



## BACKGROUND NOTE

### Global Oceans Action Summit for Food Security and Blue Growth THE HAGUE, THE NETHERLANDS,

22 - 25 APRIL 2014

#### 1. Introduction

The *Global Oceans Action Summit for Food Security and Blue Growth* will be held in The Hague, the Netherlands from 22<sup>nd</sup> to 25<sup>th</sup> April 2014.

Hosted by the Government of the Netherlands with support from the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), The World Bank Group, and partner countries: Grenada, Indonesia, Mauritius, Norway, and the United States of America, this Summit will bring together global leaders, ocean practitioners, business, science, civil society and international agencies to share experiences and demonstrate how combined action in partnerships for healthier and productive oceans can drive sustainable growth and shared prosperity while preserving natural capital for future generations.

The Summit will highlight the need to address the next frontier of successful integrated approaches that attract public-private partners, secure financing and catalyze good ocean governance while reconciling tensions and balancing priorities between (i) growth and conservation, (ii) private sector interests and equitable benefits for communities and (iii) Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZs) and Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction (ABNJ) policy frameworks.

#### 2. Background

##### 2.1. The Opportunity

Eighty percent of all life on the planet is found in oceans. The ocean provides a global life support system that helps **regulate climate** and supplies half of the planet's oxygen needed for one in every two breaths that we take. Fish contributes 17 percent of the animal protein consumed by the world's population and thus is a critical source of **food security**, with demand expected to double in the next twenty years (FAO, 2012). Currently 3 billion people depend on fish for twenty percent of their average per capita intake of animal protein. About 660–820 million livelihoods (or 10–12 percent of the world's population) are dependent on the fisheries. 97 percent of the livelihoods that are directly dependent on fisheries and aquaculture occur in developing countries, mostly via small-scale operations in Asia (FAO, 2010). Ocean **revenues** include some US\$161 billion annually from marine and coastal tourism, in addition to a growing range of products from the oceans, such as antibiotics, antifreeze,

antifouling paints and a number of pharmaceutical products (UNEP, 2006). The ocean also delivers essential **public goods and services** such as protection from natural hazards for the growing coastal population and carbon storage – in the form of ‘blue carbon’ sinks such as mangrove forests, sea grass beds and other vegetated ocean habitats, –which can sequester up to five times the amounts of carbon absorbed by tropical forests (Nellemann et al., 2009).

## **2.2. The Challenge**

Today, the world faces one of the biggest challenges of the 21st century: how to feed 9 billion people by 2050 in the face of climate change, economic and financial uncertainty and the growing competition for natural resources. The multiple challenges of food insecurity, climate change, degradation of ecosystems, and economic recession require an integrated response and an urgent transition of the world economy towards a sustainable, inclusive and resource efficient path.

Healthy oceans are one key to rising to this challenge. But three key threats to ocean health – overfishing, habitat change and pollution – affect our ability to use the oceans to drive strong economies and healthy communities. Actions to solve these threats have often been unsuccessful. Moreover, they have contributed to the tensions between (i) growth and conservation, (ii) private sector interests and equitable benefits for communities and (iii) EEZs and ABNJ policy frameworks.

## **2.3. Rising to the challenge**

This is why the Global Oceans Action Summit is bringing together stakeholders from across the public-private-civil society spheres to co-design solutions that can achieve healthy oceans at the speed and scale necessary to meet the challenges we face.

## **2.4. Breaking Down Barriers**

The tensions mentioned above have been highlighted at recent Ocean Summits and meetings and through new initiatives that focus, for example, either on EEZs or on the high seas. The Global Oceans Action Summit aims to bring together stakeholders from various “schools of thought” to examine success stories where competing interests can be reconciled with a view to identifying actions, partnerships and financing that can help scale up activities that ultimately result in shared prosperity today and for future generations.

