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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)

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".

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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 Informal Consultations of States Parties to the Agreement be dedicated, on an annual basis, to the consideration of specific issues arising from the implementation of the Agreement, with a view to improving understanding, sharing experiences and identifying best practices for the consideration of States Parties, as well as the General Assembly and the Review Conference (A/CONF.210/2016/5, annex, para. 15).

3. In paragraph 72 of resolution 78/68, the General Assembly requested that the Secretary-General convene the seventeenth round of informal consultations of States Parties to the Agreement for three days in 2024 to focus its discussions on the topic "Sustainable fisheries management in the face of climate change".

II. Organization of work

A. Opening of the seventeenth round of Informal Consultations

4. The Assistant Secretary-General for Legal Affairs, Mr. Stephen Mathias, opened the seventeenth round of Informal Consultations of States Parties to the Agreement (ICSP-17) on behalf of Mr. Miguel de Serpa Soares, Under-Secretary-General for Legal Affairs and United Nations Legal Counsel.

5. In his opening remarks, Mr. Mathias noted that participation in, as well as the full and effective implementation of, the Agreement was essential for the conservation and sustainable use of straddling fish stocks and highly migratory fish stocks. It was therefore important to continue to encourage broader participation in the Agreement, in line with the call of the General Assembly in its resolutions on sustainable fisheries. He was pleased to note, in this regard, that since the last meeting of ICSP in 2023, an additional State, Saudi Arabia, had acceded to the Agreement (on 9 June 2023), bringing the total number of Parties up to 93, including the European Union.

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 and resilience of ecosystems, including fisheries, as well as the impacts that climate change is having on the distribution and abundance of fish species. Mr. Mathias recalled that the current state of highly migratory fish stocks and straddling fish stocks remains a significant concern due to overfishing and a lack of information on the status of a significant number of stocks.

7. Mr. Mathias noted that the Agreement, as a basis for international cooperation, including through regional fisheries management organizations and arrangements (RFMO/As), can constitute an important tool for reducing the impacts of climate change on fisheries. He mentioned that the discussions during the Informal Consultations would provide an opportunity to learn more about the current impacts of climate change on fisheries from scientific experts and to exchange information on experiences and best practices for improving sustainable fisheries management at the global, regional, and national levels. Additionally, they would be crucial for informing discussions at the next resumption of the Review Conference, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, RFMO/As, and other institutions and fora.

B. Election of the Chairperson

8. The meeting elected Mr. Joji Morishita, Advisor to the Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries of Japan, as Chairperson.

C. Attendance

9. Representatives of the following Parties attended the seventeenth round of Informal Consultations: Bahamas, Bangladesh, Brazil, Cambodia, Canada, Chile, Ecuador, European Union, Greece, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Japan, Kenya. Maldives, Malta, Mauritius, Monaco, New Zealand, Norway, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, Spain, Thailand, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America and Viet Nam.

10. Observers from the following States, United Nations specialized agencies, programmes and bodies, as well as other intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental organizations attended the seventeenth round of Informal Consultations:

a. States non-Parties: Algeria, China, Colombia, Egypt, Holy See, Madagascar, Malawi, Marshall Islands, Mauritania, Nepal, Pakistan, Paraguay, Peru, Qatar, Singapore and United Republic of Tanzania;

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

11. In his opening statement, the Chairperson recalled that the informal nature of the Informal Consultations had fostered an environment where States Parties and States non-Parties alike could exchange information and views and engage in an open and constructive dialogue on issues of mutual concern.

12. The Chairperson recalled that the Review Conference in 2016 had decided that ICSP would normally be dedicated, on an annual basis, to the consideration of specific issues arising from the implementation of the Agreement. In this regard, he recalled the relevance of the topic chosen for ICSP-17 given that the ocean was facing a triple plenary crisis of pollution, biodiversity loss and climate change, each of which had the potential for substantial and devastating impacts on fisheries. In view of its scale and speed, climate change could have extensive effects on fisheries around the world. In this regard, he noted that the impacts and effects of climate change had no boundaries and that conservation and management measures and available tools could be compatible both inside and outside the exclusive economic zone. Furthermore, he recalled that healthy and sustainable fisheries would be more resilient to the impacts of climate change, but recalled that the Review Conference in 2023 had observed that the state of highly migratory and straddling fish stocks had not generally improved, with many stocks being overfished and depleted.

13. The Chairperson pointed out that although measures to address the challenges effected by climate change could be different for each region or country, depending upon the scale of fishing activity and impacts, much common information, knowledge and views could be shared during the course of the meeting. In this regard, he noted that the written contributions received

from States and organizations[1] touched upon important issues of data collection and science 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 the Sea (ICP) would focus on the ocean as a source of sustainable food . It was underscored that the cumulative effects of climate change, must be considered and that not only the environmental but also the socio-economic and cultural factors needed to be taken into account . In this regard, concern was expressed as to whether new climate conditions might entice some fishers towards illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing (IUU fishing).

18. Some delegations appreciated the opportunity to collectively discuss this topic and exchange best practices, and eagerness was expressed for learning more about and exchanging

[1] https://www.un.org/depts/los/convention_agreements/ICSP17Contributions.htm.

knowledge on supporting scientific action . It was also noted that discussions would be beneficial for regional fisheries management organizations and arrangements (RFMO/As), which are already working on climate-resilient fisheries management. It was highlighted that the effects of climate change were unequal across regions. A view was expressed that the role of climate change in the decline of fish resources should not be overemphasised.

19. Delegations highlighted measures taken domestically to improve fisheries management practices in the face of climate change, including through the incorporation of climate considerations, and the establishment of marine protected areas. A delegation noted the strengthening of scientific research including its link with traditional knowledge. Delegations underscored legislative reforms reinforcing the ecosystem approach, ensuring science-based decision-making incorporating a holistic and adaptive approach and promoting the precautionary approach. Delegations also called for increased stakeholder participation. The promotion of eco-friendly fishing vessels, alternative propulsion systems, and lower carbon fuels was also highlighted.

