

**JOINT STATEMENT ON TREATMENT OF ARTISANAL AND SMALL SCALE  
FISHERIES IN FISHERIES SUBSIDIES NEGOTIATIONS**

Communication from India and the ACP Group

The Delegation of India and the ACP Group jointly present this Statement on Treatment of Artisanal and Small Scale Fisheries in Fisheries Subsidies Negotiations.

1. This joint statement is intended to emphasize the significance of artisanal and small-scale fishing to developing countries. In the spirit of the Doha Development Round, we wish to underline that these types of fisheries are at the core of our development priorities for poverty reduction, the maintenance of livelihoods and food security.
2. The sponsors of this paper subscribe to the objective of conservation and management of fisheries and do not oppose the disciplining of subsidies, in principle. Many developing countries are signatories to UNCLOS and have also adopted various provisions of the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries even though the Code is voluntary. Developing countries are also contributing through constructive engagement in other international programmes associated with migratory and straddling stocks such as the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission.
3. The sponsors also recognize that fisheries subsidies may contribute to the creation and perpetuation of excess fishing capacity and have the potential to encourage overfishing and distort trade patterns. However, restrictions on the use of legitimate subsidies to the fishing sector can have a detrimental impact on the sustainable development of fisheries-dependent coastal and island communities in developing countries. It is therefore imperative that we strive for a balance between sustainability and development. We can only reach a successful conclusion if we are able to meet this challenge.
4. Although we welcome the flexibilities accorded to LDCs, regrettably, there are some key areas where the Chair's text falls short of meeting this balance between sustainability and development and does not give enough attention to development needs of developing countries. Particularly, the Special and Differential Treatment (S&DT) provisions do not address the need of developing countries to preserve policy space and pursue development goals. It is emphasized that the fisheries sector – especially artisanal and small-scale fishing – is not only of economic importance to developing countries, but also a key factor in the drive to eradicate poverty.
5. We need to recognize that multilateral rule making on fisheries is being undertaken in other fora such as FAO and the UN. Hence, negotiations at the WTO must be faithful to the mandate. Not only should there be no duplication in the WTO of the rule making being undertaken at other fora, but also, negotiations at the WTO must not be subject to vetting by these fora.

6. In sum, inadequate S&DT will have a deep adverse impact on this sector, and as such we ask that Members consider the profound implications of these discussions for the poorest of the poor in our countries.

---