

Iceland: Statement

177th Session of the FAO Council 7-11 April 2025

Item #3 Reviewed Strategic Framework 2022-31

Mr. Chair, - thank you for giving me the floor. Needless to say we align with the Statement made by Norway on behalf of the Nordics and we further agree with the statement made by Poland on behalf of the EU and its 27 member countries, but wish to add the following:

1. This coming June, political leaders, policymakers and experts from around the world will gather at the Third UN Ocean Conference – UNOC3 - in Nice, France, to address challenges of fundamental importance within the wide realm of Ocean Affairs.
2. The Conference agenda covers areas and issues where FAO plays a crucial role, inter alia related to the preservation of marine biodiversity and a healthy marine ecosystem. The conference will further address the importance of sustainable management of marine resources and the promotion of a sustainable blue economy. These topics squarely align with the mandate of FAO: to ensure food security and strengthen the resilience of food systems.
3. We know FAO is THE global fora for guidance regarding the constructive interaction between science-based policy and political decision making. States will continue to refer important ocean-related work to FAO, and we see that states and regional organisations increasingly rely on the normative work of FAO to make progress on issues pertaining to SDG14 “Life under Water”.
4. Many oceanic matters are Global by definition and will inevitably need to be addressed collectively and multilaterally. Iceland duly acknowledges the centrality of FAO’s work in many of the domains where it will be decided whether we will rise under our collective responsibility. We welcome and commend the build-up of knowledge and capacity within the organisation. Therefore, we must ensure that FAO is ready, capable and adequately equipped to effectively take on these issues.
5. The FAO must be able to maintain the momentum in their basic normative work whilst taking on a broader role and be in the lead as regards the Oceans. Hence, we need to accept that more resources are required – not less. It is of serious concern that available resources and expertise of the respective institutional pillars within the FAO are on the decrease - contrary to broadening scope and urgency of the tasks at hand.
6. Finally Chair; The Blue Transformation is a programme priority area (PPA) under the Strategic Framework. It is of fundamental importance, that FAO, both within the Strategic Framework and in our planning for the Medium-Term, recognize the urgency of the Blue Transformation and acknowledge that SDG 14, “Life under water” remains the least funded of all the SDGs. It is imperative that we give precedence to Ocean Affairs in our strategic planning, enabling FAO to take on and be in the lead on the UNOC3 agenda.

Thank you.