

FISHING SUBSIDIES

WTO Statement

The following is the Statement from the World Trade Organization (WTO) in support of reducing fishing subsidies

WTO leaders believe that in many cases, subsidies encourage overfishing and illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing.

"We will continue to seek appropriate enhanced WTO transparency and reporting to enable the evaluation of the trade and resource effects of fisheries subsidies programmes," they stressed.

However, Indian authorities do not agree about the proposed punitive action for unauthorized fishing, which many developing countries have rejected because it goes back on the tentative agreement reached in 2008.

Referring to the fishing subsidies, New Zealand Trade Minister, Todd McClay, pointed out: "Fisheries subsidies are a serious issue. They impact negatively on trade, the environment and development".

"Fish products are one of the world's most highly traded commodities, and subsidies distort this trade. Fishing industries from many of the world's smaller states cannot afford to compete with large heavily subsidized fleets," McClay said.

The New Zealand minister is convinced it is also a serious environmental issue, since fish stocks around the world are overfished and subsidies are one of the most significant contributors to overfishing.

"And it is also a development issue, particularly in the Pacific. Subsidies contribute to there being too many vessels, and this impacts on the health of fish stocks which are one of the most significant resources available to many Pacific Islands," stressed McClay.

New Zealand has a long history of working with other countries to address fisheries subsidies, in the WTO and elsewhere. "Unfortunately, fish stocks continue to decline while fisheries subsidies continue to increase," the minister stated.

A number of countries have joined in the statement, including Australia, Argentina, Brunei Darussalam, Canada, Colombia, Costa Rica, Fiji, Iceland, Mexico, Norway, Pakistan, Paraguay, Papua New Guinea, Peru, Solomon Islands, Switzerland, United States, Uruguay, Vanuatu, Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, Grenada, St Kitts and Nevis, Senegal, St Lucia, and St Vincent and the Grenadines.

These supporting countries recognize that action at the national level should not be delayed however, and commit not to provide such subsidies. This reaction was welcomed by WWF and Oceana.

Both NGOs agree that the ocean is a major contributor to the global economy and billions of people depend on fish for their food security. However, they agree that many fisheries are already stretched past sustainable limits and subsidies that contribute to depleting fish stocks are simply unacceptable.

These organizations have worked for many

years to end subsidies that drive overcapacity and hinder sustainable marine management.

"The WTO has a historic opportunity to show the world that it can make a meaningful contribution to solving problems of global consequence and thus clearly align with the sustainable development goals adopted this year," leaders of these NGOs remarked.

Source: <http://en.mercopress.com/2015/12/19/wto-statement-in-support-of-reducing-fishing-subsidies>

CLIMATE CHANGE

Threats to Canada's First Nations' fisheries

According to recent study, First Nations' fishery catches could collapse by almost 50 per cent by 2050 as a result of climate change, further endangering the food and economic security of indigenous communities along coastal British Columbia.

The study was conducted as part of an initiative to carry out research on global indigenous fisheries through the Nereus Program, a global interdisciplinary initiative between UBC and the Nippon Foundation in Japan.

The team had been studying the impacts of climate change on coastal communities at a wider scale and seeks to gain a better understanding of the possible impacts on the coastal First Nations of British Columbia where marine resources are crucial for both economic security as well as for social and ceremonial practices.

The researchers analyzed the habitats and population dynamics of 98 fish and shellfish species of importance to First Nations communities in order to determine how these species' ranges and abundances might shift under low-emission and a high-emission scenarios of climate change from 2000 to 2050.

Extracted: <http://ubyssey.ca/science/climate-change-threatens-first-nations-fisheries/>

ORGANIZATIONAL PROFILE

Union of Latin American Artisanal Fishers

The Union of Latin American Fishers, bringing together 10 national-level organizations, was launched in Chile in October 2015. Participating in the IV Meeting of Latin American Artisanal Fishers, organized by CONAPACH and sponsored by the Chilean Ministry of Foreign Affairs, artisanal fishing leaders from Argentina, Ecuador, Nicaragua, Panama, El Salvador, Guatemala, Peru, Costa Rica, Colombia and Chile committed themselves to forming a union and signed up to a common agenda.

