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COMMITTEE ON FISHERIES

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FAO'S CONTRIBUTION OF FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE TOWARDS ACHIEVING THE 2030 AGENDA FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Executive Summary

This document provides an overview of the contribution of fisheries and aquaculture towards achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The progress and challenges in this regard are discussed, with an update on the status of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 14 indicators under FAO custodianship, emphasising FAO's role in methodology formulation, monitoring and supporting capacity development, as well as the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Suggested action by the Committee

The Committee is invited to:

- Underline the contribution of fisheries and aquaculture to achieving the 2030 Agenda, including synergies with other Sustainable Development Goals beyond SDG 14;
- note the key role played by FAO in monitoring indicators under SDG 14, and in providing inputs for publication in international fora such as the Global SDG progress report;
- acknowledge current capacity gaps across countries in reporting SDG indicators, and associated capacity development being undertaken;
- note the trends in indicators for SDG 14 under FAO custodianship;
- note the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic and other challenges, and the need for greater consolidated international effort to achieve the 2030 Agenda;
- support initiatives to develop reporting and monitoring capacity in fisheries and aquaculture, including the promotion of discussion for additional non-traditional and unconventional funding from extra-budgetary sources and information sources in support of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for sustainable fisheries and aquaculture;
- acknowledge and support initiatives that could lead countries towards the achievement of targets under the 2030 Agenda;

- note the call for more integrated and collaborative action in order to achieve the SDGs and identify actions in capacity building along fisheries and aquaculture value chains that target poverty reduction, food security and nutrition and resources management, as well as how these may be further developed.

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development continues to shape the strategies of countries, international organizations and civil society, striving for a fair, prosperous and sustainable world in which no one is left behind. The seventeen Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) which form the 2030 Agenda are central to the achievement of inclusive, sustainable economic growth that encompasses environmental, economic and social concerns.
2. The COVID-19 pandemic has had a catastrophic impact on people's lives and livelihoods, and has hindered efforts to realise the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, achievement of the SDGs was already off track. Progress had been made in poverty reduction, maternal and child health, access to electricity, and gender equality, but not enough to achieve the Goals by 2030. In other areas, including reducing inequality, lowering carbon emissions and tackling hunger, progress had either stalled or reversed.
3. Already prior to the war in Ukraine, international food prices had reached a very high levels. This was mostly due to market conditions, but also high prices of energy, fertilizers and other agricultural inputs. Global fuel and food prices have risen rapidly since the start of the war, with Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and Low-Income Food-Deficit Countries (LIFDCs) being particularly impacted.
4. The impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, conflict, climate change and biodiversity loss present acute challenges to achieving the 2030 Agenda, and reinforce the need for collaborative action to support political, economic and social change to ensure that the recovery reduces carbon emissions, conserves natural resources, creates better jobs, advances gender equality and tackles growing poverty and inequalities.
5. Implementation of the 2030 Agenda is universal, being equally relevant to developed and developing nations. The interconnected nature of the SDGs makes them indivisible by nature, with progress in one area assisting progress in another. It also places a strong emphasis on integrated approaches to development and requires that results from related indicators be jointly evaluated to allow a comprehensive analysis of the impacts and trade-offs between different development paths. The SDGs are ambitious and call for comprehensive and participatory approaches, aimed at ending poverty and hunger while sustainably managing natural resources.
6. The Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators (IAEG- SDGs) and the High-level Group for Partnership, Coordination and Capacity-Building for statistics for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (HLG-PCCB) are the expert groups mandated to develop and implement the global indicator framework for the Goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda. Both groups are composed of Members and include regional and international agencies as observers.
7. FAO provides overall support to Members in integrating the SDGs into national development plans. Food and agriculture are key to sustainable development and FAO continues to support policymaking, partnership-building, capacity development and project implementation built on 3-dimensional sustainability. Both the SDGs and the FAO Strategic Framework are geared towards tackling the root causes of poverty and hunger, building a fairer society and leaving no one behind. In this regard, FAO fulfils many roles, compiling data and information, setting standards and working towards generating advice in support of national decision-making.

