

Joint Statement from the 1st Keystone Dialogue

SEAFOOD BUSINESS FOR OCEAN STEWARDSHIP

PREAMBLE

We represent eight of the world's largest seafood companies, collectively operating in all segments of marine fisheries and aquaculture production, across the entire world. As leaders in the global seafood industry, we are concerned about the state of the ocean and the global environment.

We depend on a stable and resilient planet for human prosperity. However, science is already providing evidence that we have entered the Anthropocene, an epoch where humanity is now challenging the stability of Earth and its ocean.

We, as keystone actors in the global seafood industry¹, recognize that together we represent a global force, not only in the operation of the seafood industry, but also in contributing to a resilient planet with marine ecosystems continuing to produce food of high quality for present and future generations.

We already make a significant contribution to healthy and nutritious diets, as well as to employment all around the world, helping to provide food security for all. We are confident that an increased production of seafood – caught in a healthy ocean using sustainable fishing methods or farmed in sustainable production systems, by people employed in safe and fair working conditions – is both possible and critical for the future of humankind.

However, oceans are under enormous pressure. There is strong scientific evidence of growing impacts on marine ecosystems. Ocean temperatures and acidification are increasing; degradation of coastal mangroves and coral reefs is threatening critical life support systems; habitats are being destroyed; nutrient run-off and toxic substances are causing serious pollution; and the build-up of plastic waste in the oceans is a threat to many species and to human health.

Many of these challenges in the oceans are not caused by the seafood industry itself, but they all impact us directly and indirectly.

We acknowledge that the ocean is also directly affected by activities of wild capture fisheries, such as Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing, bycatch, overfishing and modern slavery.

In the face of a growing and wealthier world population, the reliance on aquaculture as a crucial contributor to sustainable food production will increase. However, badly managed, aquaculture can have detrimental social and environmental impacts.

¹ Keystone actors dominate global production revenues and volumes, control important segments of production, connect ecosystems globally through subsidiaries and influence critical governance processes and institutions, see: Österblom, H. et al. 2015. PLoS ONE 10(5): e0127533 <http://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0127533>

THE WAY FORWARD

We are committed to playing a leading role in addressing these challenges. As keystone actors, we are resolved to set up a new global initiative – “*Seafood Business for Ocean Stewardship*” – that brings together, for the first time, leaders in science and business, the wild capture and aquaculture sectors of the seafood industry, and companies from Asia, Europe and North America, operating globally.

We fully support and endorse the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as a new framework for economic and social development operating within the capacity of the biosphere and its ocean. Not only do we urge all governments to implement the SDGs, we also encourage businesses to integrate them in their strategies. For us, it is particularly important that governments should ensure the right conditions for sustainable fisheries, aquaculture and a healthy ocean. Measures aimed at implementing the Paris Agreement on climate, reducing pollution and halting the destruction of coastal habitats also need to be urgently implemented.

OUR COMMITMENTS

Efforts by governments are critical, but the industry has an equally important role to play in developing and implementing solutions. Leadership in corporate sustainability is a priority for us. We believe this enhances our operations, helps make the industry more resilient, improves our access to markets and consumers, attracts new financial flows, and makes us more attractive as employers. We know better than anyone that the seafood industry depends on sustainable use of the ocean for long-term value creation.

Our companies have been in the seafood business for decades, some for more than a century. We take pride in what we already do, but acknowledge that we ourselves have further to go in improving our performance. For us, this is a strategic and long-term commitment.

Through “*Seafood Business for Ocean Stewardship*”, we intend to develop a common understanding and a common approach among the keystone actors globally, building on the many existing initiatives in which our companies are already engaged.

This is an initiative between science and business, with an ambition to engage with governments and other stakeholders for positive change. It is not only about supplying sustainable seafood to consumers; it is about becoming stewards of the world’s ocean and aquaculture environments.

We will act on the following:

- Improve transparency and traceability in our own operations, and work together to share information and best practice, building on existing industry partnerships and collaborations.
- Engage in concerted efforts to help reduce IUU fishing and seek to ensure that IUU products and endangered species are not present in our supply chains.
- Engage in science-based efforts to improve fisheries and aquaculture management and productivity, through collaboration with industry, regulators and civil society.
- Engage in concerted efforts to eliminate any form of modern slavery including forced, bonded and child labour in our supply chains.
- Work towards reducing the use of antibiotics in aquaculture.
- Reduce the use of plastics in seafood operations, and encourage global efforts to reduce plastic pollution.
- Reduce our own greenhouse gas emissions.

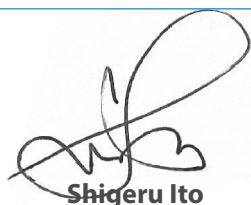
- Secure new growth in aquaculture, by deploying best practices in preventive health management, including improved regulatory regimes.
- Collaborate and invest in the development and deployment of emerging approaches and technologies for sustainable fisheries and aquaculture.
- Support novel initiatives and innovations for ocean stewardship.

The potential of the ocean to help provide healthy food for hundreds of millions of people is tremendous. But bold and firm action will be needed to make this happen. As the keystone actors in the international seafood industry, depending as we do on a healthy and resilient ocean, we know we can and must make a major contribution.

The seafood industry cannot thrive on an unsustainable planet, and we will not have a thriving planet with an unsustainable seafood industry. Now is the time to step up together as proactive leaders for ocean stewardship².

² Ocean stewardship is an adaptive and learning based, collaborative process, of responsibility and ethics, aimed to shepherd and safeguard the resilience and sustainability of ocean ecosystems for human well-being.

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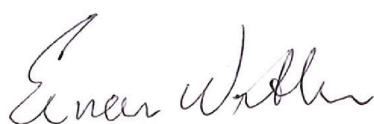
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