

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)

Written Statement
Nichola Dyer (Safe Seaweed Coalition)

Excellencies,

Thank you for holding this consultation.

Seaweeds are used as food, feed, hydrocolloids, biofertilizers and biostimulants, as well as a host of other uses such as in cosmetics, pharmaceuticals, biopackaging, textiles, waste treatment, carbon capture and sequestration, and bioenergy. With about 12,000 species, potential uses are still being discovered.

Seaweed has significant potential to help achieve multiple SDG14 targets, including by reducing nutrient pollution; strengthening the resilience of, and regenerating, coastal and marine ecosystems; reoxygenating and deacidifying ocean waters; and improving the livelihoods of producers including in small island states.

Seaweed also contributes to multiple other SDGs, among them achieving zero hunger and better health through improved nutrition, and could reduce greenhouse gases significantly through sequestering carbon and reducing ruminant methane emissions. Yet, seaweed remains a largely untapped resource. Historically it has been overlooked by much of the world beyond a few countries in Asia.

Nonetheless, this sector is growing. World seaweed cultivation production increased a thousand-fold between 1950 and 2019, from 34.7 thousand tonnes to 34.7 million tonnes. By 2020, the global seaweed industry was valued at over US \$11 billion, up from \$6 billion in 2003. The 2021 Seaweed Vision Statement published by the United Nations Global Compact notes there is considerable potential to scale up seaweed cultivation globally, from roughly 2,000 km² in 2017, with growth driven by seaweed's multiple economic uses.

On behalf of seaweed stakeholders, we respectfully request that this Political Declaration recognize the distinctness of seaweed and its multifaceted contributions to sustainability. We recognize that space for additional language is extremely limited and therefore propose the following insertion of just four words into Paragraph 11b of the Declaration, after the phrase "including small-scale and artisanal fisheries,": **aquaculture and seaweed producers,"**.

Thank you for your attention and your consideration.