8. Certain international agencies have been designated as custodians for specific indicators, with responsibility for enabling proper national, regional and global SDG reporting. FAO has been chosen as the custodian organization for 21 SDG indicators and a contributing agency to another five indicators, spanning SDGs 1, 2, 5, 6, 12, 14, and 15. The Organization's Strategic Framework 2022–31 is fully aligned to supporting achievement of the 2030 Agenda.

9. As a main and growing, food production system, the sustainable management of fisheries and aquaculture resources, addressed under **SDG 14- Life Below Water**, is of great importance to food security, economic, social and environmental goals, and underpins achievement of the 2030 Agenda. The key role of fisheries and aquaculture is increasingly recognized in international fora such as the FAO Committee on Fisheries (COFI) and its two Sub-Committees on Fish Trade and on Aquaculture and the recent United Nations Ocean Conference, among others.

10. In addition to its key role in progressing **SDG14 - Life Below Water**, the programme of work of FAO in fisheries and aquaculture contributes to the advancement of a wide range of SDGs. **SDG 2 - Zero Hunger** is of particular relevance, with fish consumption levels continuing to rise, feeding billions of people, of which 3.3 billion people consume almost 20 percent of their average per capita intake of animal protein from fish and fish products. While ensuring that diets remain nutritious, fish often provide a cheap and nutritious source of essential protein and an important source of micronutrients. With proper management, fisheries and aquaculture provide a resilient, high-quality and sustainable component of nutrition. Aquaculture now accounts for around half of aquatic animal production used for direct human consumption and plays a central role in ensuring food security at global, national and local levels.

11. **SDG 1 – No Poverty** and **SDG 8 – Decent Work and Economic Growth** also have strong correlations with fisheries and aquaculture. The sector provides income and employment for an estimated 250 million people and, as a consequence, it is central for supporting the livelihoods of a substantial proportion of the world's population. Ensuring responsible and sustainable value chains will benefit the poorest and most vulnerable in society, further enabling fisheries to provide economic resilience. In some instances, small-scale and subsistence fisheries may provide the principal source of income for entire communities, forming a cornerstone for economic resilience where often sources of alternative employment are limited or non-existent.

12. Social sustainability, non-discrimination, gender equality and shared growth are key focuses of the SDGs, with the objective of ensuring the widest distribution of benefits from natural resources and their use. The SDGs aim to nurture broad development and engender wider social inclusiveness and stability. As part of this process, efforts to empower organizations that support the development of fishing and aquaculture communities and fish processors are key areas of focus. The fostering of social sustainability in fisheries and aquaculture may serve as a catalyst for improving equality within society as a whole by promoting gender equality, securing workers' rights, enacting social protection schemes and reducing social inequalities overall.

13. Fisheries and aquaculture play an important role in achieving numerous SDGs, including:



SDG 5 Gender Equality: Women engage in all stages of the fisheries value chain and make up around fifty percent of those employed in the marketing and post-harvest processing of fish. Efforts to empower women by enhancing full access to and equal opportunities in the fisheries and aquaculture sector may serve as a catalyst for combating systemic gender inequalities and achieving greater inclusiveness.



SDG 12 Responsible Consumption and Production: Fish offer opportunities for sustainable food systems, with a lower carbon footprint than alternative animal source foods. The implementation of appropriate policies that foster sustainable consumption and production practices in fisheries and aquaculture will support the move towards more sustainable patterns of consumption and production and achieve sustainable management and efficient use of natural resources.



SDG 13 Climate Action: Changing climate and ocean conditions, in particular warming water temperatures, deoxygenation, and acidification in aquatic environments, are already impacting the distribution and abundance of fish stocks in many regions and will provide significant challenges to the sustainability of many fisheries, as well as to aquaculture. Urgent, innovative, effective and adaptive fisheries management measures, monitoring and policy action are central to ensuring the sustainability of fish stocks. Sustainable fisheries will ensure that future generations are able to reap the many benefits that fish can provide.



