2022 United Nations Ocean Conference Side Event

Launch of the 2022 edition of the World Fisheries and Aquaculture Report (SOFIA 2022)

29 of June 2022, 13:15-14:30, Plenary Hall – Altice Arena

Organized by: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)

Background on the event (one paragraph)

The State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture (SOFIA) is a FAO biennial flagship report which analyses the status and trends in fisheries and aquaculture at a global and regional level. It is a critical reference for governments, policymakers, practitioners, academics and civil society organizations as it provides the latest available data and information aimed at advancing the sustainable development of the sector, and increasing its contribution to global food security, nutrition and livelihoods. Referencing the latest available fisheries and aquaculture statistics, SOFIA 2022 presents the latest trends, development patterns and challenges faced by the sector. The SOFIA 2022 report also informs on the status of global stocks, which is vital for the monitoring of SDG 14.4, and outlines a pathway towards 'Blue Transformation', a vision aimed at enhancing aquatic food systems and their potential to sustainably feed the world's growing population, while protecting the environment.

Key Issues discussed (5- 8 bullet points)

1. **Global fisheries and aquaculture production is at a record high and the sector will play an increasingly important role in providing food and nutrition in the future**. Total fisheries and aquaculture production reached a record 214 million tonnes in 2020, comprising 178 million tonnes of aquatic animals and 36 million tonnes of algae, largely due to the growth of aquaculture, particularly in Asia.
2. **Aquaculture has great potential to feed and nourish the world's growing population, but growth must be sustainable**. In 2020, global aquaculture production reached a record 122.6 million tonnes, with a total value of USD 281.5 billion. Aquatic animals accounted for 87.5 million tonnes and algae comprised 35.1 million tonnes.
3. **The world's consumption of aquatic foods has increased significantly in recent years and will continue to rise**. Global consumption of aquatic foods (excluding algae) has increased at an average annual rate of 3.0 percent since 1961, compared with a population growth rate of 1.6 percent. On a per capita basis, consumption of aquatic food grew from an average of 9.9 kg in the 1960s to a record high of 20.5 kg in 2019, while it slightly declined to 20.2 kg in 2020.

4. **Fishery resources continue to decline due to overfishing, pollution, poor management and other factors, but the number of landings from biologically sustainable stocks is on the rise**. The fraction of fishery stocks within biologically sustainable levels decreased to 64.6 percent However, 82.5 percent of the 2019 landings were from biologically sustainable stocks, a 3.8 percent improvement from 2017. Effective fisheries management has been proven to successfully rebuild stocks and increase catches within ecosystem boundaries.
5. **Aquatic animal production is forecast to grow another 14 percent by 2030. It is vital this growth goes hand in hand with safeguarding ecosystems, reducing pollution, protecting biodiversity and ensuring social equity**. FAO's outlook for fisheries and aquaculture to 2030 projects an increase in production, consumption and trade, albeit at slower growth rates. Total production of aquatic animals is expected to reach 202 million tonnes in 2030, thanks mainly to sustained growth of aquaculture, projected to reach 100 million tonnes for the first time in 2027.
6. **Millions of lives and livelihoods are supported by aquatic food systems. Yet, many small-scale producers, especially women, are vulnerable with precarious working conditions. Building their resilience is key to sustainability and equitable development**. Of the 58.5 million people employed in the primary fisheries and aquaculture sector in 2020, 21 percent were women, rising to about 50 percent for those employed in the entire aquatic value chain (including preand post-harvest). It is estimated that about 600 million livelihoods depend at least partially on fisheries and aquaculture, when subsistence and secondary sector workers, and their dependents are included.

Key recommendations for action (5 - 6 bullet points)

a. **Aquatic food systems are a powerful solution. Blue Transformation can meet the twin challenges of food security and environmental sustainability**. FAO is committed to Blue Transformation, a visionary strategy that aims to enhance the role of aquatic food systems in feeding the world's growing population by providing the legal, policy and technical frameworks required to sustain growth and innovation. Blue Transformation seeks to promote sustainable aquaculture expansion and intensification, effective management of all fisheries, and upgrading of aquatic value chains.
b. **Blue Transformation requires a commitment from the public and private sectors if we are to achieve the United Nations 2030 Agenda, particularly since the COVID-19 pandemic has aggravated negative trends in food security and poverty erradication**. To maximize the opportunities that fisheries and aquaculture offer, Blue Transformation requires a commitment from governments, the private sector and civil society, including fisherfolk. The 2022 International Year of Artisanal Fisheries and Aquaculture reminds us of the important contribution of small-scale producers.
c. **FAO is committed to continue to support its Members to boost and accelerate actions for our blue planet, people and prosperity.**

Voluntary Commitments (one paragraph)

FAO made 12 commitments at UNOC for a value of over 140 million USD, reflecting a strong determination of the Organization and its member countries to achieve a concrete transformation of aquatic food systems in years to come. Key commitments include: a) USD 1.5 million to implement Voluntary Guidelines on Small-Scale Fisheries; b) USD 14 million global support to eliminate illegal, unregulated and unreported fishing; c) USD 53 million to support the development of upgraded fisheries and aquaculture value chains, particularly in Small Island Developing States; and d) USD 25 million to achieve the strategy on fisheries and aquaculture sustainability in the Mediterranean and Black Sea.