

RARE SUBMISSION TO COFI34

February 1 – 5, 2021



Rare is a leading organization in the use of behavior change in conservation and sustainable development, placing local communities at the center of solutions. Our flagship program, Fish Forever, focused on the role and responsibilities of fishing communities in the management of coastal ecosystems to balance effective protection with sustainable production. Rare commends the Committee on Fisheries (COFI) and its Member States on the progress to date regarding global cooperation and management on the fisheries sector for resource sustainability and global issues like biodiversity and climate change. Rare further commends Indonesia, Honduras, Brazil, Mozambique, Palau, and the Philippines who have reiterated their commitment to the small-scale fisheries sector even during the hardships of the global pandemic recognizing their critical role in a blue recovery.¹

We propose the following recommendations to the COFI Member States for the upcoming COFI34.

- Reiterate and specify the actions to support sustainable small-scale fisheries, including through the continued implementation of the SSF Guidelines.
- Invest and integrate blue recovery elements, like economic relief for small-scale fishers and fish workers, into government policies that are needed to build back better from COVID-19.
- Commit to supporting the International Year of Artisanal Fisheries and Aquaculture 2022 to elevate the role of SSF in achieving local resilience and global sustainable development, climate, and biodiversity goals, and to consider Rare a willing partner.
- Encourage appropriate integration of fisheries and related elements into country's revised Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC), implementation plan for NDCs and National Adaptation Plans, and in the formulation of future NDCs or climate action plans.
- Advocate for common and sustainable indicators important to fisheries and marine life for the CBD Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework.

Fish Forever Overview: Rare's Fish Forever program is a community-based approach to manage multi-species fisheries in the territorial seas of developing nations. To date, Fish Forever works with 150 local governments, over 990 communities and reaches approximately 157,000 fishers to deliver clear governance and effective management across more than 1.47 million hectares of coastal marine areas in 8 countries:² Brazil, Federal States of Micronesia, Guatemala, Honduras, Indonesia, Mozambique, Palau, and the Philippines. By building the capacity of local communities and local governments for an effective and rights-based co-management approach, communities develop fisheries management plans, create fish sanctuaries, conserve critical habitat, and support better enforcement over local waters. Fish Forever directly contributes to and builds on the principles of a rights-based approach for fisheries. Reforming small-scale fisheries yields benefits on a global scale for sustainable development, food security and environmental protection.

To harness the collective power of local leadership, Rare is organizing a Global Network of Local Government Leaders, comprised of elected local officials that have made a public pledge to advance small-scale fisheries reform. The Network will be formally launched in early 2021 and will facilitate the collaboration of local leaders and enable positive shifts in public opinion, political will, and government policies and financing related to the coastal fisheries sector and the communities that depend on them. The Network will be the largest coalition of local government leaders committed to achieving global coastal fisheries reform in the world.

¹ SSF & Resilience Joint Message: <https://rare.org/story/six-nations-come-together-in-support-of-strengthening-the-resilience-of-coastal-communities>

² The latest Statistics on Fish Forever are available here: <https://portal.rare.org/en/>

Inputs to Specific Agenda Items

Small-Scale Fisheries (Item 8): Rare is pleased to see the continued recognition of the role of small-scale fisheries in improving local livelihoods and addressing food security the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (SDG). Rare is committed to supporting sustainable fishing practices and the local livelihoods of small-scale fishers and fish workers in coastal communities through our programs while also elevating the visibility in relevant global arenas. To this end, Rare made a voluntary commitment towards SDG14: Life Below Oceans.³ We call on Member States to reiterate and commit their support for small-scale fisheries including through the implementation of the SSF Guidelines. Further, Rare recognizes the impacts of COVID-19 to the small-scale fishery sector where quarantine measures affected food security and local livelihoods as noted in the High Level Panel for Sustainable Ocean Economy’s paper on “[A Sustainable & Equitable Blue Recovery to the COVID-19 Crisis.](#)” We further call on Member States to consider the recommendations in the paper to ensure adequate investment of blue recovery elements, like economic relief for small-scale fishers and coastal tourism, are integrated into government policies needed to build back better.

International Year of Artisanal Fisheries and Aquaculture (Item 8): Rare is delighted by the opportunity to highlight small-scale fishers and fish workers and the importance of local leadership in global conservation and sustainable development throughout the IYAFA 2022.⁴ We express our commitment to support this effort, including but not limited to, utilizing the Global Network of Local Government Leaders from coastal communities to promote dialogue and collaboration. Rare encourages Member States to commit to active engagement in the development of the IYAFA2022 Roadmap to ensure the international year is capitalized by raising awareness of the role of SSF in achieving local resilience and global goals, and to consider Rare an interested partner in collaboration.

Climate Change (Item 11): Rare calls on Member States to have a productive discussion on the implementation of country’s NDCs, with particular emphasis on the elements around fisheries, coastal zone management, and coastal and marine protection or restoration. Rare encourages Member States to consider how to appropriately integrate fisheries and related elements into revised NDCs for adaptation (and mitigation in certain cases), implementation plan for NDCs or NAPs, and in the formulation of future NDC to ensure it is a valued sector in the ambition cycle of the UNFCCC Paris Agreement. To support Member States’ efforts around implementing the current NDCs and planning to formulate new/revised NDCs, Rare is pleased to share a new resource we co-authored on “[Enhancing NDCs: Opportunities for Ocean-Based Climate Action.](#)”

Coastal and Marine Biodiversity (Item 11.1): Rare is encouraged by COFI and FAO’s continued participation around the UN CBD and urges Member States to advocate for common indicators important to marine biodiversity and sustainable fisheries for the CBD Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework. The finalization of the biodiversity framework is an opportunity to recognize the need for sustainable and equitable area-based management tools and measures like OECMs as a solution that can deliver biodiversity and sustainable development benefits for improved livelihoods and resilience as noted in [COFI/2020/Inf.15.3](#) and the fundamental role of communities in local conservation and management decision making. In addition, we encourage Member States to contribute to awareness raising and implementation of spatial management tools for biodiversity conservation, as well as the importance of behavior change as fundamental to achieve conservation and development goals.

³ 2017 Community of Ocean Action UN Ocean Voluntary Commitments for SDG14: #15123 <https://oceanconference.un.org/commitments/?id=15123>

⁴ 2022 International Year of Artisanal Fisheries and Aquaculture <http://www.fao.org/artisanal-fisheries-aquaculture-2022/en/>