The launch of the Union was announced by CONAPACH at the "Our Ocean 2015 Conference", hosted by the governments of Chile and the US.

The Union seeks to represent the interests of Latin American artisanal fishers in all the forums where their

rights need to be defended, taking up issues of concern to the organizations that they represent at both national and international levels. Key issues to be taken up by the Union include the implementation of the FAO Guidelines on Securing Sustainable Small-scale Fisheries and the Code of



Conduct for Responsible Fisheries, and the promotion of food sovereignty.

The Union will also promote artisanal fisheries at national and international levels, forming alliances with organizations, platforms and movements, both public and private, in order to achieve their objectives. The Union will actively seek to incorporate other national-level

organizations in Latin America.

Zoila Bustamante, elected President of the Union, highlighted the constant tensions that exist between producer organizations and NGOs, where NGOs may tend to undermine the autonomy of producer organizations. "It is important that producer organizations maintain their autonomy distinct from NGOs, representing their own members, and rejecting programmes that are not in the interests of artisanal fishers", she said.

There is a long history of co-operation between national-level artisanal fishers' organizations in Latin America, going back decades. Most recently, in 2013, meeting in Chile, the People's Coalition for Food Sovereignty also appointed Zoila Bustamante to represent Latin American artisanal fishery interests.

Aquaculture and Decent Employment

The following document, titled “Improving Livelihoods through Decent Employment in Aquaculture”, was submitted at the Eighth Session of the Sub-committee on Aquaculture of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), in Brazil, in October 2015:

This paper aims at discussing one of these challenges: How could decent employment in aquaculture help improving livelihoods and reducing poverty, with the view that decent employment could offer significant opportunities for the advancement of sustainable aquaculture within a Blue Growth framework?

In 2012, some 58.3 mn people were engaged in capture fisheries and aquaculture, with 18.9 mn working in aquaculture. Most fishworkers are working in informal employment, self-employed either in informal enterprises or as subsistence producers and contributing family workers, or unregistered workers with no written contracts and often as casual, seasonal, short-term workers.

Despite its contribution to employment, the fisheries and aquaculture sector still has decent work deficits, including: low and insecure levels of income; poor and hazardous health, safety and environmental conditions; lack of stable and formal contracts; gender inequality; presence

of child labour and forced labour; exploitation of migrant workers; weak social protection and a lack of social dialogue.

Protection of labour rights in fishing and aquaculture is limited. Internationally recognized labour standards are available – but often not applied or enforced throughout fish value chains.

Limited organization and voice of most stakeholders including small-scale fishers, fish farmers, and workers in fish value chains, hinder their capacity to influence policy and legislation and access markets and better employment opportunities.

Fisheries and aquaculture policies, strategies and processes do not systematically address labour conditions, employment dimensions nor adequate representation of fish workers’ concerns and needs.

Main decent work issues in aquaculture and possible actions are introduced here with reference to the four pillars of the globally agreed decent work agenda:

- 1) Employment creation and enterprise development;
- 2) Social protection;
- 3) Standards and rights at work; and
- 4) Governance and social dialogue

A range of key issues are presented for which attention and critical action might be needed to both improve labour dimensions in aquaculture

and address rural poverty. The issues highlighted are followed by potential actions which primarily focus on how aquaculture governance mechanisms can address labour dimensions as a precondition to achieve decent work in the sector. The actions are identified without pre-defined precedence, leaving decisionmaking on priority actions to relevant stakeholders within a determined context.

Clearly, there will be differences depending on geographical context, types of commodity, nature of production, scale of operation, involvement of stakeholders, and vulnerability and exposure of fishworkers, their households and communities to poverty, and their access to health, education and other social services. The table provides a summary overview of major decent work issues in aquaculture and related possible actions.

Aquaculture stakeholders face a wide range of decent work issues which, however, can be addressed through a variety of possible actions. Promoting decent employment in aquaculture operations and practices and implementing the decent work agenda in the aquaculture sector contributes to efforts of improving livelihoods and community development in many rural areas.

