

109 Organizations Around the Globe Urge World Leaders to Reach a WTO Deal to Help Save Our Ocean

3rd March, 2020

This June, governments around the world must fulfil their commitment to curb the public money that supports overfishing and degrades our ocean. After nearly two decades of negotiations at the World Trade Organization (WTO), now is the moment for leaders to act to end harmful fisheries subsidies. Ahead of the WTO's Ministerial Conference, which is scheduled to launch on World Ocean Day, 109 organizations from around the world urge world leaders to reach a meaningful agreement to stop these harmful subsidies as time has run out.

Despite the fact that a third of fish stocks are already exploited beyond sustainable levels¹, governments continue to provide an estimated US\$22 billion every year in harmful subsidies that increase fishing capacity.² While these subsidies may be aimed at helping coastal communities, they can instead encourage fishing beyond profitable and sustainable levels in coastal waters and on the high seas, degrading the very resources on which these communities depend and jeopardising the future of the industry they set out to support.

In 2015, world leaders recognized the damage that harmful subsidies cause to fish stocks and the marine environment when they adopted the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), a blueprint to achieve a better and more sustainable future for all. SDG Target 14.6 tasked governments with reaching a new agreement at the WTO to eliminate harmful subsidies by 2020. This deadline has mobilized the international community but makes the WTO's Twelfth Ministerial Conference, this June, our last, best chance to achieve meaningful reform.

The final international agreement must trigger prompt and significant reductions by the largest subsidizers. Moreover, it must establish a binding framework that drives the phase out of all harmful subsidies that contribute to fleet overcapacity and overfishing, and eliminates subsidies to illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing by all WTO member governments. Countries at all stages of development should be prepared to improve the health of their fisheries and support the livelihoods of their fishers by reforming their fisheries subsidies programs once an agreement is reached. Anything less would miss this generational opportunity to replot the course of global fishing fleets toward sustainability, improve the health of ocean ecosystems, and help ensure that the ocean will continue to provide for the many millions who depend on it, now and into the future.

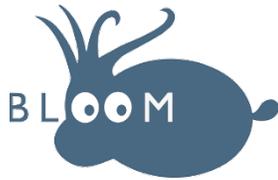
A deal is possible. We call upon world leaders to work swiftly to find landing zones in order to successfully deliver on the SDG mandate by the 2020 deadline. An agreement would demonstrate not only that WTO members can cooperate to deliver an outcome of global importance, but also that the SDGs represent a real pathway toward a better future.

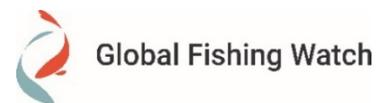
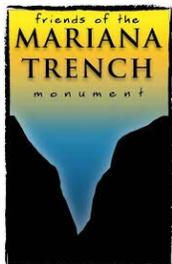
Now is the time for action.

Signees:

¹ FAO (2018) "The State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture 2018 - Meeting the sustainable development goals". Rome. License: CC BY-NC-SA 3.0 IGO.

² Sumaila et. al (2019) "Updated estimates and analysis of global fisheries subsidies", Marine Policy 109









Advocates for Public Interest Law (APIL)
 ANA: Asociación Asturiana de Amigos de la Naturaleza
 Animal Latitude
 Antarctic and Southern Ocean Coalition (ASOC)
 APECE
 Archipelagos Institute of Marine Conservation
 Associació de Naturalistes de Girona
 Association Biom
 Beta Diversidad
 BirdLife Cyprus
 BirdLife International
 BirdLife Sverige
 BirdWatch Ireland
 BLOOM
 Blue Marine Foundation
 Blue Resources Trust
 Centro Ballena Azul
 Círculo de Políticas Ambientales
 Citizens' Institute for Environmental Science (CIES)
 ClientEarth
 Coalition Clean Baltic
 Coalition for Fair Fisheries Agreements (CFFA)
 CODEMAR (Coalición en Defensa de los Mares de México)
 Colectivo Ecologista de Avilés
 Conservation International
 Coordinadora Ecoloxista d'Asturies
 Cork Environmental Forum
 CREMA
 Danmarkus Naturfredningsforening
 Deep Sea Conservation Coalition (DSCC)
 Depana
 Desmitificando Tiburones
 Deutsche Umwelthilfe e.V. (Environmental Action
 Germany)
 Earth Law Center
 Earthjustice
 ECO (Proazul Terrestre A.C.)
 Ecologistas en Acción
 Ecotrust Canada
 El Chorlitejo Plataforma para la defensa del litoral del
 sureste de Gran Canaria
 Elasmo Project
 Environmental Justice Foundation
 Environmental Management and Economic Development
 Organization (EMEDO)
 Fauna & Flora International
 France Nature Environment
 Friends of the Mariana Trench Monument
 Fundació ENT
 Fundación Mar Adentro
 Fundación MarViva
 Fundación Terram
 GEOTA
 Gesellschaft zur Rettung der Delphine
 Global Fishing Watch
 Global Ocean Trust
 Good Fish Foundation
 Greenpeace
 Humane Society International (HSI)
 Iceland Nature Conservation Association (INCA)
 Institute for Environment and Development (IIED)
 International Chamber of Commerce (ICC)
 International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW)
 International Institute for Sustainable Development
 (IISD)
 International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN)
 Korean Federation for Environmental Movement (KFEM)
 Ligue Pour La Protection des Oiseaux (LPO)
 Lithuanian Ornithological Society (LOD)
 LPN: Liga para a Protecção da Natureza
 Manta Trust
 Marine Conservation Institute
 Marine Conservation Society
 MedReAct
 MEER e.V.
 Mission Blue
 Mundus Maris
 Natural Resources Defense Council, Inc. (NRDC)
 New Economics Foundation
 Observatório do Mar dos Açores
 Ocean Conservancy
 Ocean Outcomes
 Ocean Unite
 Oceana
 OceanCare
 OceanoSanos
 Ondarroa 12 Milia
 Our Fish
 PONG-Pesca
 Portuguese Society for the Study of Birds (SPEA)
 Posidonia Green Project
 Pro Wildlife
 Qingdao Marine Conservation Society (QMCS)
 Quercus - Associação Nacional de Conservação da
 Natureza (ANCN)
 Sciaena
 Sea First Foundation
 Sea Shepherd Global
 Seal Rescue Ireland
 Seas At Risk
 SHARKPROJECT International
 Submon
 Sunce
 Sustainable Water Network (SWAN)
 Swedish Society for Nature Conservation
 The Environment and Conservation Organizations of New
 Zealand (ECO)
 The Nature Conservancy (TNC)
 The Pew Charitable Trusts
 Whale and Dolphin Conservation (WDC)
 Wildlife Conservation Trust (WCT)
 WILDTRUST
 World Forum of Fish Harvesters and Fish Workers (WFF)
 World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) International
 Zoological Society of London