Recent Developments in the Multilateral Trade System
Fish subsidies negotiation mandates

SDG 14.6: By 2020, prohibit certain forms of fisheries subsidies which contribute to overcapacity and overfishing, eliminate subsidies that contribute to IUU fishing and refrain from introducing new such subsidies, recognizing that appropriate and effective S&DT for developing and LDC should be an integral part of the WTO fisheries subsidies negotiation.

WTO MC11: to adopt by the MC in 2019, an agreement on comprehensive and effective disciplines that prohibit certain forms of fisheries subsidies that contribute to overcapacity and overfishing, and eliminate subsidies that contribute to IUU fishing. The decision recognizes that appropriate and effective S&DT for developing country members and LDCs should be an integral part of the negotiations.
• Estimated to range between USD 11.5 to 20 billion (depending of the data source whether OECD or the UBC and the year),

• Top 5 nations make up 90% of all public transfers to the fishing industry. More subsidies than all other countries together (UNCTAD, 2019 based on OECD data)

• 84% of all fish subsidies tend to only benefit large scale fleets (Schuhbauer et al., 2017).
Significant efforts by the Chair of the WTO Rules Committee and WTO Member in 2018-19 have enabled the emergence of a single, complete and non-attributed draft fish subsidies text (WTO document N/RL/W/274/Rev.614 November 2018) that includes:

- Preamble
- Definitions
- Scope
- Prohibited subsidies:
  - IUU fishing
  - Overfishing
  - Overcapacity
- A standstill clause
- Proposals on special and differential treatment
- Notifications, transparency and surveillance
- Transitional arrangements
- Institutional arrangements
Key recommendations:

5. The urgency of SDG targets 14.4 and 14.6 to be met by 2020 highlights the necessity to act swiftly and address overfishing, overcapacity, illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing and harmful fisheries subsidies. Existing political momentum needs to be translated into disciplines that are enforceable, practical and acceptable to all Member States;

13. Achieving the trade-related targets of SDG 14 requires the appropriate use of policies, investment and innovation tools to restore the productive capacity of the oceans and to increase economic benefits through sustainable marine-based value chains, particularly for coastal developing countries including SIDS and LDCs;

16. Traceability and electronic messaging systems such as the UN/FLUX standard can help prevent illegally caught fish from entering the marketplace, reduce overfishing, and promote sustainable fisheries management, and were encouraged for adoption;

20. Connectivity, sustainable transport and resilient port infrastructure are essential to bring seafood and other marine products to markets at the lowest cost possible.