



# 182 ORGANIZATIONS

## AROUND THE GLOBE URGE WORLD LEADERS TO REACH A WTO DEAL TO HELP SAVE OUR OCEAN

Updated May 16, 2022

**Governments around the world have failed to fulfil their commitment to curb the public money that supports overfishing and degrades our oceans by 2020. After two decades of negotiations at the World Trade Organization (WTO), there is no more time to waste. 182 organizations from around the world once again urge world leaders to deliver on their mandate to reach a meaningful agreement to stop these harmful subsidies as soon as possible.**

Despite the fact that a third of fish stocks are already exploited beyond sustainable levels<sup>1</sup>, governments continue to provide an estimated US\$22billion every year in harmful subsidies that increase fishing capacity.<sup>2</sup> While these subsidies may be aimed at helping coastal communities, they can instead encourage fishing beyond profitable and sustainable levels in coastal waters and on the high seas, degrading the very resources on which these communities depend and jeopardising the future of the industry they set out to support.

In 2015, world leaders recognized the damage that harmful subsidies cause to fish stocks and the marine environment when they adopted the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), a blueprint to achieve a better and more sustainable future for all. SDG Target 14.6 tasked governments with reaching a new agreement at the WTO to eliminate harmful subsidies by 2020. As of January 1st, 2021, an agreement is overdue.

The final international agreement must trigger prompt and significant reductions by the largest subsidizers. Moreover, it must establish a binding framework that drives the phase out of all harmful subsidies that contribute to fleet overcapacity and overfishing, and eliminates subsidies to illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing by all WTO members. Countries at all stages of development should be prepared to improve the health of their fisheries and support the livelihoods of their fishers by reforming their fisheries subsidies programs once an agreement is reached. Anything less would miss this generational opportunity to replot the course of global fishing fleets toward sustainability, improve the health of ocean ecosystems, and help ensure that the ocean will continue to provide for the many millions who depend on it, now and into the future.

A deal is possible. We call upon world leaders to work swiftly to find landing zones in order to successfully deliver on the SDG mandate as soon as possible. An agreement would demonstrate not only that WTO members can cooperate to deliver an outcome of global importance, but also that the SDGs represent a real pathway toward a better future.

**There is no more time to waste.**

## SIGNEES