20. Several delegations underscored observed changes in ecosystems, stocks sizes, catch rates, stock distribution, migration patterns of species, growth rate and the timing of spawning. The impacts of climate change have been noticed not only in capture fisheries but also in the aquaculture sector. It was pointed out that such changes were also giving rise to challenges with respect to the implementation of existing international agreements prompting a need to re-negotiate some sharing agreements. Internal conflicts, including with respect to traditional fishers and small-scale fishing communities, were also noted. It was pointed out that smaller scale fisheries were disproportionately affected by these changes, as large-scale fisheries could be more flexible, and that coastal States were more greatly affected than distant water fleets. It was noted, however, that not all changes in fish stocks as a result of climate change would necessarily be negative for all stakeholders.

21. Delegations also noted that the effects of a changing climate were being felt in their regions through water column stratification, marine heat waves, storm surge, more extreme weather events affecting fisherfolk and intensification of El Niño.

22. The view was expressed that the tools to address the effects of climate change on fisheries were the same as those with respect to the sound management of fisheries and that scientific research was key and needed be incorporated into existing fisheries management.

23. International cooperation was deemed crucial, including on technical aspects, to address the impacts of climate change on fisheries. It was acknowledged in this regard that work remains to be done by States, including through RFMO/As, which are important fora of discussion and some delegations noted their recent actions in this regard. Some delegations called for wider participation in RFMOs/As. At the global level, the critical role of the United Nations and of the FAO was stressed, including as facilitating the work conducted by RFMO/As.

24. Several delegations stressed the need for inclusive cooperation, involving developing States, and emphasized the importance of capacity-building and improved coordination at all levels, including with local communities. Concern was expressed that the status of the 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. Discussion panel on "Sustainable fisheries management in the face of climate change"[2]

A. Segment 1: Understanding the impacts of climate change on fisheries

25. Mr. Enrique N. Curchitser, Chair of the North Pacific Marine Science Organization (PICES) opened the discussion panel with a presentation on the science to support sustainable North Pacific fisheries management in the face of climate change. He highlighted the role of PICES, as an intergovernmental science organization to promote and coordinate marine scientific research in the North Pacific Ocean and its adjacent seas and provided examples of recent expert working groups relevant to climate change. He identified some lessons learned, noting the need to shift focus to physiological mechanisms rather than correlative relationships; to resolve outstanding questions on spatial structure of stocks; to improve communication between the science and management communities; to assess multiple and cumulative stressors; and to promote a trans-disciplinary approach to understand the impact on coastal communities. He emphasized that the climate system can no longer be considered static and, as a result, historical management approaches may not be appropriate to the rapidly changing environment. Finally, Mr. Curchitser shared some recommendations, highlighting the need to combine international fishery-dependent and independent data; develop modelling infrastructure that includes management strategy evaluations and develop global networks to facilitate knowledge exchange and capacity building.

26. Ms. Beatriz Guijarro, Científica Titular, Spanish National Institute for Oceanography, reported on the results of studies analyzing how climate change might affect the populations of European hake in the Atlantic and Mediterranean and deep water rose shrimp in the Mediterranean. She highlighted that understanding the synergistic effects of climate change and fishing on marine living resources was critical to ensuring the implementation of adaptive fishing management. Two different approaches had been considered to understand how climate change might affect the populations of hake. In Atlantic waters, the analysis of maturity records from 69 studies over 96 years demonstrated that the size at maturity decreased with increasing temperature. For the Mediterranean, studies in the Balearic Islands and Northern Spain identified a decreasing number of recruits (the number of fish surviving development phases to enter a fishery) with an increase in temperature. In the case of deep water rose shrimp, the analysis of data from bottom trawl surveys, carried out between 2001-2020 in the Spanish mainland and the Balearic Islands, revealed that abundance had increased and there had been an expansion of the species to the north. Ms. Guijarro noted that these

[2] Presentations and abstracts from the discussion panel are available at: https://www.un.org/depts/los/convention_agreements/ICSP17/ICSP17PanelistsWeb.pdf.

results showed the importance of adapting not only the fishing management, but also the assessment of the stocks.

27. In a pre-recorded presentation, Mr. Zhang Fan, Professor, College of Marine Living Resources Sciences and Management at Shanghai Ocean University, explained the diverse impacts of climate change on marine fisheries. He noted that climate change affected global fisheries through a cascade of intermediate processes, from climate shifts, changing oceanographic conditions, variations of species abundance and distribution, to alternations of the economic and social dynamics of fisheries. Mr. Fan pointed out that the effects at each intermediate level were multifaceted and dependent on the ecological, economic, and social background of each specific fishery. He emphasized the importance of conducting thorough scientific surveys and research at the regional and local levels. He further highlighted the substantial financial resources that such surveys necessitated, noting that capacity building was required globally, especially for developing countries. In this regard, Mr. Fan noted that over recent decades, China had actively engaged in comprehensive research on the impacts of climate change on fisheries and collaborated with developing states to enhance their capacity to tackle climate change. He noted that the multifaceted nature of climate change required a correspondingly diverse array of solutions when addressing its impact on fisheries. Mr. Fan also noted that adaptive management strategies, including the modification of fishing practices, the implementation of marine protected areas and the enhancement of fish stocks through aquaculture should be tailored to specific local conditions. More generally, he advocated for a holistic approach that embraced a variety of adaptive and mitigating strategies.

28. In the following presentation, Ms. Sarah Glaser, Senior Director, Ocean Futures Program, World Wildlife Fund (WWF), highlighted how predictive modelling could be used to identify fisheries expected to be particularly impacted by climate change. In this regard, she drew attention to the Ocean Futures platform, an early warning tool that integrated existing global climate and fisheries models to identify twenty regions of the world where the risk of conflict over fisheries, as driven by climate change, would be highest by 2030. These hotspots were identified by combining data projecting change in fish biomass by 2030 with socio-economic and security variables including the presence of foreign vessels, nutrition profiles, economic levels and overlapping maritime claims. The goal of the platform was to raise understanding about the causes of illegal fishing and conflict as a means of increasing the resources allocated to sustainable fisheries management. She indicated that over the next two years, WWF planned to continue to update the platform with new data, methods, and greater functionality. Ms. Glaser stressed that 23% of all fish stocks would move in the next eight years, resulting in new fish-rich and fish-poor areas. She also highlighted that over the past four decades, international fisheries conflict had increased twenty-fold. Ms. Glaser stressed the need for protecting and preserving biodiversity, supporting healthy families, de-escalating conflicts and preserving life and human rights at sea. She emphasized the important of ratification and implementation of global ocean agreements. More generally, she advocated for greater locally-led management, recognizing the importance of fisheries to food security and ensuring legal fishing rights and meaningful participation of small-scale fishers in decision-making processes.

