

**2022 UNITED NATIONS OCEAN CONFERENCE  
ONLINE STAKEHOLDER BRIEFING: INPUTS TO THE POLITICAL  
DECLARATION ZERO DRAFT**

23 March 2022  
10:30 – 11:30 AM (EDT, New York)

**Intervention  
Philip Chou (Oceana)**

Your excellencies and esteemed colleagues,

Thank you for this opportunity to provide input to the 2022 UN Ocean Conference Political Declaration Zero Draft.

We would like to recognize the importance of improving transparency in marine fisheries governance in order to achieve “scaling up ocean action based on science and innovation,” our 2022 UN Ocean Conference theme, and propose its inclusion in the Political Declaration.

Seafood is the world’s largest globally traded food commodity and the last food that humans still hunt on a global scale – yet so much about it remains in the dark. Who is catching what, where, and when. But it’s the very information we need to make science-based decisions about our fisheries, to ensure our protected areas remain protected, to rein in rampant illegal fishing that is estimated to constitute one quarter of all marine catch.

Improved fisheries transparency benefits those that rely on fish the most for their livelihoods, food security, and health. Artisanal and small-scale fishers often bear the brunt of impact from illegal fishing activities. A new study being published today (23 March 2022 at 2pm EDT) in [Science Advances](#), reveals at least one-third of all recorded offenses, are associated with just 20 companies and 450 industrial fishing vessels. “Small-scale fishers, who are often more visible to law enforcement due to their proximity to the coast, are disproportionately criminalized for fishing crimes while industrial fishers are frequently let off the hook,” says Dr. Belhabib.

[Global fisheries can provide up to one billion healthy seafood meals per day if we properly manage the ocean’s resources](#). However, without improved transparency this cannot happen. Global transparency policies can underpin effective governance, whether it’s the use of technology to gather detailed data on catches or leveraging open data to drive governments toward more sustainable practices. Indeed, a fundamental shift toward transparency in fisheries governance is critical to the future of our ocean.

Respectfully submitted,

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