

With this – concise - intervention, Belgium would like to express its strong support for the development of a standalone SDG on oceans, seas and fisheries.

Oceans, seas and fisheries are of critical importance to all three dimensions of sustainable development, to food security and poverty eradication. Fishing provides employment, can help alleviate poverty, boosts nutritional security for millions of vulnerable people and is an essential element for economic growth.

The UN calculates that over three billion people depend on marine and coastal biodiversity for their livelihoods, and estimates the market value of marine and coastal resources and industries at \$3 trillion per year, or about 5% of global GDP^[1]. The World Bank estimates that 350 million jobs are directly linked to the ocean worldwide^[2]. Around 97% of the world's fishers live in developing countries, including Small Island Developing States (SIDS), where fish are the single most traded food product, valued at \$25 billion a year^[3].

These figures bring us to the logical conclusions that, given the critical contribution of oceans, seas and fisheries to the all three dimensions of sustainable development, and due to the reasons brought forward in the previous interventions, ocean, seas and fisheries require the focused attention that can best be secured through a standalone goal.

^[1] UNEP, 2013. Freshwater and Marine Water Systems.

^[2] World Bank, 2012. The Living Oceans

^[3] The World Bank - FAO, 2010. The Hidden Harvests - the global contribution of capture fisheries; FAO, 2012. A value-chain analysis of international fish trade and food security with an impact assessment of the small scale sector

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