



HIGH LEVEL PANEL *for*
**A SUSTAINABLE
OCEAN ECONOMY**

PRESS RELEASE

Ocean could be key to future food security

ROME (NOVEMBER 19, 2019): A new scientific paper¹ written for the High Level Panel a Sustainable Ocean Economy² finds that, with better management and technological innovation, the ocean could provide over six times more food than it does today - more than two thirds³ of the animal protein that will be needed to feed the future global population, according to estimates from the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). The paper was published today at the FAO International Symposium on Fisheries Sustainability in Rome.

Christopher Costello, lead author of the paper and High Level Panel Expert Group⁴ representative, said: “The ocean has great, untapped potential to help feed the world in the coming decades, and this resource can be realized with a lower environmental footprint than many other food sources. Yet ocean health and ocean wealth go hand-in-hand. If we make rapid and far-reaching changes in the way we manage ocean-based industries while nurturing the health of its ecosystems, we can bolster our long-term food security and the livelihoods of millions of people.”

‘The Future of Food from the Sea’, authored by an esteemed group of scientists in support of the High Level Panel - a group of 14 heads of government - examines the current status and future potential of food production from the ocean. It finds that the ocean is uniquely positioned to contribute to food security due to the highly nutritious nature of seafood, which contains essential vitamins, minerals, long chain omega-3 fatty acids, and other nutrients not found in plant-based or terrestrial animal proteins. With reform, capture fisheries could produce as much as 20% more catch compared to today and up to 40% more than projected future catch, under current fishing pressures. Yet the largest potential gains for food production lie in the sustainable expansion of marine aquaculture (mariculture).

Accelerating the production of mariculture species, such as seaweed and mussels, that do not rely on direct feed inputs could contribute to global food supply while improving water quality, creating habitat for wild fisheries, and contributing to coastal resilience. Mariculture species that are fed on fishmeal and fish oil derived from capture fisheries, such as fish and crustaceans, can also significantly contribute to future protein supply, yet only if alternative feeds are fast tracked by the sector, and environmental effects can be minimized.

Manuel Barange, Director of FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Policy and Resources Division and High Level Panel Advisory Network participant, said: “To fulfill our aspirations of creating a more equitable, prosperous and food secure world, the global community must work together to end over-fishing, improve global fisheries management and prioritize low-impact mariculture approaches. This would

bolster food security and help eradicate hunger, the lynchpin for achieving the U.N. Sustainable Development Goals.”

The paper identifies the main barriers to increasing food production from the ocean, including key environmental, economic and regulatory issues, and proposes a realistic set of actions to overcome them. It also provides a framework that leaders and scientists can use to inform policy decision-making and implementation, according to their regional or local contexts. Importantly, the paper highlights that producing more food from the sea will depend not only on actions and reform within the fisheries and aquaculture sector, but also global action to address climate change, habitat degradation and pollution and improve ocean governance.

President Kenyatta of Kenya, a member of the High Level Panel, said: “Food from the ocean is of great economic and social value to Kenya and the rest of Africa. Millions of us in Kenya and across Africa depend on the ocean for income, jobs, food, protein and other nutrients. Yet harnessing the potential of our ocean to provide food for the future cannot be achieved by any one country alone. It requires a unified global vision, centered around sustainability, multilateral actions and significant investments to support nations in their efforts to secure jobs, food and nutrition for billions of people.”

Notes to editors:

¹ Read the blue paper on ‘The Future of Food from the Sea’ here: www.oceanpanel.org/bluepapers. This is one of a series of 16 blue papers to be published between now and June 2020. Each paper offers a robust fact base to inform the work and the final recommendations of the High Level Panel for a Sustainable Ocean Economy in 2020.

² The High Level Panel for a Sustainable Ocean Economy is a unique grouping of serving world leaders, with the authority needed to trigger, amplify and accelerate action for ocean protection and production in policy, governance and finance. Australia, Canada, Chile, Fiji, Ghana, Indonesia, Jamaica, Japan, Kenya, Mexico, Namibia, Norway, Palau and Portugal are all represented on the Panel. Learn more at oceanpanel.org. World Resources Institute (WRI) serves as the Secretariat for the High Level Panel. Learn more at www.wri.org/our-work/topics/ocean.

³ The blue paper estimates that the oceans could provide 364 million metric tons of animal protein. The FAO estimates 500 million metric tons of animal protein will be needed to meet future global demand.

⁴ The High Level Panel Expert Group is made up of experienced researchers and policy analysts from around the world. The group provides and reviews relevant scientific input and proposes practical solutions to the questions and challenges raised by the Panel.

A side event to discuss ‘The Future of Food from the Sea’ will be held during the International Symposium on Fisheries Sustainability at 12h30 to 13h15 on 19 November 2019 in the Sheikh Zayed Centre, Atrium of FAO headquarters, Rome.

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