



RESOLUTION ON SUSTAINABLE BOTTOM TRAWL FISHING

5 June 2025

The International Coalition of Fisheries Associations (ICFA) hereby unanimously adopts the Resolution on Sustainable Bottom Trawl Fishing.

Sustainable bottom trawl fishing is a critical contributor to global seafood production. Without bottom trawl fishing with associated sustainable fishing practices, global food security would be in greater peril.

ICFA:

- Highlights that over one-quarter of wild-caught seafood is harvested by bottom trawl fishing. This equates to 213 billion meals a year, more than enough to provide 3 meals per day to 194 million people annually – more than a country the size of Bangladesh.
- Draws attention to the fact that properly managed wild caught seafood is carbon friendly, and increasing its share in global diets can be an important mitigation action to address climate change.
- Emphasizes that all fishing activities in the high seas, including all pelagic, midwater or bottom trawl fishing, whether large scale or small scale, can be fully sustainable when conducted responsibly in accordance with effective management measures based on scientific grounds including those for properly conserving Vulnerable Marine Ecosystem (VME).
- Recalls that the 2022 United Nations (UN) Bottom Fishing Workshop acknowledged that global bottom fishing management and VME conservation efforts achieved significant progress, while recognizing the necessity of additional efforts.
- Recognizes that Regional Fisheries Management Organizations/Arrangements (RFMO's/As) govern all high seas fisheries, including bottom trawl fishing.
- Notes with serious concerns that illegal, unregulated, and unreported (IUU) fishing activities outside the framework of RFMOs continuously pose threats to:
 - the sustainability of fisheries resources and conservation of their associated ecosystems,
 - legitimate fisheries of the world,
 - global food security,
 - employment and wellbeing of fishing communities.
- Objects strongly to the unfounded claim that all bottom trawl fishing is inherently destructive, while overlooking the fact that such impacts are typically associated with illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing. Bottom trawl fishing conducted in a responsible and sustainable manner is a legitimate practice and is not destructive.
- Calls on governments to recognize properly managed bottom trawl fishing as a sustainable practice and incorporate this in their policies related to fishing and conservation of ocean ecosystem.

Moreover, ICFA draws further attention to some key facts about bottom trawl fishing. Special efforts have been made by bottom trawl fishing industries to avoid vulnerable benthic attributes, including deep sea

corals, thermal vents, and seamounts. Additionally, bottom trawl fishing nets have been repeatedly modified to have more relevant features that deter non-target species and allow by-catch to exit the net.

Going forward ICFA members will resolve to observe the followings:

1. Food Security

As the world's population continues to grow, ensuring a stable food supply is a critical global task. The supply of fishery products from the oceans, which cover 70% of the planet, is an essential element of global food security for both current and future generations. In particular, capture fisheries, when conducted under proper fisheries management, are highly preferable means of production of food from the perspective of sustainable economic development, and in terms of reducing environmental impact, as this method utilizes autonomous reproduction of fishery resources in the natural environment. Bottom trawl fishing is an effective and efficient method for food production and hence should be pursued from the perspective of contributing to the food security.

2. Job Creation

Fisheries require specialized technical skills using sophisticated equipment and tools in the natural marine environment. Ensuring that these advanced technical skills are securely passed on to future generations is essential in order to maintain a stable supply of fishery products, which constitute a key component of the food security for the future. Proper consideration should be given to securing the wellbeing, employment and livelihood of fishing communities which significantly contribute to food security.

3. Sustainable Development Goals

As stated in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), ensuring the sustainability of all human activity, while at the same time securing human security, is the most important global goal.

Recognizing that food security, employment, and poverty eradication are integral components of the SDGs, ICFA believes that fisheries of all types and sizes, if properly managed, can help contribute to food security, employment, and poverty eradication.

We support and respect the guidance by the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) on fisheries policy based on science in order to achieve sustainable fisheries, conservation and protection of the marine environment, and optimal use of the marine ecosystem services, including provision of healthy animal protein.

We commit ourselves to supporting and actively contributing to the achievement of the SDGs' goals 1 (No Poverty), 2 (Zero Hunger), 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth) and 14 (Life Below Water), among others.