SDG 17 Partnerships: Targets and goals can only be achieved by working together. This includes partnerships between the private and public sector, with academia, civil society and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) but also across national borders and through multilateral efforts and solutions. It also foresees international cooperation in fisheries management and in regional fisheries bodies to promote the application of the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries and its associated guidelines, plans of action and agreements.

14. This document focuses on achievements in relation to SDG14 as facilitated by the workplan of NFI. It provides a summary of monitoring and reporting, existing challenges and capacity building needs and progress towards targets within this SDG.

II. PROGRESS AND CHALLENGES IN RELATION TO MONITORING, REPORTING AND ADDRESSING SDG14 INDICATORS AND TARGETS

15. It is generally acknowledged that international guidance – such as provided by FAO through the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries (CCRF), the Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries and Aquaculture (EAF), the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication (SSF Guidelines), the Common Vision for Sustainable Food and Agriculture, the Port State Measures Agreement (PSMA) and others form key elements in implementing change and monitoring progress towards the 2030 Agenda.

16. The ten targets of SDG 14 are wide-ranging and diverse, addressing fundamental issues for healthy, sustainable economies, with specific objectives to reduce marine pollution, protect aquatic ecosystems, minimize ocean acidification, develop scientific capacity relevant to fisheries and improve the implementation of international law pertinent to the sustainable use of oceans. The targets are also strongly interlinked, with progress in one area having strong implications for others. The underlying importance of sustainable development that considers environmental, social and economic sustainability permeates the rationale of all of the objectives, requiring action to be taken across multiple fronts in order to progress towards the targets.

17. FAO is the custodian agency for 4 of the 10 indicators for SDG 14. All indicators under SDG 14 for which FAO is the custodian agency are classified as Tier 1, indicating well-established and internationally applicable methodologies.¹ The focus of the four indicators are:

- 14.4.1 Proportion of fish stocks within biologically sustainable levels.
- 14.6.1 Combatting illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing.
- 14.7.1 Sustainable fisheries as a proportion of GDP.
- 14.b.1 Access rights of small-scale fisheries.

18. As custodian and coordinator of these SDG indicators², FAO has the direct responsibility to:

- I. Lead methodological development and documentation of indicators.
- II. Support statistical capacity of countries to generate and disseminate national data.
- III. Collect data from national sources and ensure their comparability and consistency.
- IV. Disseminate the data to enable monitoring of progress at the global, regional and national levels.
- V. Contribute to the annual global SDG progress report for the High-Level Political Forum.

19. Below is a summary by target and indicator on monitoring progress, a brief assessment of trends in the indicators, and a summary of further actions required to progress towards achieving the targets.

SDG Indicator 14.4.1 – Proportion of fish stocks within biologically sustainable levels

Target: By 2020, effectively regulate harvesting and end overfishing, illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing and destructive fishing practices and implement science-based management plans, in order

¹ SDG indicators classified as Tier 1 are conceptually clear, with an internationally established methodology and available standards, with data regularly produced by countries for at least 50 per cent of countries and of the population in every region where the indicator is relevant.

² For more information see <https://www.fao.org/sustainable-development-goals/goals/goal-14/en/>

to restore fish stocks in the shortest time feasible, at least to levels that can produce maximum sustainable yield as determined by their biological characteristics.

Status assessment: Far from target.

Trend assessment: Deterioration

20. It is fundamentally important that the abundance of stocks be maintained at levels which allow them to fully replenish under current conditions and with present harvesting levels, in order to ensure that fisheries are able to support economic and social sustainability.

21. Implementation of 14.4.1 has strong positive implications for achieving SDG 2 - Zero hunger, SDG 12 - Responsible consumption and production, and SDG 13 Climate action. Sustainable stocks, are central to the future of sustainable food systems, where fish are able to continue to play their vital role in food and nutrition security which they do today for generations to come.