29. Ms. Kathy Mills, Senior Scientist, Gulf of Maine Research Institute, delivered a presentation on climate change impacts on fisheries. She opened her presentation by describing the ways climate change was affecting the physical conditions of the oceans, including through increasing ocean temperatures, acidification, rising sea-levels and changes

in ocean circulation. She noted that, besides ecological impacts, this affected socio-economic conditions, as well as governance and management systems. Marine organisms were negatively affected due to habitat change or loss and effects on their distribution, growth and 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 subsequential loss of productivity and yield. She cited the 2014-2016 Northeast Pacific Marine Heatwave as an example of how climate change effects could result in losses in harvest opportunities, food security and food sovereignty, employment, economic benefits, cultural traditions, and social connections. Ms. Mills indicated that fisheries were adapting to climate change risks in various ways, with certain vessels traveling further to fish targeted species, and others looking at the possibility of diversifying their livelihoods. In terms of fisheries management, she noted that most of the models and mechanisms commonly used were often no longer valid given the changing conditions owed to climate change. She provided examples of management challenges regarding transboundary species. Ms. Mills noted that continued warming was expected to affect species distribution around the globe due to declines in suitable thermal habitats for many species. Ms. Mills concluded her presentation by noting that climate change was impacting ocean conditions, marine species, and fisheries in numerous ways, while also explaining that impacts varied across regions and were not always negative. She noted that climate change was making fisheries management harder, and that fisheries were adapting but were not always able to keep up with the pace of change caused by climate change.

30. Ms. Ratana Chuenpagdee Professor, Memorial University of Newfoundland, delivered a presentation on the impact of climate change on small-scale fisheries and coastal communities. She noted that small-scale fisheries accounted for about 40 per cent of world total catch, with this sector supporting livelihoods of close to 500 million people around the world, employing 90 percent of the people involved in capture fisheries and contributing about USD 77 billion in total revenue from first sale. She noted that, considering the high proportion of women employed in the value chain, the overall contribution of small-scale fisheries to many of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), could not be ignored. Yet, small-scale fisheries had largely been overlooked and underrepresented in climate change discussions. Ms. Chuenpagdee suggested that this was owed partly to the lack of understanding about the diverse, complex and dynamic nature and characteristics of the sector, and also to the fact that many small-scale fisheries were economically and politically marginalized. She also noted that small-scale fisheries, especially those in low-lying areas and in Small Island Developing States, were highly vulnerable to climate change, and faced high risk, with their limited access to fisheries and financial resources, and often with low mobility. Ms. Chuenpagdee clarified that this was also the case with small-scale fisheries in coastal States and archipelagos, including indigenous fishers, targeting highly migratory and straddling fish stocks. She noted that impacts of climate change on this sector and their communities included, inter alia, increasing risk to fishing livelihoods due to shifting weather patterns and intensity of storm, as well as threats to food security and reduction in income, due to diminishing access and availability of fish resources. Finally, Ms. Chuenpagdee noted that the impact of climate change on industrial fisheries could also have direct and indirect consequences on small-scale fisheries. She noted that measures to address and mitigate the impact of climate change on fisheries, and sustainable fisheries management in the face of climate change should take into consideration the vulnerability and marginalization of small-scale fisheries, as well as their current and potential contribution to SDGs.

31. Mr. Colm Lordan, Advisory Committee Chair, International Council for the Exploration of the Seas (ICES) delivered a presentation addressing the challenges of scientific advice in an era of climate change. He highlighted that past performance was not 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, including legislative instruments. Mr. Curchister noted that traditional statistical models for fisheries management, based on correlation in a stationary state, could likely not effectively account for the new conditions created by climate change, as they were outside of human experience and interacted in non-linear ways that made them hard to predict. He added that,

since past experience could no longer be relied upon, it was crucial to gain a better systemic understanding, including on the role of environmental factors. As an additional approach, Ms. Glaser suggested to view fisheries as part of the global food system and highlighted the 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 Collective Progress Division of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

(UNFCCC), opened the discussion panel segment with an overview of the legal framework for sustainable fisheries management in the face of climate change under the UNFCCC frameworks. Ms. Randhawa noted the relevance of the UNFCCC and the Paris Agreement for 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 Agreement had emphasized the need to incorporate climate change impacts into fisheries management and study and address the adverse impacts of climate change and ocean acidification on fisheries, incorporating these impacts in adopting conservation and management measures, in line with the precautionary approach. The importance of cooperation with the UNFCCC had also been underlined during the Review Conference. Ms. Germani further noted the ongoing efforts by States to tackle these challenges by introducing national policies and laws to promote research and assessments and by FAO and RFMO/As through the organization of workshops and expert meetings. She concluded that the effective implementation of these international legal frameworks was crucial to mitigate the impacts of fishing on marine ecosystems and to support ecosystem resilience to climate change and ocean acidification.

43. Speaking on the role of the FAO in supporting sustainable fisheries management in the face of climate change, Ms. Tarub Bahri, Fisheries Officer at FAO, highlighted the alarming rise in global hunger due to climate change, which was exacerbated by the COVID-19 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. She detailed ongoing projects that focused on climate-resilient fisheries and aquaculture, enhancing local capacities, and promoting nature-based solutions. She stressed the importance of aligning narratives across different fora to achieve synergies in addressing food security and climate change and highlighted, in this regard, several upcoming events, such as the UNFCCC briefing for climate negotiators and the 36th Session of COFI, which presented opportunities to further integrate aquatic foods into climate action plans.

