



## 2022 United Nations Ocean Conference Side Event

### *The Road to Sustainable Aquaculture*

28 June 2022, 13.00-14.15 WET

Side Event Room 1, Conference venue, the Altice Arena

Organised by the Aquaculture Stewardship Council (ASC), Friends of Ocean Action, Certification and Ratings Collaboration

#### **Background on the event**

Sustainable aquaculture has huge potential to meet the world's growing protein needs in a nutritious way and with a lower impact on the environment than most land-based agriculture. The FAO anticipates that aquaculture will continue to drive the growth in global fish production by accounting for 106 million metric tonnes in 2030: an increase of 22 percent or nearly 19 million tonnes compared with 2020. And with wild stocks in some regions fished to near capacity, aquaculture will contribute most of the additional fish produced and consumed in the future. Like all food systems, aquaculture presents both opportunities and challenges, particularly around health, sustainability and equity. We need to embrace a diversity of blue foods and blue food actors, foster solutions and catalyse cross-sector collaboration in order to achieve truly sustainable aquaculture.

#### **Key issues discussed**

- **Sustainable Seafood Data Tool:** Improving the sustainability of global seafood production requires a deeper, more accurate understanding of progress to date, and priority areas for improvement. To this end, ASC has joined forces with five other global certification and ratings programmes to develop an interactive [data tool](#) on the current sustainability status of seafood production. The tool provides NGOs and businesses with a more comprehensive overview of seafood sustainability.
- **ASC's evaluation against the SDGs:** The rapidly growing aquaculture sector is widely recognised as having the potential to help alleviate the world's most pressing problems, and the recent benchmarking work undertaken by ASC demonstrate the extent to which responsible aquaculture can contribute to achieving the UN 17 SDGs. ASC has developed a methodology to identify which of the SDG Targets are within the scope of ASC 'sphere

of influence”, and then carried out a quantitative materiality analysis of exactly how the ASC’s standards requirements and assurance systems precisely address the SDGs. The synopsis of the report is available [here](#).

- **Blue Food Partnership (BFP) and the “The Road to Sustainable Aquaculture”:** Launched in 2021, members of the BFP seek to build greater awareness of the critical role that blue food must play in transforming the global food system towards sustainability. The [report](#) is an anchoring reference that will support its future work and will inform policy makers, investors and the business community to mainstream blue foods into our broader food systems.
- **Recognition of opportunities in aquaculture:** more than 2500 different species are already produced for food, and about 600 of those are produced in aquaculture systems. This diversity offers significant opportunity in terms of nutrient composition across that list of species and minimising environmental impacts. Blue foods must be recognised as part of future food systems.
- **Improving feed in aquaculture:** 80% of aquaculture’s impact comes from feed. Improving production techniques and ingredients that make up feed can help alleviate pressure on the environment. Companies such as BioMar are already looking into alternative feed ingredients such as insects or microalgae instead of wild fish.

### **Key recommendations for action**

- ASC would encourage aquaculture organisations and other industries to begin mapping and objectively quantifying their detailed and substantiated progress towards meeting all relevant Sustainable Development Goals’ targets, and that such assessments is published for all stakeholders’ benefit.
- Collaborations among NGOs, certification bodies, government and industry should be promoted, especially when working on innovations within the industry.
- Communication to the general public on the most sustainable and responsible purchasing choices should be simplified in order to facilitate younger generations to make conscious decisions.
- The Certification and Ratings Collaboration’s Sustainable Seafood Data Tool shows that 48% of seafood production is unassessed. To increase knowledge of current aquaculture production we need to help major producing countries to capture data needed, address issues identified for “red-rated” production, and explore unassessed production by funding investigations into what is known, and rating its sustainability status.
- Increase efforts to make certification more accessible in certain countries (i.e. in Africa) and to small holder farmers.

### **Voluntary Commitments**

The Aquaculture Stewardship Council commits to transforming aquaculture towards environmental sustainability and social responsibility using efficient market mechanisms that create value across the chain.

Friends of Ocean Action’s Blue Food Partnership, with its members, commits to integrating the critical role of blue food in sustainability narratives at a policy level in international fora and identifying and scaling pre-competitive initiatives on priority blue food topics.