### **Balancing Growth and Conservation**

Governments, policy makers and international institutions keen to boost food security and eradicate poverty face a careful balancing act between conservation and growth. While fisheries and aquaculture generate considerable social and economic benefits for hundreds of millions of people around the world, and have the potential to increase their contribution to human well-being and growth, these activities have inevitable impacts on biodiversity and the environment. These are impacts that, if not managed and controlled effectively, can cause irreversible damage to aquatic ecosystems and resources that are additional to the impacts of other human activities, such as those due to coastal and offshore



mining, oil and gas extraction, coastal and riparian zone development, pollution from land-based sources, which are often not adequately managed.

Sustainable development, based on the pillars of ecological, social and economic sustainability, entails reconciling several intersecting agendas. Often agendas are promoted that reflect *either* the economic, or social or conservation objectives. However, there is a clear need to address *all* three pillars concurrently. There is also a need to link institutions that deal directly or indirectly with ocean issues across spatial and jurisdictional scales in ways that are efficient and effective, avoiding duplications and conflicts.

National governments can play a key role in addressing these challenges, acting on their own and in concert with others through international treaties including Regional Fisheries Management Organizations (RFMOs) and other regional mechanisms such as the Regional Seas Programme of the United Nations Environment Programme's (UNEP). FAO is working on many fronts to find solutions to these problems. Major areas of activity include, for example, development and implementation of the ecosystem approach to fisheries and aquaculture, eco-labelling and certification, cooperation with CITES on commercially-exploited aquatic species, management of bycatch and discards and others.

***The Global Oceans Action Summit for Food Security and Blue Growth highlights solutions for meeting this balance between growth and conservation with a view to delivering actionable approaches towards projects for scaled-up action.***

### **Balancing private sector growth and equitable benefits for communities**

More than 38 million people are directly employed by capture fisheries, including marine and inland fisheries. Over 90% of these work in small-scale fisheries, primarily in developing countries. Globally, fish provide about 3 billion people with almost 20 percent of their average per capita intake of animal protein. In some countries, including Small Island Developing States (SIDS), Bangladesh, Ghana and Indonesia, fish accounts for more than 50 percent of the animal protein intake.

While governments can create legal, regulatory and policy frameworks and incentives, it is the private sector that is the main driver of economic growth through investment and entrepreneurial initiatives which range from global billion-dollar corporations that are vertically integrated to small-scale fishers.

Given the wide range of actors in the private sector and the differences in their goals, in the context of Blue Growth, efficiency not only relates to the monetary return on investment in sustainable fisheries but also the wider societal gains – in particular from small-scale operations for local economic growth, poverty reduction and food security.

Strong momentum exists to reshape the context in which the private sector, independently of its scale, currently operates in order to ensure sustainable growth with equitable benefits for communities. For example, one priority action identified during the recent Asia Conference on Oceans, Food Security and Blue

Growth (ACOFB, 2013) is “Ensuring that opportunities for blue growth do not marginalize small scale, local community-level fisheries and aquaculture.” Along the same lines, in the Rio+20 outcome document, *The Future We Want*, members of the international community agreed to “encourage the private sector to contribute to decent work for all and job creation for both women and men, and particularly for the youth, including through partnerships with small and medium enterprises as well as cooperatives.” These objectives require policies that create incentives for producers and consumers to adopt sustainable practices and behavior.

These principles for private sector growth and equitable benefits are also enshrined in a number of internationally adopted instruments developed to guide policy makers in decision-making on development in fisheries, namely the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries, the Right to Food Guidelines, the Voluntary Guidelines for the Responsible Governance of Land, Fisheries and Forestry in the Context of National Food Security and the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries (SSF Guidelines).

***The Global Oceans Action Summit for Food Security and Blue Growth*** will highlight examples of success where large scale private sector and small scale operators have worked harmoniously and provide frameworks and partnerships for scaled-up action.

### **Uniting EEZ and ABNJ Agendas**

There are a number of common issues that have an impact in EEZs and in the high seas in regard to resource use and conservation. A few of the most important include Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing, overcapacity, harmful subsidies, and pollution.