22. Since 1974, FAO has released data from stock assessments at regional and global levels in various reports, such as the *State of the World Fisheries and Aquaculture* (SOFIA), with assessments covering the majority (70-80 percent) of the global catch. 14.4.1 extends coverage to the national level, with biennial questionnaires sent to allow reporting on the sustainability of fish stocks.

23. The objective of achieving 100 percent of fish stocks within biologically sustainable levels by 2020 has not been achieved. While global marine landings have remained relatively stable at around 90 million tonnes since 1995, the sustainability of world fishery resources has continued to decline. The proportion of fish stocks within biologically sustainable levels decreased from 90 percent in 1974 to 64.6 percent in 2019. Despite the continuous deterioration, the rate of decline has slowed down over the past decade. Furthermore, sustainably fished stocks now provide 82.5 percent of the total 2019 fish landings, which is a 3.8% improvement from the last assessment. While encouraging, this will not be enough to turn the tide and allow the SDG target to be met, and more efforts are needed to restore stocks to biologically sustainable levels through the implementation of effective management measures.

24. A wide array of methods and approaches are used to classify stock status relative to the abundance producing MSY. This varies among countries, regions and stocks. The reliability of the classification is assessed by FAO as part of the process of producing the index. 98 countries responded to the first questionnaire sent out by FAO. These responses were assessed, with the indicator validated for 30 countries, while a further 29 had their results flagged as “unreliable”. This has highlighted the challenges faced by countries in determining stock status, including deficiencies in fisheries data collection, insufficient scientific expertise and insufficient communication amongst stakeholders.

25. **Actions to progress towards this indicator:** Assessment of a stock is essential for ensuring proper management, providing a scientific and quantitative basis from which to develop and implement a management plan. The 14.4.1 e-learning course provides detailed guidance on the process and tools for analysis and reporting on the Indicator. The course covers both classical stock assessment as well as methodologies for conducting stock assessment in situations where data or technical capacity is limited, while remaining reliable and universally applicable. Capacity building for data collection on catch, effort and biological data are being conducted in various regions, with a series of eight capacity development workshops, attended by more than 70 countries and 500 participants held between the end of 2019 and early 2022.

SDG indicator 14.6.1 – Progress by countries in the degree of implementation of international instruments aiming to combat illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing

Target: By 2020, prohibit certain forms of fisheries subsidies which contribute to overcapacity and overfishing, eliminate subsidies that contribute to IUU fishing and refrain from introducing new such subsidies, recognizing that appropriate and effective special and differential treatment for developing and least developed countries should be an integral part of the World Trade Organization (WTO) fisheries subsidies negotiation.

Current status: Very close to target

Trend assessment: Slight improvement

26. IUU fishing remains one of the greatest threats to aquatic ecosystems and to fishers and communities who rely on their resources for nutrition and livelihoods. This is due to its potent ability to undermine national and regional efforts to manage fisheries sustainably and conserve marine biodiversity (FAO, 2022c).³

27. By reducing the prevalence of IUU fishing through the implementation of appropriate governance there will be progress not only on this indicator, but also in other areas of the 2030 Agenda, especially SDG 8 - Decent work and economic growth, SDG 12 - Responsible consumption and production, and SDG 16 - Peace, justice and strong institutions.

28. This indicator⁴ focuses on the efforts to combat IUU fishing through the effective implementation of key international instruments and is therefore based on a country's self-assessed degree of implementation of instruments to combat IUU, weighted by their relative importance and overlaps. The methodology for this indicator was piloted through a series of workshops under the FAO PSMA capacity building programme in order to ensure its accuracy and national applicability.

