# 2022 United Nations Ocean Conference Side Event

## *Managing Antibiotic Risks in Aquaculture*

June 30th 1:30PM VIP Executive Arts Hotel Lisbon, Portugal

Organized by: Monterey Bay Aquarium in partnership with the Republic of Chile, the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, The World Bank, the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), Seafood Business for Ocean Stewardship (SeaBOS), World Fish, Consejo del Salmon (Chile), Magallanes Salmon Association (Chile), and the Aquatic Blue Food Coalition.

**Background on the event**

The world is facing increasing levels of food insecurity and global leaders are looking to aquaculture — which now accounts for over 50% of seafood production — to make progress toward the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030. Aquaculture is produced largely from small-scale actors and is projected to grow rapidly in the years ahead. Urgent challenges related to antibiotics must be addressed for aquaculture to fulfill its role supporting human health, sustainable blue foods, livelihoods, and emerging blue economies. Antibiotic usage is expected to continue to increase at all scales and there are considerable data and knowledge gaps regarding impacts on human health, socio-economic drivers, and the ecosystem (including biodiversity and climate sequestration). In 2020 – 2021, Monterey Bay Aquarium and the World Bank hosted a series of workshops with over 50 global experts to better understand the state of knowledge on antibiotic risks in aquaculture under the World Bank's One Health approach. This side event featured an overview of the state of knowledge on antibiotic impacts from aquaculture and highlighted perspectives from governments, industry, international development, and other experts to identify pathways to manage antibiotic risks in line with the SDGs.

**Key issues discussed**

- Blue Foods, and specifically aquaculture, are critical to address global food security. However, the aquaculture sector (from small scale to industrial farmers) currently relies on antibiotics that have impacts that are not well understood.
- Monterey Bay Aquarium and the World Bank identified significant knowledge gaps, including risks to the environment, animals and human health. It is critical to better

understand the relationship between risks and antibiotic impacts (including antimicrobial resistance) between the environment, animals, and human health.

- Issues related to antibiotics in aquaculture must be prioritized for further action to achieve the SDGs, including new approaches, tools, and comprehensive data collection.
- Chile, the EU, and other nations have developed new approaches (including legislation) to manage antibiotics, but in other countries there appears to be a lack of consistent approaches, including in basic data collection on antibiotic usage in aquaculture.
- Vaccine development holds some promise, but in many countries, particularly those with large numbers of small-scale actors, there is a need for more basic outreach and extension services, as well as technical capacity building. Vaccine development must also occur for those species that are for local food consumption – not just for major export products.
- Need for partnerships between aquaculture industry, NGOs, IGOs, and other actors to make progress, including South-South collaborations and engagement across the African continent generally.
- The FAO developed some new comprehensive approaches (5 steps) to address antibiotics in aquaculture – this needs further engagement and collaboration with UN Member States.

**Key recommendations for action**

- Monterey Bay Aquarium and the World Bank identified key recommendations to address antibiotic risks in aquaculture through "TIMER": Train, Invest, Monitor, Evaluate, Restrict. Full details can be found here: https://www.seafoodwatch.org/globalassets/sfw/pdf/projects/antibiotics-in-aquaculture/seafood-watch-antibiotics-in-aquaculture-white-paper-2022.pdf .
- Importantly, progress on antibiotics must recognize a One Health approach and take action that incorporates experts across disciplines, government agencies and at all levels – local to international.
- Investments are needed for small scale farmers, including in extension services and capacity building.
- Co-design is important to develop lasting solutions related to antibiotics in aquaculture and must include all of the major aquaculture-producing nations.

**Voluntary Commitments**

The Monterey Bay Aquarium Seafood Watch announced a commitment on Incorporating a Social Equity/Human Rights Based Approach to Seafood Sustainability.

The Magallanes Salmon Association announced their intention to develop a comprehensive approach and improve the sustainability of salmon farming in the Magallanes region, Chile.