' Network (RSN), Fisheries and Aquaculture Division (NFI), FAO, presented insights on FAO's support to regional fishery bodies (RFBs) for sustainable fisheries management in the face of climate change. Mr. Mannini emphasized that scaling up regional cooperation and coordination among RFBs was a salient priority, and recent FAO regional workshops and publications were supporting these endeavors, as well as mainstreaming climate change into international fisheries governance. He noted that FAO had recently reviewed actions of 46 RFBs on climate change, almost half of which included the precautionary approach and/or ecosystem approach in their constitutive treaties or practices. FAO concluded that the majority of RFBs were taking action, including in relation to data and science-related

evaluations. Third, enacting governance reforms to address IUU fishing, for example, by requiring more transparency in vessel ownership and access agreements. Fourth, addressing harmful subsidies that promote overinvestment in fishing, and fifth, promoting coordination across RFMOs. Before closing, Mr. Galland stressed that, while climate change had already been affecting marine biodiversity, ecosystems, fisheries, and people, there were many steps that RFMOs could take right away, in particular, with regard to adaptation. Tools for that purpose were available and should be implemented without delay.

67. Following the presentations, the Chairperson initiated the discussion by raising several questions. He began by asking whether RFMOs were taking sufficient action in the face of climate change, and whether the current governance frameworks around RFMOs were appropriate to address the challenges posed by climate change. The Chairperson then stated that changes in biomass, fish size, distribution and migration may need to result in changes to allocations, and, acknowledging that this was a challenging issue, asked for ideas on how to handle such changes. Noting that precautionary allocations based on future prospects or models had been suggested by some panellists, he inquired whether this would be feasible. Furthermore, the Chairperson expressed his view that there was a need to learn more specifics about how to strengthen the resilience of fisheries. He then recalled that management strategy evaluations were presented as one of the tools to address climate change, and asked panellists to elaborate on the targets or objectives of such evaluations, specifically, whether it would be possible to include the maximum, rational or optimum utilization of resources as well as resilience to

or inhouse scientists was their ability to address questions in a timely manner, while bodies with volunteer government scientists often had slower processes. Mr. Mannini noted that there were major differences between RFMOs in terms of performance, and suggested that cooperation and coordination on science matters within regions and among the different players would be beneficial. Summarizing the discussion, the Chairperson noted that most responses were positive, but some challenges remained, for example with regard to the independence of national scientists, and the lack of quality control of scientific documents provided to management.

70. A delegation, noting that Ms. Garvilles had highlighted the ocean-temperature-related eastward migration of certain tuna stocks, inquired whether the understanding of WCPFC was also communicated to, and shared by, the Inter-SPHULFDQ x 7 URSISID OATTCQ D & In a similar vein, recalling that Mr. Campbell had referred to NEAFC cooperation with OSPAR and ICES, the delegation asked whether NEAFC was also communicating with the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization (NAFO). The delegation concluded its intervention by sharing its experience in relation to blue fin tuna, a transboundary species present both in the convention areas of WCPFC and IATTC. Before management decisions were taken in relation to these stocks, the relevant RFMOs would first conduct joint meetings. While this arrangement did not pertain to climate change, it could potentially constitute a useful example in the that context.

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73. A delegation raised a question pertaining to the quality of data and information received from States, for example, when it came to attributing a decrease in fish size to climate change as opposed to overfishing. Mr. Campbell responded that, based upon discussions with senior ICES advisors, it could be challenging to determine which factors were determinative and that climate change, plankton distribution and fishing pressures could play a role. Mr. Lordan noted that ICES had developed a quality assurance system for its data, explaining that it went through a rigorous screening process, checked by independent experts in ICES working groups. In this

levels. Addressing climate change impacts, Ms. Miller described robustness tests that examine potential outcomes, including distribution shifts. Implementing these strategies involves a continuous cycle of monitoring, assessment, comparing status to objectives, implementing management changes, and using feedback loops. She provided case studies of harvest strategies in global fisheries, supported by references, and concluded by outlining next steps as determining potential impacts of climate change, designing Management Strategy Evaluation (MSE) robustness tests, conducting climate vulnerability assessments, understanding productivity changes, and expanding dialogues among RFMOs on climate-ready initiatives.