29. The indicator measures national progress in the implementation of five principal international instruments which together provide a strong framework for combatting IUU fishing. The level of implementation is assessed through responses to specific questions, carried in various sections of the questionnaire for monitoring the implementation of the CCRF and related instruments (CCRF questionnaire), relating to the following instruments (the percentage in brackets refers to their respective weightings applied in the assessment):

- Adherence and implementation of the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (10 percent).
- Adherence and implementation of the 1995 United Nations Fish Stocks Agreement (UNFSA)⁵ (10 percent).
- Development and implementation of a national plan of action (NPOA) to combat IUU fishing in line with the 2001 FAO International Plan of Action to Prevent, Deter, and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing (IPOA-IUU) (30 percent).
- Adherence and implementation of the 2009 FAO PSMA (30 percent).

³ FAO, 2022c. Sustainable Development Goals – Indicator 14.6.1.

⁴ www.fao.org/sustainable-development-goals/indicators/1461/en/

⁵ 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.

- Implementation of Flag State Responsibilities in the context of the 1993 FAO Compliance Agreement and FAO 2015 Voluntary Guidelines for Flag State Performance (20 percent).

30. Countries have made progress in combatting IUU fishing, with close to 75 percent scoring highly in their degree of implementation of relevant international instruments in 2022, compared to 70 percent in 2018. This progress was also reflected with the average score for this indicator rising from 3/5 to 4/5 over this period. The challenges in fully implementing these instruments are particularly acute for LDCs, which have maintained a medium level of implementation. Meanwhile, Small Island Developing States (SIDS) saw their indicator rise from 3/5 in 2018 and 2020 to 4/5 in 2022.

31. Between 2018 and 2022 there was a notable drop in the number of relevant countries reporting on the indicator in Central and Southern Asia (from 7 to 2) and sub-Saharan Africa (from 18 to 9). Increased reporting is seen as necessary to allow for accurate assessment of progress under the indicator.

32. **Actions to progress towards this indicator:** The implementation of the PSMA and complementary instruments, in particular in developing countries, is expected to be achieved principally through the;

- strengthening of national policy and legislative frameworks to combat IUU fishing;
- strengthening of monitoring, control, surveillance and enforcement capacities;
- enhancement of national institutions' capacity to improve flag State performance;
- further development and implementation of traceability and market measures;
- enhancement of coordination and cooperation at national, regional and global level, including inter-agency cooperation; and
- the ongoing development and use of global information exchange systems, namely through the PSMA Global Information Exchange System and the Global Record of Fishing Vessels, Refrigerated Transport Vessels and Supply Vessels.

33. Furthermore, during the World Trade Organization (WTO) 12th Ministerial Conference, countries agreed on rules addressing fisheries subsidies, with a focus on overfished stocks and IUU fishing. A multilateral agreement regulating fisheries subsidies, with specific disciplines towards IUU fishing and cross-references to the PSMA, will have a global positive impact on the indicator.

SDG indicator 14.7.1 – Sustainable fisheries as a percentage of GDP in small island developing States, least developed countries and all countries

Target: By 2030, increase the economic benefits to SIDS and LDCs from the sustainable use of marine resources, including through sustainable management of fisheries, aquaculture and tourism

Status assessment: Not possible due to absence of numerical yardstick in target

Trend assessment: Slight or no improvement

34. Fisheries support the livelihoods of millions worldwide, providing an important source of income and food security. Ensuring that fisheries resources are appropriately safeguarded is inextricably linked to their continued contribution to economies and sustainable development, especially for LDCs and SIDS.

35. The multifaceted character of this indicator allows positive spill overs that can be particularly relevant in supporting other areas of the 2030 Agenda, including minimizing the negative effects of COVID-19, especially involving SDG 1 (no poverty), SDG 8 (decent work and economic growth),

SDG 12 (responsible consumption and production patterns). For this indicator, long-term improvements can be emphasized and boosted by monitoring directly quantifiable benefits, namely Gross Domestic Product (GDP), and linking any outcomes to sustainable practices.

