

Interactive Dialogue 2

Managing, protecting, conserving and restoring marine and coastal ecosystems

FAO Statement

Tuesday 28th June 2022, 15:00-18:00hrs Tejo Hall

3 minute statement

- Chairperson, thank you for giving me the floor. Distinguished delegates,
- Recognizing negative trajectories in the sustainability of some aquatic foods, including the need to rebuild some fish stocks from depleted levels, FAO leads on a number of initiatives to support its Members recover these natural resources and restore their resilience;
- The UN Decade of Ecosystem Restoration 2021-2030, has the aim of supporting and scaling up efforts to prevent, halt and reverse the degradation of ecosystems worldwide and raise awareness of the importance of successful ecosystem restoration;
- FAO co-leads with UNEP the establishment and implementation of the UN Decade. The Co-Leads rely on the collaboration and participation of the Rio conventions, other relevant multilateral environmental agreements, entities of the United Nations system, business, and civil society organisations to ramp up restoration activity over the next decade;
- The need for restoration is found across all ecosystems. Marine ecosystems, from coastal to deep sea, are showing increased impact of human action, with coastal ecosystems in particular showing large historical losses of extent and condition. Deterioration of these ecosystems reduces service provision, as well as livelihood opportunities;
- For aquatic systems, freshwater ecosystems have the highest rates of decline, with only 13 per cent of the wetland present in 1700 remaining in at the turn of the Century;
- I must note that the term “Ecosystem restoration” is interpreted differently by the broad range of actors involved in this endeavour, ranging from “restoration” as a return to a non-degraded – thus, fully productive – state, to “restoration” as meaning the re-establishment of the original or “natural” state of an ecosystem;
- As the specialized agency of the United Nations leading international efforts to defeat global hunger and malnutrition, FAO takes an active role in framing a vision for the implementation of the Decade from the perspective of its mandate.

- For aquatic systems, the primary objective of FAO is restoring ecosystems to their full productive capacity — improving trade-offs between economic, social and ecological objectives, ensuring the sustainability and efficiency of these systems and reducing their overall footprint.
- To date FAO and UNEP and partners have established 5 Decade Taskforces, i) Best Practices (FAO), ii) Monitoring (FAO), iii) Science (IUCN), iv) Finance (World Bank), and v) Youth (youth self-organized). A Multi-Partner Trust Fund (MPTF) has also been established, with World Restoration Flagship projects in the process of being funded.
- FAO has begun to publish products to raise awareness of current, ongoing and future work.
- In the case of World Restoration Flagships, FAO and UNEP received 154 Expressions of interest and 73 government-endorsed nominations. Together, they cover 74 countries, representing major ecosystems. 20+ best Flagships were selected for advocacy, of which a few selected initiatives are to receive funding from Multi-Partner Trust Fund.
- Excellencies, we have the rest of the Decade to ensure we create ‘A world where — for the health and well-being of all life on Earth and that of future generations — the relationship between humans and nature has been restored, where the area of healthy ecosystems is increasing and where ecosystem loss, fragmentation and degradation have been eliminated’.
- Thank you for your attention.