

Statement by Elizabeth Wilson, Senior Director Environmental Policy, Pew Charitable Trusts
(on behalf of the Stop Funding Overfishing Coalition)

Ocean Action Panel 5: Fostering sustainable fisheries management including supporting small-scale fishers

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Thank you Mister/Madam Chair for this opportunity to speak on behalf of the Stop Funding Overfishing Coalition, a group of 180 civil society organisations encouraging the World Trade Organization to finalize its Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies.

The Agreement establishes, for the first time, a set of binding global rules that will require governments to consider the legality and sustainability of the fishing activities they subsidize. Currently, one-third of fish stocks are exploited beyond sustainable levels, yet governments have been providing an estimated US \$22 billion every year in harmful subsidies that increase fishing capacity.

This Agreement prohibits giving subsidies that enable (1) illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing, (2) fishing of overfished stocks or (3) fishing of unmanaged stocks on the high seas.

The Agreement is nearing entry into force – only 10 more ratifications are needed to hit the required 111.

We encourage WTO members to intensify and accelerate their domestic efforts to ensure the agreement is ratified as soon as possible, so it can begin delivering benefits to fish populations and local communities around the world.

Further, trade ministers had committed to continuing negotiations on outstanding issues and recommending additional rules on subsidies that lead to overfishing and overcapacity. At the WTO's 13th Ministerial Conference they came close to finalizing a deal. Governments must now redouble efforts to conclude these negotiations as soon as possible.

The Stop Funding Overfishing Coalition emphasizes the need to strengthen and ratify the WTO Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies to improve the health of ocean ecosystems and help ensure that the ocean will continue to provide food and economic security for the hundreds of millions who depend on it, now and into the future.