44. Mr. David Vivas Eugui, Chief of Section, a.i. at the Trade, Environment, Climate Change and Sustainable Development Branch of UNCTAD, in his presentation on climate change and the fishing industry, highlighted the importance of the fishing sector for coastal communities and island communities in providing jobs for over 14 million fishers globally while contributing significantly to food security and livelihoods. He noted that despite its relatively low carbon footprint, fisheries remained highly vulnerable to climate change. Mr. Vivas Eugui stressed the urgency of transitioning to sustainable energy, emphasizing that all sectors, including fisheries, must contribute to the goals in the Paris Agreement of limiting global temperature rise. He pointed out that emissions from fishing vessels were primarily due to the extensive use of marine diesel, particularly among motorized fleets in Asia and other regions and that subsidies for fossil fuels in the fishing sector, amounting to USD 2.1 billion between 2018 and 2020, contributed to overfishing and overcapacity. In addressing these challenges, Mr. Vivas Eugui emphasized the potential role of green biofuels and energy efficiency measures as key alternatives for transitioning fuel sources in the fishing industry, while noting current issues with these alternatives, including supply-side capacity and infrastructure to support widespread use, as well as storage and safety. He stressed the need for investment in research and development to realize the full potential of the energy transition and emission reduction in the fishing industry and highlighted the importance of harmonized data collection on fisheries emissions and phasing out fossil fuel subsidies. Mr. Vivas Eugui proposed several policy measures to address these issues, including establishing global emissions reduction targets for fishing and providing incentives to support non-motorized and low-emission fishing methods. He underscored the need to balance decarbonization with effective stock management to ensure the sector's long-term sustainability.

45. Ms. Anastasia Telesetsky from California State Polytechnic University San Luis Obispo, while discussing ways to create new synergies between the law of the sea and the

UNFCCC, emphasized that effective fisheries management involved fish conservation, but also safeguarding human livelihoods and preserving cultures reliant on fish protein, which sustained over 3.1 billion people worldwide. She underscored the challenges posed by the migration of 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 highlighted the important role of UN-Oceans as a coordinating mechanism to improve synergies among global frameworks with mandates on oceans and seas and avoid duplication, including in the context of climate change and the UNFCCC. She also noted a number of capacity-building projects in the Division that had the objective of supporting a multi-sectoral and integrated approach to ocean governance, while highlighting in particular, programs developed in cooperation with the Nippon Foundation.

48. One delegation highlighted challenges in this context due to the impacts of climate change and changes in migratory patterns on small-scale fisheries in coastal areas and noted the important role of conservation and management measures in RFMO/As in this regard. This delegation also noted capacity challenges on coastal States arising from participating in the large number of frameworks and bodies relating to the conservation and management of fisheries. While noting progress in creating synergies between regional bodies and global frameworks, Ms. Bahri emphasized that not all countries were equal in their capacity for fisheries governance and stressed the need for greater investment and improvement in cross-

sectoral coordination, in particular at local and national levels, including in some developed countries. The Chairperson emphasized in this context that basic fisheries governance, including conservation and management measures, was a prerequisite for countries to take 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 underrepresentation of fisheries in climate financing projects due to high uncertainty and lack of data on the impacts of climate change on fisheries in developing countries and the absence of management plans and practices for fisheries in some developing countries, including with respect to monitoring and licensing. Ms. Bahri highlighted efforts by FAO to commission studies and improve modeling at the national level in order to quantify climate change impacts on fisheries so as to provide a climate rationale for fisheries projects and improve information on the relevance of fisheries management to address the impacts of climate change. In reply to a comment on the importance of supporting aquaculture and fisheries industries in the face of climate change disasters, Ms. Bahri noted efforts by FAO to integrate the aquatic food sectors in climate change disaster response plans.

52. One delegation emphasized the importance of considering both economic and non-economic factors in addressing loss and damage to developing countries due to the impacts of climate change on fisheries, including the loss of traditional knowledge and cultural values. Ms. Telesetsky noted the difficulties of assessing loss and damage for non-economic factors, such as traditional ecological knowledge. She referenced, for example, the importance of salmon in some tribal cultures that were facing the need to redefine their cultural identity due to the loss of this species.

53. Another delegation noted the need to improve cooperation between existing RFMO/As through new or existing mechanisms and instruments in order to address the migration of fish stocks due to climate change. Ms. Telesetsky noted that the Warsaw Implementation Mechanism could be one of the tools to support coordination among fisheries bodies but also 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 exiting 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 use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction (BBNJ Agreement) in increasing cooperation in oceans and fisheries governance, including regarding cross-sectoral and cumulative impacts, was also noted. In assessing the need for new instruments and frameworks, the Chairperson stressed the need for implementation of existing instruments and frameworks on fisheries and climate change, including capacity-building and financing for developing countries, in particular small-scale fisheries.

56. One delegation noted the impacts of climate change on marine ecosystems and raised questions on how models for fisheries projections have changed to take into account such impacts as well as possible obstacles in terms of lack of data, format and other aspects, including timelines to address such challenges. In response, another delegation noted the need for better data to improve modeling projections as well as plausible harvest control rules and reference points. This delegation highlighted the existence of fisheries models that already integrated climate change and other drivers into stock assessments but noted the challenge of factoring in the precautionary approach in the integration of such drivers into the modelling.

57. Ms. Bahri and the Chairperson stressed the need for further efforts to improve the accuracy of models with multiple drivers, in particular, increased data to help validate predictions. The EAF-Nansen Programme was mentioned in this context as a model for data collection that also includes climate change considerations in order to support climate analysis in developing countries. Ms. Germani also recalled in this context the capacity-building and capacity-development activities of DOALOS to promote participation and implementation of UNCLOS and UNFSA in developing countries.

58. Another delegation noted the upcoming twenty-fourth meeting of the United Nations Open-ended Informal Consultative Process on Oceans and the Law of the Sea (18 to 21 June 2024) and discussions on the topic of "The ocean as a source of sustainable food". The delegation emphasized in this context the importance of "blue food" and in particular the need for financing in order to develop fisheries governance and management systems. She noted that Sustainable Development Goal 14 on oceans was the most underfunded goal in the 2030 Agenda and stressed the need to integrate financing into efforts to address the impacts of climate change on fisheries.

59. One delegation raised a number of wide-ranging questions, including whether model laws existed on addressing climate change issues in the context of fisheries management and how small-scale fisheries could be incorporated in legal and economic considerations of fisheries conservation and management in the face of climate change. She also questioned whether commercial and insurance considerations, such as anti-trust laws and indemnities, were relevant in measures taken to address the impacts of climate change in fisheries. She stressed in this context the importance of balancing economic and environmental factors in providing legal and policy guidance on fisheries management.