36. This indicator is calculated exclusively from data already published by National Statistics Offices or international agencies. This gives consistent current and historical coverage without creating an additional reporting burden for countries.

37. Calculation of this indicator is built on internationally recognized standards and statistics, including:

- Value-added of fisheries and aquaculture.
- Biological sustainability of fish stocks.
- Gross domestic product.

38. At the global level, the contribution of sustainable fisheries to GDP has remained fairly stable at around 0.1 percent, reflecting the interplay of two opposing trends: a consistently rising value-added from fisheries and a continued decline in the sustainability of global fish stocks. Sustainable marine capture fisheries make a substantial contribution to the GDPs of SIDS in Oceania and LDCs, where fishing activities are vital to local communities and indigenous people. However, both Oceania (excluding Australia and New Zealand) and LDCs, have seen their indicator fall between 2011 and 2019, from 1.70 percent to 1.54 percent and 1.27 percent to 0.88 percent respectively.

39. The 2022 reporting cycle (which estimated the indicator for 2019) saw a significant drop in national reporting. This was most pronounced for SIDS and LDCs, with coverage falling from 34 to 24 and from 20 to 15 respectively, and highlights the challenges faced by national statistical systems in reporting during COVID-19.

40. **Actions to progress towards this indicator:** Effective fisheries management, supportive and transparent government initiatives, better access to information and the implementation of new technologies are critical to increasing the contribution of sustainable fisheries to GDP, particularly in countries where fisheries are central for local economies, food security and vulnerable communities.

SDG indicator 14.b.1 – Progress by countries in the degree of application of a legal/regulatory/policy/institutional framework which recognizes and protects access rights for small-scale fisheries

Target: Provide access for small-scale artisanal fishers to marine resources and markets.

Current status: Very close to target

Trend assessment: Slight improvement

41. The forthcoming FAO, Duke University and WorldFish study *Illuminating Hidden Harvests* underlines the importance of the small-scale sector. The contribution of small-scale fisheries to sustainable development confirms that small-scale artisanal capture fisheries employ about 90 percent of those employed in capture fisheries value chains, equivalent to 60 million people⁶. They are of great importance for food systems, livelihoods, culture and the environment, and by extension so too is an enabling environment which recognizes and protects small-scale fisheries rights. The principles of such an enabling environment are:

⁶ <https://www.fao.org/fishery/en/publications/289233>

- I. Appropriate legal, regulatory and policy frameworks.
 - II. Specific initiatives to support small-scale fisheries.
 - III. Related institutional mechanisms which allow for the participation of small-scale fisheries organisations in relevant processes.
42. Small-scale fisheries, which account for at least 40 percent of the total inland and marine capture fisheries production, play a fundamental role in food security and poverty eradication, underpinning the livelihoods of those who are often most vulnerable in society. It is estimated that almost 500 million people depend at least partially on small-scale fisheries for their livelihoods. Supporting their access rights has parallel efficiencies for SDG 1 - No poverty, SDG 2 Zero hunger, SDG 5 -Gender equality, and SDG 16 - Peace, justice and strong institutions.
43. At the same time, small-scale food producers fulfil a vital role to nourish those depending on the sector and local communities, as especially seen during the COVID-19 pandemic and current food crisis. It is more important than ever for countries to support small-scale fishers as key contributors to sustainable agrifood systems.
44. Progress is measured in a range of areas relevant to safeguarding access-rights for small-scale fisheries. This is assessed through responses provided by countries in the CCRF questionnaire in the following sections:
- Existence of laws, regulations, policies, plans or strategies that specifically target or address the small-scale fisheries sector.
 - Ongoing specific initiatives to implement the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication (SSF Guidelines).
 - Existence of mechanisms through which small-scale fishers and fish workers contribute to decision-making processes.
45. The average global score has moved from 3/5 in 2018 to 4/5 in 2020 and 5/5 in 2022. In particular, Northern Africa and Western Asia reflect this increase, while Central and Southern Asia and Latin America and the Caribbean reduced their regional score from 3/5 to 2/5 and from 4/5 to 3/5 respectively, highlighting the need for strengthening their implementation efforts. The other regions remained stable at a score of 4/5. However, among the main constituents of the composite score for SDG indicator 14.b.1 reflects the lowest commitment by countries, despite their ability to guide actions to protect small-scale fisheries, particularly in the current circumstances. Only about half the countries in the world have adopted specific initiatives to implement the SSF Guidelines.
46. Reporting rates have fallen from 63 percent in 2018 to 52 percent in 2022. Much of this is due to a lower response rate in Central and Southern Asia, Northern Africa and Western Asia, and sub-Saharan Africa, with country coverage falling from 9 to 5, 10 to 7, and 26 to 13, respectively.
47. **Actions to progress towards this indicator:** Expanded support for small-scale fishers is critical, in particular in light of the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic in the sector, and in line with the objectives of the International Year of Artisanal Fisheries and Aquaculture (IYFAA) 2022.⁷ In addition, more financing is needed to support small-scale fisheries initiatives, including utilizing non-traditional and unconventional funding and resources, in conjunction with increased public awareness of the importance of small-scale fisheries and stronger inter-institutional coordination. In the context of

