Inter-Parliamentary Declaration of Intent To Combat Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated Fishing

Made at the 17th Conference of Parties (COP17) to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)

October 22, 2026

We, Members of the Conservation Caucuses of the national legislatures of Colombia, Ecuador, Indonesia, Kenya, Mexico and the United Kingdom, have met in Yerevan, Armenia during the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity Conference of the Parties (COP17), with the support of the International Conservation Caucus Foundation (ICCF) Group, which acts as informal caucus secretariat. We have exchanged experiences regarding the most important issues on Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated Fishing (IUUF) in our countries and have come to a consensus on the following points.

Having had the benefit of expert opinion and dialogue with our fellow legislative Members, we affirm that:

1. IUUF is a serious threat to our territorial security and sovereignty.
2. Some IUUF vessels also engage in other illegal maritime activity, including the illicit trafficking of weapons, narcotics, wildlife, and human beings.
3. IUUF vessels often engage in significant human rights abuses. These abuses violate basic human dignity and the rights of our citizens.
4. IUUF operations have been found to finance transnational organized criminal networks and money laundering, and may have connections to terrorist groups.
5. IUUF fosters corruption in coastal countries and threatens rule of law and democracy.
6. IUUF impacts food security, particularly on the coasts of developing countries which depend on subsistence fishing as a key source of protein.
7. IUUF has a catastrophic impact on key marine ecosystems, destroying fish stocks that all levels of the food chain rely on and damaging habitats from illegal or improper gear use.
8. IUUF undermines the ability to conduct sound science to assess the biomass of fish stocks.
9. IUUF product is often hard to trace, entering the market and outcompeting fish products from fishers that abide by domestic and international fishing regulations.

In our authority as legislators, we mutually pledge to:

1. Recognize that IUUF is not just a fish stock and conservation issue, but a food, economic, and national security threat and therefore a priority for government bodies that deal with finance, trade, and security as well as fisheries, agriculture, and environment.
2. Highlight the importance of the ratification and implementation of key international agreements that address IUUF and related maritime security and labor threats rooted in

IUUF, such as the Port State Measures Agreement and the International Labor Organization (ILO) Work in Fishing Convention, 2007 (No. 188).

3. Coordinate with the other signatory countries and technical experts to improve transparency and data sharing — such as satellite monitoring, vessel tracking, and port monitoring — as these are critical tools in exposing bad actors and empowering governments and stakeholders to detect, deter, and enforce against illegal activities.
4. Strengthen measures to ensure that all flag states entering our ports monitor and regulate their fishing vessels effectively, regardless of where they operate, by maintaining and publicly sharing vessel records through appropriate means.
5. Prioritize the improvement of data collection and fisheries management techniques within our own Exclusive Economic Zone.
6. Strive to improve transparency and traceability across the seafood supply chain to strengthen market-based and import control tools.
7. Strengthen data collection on harmful fishing practices related to IUUF, including labor abuses within the seafood supply chain, while increasing collaboration to better identify and address forced labor, unsafe working conditions, and human rights violations in the fishing industry.
8. Engage in public-private partnerships to benefit from the data, technology, and capacity that is currently available to deter IUUF.
9. Promote legal frameworks, transparency mechanisms, and oversight measures to prevent and detect acts of corruption that facilitate IUUF, and encourage their investigation and prosecution by the relevant authorities, particularly in the issuance of fishing licenses, port inspections, and import and export operations.
10. Encourage the government to secure increased financial fines, seize illegal vessels, and revoke fishing permits to ensure punishment severity exceeds the financial benefit of non-compliance.
11. Establish legal protections and incentives for maritime crew members and port workers who report IUUF practices.
12. Exhort the government to secure dedicated budget allocations for IUUF regulation, monitoring, and enforcement.
    a. Exhort the government to secure sustained funding for coast guard patrols, maritime law enforcement agencies, and port authority inspection capacity.
13. Promote inclusive and equitable fisheries governance that protects the rights and livelihoods of small-scale, artisanal, and traditional fishing communities, ensuring that regulatory compliance requirements are proportionate, accessible, and supported by adequate technical and financial assistance, as well as capacity building.
14. Strengthen legal and regulatory frameworks to identify and hold accountable the beneficial owners, operators, financiers, and commercial entities profiting from IUUF, including through financial investigations, transparency of vessel ownership, and appropriate sanctions that remove the economic incentive for illegal activities.

Signatures:

Colombia:

Hon. Marcos Daniel Pineda García

Hon. Alejandro de la Ossa

Hon. Franklin Lozano

Indonesia:

Hon. Rina Sa'adah

Hon. Rahayu Saraswati Djojohadikusumo

Kenya:

Hon. Dr. Beatrice Kahai Adagala

Hon. Shimbwa Omar

Mexico:

Hon. Azucena Arreola Trinidad

Hon. Gabriela Benavides Cobos

Hon. Marcela Guerra Castillo

Hon. Erick Iván Agundez Cervantes

UK:

Hon. Barry Gardiner

Hon. Mary Creagh

Ecuador:

Hon. Esperanza Rogel