78. Ms. Aissatou Fall Ndoye, Engineer in Fisheries Management and Head of the Environment and Climate Change Office in Senegal, presented on the opportunities and challenges for Senegal to strengthen sustainable fisheries management in response to climate change. She outlined challenges faced by Senegal with regard to fisheries and climate change, highlighting vulnerabilities to environmental hazards and pollution, and discussed a national adaptation plan for fishing and aquaculture, focusing on sustainable management and marine habitat restoration, with an action plan for the years 2023-2027 currently in progress. Ms. Ndoye emphasized policy initiatives and objectives for fisheries and aquaculture, noting gender issues such as the access and representation of women. Traditional activities for environmental protection and strategic programmes for sustainable fishing and the blue economy were also highlighted.

79. Mr. Camille Manel, Executive Secretary of the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT), discussed challenges and opportunities of ICCAT for strengthening sustainable fisheries management in the face of climate change. Mr. Manel began with an introduction of ICCAT, noting its legal and regulatory framework concerning climate change, including binding recommendations, harvest control rules, and resolutions for applying the precautionary and ecosystem approaches to fisheries management. Mr. Manel highlighted opportunities for assessing the impact of climate change through the subsidiary bodies of ICCAT, and discussed how MSE and harvest strategies are tested against scenarios with time-varying target biomass. He also mentioned opportunities for accounting for cumulative impacts, noting that while MSE scenarios simulate historical effects and generate credible hypotheses about changes in population dynamics, aspects pertaining to prey and predator species redistribution remain challenging. He noted that ICCAT's existing mandate was sufficient to address the challenges of climate change as outlined in resolutions adopted by ICCAT in 2022 and 2023.





the importance of gathering detailed and consistent data to support stakeholders on issues such as MSE, bycatch, and stock assessment. He noted that some data types are not consistently collected, leading to weaknesses in the models. Ms. Miller further noted that many RFMOs, including ICCAT, have committed to developing harvest strategies, emphasizing the importance of work plans, funding, and stakeholder engagement. Ms. Miller also emphasized that additional climate vulnerability assessments may be needed to understand species-specific impacts and incorporate them into MSEs, ensuring robustness against climate change.

85. Ms. Kristin Kleisner, Lead Senior Scientist for Ocean Science, Environmental Defense Fund (EDF), delivered a virtual intervention entitled “From exploring theory to providing operation help: Development of the Climate Resilient Fisheries Plan (FRP)” (11/20/2024) (107-10620)

87. Ms. Katie Longo, Principal Scientist, Marine Stewardship Council (MSC), provided an overview of the MSC incentive-based perspective on strengthening sustainable fisheries management in the face of climate change, specifically with reference to the MSC seafood ecolabelling programme. She described the need for multistakeholder efforts required to overcome challenges posed by climate change, and the contribution of the MSC third-party certification scheme thereto. She outlined the process, from standard development through third-party audits and assurance to certified seafood, which engages 19 percent of wild marine catch and 713 fisheries and is underpinned by the principles of sustainability of the stock, ecosystem impacts and effective management, based on the FAO Code of Conduct for Sustainable Fisheries, the precautionary

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emphasized that there may be reference points that are more practical in climate change scenarios than static MSY. The Chairperson further noted that the MSE concept is now advancing in response to uncertainty and climate change, but that this is an ongoing process with many challenges. He emphasized in this context that it is important to share information so that these issues can be discussed further domestically as well as at RFMOs and other institutions. Ms. Longo added, concerning management strategy evaluations and reference points, that another element to be aware of is uncertainties. The application of the precautionary approach goes beyond scientific evaluation and involves how science is translated into advice. She emphasized the importance of awareness that there are risks involved in relying on advice that is generated based on modelling, and that there may also be potential negative consequences in the use of, for example, adaptive reference points.

## V. Status of the Part VII Assistance Fund

91. With regard to the status of the Part VII Assistance Fund,

VI. Initial preparatory work for the resumption of the Review Conference on the Agreement

95. The Chairperson recalled that the resumed Review Conference was held at intervals of five years or more and that the next resumed Review Conference would not be held before 2028. Delegations were invited to advance proposals in order to make best use of the intervening years to prepare for the Review Conference and ensure a meaningful outcome.

