



**Preparatory meeting for the
20th CITES CoP
September 11-12, 2025, Casablanca (Morocco)**

RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Taking into** account the need to ensure integrated and ecosystem-based sustainable development, focused on maximizing economic benefits, social and environmental, in accordance with the “blue transformation” programs, FAO (2022-2030);
- **Reaffirming** the commitment to contribute to the achievement of the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, in particular its Sustainable Development Goal 14 (SDG14) on the conservation and sustainable use of the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development, and target 14b “*Ensure access to resources and markets for small-scale fishers*”;
- **Stressing** the need to ensure the conservation, management and rational exploitation of fishery resources and their sustainable development;
- **Recognizing** the critical importance of the fisheries and aquaculture sector for developing countries, through its contribution to economic growth and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, including SDG 1 «No Poverty»; SDG 2 «Zero Hunger» and SDG13 «Action to combat climate change and its impacts»;
- **Aware** of the growing dangers that threaten food and nutritional security, in particular the use of food fisheries resources which can lead to potentially harmful consequences for the populations of our countries;
- **Concerned** by the precarious conditions of artisanal fisheries in African States and by the situation of vulnerability and deprivation of the fishing communities who depend on them;
- **Referring** to the inalienable right of States to dispose of their living marine resources for sustainable exploitation as a priority for the benefit of their current and future populations;
- **Aware** of the challenges faced by developing countries in implementing the requirements of the CITES aquatic species lists, such as species identification, issuance of non-detriment findings (NDFs), issuance of the “introduction from abroad” certificate, “introduction from the sea” certificate and the serious impacts on sustainable fisheries development and socio-economic aspects, livelihoods of coastal communities, threat to food security, rising prices of food and other products, including fishery products.
- **Reaffirming** that sustainable use is a universal principle based on the application of sound scientific evidence;
- **Noting** the compatibility of FAO's strategic objectives and the mandate of CITES;

- **Noting** that the relevant Regional Fisheries Management Organizations (RFMOs) adequately ensure the conservation and management of commercially exploited aquatic species;
- **Committed** to the spirit of the Constitutive Act of the African Union as well as to the Abidjan Declaration of the Ministers of ATLAFCO, which calls for " *promoting and defending common African positions on issues of interest to the continent and its population* ", and to the principles of unity and solidarity, to speak with one voice and weigh in the negotiations, in order to defend our collective interests relating to the management, use and sustainable conservation of marine resources.

The participants made the following recommendations:

- 1- **Base** all decisions regarding the management of fisheries resources on the best available scientific advice from the competent national, sub-regional, regional and international institutions and bodies;
- 2- **Promote** scientific evidence, strengthen communication, diplomatic lobbying and cooperation efforts to support the legitimacy and benefits of conservation and sustainability;
- 3- **Strengthen** the scientific capacities of Member States institutes and researchers and ensure their regular and effective participation in the scientific committees of the competent international bodies for the conservation of marine resources;
- 4- **Support**, within Member States, national coordination between entities responsible for fishing and those responsible for environmental conservation, for coherent and integrated management of fisheries resources;
- 5- **Take into account**, in decision-making by international bodies for the conservation and management of fisheries resources, the specific characteristics of certain fisheries, in particular the strategic importance of artisanal fisheries and their essential role in food and nutritional security, poverty reduction and the improvement of sustainable livelihoods of coastal communities;
- 6- **Strengthen** the resilience and adaptive capacity of countries in the face of climate hazards and disasters with a focus on strengthening country capacities;
- 7- **Ensure** the participation of government fisheries authorities in the national decision-making process and designate a fisheries focal point with the relevant international bodies (BBNJ and CITES);
- 8- Maintain close consultation between ATLAFCO member states and countries sharing the principle of *sustainable use*, for better harmonization of their positions on issues of conservation and exploitation of marine resources, during the 20th session of the Conference of the Parties to CITES.

- 9- **Follow** scientific and technical advice of the FAO Expert Advisory Panel established in accordance with the 2006 Memorandum of Understanding between CITES and FAO, when reviewing proposals for inclusion in the CITES Appendices;
- 10- **Propose** to CITES and FAO to ensure scientific monitoring of marine species listed in the CITES appendices, and to assess their impact on their conservation and sustainable development;
- 11- **Raise** awareness of the challenges that developing countries face in implementing the requirements of CITES aquatic species lists;
- 12- **Adopt** the principle of only resorting to restrictions on international trade in endangered marine species at CITES level after the inability of coastal States and relevant RFMOs to ensure their sustainable exploitation has been established;
- 13- **Strengthen** coordination and consultation at the national level on CITES-related issues to adopt a common position;
- 14- **Organize** future ATLAFCO preparatory and coordination meetings for the Convention of the Parties to CITES sessions within a longer time limit.