

## UN OCEAN CONFERENCE

### Interactive Dialogue 4: “Making Fisheries Sustainable and providing access for small-scale artisanal fishers to marine resources and markets”

#### Keynote Speech

By

Dr QU Dongyu, FAO Director-General

29 June 2022

Excellences,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. I wish to thank the **Governments of Portugal and Kenya** for working with the UN to bring together so many of the world’s leading actors and stakeholders to scale-up ocean actions to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.
2. Today over 800 million people go hungry and more than 3 billion people cannot afford a healthy diet.
3. As FAO Director-General - the leading agency to end hunger and all forms of malnutrition, while sustainably managing nature’s assets - my message today is simple:
4. **Our oceans, rivers and lakes can help feed the world, but only if we use their valuable resources responsibly, sustainably and equitably.**
5. Aquatic food production is more efficient, has less impact on the environment and emits lower greenhouse gas emissions than land-based animal production systems.
6. Aquatic foods are a critical source of animal proteins and micronutrients, essential to health and development, and play a vital role in food and nutrition security, especially for vulnerable coastal populations.
7. However, few countries include fish in their food security and nutrition strategies.
8. Sustainable and inclusive agrifood systems can contribute to improving rights, incomes and livelihoods of the 600 million people depending on fisheries and aquaculture, the majority in the Global South.
9. We need to urgently transform our aquatic food systems to be more efficient, more inclusive, more resilient, more sustainable, and equitable.
10. **Achieving SDG14 is vital.**

11. **FAO, as the main global forum for fisheries and aquaculture issues, is the custodian of indicators for 4 SDG14 Targets, and co-custodian for another 3.**

12. **So where do we stand?**

13. **Target 14.4** calls to **restore fish stocks** so that they may produce maximum sustainable yield by 2020.

14. The indicator for this target is the proportion of fish stocks within biologically sustainable levels.

15. **Unfortunately, this target was not achieved.**

16. The fraction of stocks fished at sustainable levels declined by 1.2% from 2017 to 2019.

17. However, if weighted by volume, 82.5% of marine fisheries landings are from biologically sustainable stocks - an almost 4% rise since the last assessment.

18. This shows that effectively managed fisheries stocks are rebuilding.

19. **In order to meet Target 14.4, effective management is the best conservation.**

Dear Colleagues,

20. **Target 14.6** seeks to **eliminate subsidies that contribute to overfishing and Illegal Unregulated and Unreported fisheries.**

21. For this, FAO assesses progress by Members in implementing international instruments to combat IUU fishing.

22. IUU fishing is a complex challenge, but we are making progress.

23. We have globally binding tools, such as the **1995 UN Fish Stocks Agreement**; the **1995 Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries**; and the **2009 FAO Port State Measures Agreement**.

24. FAO continues to support Members in implementing these global and regional instruments, working together with civil society, the private sector, academia and the UN wide system.

25. In this regard, I wish to congratulate **WTO** for the unprecedented agreement reached on fisheries subsidies.

26. FAO is committed to support the WTO and its Members in implementing this agreement.

27. **Bottom line: to meet Target 14.6 we must ENFORCE what is IN FORCE.**

28. **Target 14.7** aims to **increase the contribution of fisheries to GDP**, particularly in Small Island Developing States and Least Developed Countries.

29. **To meet Target 14.7 we must upgrade and enhance existing value aquatic food chains,** and initial analyses indicate this target is trending positively.
30. The potential for greater economic returns is real, but only if we implement effective management that recovers stocks, restores degraded ecosystems and distributes benefits equitably.
31. Finally, we have **Target 14.b, to provide access for small-scale artisanal fishers to marine resources and markets.**
- 32. This is the most crucial of all in relation to sustainable livelihoods.**
33. As the focus of this Dialogue, I am pleased to say that **the target is trending positively.**
34. More and more national frameworks recognize and protect rights for small-scale fishers, who account for 90% of the sector's workforce, and produce 40% of the world's catch.
35. Building the resilience of small-scale fishers and supporting their inclusion in decision-making processes are key to ensuring long-term sustainable fisheries and healthy oceans.
36. This year, as we celebrate the **International Year of Artisanal Fisheries and Aquaculture,** we have a big opportunity to further advance Target 14.b.

Dear Friends,

37. **SDG14 - the least-funded of all the SDGs** - can only be achieved through strategic and innovative partnerships, commitments and financing,
38. To deliver effective management, eliminate harmful subsidies, enhance economic value and secure equitable small-scale fisheries.
39. However, to feed the world with aquatic foods we must also consider **aquaculture**, which is not directly reflected in SDG14.
40. Beyond food, aquaculture offers new opportunities and markets to support millions of livelihoods, including women, youth and indigenous communities.
41. To address today's challenges, the **FAO Strategic Framework 2022-31** supports the urgent transformation of global agrifood systems, including aquatic food systems,
- 42. For better production, better nutrition, a better environment and a better life for all, leaving no one behind.**
43. To deliver on this vision, FAO promotes **Blue Transformation**, with 3 core objectives:
- **One:** Sustainable aquaculture intensification and expansion;
  - **Two:** Effective management of all fisheries; and

- **Three:** Upgraded value chains that ensure the social, economic and environmental viability of aquatic food systems.

44. With your engagement and the commitment of **global ocean champions**, we can achieve these objectives.

45. We have less than 8 years to meet SDG14 and the 2030 Agenda.

46. Let us continue to work together in an efficient, effective and coherent manner to achieve SDG14.

47. Let us use today's Dialogue and this important UN Conference to boost and accelerate our actions for our oceans, people, prosperity and planet.

48. Thank you.