

**Statement of India in Meeting on Fisheries Subsidies Negotiations at
HoD Level on 17 July 2019**

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Thank you Chair for convening this meeting to apprise us of the developments in the fisheries subsidies negotiations.

2. We note the progress made so far as reflected in the three working documents, on IUU fishing, overfished stocks and overfishing and overcapacity and the fourth one, the compendium on cross cutting issues. I would like to place on record our appreciation for the hard work done by the facilitators in consolidating most of the issues for further discussion. I also commend the Secretariat's recent efforts to facilitate participation of the capital based experts through online streaming of the proceedings, which is expected to be operational shortly.

3. Chair, I understand from your briefing today that the documents produced by the facilitators reflect a work in progress and the clean consolidated text will be developed in due course. We also believe that Members will have opportunities to provide further inputs, into these documents, either bringing in elements from the document 274/Rev6, which our Ministers endorsed in Buenos Aires, the documents resulting from subsequent discussions like, RD/TN/RL/72 dated 7 December 2018, or through any new proposal.

4. India is committed to engage constructively in the fisheries subsidy negotiations. However, while negotiating the disciplines, we must be mindful of the mandates of SDG 14.6 and the MC11 decision on fisheries, both of which clearly state that there should be appropriate and effective special & differential treatment for developing countries. These mandates need to be honoured in letter and in spirit. S&DT should not be replaced or derailed by new proposals citing inbuilt flexibilities for all. In this regard, any abridgement of the mandate to provide S&DT to developing countries including LDCs will make outcomes in this important area of negotiations very difficult.

5. India has introduced a proposal for S&D for developing countries and updated our fisheries subsidies notifications. Our latest subsidy notification shows that we are small subsidizers with miniscule subsidies of less than \$ 0.10 per fishermen per day. So obviously we are not part of the problem, which is the creation of the large subsidisers which give huge subsidies and operate industrial fishing fleets. Accordingly, we need to be mindful that any solution which rewards Members, who are major subsidizers and are largely responsible for the current state of affairs, will be unacceptable. Any approach for disciplining harmful subsidies should measure up on this criterion and take into account the development status of members.

6. Ambassador Thomson, the UNSGs envoy for the oceans was absolutely clear that if the oceans are to be saved, subsidies that increase fishing effort need to

come down drastically. And these funds need to be diverted to fight other problems like pollution of the oceans. Now large subsidies are provided by about half a dozen large subsidisers, who largely support industrial fishing. If these subsidisers are able to retain their subsidies through carve outs or caps, not only will the adverse effects of subsidies remain, but no resources will be available to support other remediation measures that are also part of SDG 14 goal.

7. Now on the way forward, we believe that the process for the forthcoming crucial part of negotiations, resuming from September 2019 after the summer break, should remain transparent and fair with participation of each of the Members, with a need to devote more effort on cross cutting issues. We are committed to working with your successor and the facilitators to fulfil the mandate of SDG 14.6.

8. Finally, Roberto, thanks for your leadership and for so ably shepherding the important and difficult fisheries negotiations. We will really miss you. All the best in your future endeavours !