60. In response to a comment on the need for proactive measures for adaptation and to address loss and damage in the context of climate change, Ms. Telesetsky agreed that loss and damage due to climate change was already expected and consideration needed to be given to mechanisms for compensation. While insurance or other commercial products could provide a short-term solution to help communities transition following the loss of fish stocks, she stressed that the challenge was coming up with long-term solutions.

C. Segment 3: Sustainable fisheries management in the face of climate change: case studies, best practices and challenges at the regional and national levels

Ms. Kirstin Holsman, Research Fishery Biologist at the Alaska Fisheries Science Center of National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), United States of America, opened the panel with a presentation on recent advancements, case studies and future directions towards supporting sustainable fisheries in the face of climate change. Ms. Holsman identified three "take-home messages" and, under the overarching theme of those messages, presented case studies illustrating NOAA's work in developing tools to help fisheries adapt to climate change. First, she highlighted that carbon mitigation was critical for productive fisheries and effective adaptation. With increasing warming trends, the risks for fisheries increased and the

effectiveness of adaptation measures declined. Ms. Holsman underscored this finding with an example from the Eastern Bering Sea, where projected declines in pollock populations correlated linearly with the degree of warming. Second, she stressed that adaptation planning was needed to support equitable climate responses and resilience, and discussed management challenges and potential solutions. In this context, she explained how management strategy evaluations were being used to understand how climate-informed reference points might perform under future scenarios of climate change. Integrated modelling projects, for example, projected climate impacts on growth, abundance, condition and distribution of species, which formed the basis for advice on changes in total allowable catch, allocation, value, as well as on implications for ecosystems and human well-being. As a third take-home message, Ms. Holsman noted that ecosystem-based management supported the inclusive, dynamic and equitable climate planning that needed to take place. She closed her presentation by emphasizing the need for sustained support for coordinated climate change adaption planning, climate-integrated tools and advice for fisheries management.

61. Responding to a question by the Chairperson on how information was shared with stakeholders, Ms. Holsman explained that it was important to collaborate with stakeholders throughout the process to ensure that the output could be considered in existing management processes.

62. Mr. Darius Campbell, Secretary of the North-East Atlantic Fisheries Commission (NEAFC), discussed sustainable fisheries management in the face of climate change from the perspective of the North-East Atlantic. He noted that there was a mix of pelagic and deep-sea fish stocks in the NEAFC Convention area, and that some potential future climate-related effects had been documented, such as stocks heading north and possibly declining in biomass, while also noting that it was difficult to disentangle climate change-related effects from other pressures. Mr. Campbell explained that the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES) provided scientific advice to NEAFC, including fisheries and ecosystem overviews and stock-by-stock advice, as well as advice on total allowable catch and long-term management plans, and pointed out that all advice received from ICES was climate change-informed. Furthermore, Mr. Campbell underscored how already difficult discussions on allocations may be impacted by climate change impacts, including stock shifts. Turning to opportunities, Mr. Campbell highlighted that NEAFC, with ICES' support, was developing operational and measurable ecosystem-based objectives, which it hoped to apply in decision-making. Moreover, he described how area-based management tools (ABMTs) in the NEAFC Convention area enabled NEAFC to react to climate effects on vulnerable marine ecosystems, and underscored the benefits of cooperation between NEAFC and the OSPAR Commission on ABMTs to achieve conservation goals. In his view, the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework and the BBNJ Agreement provided further opportunities for interaction between the competent sectoral organizations at the regional and global levels, which was needed to increase resilience in the face of climate change. Before closing, Mr. Campbell summarized the key points of a resolution on climate change that NEAFC Parties had adopted in 2023.

63. Ms. Elaine G. Garvilles, Assistant Science Manager at the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC), delivered a presentation on the experience and perspective of WCPFC, sharing case studies, best practices and challenges at the national and regional

levels. She noted that the tuna catch in the western and central Pacific Ocean was substantial, accounting for the majority of the global tuna catch. In an IPCC scenario where GHG emissions doubled by 2050, impacts on the tropical tuna stocks of skipjack, yellowfin and bigeye could be expected to result in an average annual loss of $90 million and a 20 percent loss of biomass 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.

64. 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 measures, fisheries management advice and institutional or organizational steps, with the most frequent action being the holding or co-sponsoring of events or workshops. Mr. Mannini observed that a substantial increase in actions had occurred since 2022, and new actions had emerged, including pertinent standing agenda items, resolutions, conservation and management measures, and integration in scientific programmes. He expressed the view that, at this early stage, collaboration between RFBs, including on experiences and best practices, could be especially valuable. Similarly, allocation of sufficient resources and assessment of existing measures and procedures were needed to make further progress.

65. The fifth and final speaker on the panel, Mr. Grantly Galland, Project Director of International Fisheries at the Pew Charitable Trusts, discussed opportunities and needs as RFMOs responded to climate change, based on this organization's experience working with nine RFMOs. Recalling climate impacts on the ocean, such as ocean warming, sudden ocean heat waves, deoxygenation, and acidification, he described how these affected marine wildlife and led to changes in number, location, size, reproductive success, and behaviour of fish, among others. He highlighted that climate change had been gaining momentum in RFMOs in the past 24 months, with most of them taking measures related to climate change, even though this was beyond their primary mandate. To ensure climate change being on the RFMO agenda, Mr. Galland recommended working with leaders in these organizations and influential participating members thereof, as well as ensuring that climate change-related action was

included in RFMO budgets. He identified five measures to help RFMOs fulfil their climate-related commitments. First, mainstreaming ecosystem-based fisheries management, for example by implementing dynamic fisheries closures or temperature-based management measures. Second, adopting climate-adaptive harvest strategies, using management strategy 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.

66. 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 climate change, as dual targets in a management strategy evaluation exercise.

67. One delegation inquired if, and, if so, how, NEAFC had considered marginal ice zones, which were ecologically vulnerable transitional zones between open and ice-covered seas, in the context of protecting vulnerable marine ecosystems. Mr. Campbell responded that NEAFC had not discussed this issue yet, but that it did not have any fisheries closures related to vulnerable marine ecosystems that far north. He also pointed out that the Central Arctic Ocean Fisheries Agreement (CAOFA), which overlapped with the NEAFC Convention area, might be relevant in this regard.