100. In response to a question from a group of States on possible budget implications, the Director of the Division noted that delegations could plan an extrabudgetary event or request one through a General Assembly resolution, but doing so would add additional layers of complexity. He further noted that the United Nations Ocean Conference in 2025 would have a fisheries component and thus presented an opportunity to commemorate the thirtieth anniversary of the Agreement. One delegation highlighted the desirability of reaching a larger audience at the United Nations Ocean Conference in 2025 in order to showcase fisheries in the context of the ocean more generally and help change perceptions of fisheries as a damaging activity.

101. The Chairperson concluded that there was general support for a commemorative event, with some preference to convene the event as part of ICSP-18 in order to utilize existing resources, and with similar modalities to the commemoration of the twentieth anniversary. He

only. Delegations would then have an opportunity to review the document over a period of approximately two weeks before it was finalized. The Chairperson closed the meeting by expressing appreciation to delegations and panelists that had contributed to the meeting, as well as to conference services and the Secretariat for the assistance in the preparation and conduct of the meeting.

## Annex 1

Key points relating to sustainable fisheries management in the face of climate change raised during the seventeenth round of Informal Consultations, summarized by the Chair

On the basis of the presentations and discussions at the seventeenth round of Informal Consultations of States Parties to the Agreement, the Chairperson would like to draw attention to the following key points that, in his view, emerged from the Consultations. It is noted that since these key points were not discussed at the Consultations, they remain under the sole responsibility of the Chair.

- Climate change is already impacting marine ecosystems in a variety of ways which affect the health, resilience and sustainability of straddling fish stocks and highly migratory fish stocks, as well as their ranges and distribution. These impacts include changes to distribution, growth/maturity and productivity of stocks. Many stocks appear to be moving towards higher latitudes and into deeper waters as ocean warming occurs. The increase in extreme weather events would impact both fish and fishers.
- The actual and potential future impacts of climate change on specific fisheries are dependent on a number of factors, and different regions, fisheries or fish stocks may be impacted differently. These changes may also impact different stakeholders in a fishery differently, with some net winners and net losers. It is also important to distinguish between short-term and long-term impacts, particularly as the global effects of climate change are expected to become more acute over time.
- Fisheries in coastal States, and in particular small-scale and artisanal fisheries, will be particularly impacted because of the limited scope for adaptation, as well as limited capacity. It is necessary to take into account the socio-economic, gender-related and cultural impacts on fishers and coastal communities, as well as those on



- International fisheries instruments, in particular the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) and the 1995 United Nations Fish Stocks Agreement, contain various obligations relevant to sustainable fisheries management in the face of climate change. These include requirements in relation to ensuring the long-term sustainability of stocks, implementation of an ecosystem approach to fisheries management, the application of the precautionary approach, including through adaptive management frameworks, and duties to protect and preserve the marine environment and marine biodiversity.
- In this regard, it was noted that many modern fisheries management tools and approaches, if fully and effectively implement, may already provide a framework for fisheries management in the face of climate change. Such frameworks should include an adaptive management approach which incorporates the precautionary approach and ecosystem approaches to fisheries management. Management strategy evaluation tools were highlighted in this regard.
- Climate change may result in specific challenges to traditional fisheries management approaches, including with regard to stock assessments, allocations and compliance, which would need to be overcome. Assessing and addressing such challenges, including by mainstreaming climate change considerations into fisheries management decision-making, would be a difficult but critical step towards building climate-resilient fisheries.
- The need for additional scientific information on the impacts of climate change on specific stocks, species and ecosystems was also highlighted. In this regard, some practical and capacity challenges were highlighted, as the resources of RFMO/As to undertake new and complex tasks were limited, and the scientific knowledge required may go beyond the traditional analysis undertaken by RFMO/A scientific committees. A well-functioning science-policy interface was considered key to timely and well-informed decision-making.
- In their written statements and interventions, States and RFMO/As highlighted the steps they were already taking to mitigate the impacts of climate change on fisheries at the national and regional levels. While some initiatives are aimed at furthering

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importance of fisheries to food security, nutrition and sustainable development was underscored in this regard. It was noted however that the ongoing relevance of discussions on the effects of climate change in the context of UNFSA and by RFMO/As should be viewed as complementary and non-duplicative of discussions at the UNFCCC and on the Paris Agreement.



9. Consideration of the next round of Informal Consultations of the States Parties to the Agreement.

10. Other matters.