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SEABOS JOINS GLOBAL GHOST GEAR INITIATIVE

Oslo, Norway – Today (24 October 2019), at the Our Ocean 2019 conference, the Seafood Business for Ocean Stewardship initiative (SeaBOS) announced it has joined the Global Ghost Gear Initiative (GGGI), the world's first global platform for tackling abandoned, lost and discarded fishing gear (ALDFG), also known as ghost gear.

SeaBOS represents 10 of the world's largest seafood companies, all of whom are aligned in their mission to lead a global transformation towards sustainable seafood production and a healthy ocean. The companies committed to the initiative include Maruha Nichiro, Nissui, Thai Union, Mowi ASA, Dongwon, Skretting, Cargill, Cermaq, Kyokuyo, and Charoen Pokphand Foods (CPF).

SeaBOS connects the global seafood business to science, connects wild capture fisheries to aquaculture, and connects European and North American companies to Asian companies. Working together with the GGGI, SeaBOS continues to work towards its ambition of leading a global transformation towards sustainable seafood production and healthy ocean. Some of its member companies are already taking actions to address ghost gear but would like to go one step further, while for others this is a new issue.

Martin Exel, SeaBOS Managing Director, said, "SeaBOS is pleased to partner with GGGI to help remove, reduce, redesign fishing gear, and promote new practices to achieve positive and sustainable ocean health outcomes."

Launched in 2015, the GGGI is a cross-sectoral alliance that addresses the problem of ghost gear worldwide. Through the collective impact of its close to-100 members, the GGGI aims to reduce the ecological and economic impacts of ghost gear.

Ingrid Giskes, Director of the GGGI, said, "We are delighted to welcome SeaBOS and the companies it represents as members of the GGGI. This announcement sends perhaps the strongest message yet that the global seafood industry is recognising the severe threat that ghost gear poses and is increasingly committed to tackling the problem in its supply chains. We look forward to working with SeaBOS to make our ocean cleaner and safer for all."

The GGGI works globally and locally to build evidence of the problem of ghost gear, define best practice and inform policies, and catalyse and replicate scalable solutions. Working with governments and multilateral organizations around the world, the GGGI elevates the issue of ghost gear on the global agenda and aims to inspire international action. Since its inception, the GGGI has established the world's first and largest database on ghost gear – combining data sets from organizations all over the world – to build evidence of the problem and help inform solutions work in the future.

In 2009, a UN study estimated that at least 640,000 tonnes of abandoned, lost or otherwise discarded fishing gear (ALDFG) are lost or abandoned in our ocean each year, but new research has indicated



that this number is likely to be much higher today. Recent studies have suggested that between 46% - 70% of floating macroplastics may be fishing related when measured by weight.

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NOTES TO EDITOR

Ghost gear also compromises yields and income from fisheries – it is estimated that over 90% of species caught in ghost gear are of commercial value. An estimated 5-30 percent decline in some fish stocks and damage to important marine habitats can be attributed to ghost gear – creating higher costs for companies sourcing fish and threatening global food security. With over three billion people relying on fish for 20% of their protein (with this number rising to 50% in some developing coastal nations), ghost gear is a real and present threat to food security.

The adverse impacts of ghost gear have been made even worse by the introduction of non-biodegradable or plastic fishing gear, predicted to persist in the marine environment for up to 600 years. Ghost fishing gear (if measured by weight) may account for over half of all macroplastics in our ocean today and will eventually break down into microplastics, where it will be consumed by marine animals and, ultimately, enter the human food chain.

SeaBOS companies have already been taking action to address ghost gear. For example:

- Thai Union joined the GGGI in 2018 to help tackle the impact ALDFG has on global food security, the seafood supply chain and the livelihoods of coastal communities. Since then they have been working with the GGGI on implementing a [dedicated three-year workplan](#) on which they publicly report progress.
- One of the Maruha Nichiro companies – Austral Fisheries – is a Foundation member of GGGI, and has been extensively involved in recovery of lost demersal longline gear, and developing measures to reduce fishing gear loss in future.
- As a group of companies of Nissui, assessment of all fishing gear (type, materials, etc) that are used in Nissui group companies, and studying the risks associated with each gear type is underway, and actions have been taken to promote ATW (automated trawl winch) systems to improve the manoeuvring of trawl nets and avoid gear loss.
- A number of SeaBOS companies run extensive clean up campaigns incorporating removal of ADLFG. Cermaq engages proactively in ocean clean up activities in all its countries of operation. This past year, Cermaq Canada removed at least 25 tons of fishery-related debris on Vancouver Island, including nets and small boats. Additionally, Cermaq removed an abandoned seine boat in cooperation with the Coastal Restoration Society and the BC provincial government, and is planning to clean a salmon migratory route in the fall 2019. Cermaq Chile is participating in the Minga project on ocean cleanup in Chile, where a significant amount of old fishing gear has been removed. Cermaq Norway cleaned beaches during the summer and a total of 5420 kg of waste was removed, most of which related to fishery/aquaculture.
- Mowi is actively working towards a responsible use of plastic equipment and packaging. All the nets we use at sea to raise our fish are traceable and reused for several production cycles before they are properly stored and recycled. In Europe, we run a net recycling program where nylon of the nets is recycled into swimwear, carpets or socks. This program has helped Mowi sending 302987 kg of net material for recycling which



represents a reduction in carbon footprint equivalent to avoiding 9850 passenger planes from Oslo and London (about 1094353 kg CO₂e).

About the GGGI

The GGGI is a cross-sectoral alliance addressing abandoned, lost and otherwise discarded fishing gear (ALDFG) or “ghost gear” worldwide. Through the collective impact of its members, the GGGI aims to mitigate the ecological and economic impacts of ghost gear. The GGGI serves as a global clearinghouse for information on ALDFG; informs specific plans, strategies and policies to prevent and reduce ALDFG; and catalyzes practical and replicable solutions for on-the-ground and in-the-water removal and prevention of ghost gear. The GGGI also works with governments and multilateral organizations around the world to elevate the issue of ghost gear on the global agenda and inspire international action. The GGGI is part of the Trash Free Seas® program’s portfolio of initiatives addressing marine debris at Ocean Conservancy. www.ghostgear.org.

About SeaBOS

The SeaBOS concept was established in 2016, following insights from Prof. Carl Folke and Prof. Henrik Österblom of the Stockholm Resilience Centre (SRC), and substantial work from their scientific and academic teams at SRC and the Royal Swedish Academy. Their vision was to explore whether a small number of companies had the potential to transform the global seafood system. The SeaBOS initiative was formally agreed to become a legal entity in September 2018 through a collaboration between ten of the world’s largest seafood companies, to determine whether a small group of powerful industry leaders can influence fishing practices among a majority of smaller industry participants.

For the first time ever, SeaBOS connects the global seafood business to science, connects wild capture fisheries to aquaculture, and connects European and North American companies to Asian companies. The ambition is to lead a global transformation towards sustainable seafood production and healthy ocean. SeaBOS will actively contribute to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and in particular Goal 14 – “Conserve and sustainably use the ocean, seas and marine resources.” Support for the initiative and science underpinning the concept was also provided from the Walton Family Foundation, the David and Lucile Packard Foundation, and the Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation.

See www.seabos.org for more details.