

# BLUEBIO

## ALLIANCE

**João Rito**

President of the Executive Board of BlueBio Alliance

On behalf of BlueBio Alliance and all ocean stakeholders it represents, I would like to bring your attention to the major opportunity of sustainably using the ocean as the most important means to feed millions of human lives while restoring its own health state.

Our contribution to this meeting is mainly focused on the proposed theme for the Ocean Action panels: “Promoting sustainable food production from the ocean to address food security”.

Climate change is bringing considerable challenges to our society in several ways. One example is ocean acidification. It impacts shellfish and corals’ survival and all related organisms that depend on trophic relations with these groups. Food production is also severely damaged by this phenomenon.

Ocean biodiversity is at risk due to climate change and its reduction disrupts marine ecosystems’ functions, threatening food security, mainly in coastal communities.

The Blue Foods sector (ocean-based sustainable production of human food) tackles three main pillars for the sustainable development goals:

- 1) Social
- 2) Economic
- 3) Environment

Creating conditions to foster this sector allows social development by creating jobs while qualifying populations. It is of the utmost importance when we consider the difficulties of Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and Least Developed Countries (LDCs) due to the lack of resources accessibility which would help them create the same development opportunities as other regions. Blue Foods can and should provide not only the best source of high-quality and balanced nutrition for livelihoods but also allow economic development for the outermost and impoverished regions. It is one of the most sustainable ways of producing highly nutritional food rich in essential micronutrients, which is especially important for children, lactating women and the elderly to avoid heart-related health problems.

Ocean-based sustainable food production promotes wealth in its geographical regions. More jobs mean more people contributing to the countries’ development allowing sustained economic

growth. It is even more relevant for the coastal developing countries that can create value by sustainably exploiting their natural marine resources.

Environmental sustainability is more easily achieved through Blue Foods' production practices. With a growing world population demanding gradually more food it is mandatory to bet on non-natural-resources-depleting practices. Marine blue foods have a high feed conversion efficiency, wasting less energy and uptaking fewer ingredients from other sources; have a low area footprint; small greenhouse gas emissions; and negligible utilisation of fresh water. Moreover, this sector can operate with technology that avoids the application of any potential contaminant in water promoting the highest levels of biosecurity. Bivalves and seaweeds raise the sustainability bar even further since they dispense being artificially fed.

Mobilizing finance for investment in promoting sustainable food production from the ocean is pivotal for its successful implementation and support in mitigating the impacts of climate change.

However, it is important to correctly introduce nature's cost in the common "business as usual" plans, to promote exclusively the development of the Blue Bioeconomy rather than extractive businesses, which owe all of us the economic value that was stolen from nature by extracting its natural resources indiscriminately.

The lack of funding is a real problem that bottlenecks the sector's development. However, it is an unjustified challenge since investing in this activity can be highly profitable and promote considerable economic growth. It is estimated that at least 5\$ is gained for every 1\$ invested in the blue (sustainable) food production.

Governments also have a decisive role in creating the proper regulatory framework to facilitate investments in the blue economy and foster the conditions for these businesses to become a reality.

The Ocean is under threat (our threat). It is our responsibility to eliminate this threat and reverse the damage done.

This can only be achieved by involving the international community to accelerate action in a great sense of collaboration and solidarity, ensuring no one is left behind.

BlueBio Alliance is available to responsibly and adequately contribute to this mission.

Kind regards,  
João Rito

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