⁷ www.fao.org/artisanal-fisheries-aquaculture-2022/home/en/

supporting Members in achieving and reporting on SDGs, FAO has developed an e-learning course for data collection, analysis and reporting on SDG 14.b.1.⁸

48. IYAFA 2022 provides a unique global opportunity to implement the SSF Guidelines and achieve SDG 14.b. Pillar 2 of IYAFA's Global Action Plan for economic sustainability calls for support for value chains that are inclusive of SSF, which would enable SSF producers to better provide affordable, high quality fish products, fostering economic development and generating employment.

III. REPORTING CHALLENGES AND CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

49. Robust, effective, participatory, transparent and integrated monitoring and reporting frameworks will help countries to maximize and track progress in implementing the 2030 Agenda in order to ensure that no one is left behind.

50. A critical aspect in measuring progress towards the achievement of the 2030 Agenda is to ensure the availability of high-quality official statistical information. Through improved coverage and availability of accurate information and advice, policymakers and other actors may better analyse the interconnected nature of the fisheries and aquaculture sectors, ensuring appropriate allocation of resources, and promoting the sustainable and fair use of natural resources. Substantial efforts have already been made in this regard, but more will be needed to ensure that sufficient human and institutional capacities are regularly available for such monitoring and reporting.

51. Data for fisheries is often produced by line ministries, such as the ministry for fisheries or agriculture, and so is often managed outside national statistical systems, presenting specific challenges for ensuring consistency and comparability. Data and scientific information may be scarce, as experienced in attempts to run robust stock assessment methodologies at country level. Partnerships with Regional Fisheries Bodies (RFBs) and regional fisheries management organizations (RFMOs) play a key role in data availability, monitoring and reporting, both through direct reporting but also through the technical and scientific support they lend to their member countries.

52. Encouraging and enabling participation of countries in SDG monitoring and reporting may increase ownership and buy-in, enabling virtuous cycles of improved data and progression of objectives. Additional, non-traditional and unconventional funding and information sources need to be explored, such as government budget re-allocation, private sector contributions, including corporate business reporting, or civil society and philanthropic initiatives.

53. The main challenges faced by countries in implementing frameworks for data collection, processing, monitoring and dissemination have been identified as follows:

- I. Lack of enough technical expertise, in particular for implementing efficient information systems and in analysis.
- II. Difficulty mobilising technical support.
- III. Monitoring not properly reflected in budgeting.
- IV. Transparency in reporting.

