

UN Ocean Conference

Plenary Statement (5 minutes)

By

Dr QU Dongyu, FAO Director-General (5 minutes)

30 June 2022

Thank you, Chairperson, for giving me the floor

Excellences,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. I wish to thank the Governments of Portugal and Kenya for their work together with the United Nations, under the coordination of Ambassador Peter Thomson, to bring together the global ocean community.
2. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) is the UN Specialized Agency as a platform for policy consultation and technical support on agrifood systems, while sustainably managing and utilizing the world's natural resources, such as forestry, land (soil), water, including underwater like lakes, rivers, oceans, seas and marine resources.
3. FAO is the main global forum for discussions and decisions on matters related to fisheries and aquaculture.
4. Achieving SDG14 is essential not only for the ocean, but also to reduce poverty and eradicate hunger.
5. While the world faces daunting challenges, there is great opportunity in the fisheries and aquaculture sector.
6. My message today is simple:
7. Our oceans, rivers and lakes can help feed the world, but only if we use their valuable resources responsibly, sustainably and equitably.

8. Aquatic food production is more efficient, has less impact on the environment and emits lower greenhouse gas emissions than most land-based animal protein production systems.
9. Sustainable and inclusive aquatic food systems improve rights, incomes and livelihoods of fishing and fish farming communities.
10. Aquatic foods offer highly accessible and affordable sources of animal proteins and micronutrients, playing a vital role in the food and nutrition security of many people across the world, particularly vulnerable coastal populations.
11. But, without urgent action to conserve, protect, restore, and sustainably manage marine ecosystems, the ocean will not be able to maintain its significant role in providing food security and economic prosperity.
12. We need to urgently transform our aquatic food systems to make them more efficient, more inclusive, more resilient and more sustainable,
13. So that they can better contribute to better production, better nutrition, a better environment and a better life for all, leaving no one behind.
14. FAO's Blue Transformation programme offers high-impact solutions to meet the twin challenges of food security and environmental sustainability.
15. Blue Transformation has three core objectives:
 1. Sustainable aquaculture intensification and expansion;
 2. Effective management of all fisheries; and
 3. Upgraded value chains that ensure the social, economic and environmental viability of aquatic food systems.

Dear Colleagues,

16. Global fisheries and aquaculture production is at a record high.

17. Aquaculture accounts for half the aquatic foods we eat and offers great potential to feed our growing population.
18. Expanding aquaculture production will support millions of livelihoods, including women, youth and Indigenous Peoples.
19. We need to harness technological innovation, promote investment policies, ensure adequate biosecurity and disease controls,
20. To ensure that aquaculture provides increased economic and employment opportunities, and health benefits where they are needed most.
21. Blue Transformation requires commitment from governments, the private sector, academia and civil society, and all stakeholders.
22. Proactive public and private partnerships are needed to improve production, reduce food loss and waste and enhance equitable access to lucrative markets.
23. It is critical that aquatic foods be included in national food security and nutrition strategies with enabling policies on investment and innovation.
24. By working together in an efficient, effective and coherent manner, we can achieve SDG 14 and the 2030 Agenda – we have less than 8 years to do so.
25. FAO is committed to continue to fully support its Members to boost and accelerate actions for our blue planet, people and prosperity.
26. Thank you.