



## **2022 United Nations Ocean Conference Side Event**

**Seaweed: Aquatic food solutions for people, climate and oceans**

**Tuesday, 28 June 2022**

**08:00-09:30 (WEST / Lisbon, Portugal) / 15:00-16:30 (UTC+8 /Malaysia)**

**Virtual**

**Organized by: WorldFish, Sylhet Agricultural University, WWF International and the Safe Seaweed Coalition**

### **Background on the event (one paragraph)**

An important theme that emerged from the UN Food Systems Summit 2021 and the Glasgow COP 26 meeting is the importance of aquatic foods in the food systems transformation agenda, moving the global agenda toward Zero Hunger, and as nature-based solutions to address climate risks. Aquatic foods, an encompassing term to include diverse plants, animals and microorganisms originating from various aquatic resources, are consumed by up to 3 billion people globally, and provide livelihoods for up to 800 million people around the world, especially in low- and middle-income countries. Seaweed, a low-trophic and high-biomass aquatic food, is gaining recognition for its role to provide multiple micronutrients and essential fatty acids in diets, as well as an important carbon sequestration agent and carbon sink for the ocean.

### **Key Issues discussed (5- 8 bullet points)**

- Seaweed features strongly in the diets of East and Southeast Asia, the Pacific and other coastal communities, and is gaining popularity worldwide as an innovative solution to address food and nutrition security, livelihoods and ocean health.
- As seaweed grows in popularity in Bangladesh, people are more aware of its nutritional values and women are more involved in the harvesting, processing and marketing sector. This is contributing to the life and livelihoods of the fisheries and aquaculture worker, communities and their families.
- Blue carbon has received recognition as a great source for carbon removal due to its ability to absorb carbon from the marine ecosystem. Within this line, seaweed has recently received the spotlight as a powerful ocean-based climate solution due to its potential for carbon sequestration in South Korea, Asia and beyond.
- In Indonesia, the production of seaweed, through sea-based farming, is contributing to economies and markets, as not just an export and trading source of raw material, but as

derivative products, such as fertilizer, livestock feed, and degradable packaging materials, to countries including China, Japan, UK and USA.

- Malaysia's long coastal line acts as a natural ecosystem for the growth of seaweed. Since the 1980s, the seaweed aquaculture industry has grown from a traditional to a commercial scale. Despite challenges in health, pest and climate change, science and policies can help develop new strains that are more resilient.
- This session positioned positive actions that can advance seaweed accessibility and availability to more communities, especially the poor and vulnerable groups across the world.

### **Key recommendations for action (5 - 6 bullet points)**

- The invited speakers focused on the theme of 'Scaling up Ocean Action based on Science and Innovation for the Implementation of Goal 14: Stocktaking, Partnerships and Solutions,' highlighting seaweed cultivation as a net-zero production solution to transform global food systems.
- In particular, to improve access to sustainable, healthy and climate-equitable diets, draw positive attention to the diverse, economic and social inclusive potential and spur interest to scale up the seaweed industry safely and sustainably.
- Low trophic aquatic foods, such as seaweed, were featured prominently in discussions on nature-based solutions for addressing the climate crisis and as highly nutritious superfoods. With the inclusion of seaweed on plates, in diets and production, we can promote synergies in holistic food systems.
- The revolution of seaweed cultivation has started 50 years ago in Asia, but we must implement it in other countries as well to enable its full potential. The 'Safe Seaweed Coalition' is a global platform of 800+ global, diverse seaweed stakeholders. It is a call to action for positive, faster and more efficient changes in the industry.
- New applications and trends provide opportunities for seaweed producers in developing countries, such as Bangladesh, which seeks to develop the next generation of smart, protein foods from edible seaweeds, which are cost-effective, resource-efficient, and nutritious.
- We have huge opportunities for leapfrogging by harnessing technological and digital innovations to significantly transform seaweed farming, processing, utilization and consumption and address the triple challenge of poverty, biodiversity loss and climate change through policy instruments and investments.

### **Voluntary Commitments (one paragraph)**

**N/A**