IUU Fishing is a serious global problem and increasingly is seen as one of the main obstacles to the achievement of sustainable world fisheries. IUU fishing respects neither national boundaries nor international attempts to manage fishing on the high seas. Many factors contribute to circumstances where IUU fishing flourishes, including economic incentives which negate attempts to make fishing behaviour more responsible. It thrives where limited capacity or weak governance arrangements prevail and is further encouraged by the failure of countries to meet their international responsibilities. It puts unsustainable pressure on fish stocks, marine wildlife and habitats, subverts labour standards and distorts markets.

Although the overall extent and value of IUU fishing is very difficult to estimate with any real degree of accuracy, recent studies<sup>1</sup> put the worldwide value of IUU fishing at between \$10 billion and \$23.5 billion annually. IUU fishing imposes significant economic costs on some of the poorest countries in the world where dependency on fisheries for food, livelihoods and revenues is high and undermines efforts by these countries to manage natural resources as a contribution to growth and welfare.

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<sup>1</sup> Estimating the Worldwide Extent of Illegal Fishing, 2009 David J. Agnew, John Pearce, Ganapathiraju Pramod, Tom Peatman, Reg Watson, John R. Beddington, Tony J. Pitcher <http://www.plosone.org/article/info:doi/10.1371/journal.pone.0004570>



Another common issue of the ABNJ and coastal fisheries which directly affects overfishing is the large number of harmful subsidies that have resulted in marine capture fisheries underperforming as a global asset. Perverse subsidies to the fisheries sector (such as for vessel construction and fuel tax waivers) reduce the real costs of fishing and enable fishing to continue when it would otherwise be unprofitable. The Sunken Billions study<sup>2</sup> shows that the difference between the potential and actual net economic benefits from marine fisheries is in the order of \$50 billion per year – equivalent to more than half the value of the global seafood trade. The cumulative economic loss to the global economy over the last three decades is estimated to be in the order of two trillion dollars. In many countries the catching operations are buoyed up by subsidies, so that the global fishery economy to the point of landing (the harvest sub-sector) is in deficit.

From small-scale artisanal fisheries to large-scale industrial fisheries, and whether in national waters or ABNJ, the related issues of who has the right to exploit the fishery's resources and the nature of that right are a key part of the sustainable management of the resource. The experience to date with a variety of types of user access systems – customary, traditional, and current – provides a basis for assessing when the use of such systems may help in ensuring that fishing effort is commensurate with the maximum sustainable productivity of fisheries resources. This experience may also help determine when such systems can provide fishers and fishing communities with a tool that can create incentives for conserving and responsibly using fisheries resources.

An additional issue linking the ABNJ and EEZs is the growing impacts of marine pollution on ocean living resources. Marine pollution includes marine litter and debris, waste water and excess agricultural nutrients. Marine debris includes any anthropogenic, manufactured, or processed solid material (regardless of size) discarded, disposed of, lost or abandoned that ends up in the marine environment. It includes, but is not limited to, plastics, metals, glass, concrete and other construction materials, paper, polystyrene, rubber, rope, textiles and hazardous materials, such as munitions, asbestos and medical waste. Marine debris may result from activities on land or at sea and is a complex cultural and multi-sectoral problem that exacts tremendous ecological, economic, and social costs around the globe. In the few decades since mass production of plastic products commenced, plastic debris, driven by currents, has accumulated in the open ocean, on shorelines of even the most remote islands and in the deep sea.

Environmental pollutants comprise one of the major hurdles the marine food web is facing today. Contaminants that accumulate in wildlife, including fish, cause health problems for them and for humans who eat them. Reproductive and developmental problems, behavioral problems, diseases, and cancers have all been linked to chemical pollutants. Marine mammals, birds and fish may be even more sensitive than humans to low concentrations of these pollutants<sup>3</sup>.

***The Global Oceans Action Summit for Food Security and Blue Growth brings together EEZ and ABNJ stakeholders around common issues which, if***

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<sup>2</sup> The Sunken Billions; The economic justification for fisheries reform. 2009. The World Bank and FAO.

