

## **Ocean Action Panel 9:**

### *Promoting the Role of Sustainable Food From the Ocean for Poverty Eradication and Food Security*

As the global population is projected to reach 9.7 billion by 2050, the demand for food will continue to rise significantly. However, this growing demand comes amid increasing pressure on the world's natural resources, the unavoidable impacts of climate change, and persistent inequalities. These dynamics pose serious challenges to achieving sustainable food systems and ensuring food security for all.

In addition to climate and environmental stresses, post-harvest losses and food waste remain pressing concerns in the sustainable management of aquatic resources. These inefficiencies disproportionately affect vulnerable populations, further endangering their food security. To address these challenges, there is an urgent need to strengthen governance frameworks, improve fishing and aquaculture practices, and promote the exchange of best practices.

The Philippines is proud to be the first country in Asia to develop a National Plan of Action for Small-Scale Fisheries (NPOA-SSF). This pioneering initiative reflects our recognition of the vital role small-scale fisheries play in ensuring food security, sustainable livelihoods, and improved nutrition. The NPOA-SSF is grounded in the principles of the FAO Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication.

The Philippines also continues to strengthen its aquaculture sector to enhance food security and support rural livelihoods through its aquaculture programs and fisheries technology centers. As one of the top global producers of seaweeds, the Philippines is implementing the Enhanced Philippine Seaweed Development Program, which promotes sustainable seaweed farming practices, improves post-harvest processes, and supports market access to uplift coastal communities.

We also underscore the need for enhanced private sector participation in the sustainable development of agriculture and fisheries. This includes fostering investments in infrastructure, improving market access and trade, enhancing food safety and nutrition, and reducing food loss and waste.

The Philippines encourages all countries to support inclusive business models that empower smallholders, strengthen community development, improve market access and linkages, and promote competitiveness across the food value chain. Strengthening linkages and building entrepreneurial capacity for smallholders and MSMEs is essential to developing resilient and inclusive food systems.

The Philippines calls for sustained collaboration, shared responsibility, and inclusive partnerships to build resilient, sustainable, and equitable food systems that serve the needs of present and future generations.

Thank you.