



Key Priorities for the Thirty-Seventh Session of the FAO Committee on Fisheries (COFI 37)

Overall Message

The International Coalition of Fisheries Associations (ICFA) encourages FAO Members to continue prioritizing effective, science-based fisheries management, sustainable use of marine resources, global food security, and the elimination of illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing. As international discussions increasingly connect fisheries with biodiversity, climate, trade, and ocean governance, it is essential that fisheries policy remain grounded in science and informed by the expertise of FAO and Regional Fishery Bodies.

ICFA's Priorities:

Effective Fisheries Management

- Reaffirm science-based fisheries management as the foundation of sustainable fisheries.
- Strengthen fisheries science, stock assessments, data collection, monitoring, and management capacity.
- Work toward bringing all global fisheries under effective management.

Combat Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) Fishing

- Continue strengthening implementation of the Port State Measures Agreement.
- Improve monitoring, enforcement, vessel transparency, and international cooperation.
- Expand technical assistance and capacity building for developing countries.

Strengthen FAO's Leadership and Regional Fisheries Bodies

- Reinforce FAO's role as the leading source of fisheries science and technical expertise.
- Recognize the central role of Regional Fishery Bodies (RFBs) and Regional Fisheries Management Organizations (RFMOs) in international fisheries governance, including implementation of the Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ) Agreement.
- Promote coordination across biodiversity, climate, trade, and ocean governance processes so fisheries decisions remain informed by fisheries science.

Food Security and Sustainable Aquatic Foods

- Recognize sustainably harvested aquatic foods as essential to global food security, nutrition, and resilient food systems.
- Ensure fisheries continue to be appropriately reflected in food security and climate discussions.

Science-Based Fisheries Policy

- Ensure fisheries policies are based on scientific evidence, stock status, environmental performance, and effective management.
- Recognize the important contribution of responsibly managed trawl fisheries to seafood production, food security, employment, and coastal communities.
- Continue supporting innovation that improves fishing efficiency while reducing environmental impacts.

Keep FAO Focused on Its Core Fisheries Mandate

- Ensure FAO continues to provide authoritative fisheries expertise concerning BBNJ, CBD, CITES, UNFCCC, and other international processes;
- Do not divert resources from FAO's core mission of strengthening fisheries science, management, and governance.
- Continue investing in fisheries data, stock assessment, and effective management as FAO's principal comparative advantages.