FISH STOCKS AGREEMENT

Secretary-General’s message on the 20th Anniversary of the Opening for Signature of the UN Fish Stocks Agreement, made at New York, on 4 December 2015

On the occasion of the 20th anniversary of the opening for signature of the 1995 United Nations Fish Stocks Agreement, it is important to recall the critical importance of sustainable fisheries to food security, economic prosperity, poverty alleviation, employment and the sustainable development of many States, particularly developing States. Sustainable fisheries are also essential for the long-term health and resilience of the oceans and seas on which humanity relies so greatly.

The Agreement promotes the sustainability of some of the world’s most commercially important fish stocks, by setting out a comprehensive legal regime for the conservation and sustainable use of straddling and highly migratory fish stocks.

However, the world’s fisheries are still in crisis, as many important fish stocks remain subject to overfishing, even to the point of depletion. As we embark on efforts to meet the ambitious Goals and targets agreed in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including Goal 14 to “conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources”, we need to redouble our efforts to safeguard the world’s fisheries.

In marking this anniversary, let us recognize both the successes the Agreement has made possible and the distance still to travel towards achieving universal participation as well as its full and effective implementation.

<http://www.un.org/sg/statements/index.asp?nid=9313>

Table: Major decent work issues in aquaculture and examples of possible actions (extracted)

Major Issues	
Pillar 1: Employment creation and enterprise development	Low earnings and labour productivity
	Data and policy gaps
	Threats to sustainable livelihoods
Pillar 2: Social protection	Lack of social protection
	Hazardous employment
Pillar 3: Standards and rights at work	Ineffective labour regulation
	Prevalence of child labour
	Vulnerable migrant labour
Pillar 4: Governance and social dialogue	Low levels of organization and participation

INFOLOG: NEW RESOURCES AT ICSF

ICSF's Documentation Centre (dc.icsf.net) has a range of information resources that are regularly updated. A selection:

Publications

National Plans of Action for the Conservation and Management of Sharks in the Maldives (NPOA-Sharks)

Maldives is committed to sustainably manage the marine resources of the country. In 2010, shark fisheries of Maldives were completely banned to address the growing concerns of depleting shark stocks. NPOA-Sharks was developed to address these concerns and to ensure the conservation of the shark fauna while safeguarding the interests of all stakeholders. NPOA-Sharks provides a history of shark fishing in Maldives, examines the level of alignment of the fisheries management system of Maldives with the objectives of the IPOA-Sharks and sets out an action plan to sustainably conserve the shark resources. The NPOA-Sharks was developed by Ministry of Fisheries and Agriculture with assistance from the Bay of Bengal Large Marine Ecosystem Project (BoBLME). <http://www.fao.org/3/a-az641e.pdf>

SSF Guidelines

A workshop to introduce the FAO Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication (VG-SSF), was organized in Tanzania by the International Collective in Support of Fishworkers (ICSF) and Mwambao Coastal Community Network, Tanzania, at Bagamoyo, during 17-18 August 2015. The report of the workshop is available at <http://igssf.icsf.net/en/page/1070-Tanzania.html>

Translation of the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication into Indian Languages (Hindi, Oriya, Bengali, Tamil, and Telugu) is available at <http://igssf.icsf.net/en/page/1069-SSF%20Guidelines%20Translation.html>.

Summary of the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication, by John Kurién, is also translated into different languages including Hindi, Oriya, Bengali, Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam and Spanish, and is available at [http://igssf.icsf.net/en/page/1067-SSF%20Guidelines%20\(Summary\).html](http://igssf.icsf.net/en/page/1067-SSF%20Guidelines%20(Summary).html)

Videos

United Nations University: Fisheries Training Programme: Success Stories of Fisheries Management. This four-minute film documents the fisheries management in Iceland, and how this has helped fisheries professionals in Jamaica.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5SRZXAGPxl4>

