AQUATIC BLUE FOOD COALITION

Aquatic Blue Food Coalition Declaration

A Coalition to champion aquatic blue foods for nutritious, equitable, sustainable, and climate-resilient food systems.*

Background

Transforming food systems has emerged as a global priority for addressing interconnected challenges—including climate change, food and nutrition security, biodiversity loss—and achieving the U.N. Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Sustainable blue food systems are essential to this transformation and require stronger policies, greater investment, and cross-sector partnerships to fully integrate blue foods into decision-making at national, regional, and global levels.

The Aquatic Blue Food Coalition was established following the 2021 UN Food Systems Summit and launched at the 2022 UN Ocean Conference to advance this agenda. The Coalition works to ensure that blue foods are recognized as a critical component of equitable, resilient, and sustainable food systems that support food and nutrition security, climate resilience, and biodiversity.

Bringing together governments, intergovernmental organizations, academic institutions, civil society, and industry, the Coalition leverages its diverse expertise to help decision-makers unlock the full potential of blue food solutions for people and the planet.

The Coalition's work builds on existing international commitments and guidance, including the 2021 Committee on Fisheries Declaration for Sustainable Fisheries and Aquaculture, the FAO Blue Transformation Roadmap, the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries, the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the Committee on World Food Security, UN Nutrition, the World Bank's ProBlue program, and the High Level Panel for a Sustainable Ocean Economy.

Commitment

Members are joining together in a shared vision about the following:

***Blue foods: Foods derived from aquatic fish, shellfish, plants or algae that are captured or cultivated in freshwater and marine environments.**

Our Mission:

Our mission is to advocate for the recognition of blue foods in global food system discussions, mobilize support and adequate funding for their integration, and drive on-the-ground action to foster equitable, sustainable, and climate-resilient food systems.

The Aquatic Blue Food Coalition rises to the challenge of still-untapped potential of aquatic blue foods to meet protein needs and reduce micronutrient and other nutrition deficiencies, improve heart, brain and eye health, and replace consumption of less healthy foods.

The Coalition recognizes the important role of these foods as part of the climate solution. Recent analyses also show that climate change is impacting aquatic food production and aquatic ecosystems significantly, and that investment in climate resilient management is an urgent priority to avert significant negative impacts, especially in the tropics where climate impacts will be most severe and where the most vulnerable populations are concentrated.

Our Key Objectives:

- **Raise the profile of aquatic foods**:

We engage with high-level decision-makers at national, regional, and international levels to advocate for the recognition and integration of blue foods' potential in transformations towards food systems that deliver for both people and the planet.

- **Mobilize support:**

We connect and work with multiple stakeholders to mobilize investment, technical capacity and partnerships for countries, or groups of countries, looking to integrate aquatic foods into their food systems policy.

- **Knowledge exchange and place-based action:**

We foster knowledge exchange between our members and provide them with support to catalyze action in key regions and/or countries by helping them understand their blue food needs and possibilities, and matching them with funding and/or technical assistance.

Our Accomplishments:

- **The Coalition has successfully moved blue foods from a niche ocean issue into mainstream global discussions**. Since its launch following the 2021 UN Food Systems Summit, it has helped secure recognition of blue foods in major international processes, including the COP28 Emirates Declaration on Sustainable Agriculture, Resilient Food Systems, and Climate Action, and has advocated for their inclusion across UN food, climate, and biodiversity forums through over 75 global events.

- **Developed practical guidance to help governments integrate blue foods into policy**. The Coalition has helped translate science into actionable tools for policymakers, including guidance for incorporating blue foods into Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and collaborating with the School Meals Coalition to integrate blue foods into international guidance on planet-friendly school meals. These efforts are already informing national policy, including Mexico's updated NDC.

- **Mobilized government champions for policy action.** In partnership with the African Union Development Agency (AUDA-NEPAD), the Coalition is supporting the development of the Africa Blue Foods Champions Network, which will mobilize government leaders to elevate regional priorities, share lessons, strengthen regional collaboration, and advance the integration of blue foods into national policies and global decision-making.

Organization

A Secretariat

The Coalition is led by a Secretariat. It is currently jointly managed by the Environmental Defense Fund, Stanford Center for Ocean Solutions and Oceana, with leadership and strategic guidance provided by a Chair, currently from the Government of Iceland.

Members

Membership in the Coalition is free and requires no financial commitment. Monthly online meetings are held with a clear agenda set for each. These meetings enable regular networking, briefings of interested parties, advocacy, and inclusive membership participation for the purpose:

- Of providing briefings on upcoming international meetings and other opportunities to raise the profile of blue foods and coordinate engagement; and

- Of members presenting updates on their work and engagement priorities.

- Of presenting country or regional initiatives that need support from Coalition members which can be matched with funding or technical assistance.

The Coalition has brought together over 65 members that have expressed their commitment to blue foods as a priority:

Parties: European Union, Fiji, Germany, Iceland, Japan, New Zealand, Palau, United States of America, Canada, Portugal, Madagascar.

Intergovernmental Organizations: African Union Development Agency (AUDA-NEPAD), The Pacific Community (SPC), WorldFish One CGIAR.

Academic Institutions: Stanford Center for Ocean Solutions, Johns Hopkins Center for a Livable Future, Institut de Recherche pour le Développement (IRD).

Civil Society: Environmental Defense Fund, WWF, Friends of Ocean Action, Rare, European Bureau for Conservation and Development (EBCD), Oceana, Monterey Bay Aquarium, Marine Stewardship Council, Regional Cluster "North-East" – Bulgaria, Conservation International, Village Farmers Initiative, Lloyd's Register Foundation, Care International, Wildlife Conservation Society, Positively Groundfish, African Women Fish Processors and Traders Network (AWFISHNET) of Nigeria, African Women Fish Processors and Traders Network (AWFISHNET) of Malawi, Zero Hunger Coalition, World Resources Institute.

Industry: Global Seaweed Coalition, Global Salmon Initiative, Blue Food Partnership, FUTUREFISH.

The Aquatic Blue Food Coalition is always open to work with new partners around the world to ensure aquatic blue foods are represented in international, regional and national policy discussions and become an integral part of nutritious, equitable, sustainable, and climate-resilient food systems.

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