<sup>3</sup> From: <http://namanet.org/our-work/ecosystem-protection/toxic-pollution-fisheries>

*addressed holistically, can have positive impacts on ocean health, as a whole.*

## 2.5. Turning the Tide: delivering solutions

Restoring the health of the world's oceans is a global challenge that can be solved. The challenge is to accelerate efforts to implement the commitments the world has already made and to seize this opportunity for the global economy. The institutional failures that have created the conditions for "The Tragedy of the Commons" with open access to ocean resources can be addressed effectively. A growing number of examples from around the world have shown that global coordinated action to increase investment can unlock the oceans' economic potential, benefiting millions of people.

Taken altogether, whether addressing growth and conservation, private sector and equitable benefits for communities or ABNJ and EEZ, these solutions should also help address fundamental ocean issues such as:

- (a) **Sustainable seafood and livelihoods from capture fisheries and aquaculture; with a view towards,** (i) Significantly increasing global food fish production from both sustainable aquaculture and sustainable fisheries by adopting best practices and reducing environmental risk to stimulate investment; and (ii) Enabling the world's overfished stocks to be rebuilt and increase the annual net benefits of capture fisheries by at least \$20 billion, including through reducing subsidies that promote overfishing and by encouraging responsible governance of tenure.
- (b) **Critical coastal habitat and biodiversity protection, with a view towards:** (i) Halving the current rate of natural habitat loss and reducing habitat degradation and fragmentation, by applying ecosystem-based approaches to management; (ii) Increasing marine managed and protected areas, and other effective area-based conservation measures, to include at least 10% of coastal and marine areas; and (iii) Conserving and restoring natural coastal habitats to reduce vulnerability and increase resilience to climate change impacts.
- (c) **Pollution Reduction, with a view towards:** (i) Reducing pollution to levels not detrimental to ecosystem function and biodiversity; and (ii) Supporting implementation of the Global Program of Action to reduce pollution, particularly from marine litter, waste water and excess agricultural nutrients, and further develop consensus for identifying cost-effective interventions to reduce these pollutants.

Oceans and food security need to be at the heart of sustainable development and poverty eradication efforts. Healthy productive oceans are vital to global human welfare and are therefore part of the solution.

## 3. The Global Oceans Action Summit for Food Security and Blue Growth

**The Global Oceans Action Summit for Food Security and Blue Growth** will focus on surfacing solutions to meet the needs of countries to restore their oceans and use them to alleviate poverty, share prosperity and better absorb global shocks.



**The Summit** will emphasize Three Thematic Areas (growth and conservation; private sector and equitable benefits for communities; ABNJ/EEZ) with a view towards breaking down silos in the world of ocean policy and action while promoting integrated approaches. The Summit will focus on how to use this shared understanding to develop action-oriented partnerships, frameworks for existing and new financing mechanisms, and models for good governance.

### **3.1. Key Objectives**

- Identifying solutions to ocean threats that can be replicated at speed and scale to deliver healthy oceans for every country.
- Identifying financial mechanisms and mobilizing partnerships to better fulfil the obligations embedded in UNCLOS.
- Using these solutions and the shared understandings across important ocean themes to serve as inputs to the post-2015 sustainable development framework.

### **3.2. Summit Logistics**

#### ***Timing, program and location:***

The Government of the Netherlands will host the *Global Oceans Action Summit for Food Security and Blue Growth* from 21<sup>st</sup> to 25<sup>th</sup> April 2014 at The World Forum in The Hague, The Netherlands. A ministerial dialogue will be convened on Thursday April 24<sup>th</sup>.

Tentatively, the program will include:

- Day 1: Opening. Positioning the Oceans. Global State of the Oceans and challenges per region / Working Group sessions.
- Day 2: Working group sessions to examine success stories where competing interests can be reconciled with a view to identifying actions, partnerships and financing that can help scale up activities that ultimately result in shared prosperity.
- Day 3: High-Level Summit Event. Solution and action oriented engagement amongst stakeholders, including Ministers and CEOs.
- Day 4: Report back from High Level Event and Closing session.

#### ***Participation:***

Participants are being invited from governments, private sector, the scientific community, local community and indigenous people, international organizations, non-governmental organizations, philanthropic foundations.

#### ***More information:***

Further information on the Summit will be available on the website:

[www.globaloceansactionsummit.com](http://www.globaloceansactionsummit.com)