

Agreement on the International Tuna Sustainability Declaration

Fishing activity is essential to guarantee food for a growing world population. Today, fish and fishery products are an essential source of nutrients that contribute to a balanced and healthy diet. They also represent great economic value. A significant part is wild-caught, so it is necessary to manage their exploitation to guarantee sustainability suitably.

There are tuna in all the world's oceans and many countries depend on tuna an excellent deal for food security and nutrition, economic development, employment, livelihoods, culture, and leisure. In fact, tuna fishing forms the basis for the socioeconomic development of numerous communities in which small-scale fishing has given rise to a great diversity of cultures and local ways of life. Currently, more than 80 countries have a tuna fisheries sector, with thousands of boats that fish in oceans all over the world, generating almost 60 million jobs. And faced with the continuous increase of the demand for this healthy food, and source of natural proteins, the global fishing capacity continues to increase in all the oceans.

Fishing reached a global production of around 95 million tons in 2020, 5,3 million tons of which corresponded to the main tuna species (tropical species such as the bigeye tuna, skipjack, yellowfin tuna, in addition to red tuna and white tuna). The main tuna species represent 20% of the value of global fisheries and more than 8% of all sea products that are marketed in the world, including aquaculture.

Considering the tuna population evaluations carried out by the world's Regional Fisheries Organisations, and the current 5,3 million tons caught per year, 86% of the Maximum Sustainable Yield would be being fished, meaning that, in the future, we have no margin to increase tuna fishing if we also want to guarantee the exploitation of the fish populations in sustainable economic, environmental, and social conditions.

Moreover, because of the foreseen increase in world population and climate change, among other factors, it is estimated that the global consumption of tuna per capita will significantly increase and the demand will be difficult to satisfy. Consequently, it is not unreasonable

to think that the raw materials in food will become more expensive, especially tuna, and that food as a resource will become just as strategic as energy, fueling factors that represent a severe threat to the long-term sustainability of the fisheries: overfishing, illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing (it is estimated that, already today, one million tons of tuna fish that are marketed could come from illegal fishing), the degradation of working conditions (precarious and even slave conditions in some cases, often linked to illegal fishing), and environmental degradation, among others. Not in vain, does the Agenda 2030, within its Sustainable Development Goal 14 (Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas, and marine resources for sustainable development), devote several objectives to ensuring sustainable fishing throughout the entire value chain.

Therefore, some high priorities for mankind emerge: recognise and safeguard the fundamental role of tuna in sustainable development, food security, and economy and respect the Human Rights of all those people who participate in the entire value chain; guarantee the sustainability of tuna resources and associated species, and also work in a responsible manner in those communities where we fish and produce.

Within this context, and totally committed to the UN 2030 Agenda and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals, especially the SDG 14, the **Bermeo Tuna World Capital** Association fosters the drafting of an **agreement on an International Tuna Sustainability Declaration**, whose aim is to compile commitments shared by the different actors at a GLOBAL level, with the ability to impact, and socially and economically transform the entire tuna value chain, to **protect these valuable resources and their ecosystems**.

We, the public, private, and social entities, and signatories of this Declaration, are aware that, to achieve sustainable tuna management, as well as for the conservation and sustainable use of the ocean, collaboration, awareness-raising, and joint and continuous work, are necessary. To this end, we acquire the following commitments:

Commitments:

1. Comprehensively address tuna sustainability, recognizing the environmental, social, and economic characteristics of the fisheries and the people involved in their management and exploitation.
2. Promote social standards and the improvement of the labor rights of all people involved in the tuna value chain, with particular attention to the fishermen and fisherwomen.
3. Promote gender equality in all stages of the tuna value chain, ensuring that women have access to equal working conditions, as well as decision-making spaces.
4. Support small-scale and responsible fishing communities, promote the participation of local communities in decision-making spaces, the distribution of profits, and respect for local social-cultural processes.
5. Promote the nutritional value of tuna as a healthy food source.
6. Foster the consumption of responsibly and sustainably caught tuna. As well as encourage accurate notification of catches and accurate weighing of all species in tuna fisheries.
7. Ensure full traceability of all catches in tuna fisheries from the net to the plate by implementing digital tools that will guarantee the traceability of all commercial transactions, thus avoiding fraud and the entry of illegal fish into legal commercial circuits.
8. Foster the compulsoriness of reporting all catches and discards by species and origin (flag of fishing vessel, fishing area, and country of processing) of the fish on all products, above all on canned and frozen products.
9. Efficiently regulate tuna fisheries management and exploitation and enforce rules in order that no catches in tuna fisheries result from illegal fishing practices, both in terms of environmental standards and social-cultural and labor standards reach the legal commercial market.

10. Promote sustainability certifications, and good management and exploitation practices, including those aiming at reducing by-catches in tuna fisheries, in the entire tuna value chain.
11. Improve governance systems and transparency and ensure effective and efficient control monitoring and surveillance, including proper enforcement to meet the sustainability objectives and to fight against illegal fishing, including with the use of remote electronic monitoring and CCTVs.
12. Facilitate and promote collaboration between the scientific and fishing communities.
13. Cooperate to improve information and data, to increase scientific knowledge, research capacity, and technology transfer in maritime fishing matters.
14. Minimise negative impacts on the environment and people throughout the tuna value chain.
15. Protect and preserve the marine environment and its living resources against pollution and environmental degradation.

In Bermeo, on 2 of May 2023