68. The same delegation posed a second question focused on the different organizational structures of RFMO/As with respect to scientific advice, asking the pros and cons of the different structures. The delegation was also interested in how these different structures affected the way climate change-related information entered into management. Mr. Campbell emphasized that NEAFC's experience working with ICES as its independent scientific advisor was very positive, although requiring payment for their services. He underscored that ICES had processes in place to ensure that their work was sufficiently independent, which also meant that NEAFC was not able to influence ICES' advice. Ms. Garvilles responded that WCPFC received scientific services from the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC) and was

satisfied with their advice. However, she noted that the Commission had many demands, but due to resource constraints, there were limits in what SPC could provide. Mr. Galland commented that the variety of systems generally seemed to work, and that he had no concern about climate change-related information being considered, regardless of the system. He also pointed out that an advantage of science providers 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.

69. 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-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC). 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.

70. In response to these questions, Ms. Garvilles noted that WCPFC had adopted a formal memorandum of understanding with IATTC, envisaging, among other things, mutual boarding of vessels by observers and exchange of data and information. Recent engagement initiatives between the two RFMOs had concerned harvest strategies in light of shifting stocks, including in the context of a climate change workshop. Mr. Campbell emphasized that NEAFC maintained close relations with NAFO, via a joint technical committee on data management, and co-managed certain fish stocks.

71. In this context, a question was raised as to which extent lessons learned by, and best practices of, one RFMO were transferable to another, in light of the specificities of various bodies, and with respect to the features of the relevant stocks, their environment and pertinent management structures. Mr. Mannini responded by highlighting that this was a key consideration, with some aspects maintaining global validity and others being of a more regional character. There were instruments available to explore such possibilities. Often, RFBs would coordinate where one saw a benefit in replicating what others were doing. Exchanges were facilitated by RSN and other frameworks, including the Sustainable Ocean Initiative Global Dialogue with Regional Seas Organizations (RSOs) and RFBs, in cooperation with the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). In the context of climate change, the Regional Seas Programme could play a role in supporting RFBs in certain regions.

Similarly, the RSN Magazine, composed of contributions from RFBs, could fulfill a similar function — the latest issue had been devoted to the subject of climate change. Mr. Campbell noted that RFB Secretariats could add value to exchanges of this kind, for example, by reporting back after attending meetings such as those of ICSP or the Bay of Bengal Programme.

72. 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 respect, the Chairperson noted that scientists had developed methods to verify data, for example, by comparing data sets obtained from different sources, or correcting biases, for example, by accounting for closures in certain areas. It was challenging to obtain high-quality fishery data in relation to climate change, but scientists were dedicated to improving standardization and accuracy.

73. Noting that further efforts were needed in relation to climate change data, a delegation inquired whether OSPAR and NEAFC, given their overlapping convention areas, used the same data or type of data. Observing that climate change was modifying fish stocks, another delegation inquired about RFMO coverage gaps and the challenges and opportunities for high seas fisheries management through the Agreement, the BBNJ Agreement, or other means.

74. In response, Mr. Campbell highlighted that NEAFC only accepted advice from ICES in relation to fisheries management activities. While OSPAR equally obtained advice from ICES, it also maintained its own scientific committees and a pool of scientists. Though the mandate of NEAFC was narrower than that of OSPAR, there were opportunities to cooperate on common issues. Mr. Lordan emphasized that the ICES data center worked closely with OSPAR, and that cooperation extended into scientific and advisory aspects. ICES held bilateral meetings with both NEAFAC and OSPAR, which could contribute to harmonization.

75. Mr. Mannini observed that while this was less of an issue for tuna, other stocks lacked RFMO coverage in certain areas, which was inconsistent with the Convention and the Agreement, and emphasized flag State responsibility. He noted that upon entry into force, the World Trade Organization (WTO) Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies could apply to fishing vessels operating on the high seas beyond the scope of any RFMO. It was therefore an opportune moment to consider establishing RFMOs for areas that currently lacked coverage.

D. Segment 4: Challenges and opportunities for strengthening sustainable fisheries management in the face of climate change

76. In the first presentation of this segment, Ms. Shana Miller, Director of the International Fisheries Project, The Ocean Foundation, highlighted the use of harvest strategies as a tool for

climate-ready fisheries management. She began by defining harvest strategies, explaining their management objectives, and outlining the framework for making management decisions. Ms. Miller elaborated on harvest control rules, which RFMOs use globally, emphasizing the importance of monitoring population size and fish mortalities to maintain sustainable fishing 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.

77. 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.

78. 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. Further, Mr. Manel addressed opportunities for understanding the impact of climate change on fisheries by incorporation of economic, social, and cultural aspects into sustainable fisheries management. He also outlined general challenges such as capacity and time constraints, scientific linkages, and the uncertainty of future predictions, including potential changes in species distribution.

79. The fourth panelist, Ms. Munshida Ibrahim, Director of the Fisheries Management Section of the Ministry of Fisheries and Ocean Resources, Maldives, discussed the challenges and opportunities faced by Maldives. Ms. Ibrahim highlighted that fisheries contribute significantly to the annual GDP of Maldives, with high consumption of fish products and substantial portions of fisheries in total imports and exports. She highlighted three major impacts, namely the stress on coral reefs leading to habitat loss and affecting ocean health, the use of pole-and-line gear for tuna fishing compared to longline fishing at greater depths, and the warming oceans causing tuna species to migrate north beyond the EEZ of Maldives, noting that at present Maldives does not engage in high sea fishing. Ms. Ibrahim emphasized the need for informed decision-making and further research on anticipating tuna migration, management practices, and plans. Ms. Ibrahim highlighted that best practices must evolve to ensure sustainability and effectiveness in changing environmental conditions, making fishing vessel operations more efficient, innovative, and data driven. She also stressed the importance of transforming the industry towards carbon neutrality and green fisheries through collaborative partnership, which is crucial for ocean health resilience.

80. A question was raised by one delegation concerning how quotas are allocated at ICCAT for each country, whether they are based on historical landings, and whether challenges related to quota allocation and climate justice are anticipated. Mr. Manel responded that quotas are allocated on the basis of discussions, and that since 2015 criteria have been developed, of which historical catch is one, to guide the discussions.