Sustainable Fisheries for Sustainable Development

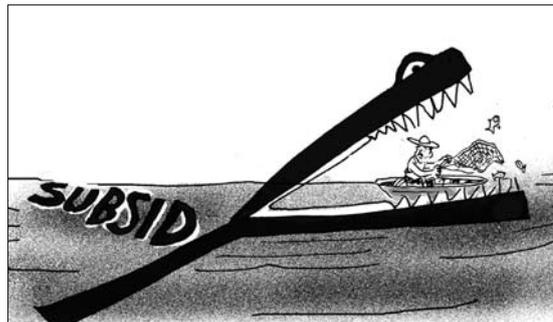
A short, animated video about the importance of fisheries for food security, health and growth in developing countries, highlighting the commitment of the EU with third countries to help promote sustainable management of seafood resources and inclusive opportunities for trade and growth.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ITWeIRky7Bc>

FLASHBACK

What price subsidies?

One of the most important reasons for overfishing is excessive fishing capacity. This was the main focus of the recent FAO Consultation on the Management of Fishing Capacity, Shark Fisheries and Incidental Catch of Seabirds in Longline Fisheries (see page 36). According to FAO, between 1970 and 1989, total gross registered tonnage (GRT) of the world's fishing fleets increased from 13.6 million to 25.3 million GRT. About three-quarters of this capacity belonged to the large-scale, industrial sector, which accounts for about 75 per cent of total capital investment and global marine fish production. This situation



is further complicated by the fact that new fishing vessels have enormously increased their fishing power. A recent study by Greenpeace International shows that the efficiency of fishing vessels has increased over time with advancements in fishing technology. A vessel built in 1990, for example, is no longer comparable, in terms of efficiency, with a vessel of the same tonnage built in the 1970s.

As we have argued earlier, such subsidies not only help add to excess capacity, they also facilitate fleet migration to the waters of several low-income, food-deficit countries, under the aegis of international fishery access agreements or joint ventures. In the process, the highly efficient and locally beneficial domestic artisanal fleets are often put to disadvantage. Without effective monitoring, control and surveillance systems, and in the absence of competent Flag State control, many of these fishing arrangements—for example, between the European Union and China with other developing countries—have clashed with the livelihood interests of disadvantaged coastal fishing communities.

Distorted economic incentives, in the form of subsidies and concessional credit, have also fuelled the anarchic growth of large-scale, industrial fisheries, even in developing countries. Many of the large-scale, industrial vessels, which depend on destructive and non-selective fishing methods and practices, may not even remain economically viable without such incentives.

— from *Comment in SAMUDRA Report No. 21, December 1998*

ANNOUNCEMENTS

MEETINGS

Ad Hoc Tripartite Maritime Committee for the amendment of the Searfarers' Identity Documents Convention (Revised), 2003 (No. 185),

10 - 12 February 2016, Geneva

At its 323rd Session (March 2015), the ILO Governing Body decided to constitute an Ad Hoc Tripartite Maritime Committee and convene a meeting of this Committee in 2016 for the amendment of Convention No. 185, with the task of making

proposals, based on the recommendations of the Meeting of Experts, for appropriate amendments to the Annexes to Convention No. 185 with a view to their submission for adoption by the International Labour Conference in accordance with Article 8, paragraph 1, of Convention No. 185.

34th Session of the Asia-Pacific Fishery Commission (APFC)

12 - 14 February 2016, Colombo, Sri Lanka

The agenda items for the 34th session includes: APFC Regional IUU assessment method and results; APFC regional

guidelines for responsible culture-based fisheries and indicators for the enhancement of inland fisheries; The Bay of Bengal Strategic Action Programme; Outcomes of the Regional Initiative on Blue Growth and Voluntary Guidelines on Small-scale Fisheries, and regional action plans.

WEBSITES

Global Sustainable Seafood Initiative (GSSI)

GSSI is a global platform and partnership of seafood companies, NGOs, experts,

governmental and intergovernmental organizations working towards more sustainable seafood for everyone. GSSI's Global Benchmark Tool includes GSSI Essential Components that are based on the CCRF and the FAO Guidelines and which seafood certification schemes must meet to be recognized by GSSI. GSSI has also created GSSI Supplementary Components, which show a seafood certification scheme's diverse approach and help stakeholders understand where differences exist.

<http://www.ourgssi.org/>