

NEWS RELEASE

Global Oceans Action Summit for Food Security and Blue Growth opens in The Hague

High-level gathering focuses on identifying solutions for healthy oceans

The Hague, Netherlands, April 22, 2014 – Urgent coordinated action is needed to restore the health of the world's oceans and secure the long-term well-being and food security of a growing global population. That is a key message of an international summit that opens today in The Hague, the Netherlands.

Ministers and senior representatives from governments, the fishing industry, coastal communities, science and civil society are coming together at the [Global Oceans Action Summit for Food Security and Blue Growth](#) (22-25 April) which aims to bring global attention and increased investment into addressing the three key threats to ocean health and food security: overfishing, habitat destruction and pollution. The summit will culminate in a high level roundtable on Thursday 25 April.

“Joint urgent action of the global community is needed to address the threats facing our oceans”, said H.E Sharon Dijksma, minister for Agriculture of the Netherlands, who is hosting the summit. “Local innovations to balance ecology and economy at sea must be identified and put into practice in other regions. The Global Oceans Action Summit in The Hague provides the opportunity to make a difference.”

On average, 17 percent of global animal protein intake comes from fisheries and aquaculture, and demand for fish protein is expected to double in the next 20 years, yet some 28 percent of global stocks are already overfished. At the same time, climate change is threatening biodiversity, altering habitats and changing the productivity of our fisheries.

“Healthy oceans have a central role to play in solving one of the biggest problems of the 21st century – how to feed 9 billion people by 2050,” said Árni M. Mathiesen, Assistant Director-General for Fisheries and Aquaculture at the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). “However, we need to act now at the speed and scale necessary to meet the challenges we face by joining forces with all stakeholders, fostering partnerships and spurring sustainable growth.”

Over 500 delegates are expected to attend the Summit, including more than 60 ministers, CEOs and leaders from civil society. Hosted by the Government of the Netherlands, the Summit is co-organized by the World Bank, FAO and the Governments of Grenada, Indonesia, Mauritius, Norway and the United States of America.

Balancing acts

The Summit will focus on some of the underlying causes that have led to the overfishing, increased marine pollution and loss of critical habitat as well as potential solutions. This means balancing the demand for growth with the need for conservation of marine areas; addressing illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing in the high seas and within national exclusive economic zones; and ensuring private sector growth does not come at the expense of protecting the livelihoods of local communities.

“Solutions exist that balance the ecological and economic demands on the ocean,” said **Juergen Voegele, Director of Agriculture and Environmental Services at the World Bank**, a co-organizer of the event. *“We have the opportunity to align all our efforts and bring solutions to scale locally. With public private partnerships and shared approaches we can restore ocean health and provide food and jobs for communities worldwide.”*

In exploring solutions, emphasis will also be placed on the finance mechanisms and governance structures needed to ensure that actions have the impact and longevity to respond to global demands. Among the approaches discussed, inclusive partnerships that bring together public, private, community and civil society actors will be highlighted.

Blue growth

Coming out of the [2012 Rio+20 Conference](#), the blue economy comprises the food, jobs and opportunities for development provided by ocean and coastal assets. Blue growth emphasizes conservation and sustainable management of aquatic resources and equitable benefits to the coastal communities that rely on them.

Did you know?

- 80 percent of all life on the planet is found in oceans
- The oceans provide half of the planet's oxygen
- Blue carbon sinks (mangrove forests, seagrass beds, other vegetated ocean habitats) can sequester up to five times as much carbon as tropical forests
- More than 40 percent of the global population lives within 100 km of the coast
- 13 of the world's 20 megacities lie along coasts
- Nearly 700 million people live in low lying coastal areas less than 10 metres above sea level
- 10-12 percent of the world's population is dependent on fisheries and aquaculture for livelihoods.
- Over 90 percent of the 58.3 million people engaged in the primary fisheries and aquaculture sector work in small-scale fisheries.
- The impact of IUU fishing is estimated at \$10-23.5 billion annually.
- Potential economic gain from restoring fish stocks is estimated at \$50 billion a year.

Related links

[Global Oceans Action Summit](#)
[FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Department](#)
[Global Program on Fisheries \(PROFISH\)](#)
[Blue Ribbon Panel Report](#)

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