81. The Chairperson elaborated on the challenges and opportunities related to quota allocation and climate change and noted that fisheries management has traditionally relied on historical fishing records to decide quotas, but the reality is shifting quickly due to the impact of climate change. He also added that allocation was affected by newcomers seeking fishing opportunities in the past, but now there is a need to reflect shifts in resource distribution and biomass size resulting from climate change. He shared an example of the North Atlantic Fisheries Organization, which has a mechanism for reallocating or exchanging quotas between countries by agreement, although driven by economic factors rather than climate adaptation, and noted that addressing these changes is a pressing issue for many countries.

82. One delegation, noting the role of harvest control rules and MSE as powerful tools for addressing challenges posed by climate change, queried about the key practical steps that can be taken to enable wider application and adoption of these approaches and how to further improve their robustness, especially in the face of more severe or unpredictable effects of climate change. Ms. Miller noted that many RFMOs, including ICCAT, have committed to developing harvest strategies and emphasized the importance of developing work plans, allocating funding, and engaging stakeholders. She stressed the need for climate vulnerability assessments to understand species-specific impacts and incorporate them into MSEs. Ensuring these strategies are robust to climate change challenges and having a framework for extreme scenarios is crucial. Continuing to work through existing commitments and initiating processes in new regions is essential.

83. Noting the challenges with introducing climate-resilient factors into the MSE process raised in Mr. Manel's presentation, one delegation queried the specific challenges faced and sought advice on potential solutions. Mr. Manel highlighted how global engagement is being facilitated to address common challenges. Regarding data collection, Mr. Manel acknowledged 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.

84. 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 Planning Tool", presenting the framework and toolkit to support integrated assessments and planning for climate resilience in marine fisheries developed by the Science for Nature and People Partnership (SNAPP) working group on Climate Resilient Fisheries. She presented how the tool was developed, starting from the theory of resilience, using 18 case studies, and further refined to create a framework that can help identify climate risks, evaluate various attributes that influence resilience, including ecological, socioeconomic and governance attributes, and prioritize actions that will enhance climate resilience in a fishery. She noted that their evaluation found evidence of two pathways to resilience: resilience through economic assets and effective governance, and resilience through ecological assets and strong communities. The planning tool, using a six-step process derived from the evaluation, was launched in 2023 and aims to provide an easy process for fisheries managers to follow, including defining the system, assessing the system and planning climate-resilient actions.

85. Ms. Neetu Prasad, Joint Secretary (Marine Fisheries) Department of Fisheries, Government of India, presented an overview of the Indian fisheries sector, challenges to the fisheries sector globally presented by climate change, global and national initiatives concerning sustainable fisheries management in this context and possible ways forward. She highlighted the growth of the fisheries and aquaculture sectors in India in the previous decade and the threats posed by the socio-economic impacts of climate change on coastal regions, noting at the same time that there may be positive impacts in certain circumstances. Ms. Prasad noted that risk mitigation initiatives adopted include adaptation and mitigation management strategies, the promotion of sustainable fisheries practices through various means, support to the fisheries sector, support for artificial reef and ranching activities, development of a satellite-based vessel communication and support system for monitoring, control and surveillance, development of an open-source application for vessel registration and fishing licenses, implementation of a minimum legal size in marine capture fisheries, sea turtle conservation measures, a planned project for conservation and management of coastal ecosystems and various activities with coastal fishing villages. She also highlighted the importance of mariculture in India, and the potential for seaweed cultivation, as well as participation in the

IMO-FAO Glolitter Partnership Project. She concluded her presentation by highlighting the engagement of India with climate change and fisheries at the G20 and possible avenues for navigating climate change in terms of adaptation and mitigation strategies.

86. 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 and ecosystem approaches and best available science. Ms. Longo detailed how fisheries that need to strengthen their governance principles have a structured path to reform using the MSC standard as a support tool, providing the example of the pathway projects within the FAO Common Oceans project. However, she also highlighted the issue of certain fisheries starting to fail MSC requirements on the basis of insufficient productivity, shifting migrations and climate-driven population shifts, where a lack of scientific basis to predict changes and slow institutional responses have undermined good fisheries governance. Ms. Longo explained that the new MSC v.3.0 standard provides a structured path for RFMO fisheries to design robust harvest strategies with stakeholder consultation and management strategy evaluation. Noting that while the principles of the UNCLOS framework still provide the foundation of good fisheries management today, management systems struggle with timely, adaptive responses to new phenomena. She outlined that a possible response involves appropriate incentives and structured processes for fisheries, supply chains and other stakeholders to build buy-in and incorporate their knowledge.

87. In response to a question from a delegation whether, with changes expected from climate change, it is to be anticipated that there will be significant changes to performative indicators for the MSC standard, or whether they already capture changes that might take place, Ms. Longo highlighted that this standard had just been released and it would be evaluated over the next five years what information the current indicators could provide about the effects of climate change. She outlined that MSC was not currently expected to change the indicators but rather prioritize climate resilience within its current assessment framework. She noted that MSC is developing a climate risk assessment concerning climate-related threats to sustainability and priorities.

88. One delegation, noting the importance of bringing scientists and policy makers together for discussions, raised the issue of how more dialogue can be fostered in this respect. Mr. Manel noted that it was necessary to do so at all levels, in particular mobilizing expertise at the national level that could be brought to regional or international levels to provide the best available expertise.

89. Mr. Manel further raised the issue as to whether the concept of maximum sustainable yield (MSY) is still relevant in fisheries management and conservation in the face of climate change. Ms. Miller noted in response that in management strategy evaluations, instead of static reference points for MSY, it is possible to use dynamic MSY, which is more adaptive. She 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

90. With regard to the status of the Part VII Assistance Fund, Mr. Piero Mannini, Senior Liaison Officer, FAO, reported that the Fund remained depleted and that no contributions had been received since the delivery of the financial report on the status of the Fund at the resumed Review Conference in 2023 (see A/CONF.210/2023/6,paras. 18-21).

91. Mr. Michele Ameri, Legal Officer (Secretary), DOALOS, underscored the importance of the Fund in facilitating the participation of developing States in fisheries meetings and noted that since the depletion of the Fund, attendance of delegates from developing States in the Informal Consultations had decreased, including at the resumed Review Conference.

