Leading Businesses, NGOs, Experts Identify Solutions To Secure Global Seafood Supplies

As several of the world's leading food distributors, environmental NGOs, food science institutes, and seafood industry experts, we have joined together to call for a set of specific actions to ensure that all wild-caught fish products are fully traceable to legal fishing activities.

Fish stocks in every ocean are subject to widespread and sometimes illegal overfishing. Fortunately, a growing number of seafood companies are already acting to ensure they can trace the products they sell back to the boat, and that the fish they purchase are caught legally. Meanwhile, governments around the world are considering new rules to halt commerce in illegal fish products. But with seafood being fished and traded globally, better coordinated business systems and government policies are needed to put affordable and effective solutions within reach.

A panel of experts from our organizations has worked together and in consultation with outside specialists to identify cutting edge solutions that combine regulatory and private sector approaches at both national and global scales. Among the panel's top recommendations are:

- Industry and other stakeholders should launch a global dialogue to agree on and adopt common international standards and protocols for tracking seafood products and for sharing digitized data about their origins;

- Governments should accelerate creation of a new “global record of fishing vessels” to provide a worldwide system that prevents vessels from hiding their identity through frequent name changes or flying false flags;

- Governments, industry, and conservationists should expand and harmonize the use of “landing authorizations” to ensuring that the legality of fish catches can be verified as they come off the boats;

- Industry should commit to making a full transition to electronic product traceability within five years; and
Governments should adopt border measures that set minimum standards for seafood traceability and proof of legal origin for seafood products traded internationally.

We believe that the panel’s report sets out a solid vision based on pragmatic technical analysis that can serve as strong basis for action towards concrete solutions. The report is intended to serve as a reference point, and to promote expanded engagement and dialogue among industry actors, civil society stakeholders, and policymakers. By achieving a world in which all fish products are fully traceable to legal sources, we can help conserve ocean ecosystems and secure sustainable fish supplies for the future of the seafood industry and of the communities around the world that depend on fish for food and livelihoods.

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For further information about the panel, to contact us, or to download a copy of the panel report, please visit the panel’s website: www.solutions-network.org/seafood