

Ministers, Excellency's, Ladies and Gentlemen,

About 20 years ago, there was a sea change in fisheries management and stock status. The post war rapid increase in world catches and rapid decline in stock status changed to a situation of stabilized world catch and a much slower decline and sometimes periods of stability in stock status. This didn't mean that nothing was happening, far from it. The developed countries, in the northern hemisphere mostly, were reducing the fishing effort in their waters and stocks there have improved in status. Although more effort is needed in certain places. Fishing effort was however increasing in the south and many stocks there, industrial and artisanal have declined. Meanwhile aquaculture has increased its production, filled the gap, and allowed fish consumption to increase in spite of this development.

Total production is currently 170 MT, with Capture fisheries at 95MT, while approximately a third of stocks are over-exploited beyond MSY

Present problems:

We now have a situation made of many different problems but three of them stand out and if they are given the attention of this conference, tackled and hopefully solved, many other problems will be easier to resolve.

The three problems are:

1. Illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing.
2. Difficult management of shared, straddling and migrating stocks on the high-seas as well as in coastal sovereign waters.
3. Improving the status of fisheries in coastal communities in developing countries including SIDS. These are mostly small-scale fisheries and those concerned make up over 90% the people involved in the fishing industry globally.

The Drivers:

There are a number of drivers behind these problems including:

Various operations leading to

1. Overfishing, local as well as distant water, causing food and nutrition safety concerns as well as biodiversity considerations. The cost of this situation is 10-15% of current global catches
2. Harmful subsidies. Subsidies estimated to be \$35 billion worldwide, that could include \$20 billion categorized as capacity-enhancing subsidies that directly contribute to overfishing.
3. Population dynamics, including population growth, poverty and socio-economic situations, economic migration and forced migration reaching new heights!
4. Climate change and climate events of an unprecedented level!

The Solutions:

Primarily through improved local, national and regional science based management with multi-stakeholder involvement and powerful support from international cooperation through binding and non-binding (voluntary) instruments.

1. IUU can be solved with our present instruments the Port State Measure Agreement (PSMA), Catch Documentation Scheme (CDS) and Global Record for fishing vessels (GR), complemented by some of the initiatives presented here this week, like the Tuna Transparency Declaration. If we put our minds and resources to it. (FAO and Member Countries have a range of pledges that support this effort).
2. We have a regional management model based on UNCLOS and UNFSA. If that mechanism, the Regional Fisheries Management Organizations (RFMOs), would get the political, scientific and financial resource support that it needs, it could serve us more broadly and effectively, and much better than it does. It is as if we forgot that a system like that needs resources, fuel to run on, to work.

3. We can join together and decide within WTO to stop harmful subsidies particularly those that drive otherwise uneconomic and unsustainable fisheries.
4. We need a massive, multi-stakeholder, well designed and targeted effort to support coastal communities to manage, develop, conserve and get their resource products in the most valuable form to the market. I call this Blue Growth, based on the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries (CCRF) and the Ecosystem approach; you can call it by other names, but the effects need to be the same. This effort needs to be holistic and take the whole community, the ecosystem and the value chain into account. Leave no-one behind, including those that are possibly left on the beach when management changes. For this we need a blue print, a Blue Print for Rebuilding Fisheries. FAO pledges to assist those that do request support to develop this kind of a blue print.
5. For all of the above, many of the poorest nations are often isolated by distance or capacity constraints, constraints that place hurdles in the path to achieving sustainable development and reaching their full potential. ...To shrink distances and bridge capacity needs, we have the opportunity to harness new technologies, that can make previously impossible actions, more [possible and] achievable. These technologies can create better data streams on the status of fishery resources for management, and better links to information that can open the door to valuable markets and blue growth.

We can do this if we pull together!