92. Mr. Ameri also recalled that an earmarked contribution to the Fund by the European Union had enabled DOALOS, in cooperation with the FAO, to implement a three-year capacity-building project to strengthen participation in and implementation of the Agreement. This was the first project to be implemented pursuant to the revised Terms of Reference of the Part VII Assistance Fund. The project had facilitated awareness raising, improved understanding, technical assistance and international implementation of the Agreement and had led to the production of communication materials, policy briefs, training materials, an implementation guide and demand-driven technical assistance to developing State parties. He noted that with sufficient funding the project would enable the convening of an intra-regional workshop on opportunities for cooperation and exchanging experiences in the implementation of the Agreement. A delegation expressed support for the Fund and highlighted that certain RFMOs also had funds to facilitate participation in their meetings.

93. The Chairperson echoed the importance of the Fund and invited donors to contribute. The meeting took note of the information reported by FAO and DOALOS on the status of the Fund.

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

94. 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. These discussions continued in the context of consideration of the next round of Informal Consultations of States Parties to the Agreement (see below).

95. One delegation stressed the need for solutions on climate change and fisheries during the interim period and proposed developing a mechanism to integrate the discussions at RFMO/As and the Informal Consultations in order to develop effective solutions on the fisheries-related implications of climate change, such as sea-level rise. This delegation also sought ways to circulate reports from coastal States on species diversity and stock status in order to improve information and data sharing on fish stocks.

VII. Consideration of the next round of informal consultations of States Parties to the Agreement

96. The Chairperson invited delegations to share views on preparations for the eighteenth round of Informal Consultations (ICSP-18), while noting that 2025 would also mark the 30th anniversary of the adoption and opening for signature of the Agreement. He recalled that a decision on the topic of the next round of the Informal Consultations could ultimately be made by the General Assembly in the context of the informal consultations on the draft resolution on sustainable fisheries if delegations required additional time to agree.

Commemorative event at ICSP-18

97. In discussing these preparations, some delegations expressed support for holding an event to commemorate the thirtieth anniversary of the adoption and opening for signature of the Agreement either on the margins of ICSP-18 or during the United Nations Ocean Conference to be held in Nice, France in June 2025. A delegation indicated that such an event could be an opportunity to promote participation in the Agreement, especially by developing States.

98. The Secretariat recalled that the twentieth anniversary of the adoption and opening for signature of the Agreement was commemorated during the eleventh round of the Informal Consultations (ICSP-11) in 2015, which comprised a half-day moderated roundtable discussion with participation from speakers that had made notable contributions to the development and implementation of the Agreement and that the discussions focused on the negotiation and

implementation of the Agreement, including associated challenges. He noted that the event was made part of ICSP-11 in order to defray the costs. He indicated that a similar commemorative event could be held as part of ICSP-18 within its budgetary framework, but that there would not be funds to defray the cost of panellist participation.

99. 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.

100. 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 suggested that the discussions could focus on developments that had occurred over the past decade, including challenges in the implementation of the Agreement, as well as plans for the future of the Agreement.

Future ICSP topics

101. The Chairperson noted that any plans to commemorate the thirtieth anniversary of the Agreement at ICSP-18 did not preclude the possibility of addressing additional topics at the meeting. Drawing from the discussions during the meeting, he noted some topics that could benefit from elaboration during future rounds of the Informal Consultations, including implementation of the Agreement by RFMO/As and the importance of an integrated approach in the implementation of the Agreement, including the participation of small-scale fisheries and coastal communities.

102. One delegation suggested reviewing the outcomes of the resumed Review Conference and the annexes to the reports of the Informal Consultations for possible topics with the aim of advancing implementation of the Agreement and the exchange of best practices by States Parties.

103. Several delegations expressed views on other possible topics for future discussion, such as illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing (IUU fishing), including human elements. The Chairperson noted that different aspects of IUU fishing, such as human elements, could also be addressed as independent topics.

VII. Other matters and Closing of the seventeenth round of Informal Consultations of States Parties to the Agreement

104. The Chairperson announced that, as in the past, the outcome of the seventeenth round of Informal Consultations would consist of an informal report to be prepared by the Chair, with the assistance of the Secretariat, summarizing the discussions and, in an annex, key points raised during the meeting, and that it would be posted on the website of DOALOS in English 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 fish stocks and the marine environment. Small island developing States and low-lying coastal communities may also experience specific direct impacts as a result of particular vulnerabilities to climate change and sea-level rise.

- It is vitally important to address the underlying causes of anthropogenic climate change in line with global commitments on greenhouse gas emissions, including in the fishing industry. At the same time, measures must be taken to mitigate the impacts of climate change on fisheries, in order to preserve their important global benefits to food security, economic development, social and cultural well-being, as well as environmental and ecosystem health and resilience.

- Sustainable fisheries management is an important vehicle for mitigating the impacts of climate change on fisheries, as well as promoting the long-term health and resilience of the marine ecosystems associated with such fisheries in the face of climate change. However, there is a need to ensure that fisheries management bodies and mechanisms are able to effectively respond to the expected scope and speed of climate change impacts, including by utilizing the precautionary approach.

- 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 understanding and awareness, some management measures are also being put into place to address known risks.

- Increased sharing of information, experiences and best practices amongst States and RFMO/As can contribute to developing effective measures, bearing in mind regional specificities and differences among target and non-target species, as well as differences in climate vulnerability and impacts.

- It was noted that ICSP could contribute to a broader conversation on climate change and fisheries that was being undertaken across different fora, including the upcoming meeting of the FAO Committee on Fisheries. The point was made that it was important to move discussions beyond high level principles to practical guidance on implementation.

- It was also considered important to integrate fisheries into climate change discussions, including through the use of nationally determined contributions. The

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.

Annex 2

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)

Agenda

15-17 May 2024
United Nations, New York

1. Opening of the seventeenth round of Informal Consultations by a representative of the Secretary-General.

2. Election of the Chairperson.

3. Adoption of the agenda.

4. Organization of work.

5. General statements.

6. Discussion panel on “Sustainable fisheries management in the face of climate change”

   (a) Segment 1: Understanding the impacts of climate change on fisheries;

   (b) Segment 2: Overview of the legal framework for sustainable fisheries management in the face of climate change;

   (c) Segment 3: Sustainable fisheries management in the face of climate change: case studies, best practices and challenges at the regional and national levels;

   (d) Segment 4: Challenges and opportunities for strengthening sustainable fisheries management in the face of climate change.

7. Status of the Part VII Assistance Fund.

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

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

10. Other matters.