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European Union and its Member States contribution

Oceans and sustainable development: integration of three dimensions of sustainable development, namely, environmental, social and economic

EUROPEAN UNION

Sustainable management of oceans provides well documented economic and social benefits to humankind which is valued at around 350 billion USD (around 5% of GDP) with around 350 million people dependent on oceans.

The EU has recognised the importance of oceans for sustainable development and has taken different measures under its relevant policies to harness the benefits of oceans to contribute to the creation of wealth and jobs while ensuring long-term sustainability and management of the natural resource base as outlined below.

The European Union's Common Fisheries Policy was reformed in 2013 and prioritizes sustainable development of Europe's fisheries. The main objective of achieving economic, social and environmental benefits, and the heart of the fisheries management system and is to be achieved by 2015 where possible and at the latest by 2020. Maximizing yields under conditions of sustainability will result in increased catch opportunities, and potential for increased returns on investment, higher profit margins and gross added value for the catching industry. The policy integrates the ecosystem and precautionary approaches to fisheries management through the application of integrated multiannual plans for fisheries areas in European waters based on the best available science. The European fisheries policy also seeks to

support to ensure sustainable production methods which contribute to increased productivity without negatively affecting the coastal marine ecosystems. In addition, there are also measures to contribute to the improvement of safety and working conditions for fishing operators and to foster direct and indirect job creation and economic development in coastal areas.

This Communication includes actions tackling environmental issues (e.g. promotion of the Protocol to the Barcelona Convention on Integrated Coastal Management, development of strategies on marine litter, etc.) as well as other actions promoting economic growth and employment such as developing guidelines for the development of marinas, promotion of economic competitiveness while safeguarding the enviro

June 2014) together with its Action Plan. It addresses the three dimensions of sustainable development by promoting blue growth (Blue technologies, Fisheries & Aquaculture, Maritime & marine services); connecting the region (Maritime transport, Intermodal hinterland, Energy networks); environmental quality (Protecting the marine environment, protecting terrestrial biodiversity, habitats and ecosystems); sustainable

BELGIUM

One of the main outcomes of the Rio+20 Conference was the agreement to develop a set of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Oceans and Fisheries have a critical importance to all three dimensions of sustainable development (social, economical and environmental) and have critical relevance to food security and poverty eradication. This is why the United Nations General Assembly decided to accept this issue as the topic for the 16th Open-ended Informal Consultative Process on Oceans and the Law of the Sea in April 2015.

Oceans cover approximately 71% of the world surface. The UN calculates that over three billion people depend on marine and coastal biodiversity for their livelihoods, and estimates the market value of marine and coastal resources and industries at \$3 trillion per year, or about 5% of global GDP³. The World Bank estimates that 350 million jobs are directly linked to the ocean worldwide⁴. Around 97% of the world's fishers live in developing countries, including Small Island Developing States (SIDS), where fish are the single most traded food product, valued at \$25 billion a year⁵. Sustainable fishing provides employment, can help alleviate poverty and boosts nutritional security for millions of vulnerable people.

The human population is predicted to reach 9,5 billion by 2050⁶. As the global population continues to rise, humanity's dependence on healthy and productive ocean ecosystems will increase. The FAO estimates that 85% of fish stocks are fully exploited, overexploited, depleted or recovering from depletion, preventing the marine ecosystem from reaching its full potential as an animal protein

