



SeaBOS statement on harmful subsidies May 2022

Government subsidies can be an important policy tool for advancing sustainability, but they can also have detrimental effects. Harmful fishing subsidies, defined as subsidies that incentivize overcapacity and lead to overfishing, have been a contentious issue for years, but the science is clear: harmful subsidies represent a barrier towards a healthy ocean, a thriving seafood sector, and coastal livelihoods.

We represent ten of the largest seafood companies in the world – headquartered in Japan, South Korea, Norway, Thailand, and the USA, with subsidiaries in over 95 countries. During our respective histories, we have benefitted from government subsidies for construction of boats, development of aquaculture, access to cheaper fuel, and more. We have been aware of the negotiations within the WTO on fisheries subsidies and noted the long process that has led to the draft text tabled in November 2021.

We recognize the important progress that has been made within those negotiations and urge governments to take all possible steps to conclude an agreement on phasing out harmful subsidies. As members of the seafood industry, we see an urgent need to utilize every policy tool available to reduce IUU fishing and reduce pressure on fish stock populations that are harvested above scientific advice. Reducing harmful subsidies is an important step in that direction, and towards achieving UN Sustainable Development Goal 14.

SeaBOS member companies encourage governments to ensure that any exceptions to the rules remain limited and include safeguards, including provisions for additional scrutiny, to ensure subsidies allowed do not contribute to IUU fishing or overfishing. Our vision is one of ocean stewardship, and we encourage governments to join us in recognizing the urgency of action towards achieving this vision.

On behalf of SeaBOS

Therese Log Bergjord
CEO, Skretting and Chair of SeaBOS

Seafood Business for Ocean Stewardship (SeaBOS) is a unique collaboration between scientists and seafood companies across the wild capture, aquaculture, and feed production sectors, leading a global transformation towards sustainable seafood production, and improving ocean health. The collaboration has been coordinated by the Stockholm Resilience Centre at Stockholm University. Together, SeaBOS companies represent over 10% of the world's seafood production and comprise over 600 subsidiary companies globally. Members include: Maruha Nichiro Corporation, Nissui, Kyokuyo Co. Ltd, Mowi, Cermaq, Thai Union, CP Foods, Dongwon Industries, Nutreco/Skretting, and Cargill Aqua Nutrition.