54. In addressing these challenges, the following measures to strengthen national statistical capacity should be prioritised:

⁸ <https://elearning.fao.org/course/view.php?id=348>

- I. Clarification of institutional ownership on data and monitoring for SDGs.
- II. Tackling institutional and regulatory barriers.
- III. Use of technology to improve data collection, analysis, and accessibility, in fully integrated systems.
- IV. Involving stakeholders in data collection, including women and youth, and empowering them with services that improve their livelihoods and facilitate ownership.
- V. Identification of new data sources and technologies such as remote sensing, to guide SDG implementation.
- VI. Mobilizing support through partnerships.
- VII. Continued cooperation with RFBs and RFMOs.

55. In addition to the above, the COVID-19 pandemic is intensifying data scarcity problems when timely reliable information has become even more essential for immediate policy responses and for monitoring national and international capacity agendas.

56. The COVID-19 pandemic compelled data providers to innovate and build new forms of data collection and analysis, as well as partnerships; these should be leveraged and scaled up, particularly in data poor regions.

57. To combat the impact of the pandemic on both data collection and livelihoods, in terms of food insecurity and disruptions to the food systems, FAO is providing technical assistance and capacity building support in a number of areas, including in fisheries and aquaculture.

58. FAO capacity development work aims primarily to enable countries to improve the sustainability of the management of their resources, including by accurate monitoring of resources and fishing activities, estimation of adequate indicators and preparation of scientific and technical advice according to internationally agreed methodologies and standards, both for the country's internal use and for reporting to relevant international fora, as discussed in this document.

59. In particular, for the indicators described, FAO has organized global and regional training workshops and is providing guidance for national monitoring, through guidelines and e-learning courses, the identification of reporting systems, including standard data collection frameworks, software (CCRF questionnaires, Calipseo), by using existing partnerships (e.g. FIRMS) and through innovative technologies (e.g. Global Record of Stocks and Fisheries, SDG14.4.1 Stock Monitoring Tool).

60. For this purpose, FAO has established a Multi-Donor Umbrella Programme to fill capacity gaps in national statistical systems and enable countries to report on and use the SDG indicators effectively. The Programme will help countries monitor progress for SDG targets related to hunger and food security, sustainable agriculture and management of natural resources, through improved monitoring based on higher quality and granular data. Partner countries will produce and disseminate more comprehensive and comparable data on SDG indicators, enabling them to design effective evidence-based national policies and strategies to meet SDG targets. Cooperation with regional fisheries management organizations and regional seas convention can play a fundamental role in fostering consistency and comparability of country approaches towards monitoring and reporting frameworks.

61. FAO's Blue Transformation allows agencies, countries and dependent communities to leverage existing and emerging knowledge, tools and practices to secure and sustainably maximize the contribution of aquatic food systems to food security, nutrition, affordable healthy diets and the SDGs. By supporting a transformation to more efficient, inclusive, resilient and sustainable aquatic food

systems, Blue Transformation forms an important mechanism for accelerating actions to reach the SDG targets.

62. As highlighted in the 2022 Sustainable Development Report⁹, peace, diplomacy, and international cooperation are fundamental conditions for the world to progress on the SDGs towards 2030 and beyond. A global plan to finance the SDGs is needed, in particular for SDG 14, given the low level of funding allocated to this goal globally¹⁰ and its cross-cutting nature in the 2030 Agenda.

63. The ongoing war in Ukraine has worsened the crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the climate crisis and conflicts, resulting in ever higher food, fertilizers and fuel costs. The inflationary pressure exacerbated by the war will be felt most keenly by developing countries and, low-income food import dependent countries, many of whom have already seen a distinct rise in poverty and food insecurity. This will have serious implications for achieving progress under the 2030 Agenda and will require redoubled international efforts to support a long-term, equitable and sustainable recovery.

⁹ [2022 Sustainable Development Report \(unsdsn.org\)](https://unsdsn.org/)

¹⁰ OECD (2020) Sustainable Ocean for All: Harnessing the Benefits of Sustainable Ocean Economies for Developing Countries and OECD database of SDG funders at <https://sdgfunders.org/sdgs/goal/life-below-water/lang/en/>