



Remarks

by

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**for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing
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at

**The 15th Meeting of the UN Open-ended Informal
Consultations on Oceans and Law of the Sea**

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Distinguished co-Chairs,

Excellences,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me first congratulate you Ambassadors Mckay and Meeterbhan, for being at the helm of this consultative process. Under your able cochairmanship I am confident that this meeting will be a success.

I would like to thank you for the opportunity to say a few words at the opening of the 15th meeting of UN Open-ended Informal Consultative Process on Oceans. It is an honor and privilege for me. At the outset, let me congratulate the member States on selecting this important topic for this year's session: the Role of Seafood in Global Food Security.

Food and nutrition security is one of the major issues of concern today. This is so because despite the availability of enough food globally, over a billion people continue to suffer from the lack of nutritious food. It is deeply affecting overall and long term prospect of the nation and the people. The long term damage is particularly worrisome. This disproportionately affects the people from the developing countries. Therefore we have to look at it from the equity perspective, economic perspective as well as sustainability perspective in a more holistic manner.

May I also offer congratulations to the Office of Legal Affairs, and its Division for Oceans and Law of the Sea, for the excellent report prepared in support of this meeting. In the context of the current ongoing discussions on the post-2015 development agenda, the topic of this meeting is propitious.

For my part, I would like to highlight and reiterate the importance of seafood in ensuring food security for the vulnerable countries and peoples. Secondly, I would like to offer some food for thought on the recommendation of the report as it relates to communities living below the poverty level, in particular in developing countries, including SIDS, and the support needed to enable these vulnerable countries to ensure sustainability of seafood for food security.

The report underscores that the importance of seafood to global food security. Seafood plays an important role in human nutrition. With 17 per cent of the world's animal protein intake, it is the main source of animal protein along with essential micronutrients and fatty acids for three billion people. That is a staggering number.

Populations of developing countries, particularly those in Asia and Africa, rely even more on fish for their intake of animal proteins. Many of the people living in these two continents are among the world's most vulnerable. The need to ensure the security of this important food source for the most vulnerable should be recognized.

Perhaps not surprisingly, the importance of seafood to Island inhabitants' animal protein intake and nutrition will be naturally higher, up to 40 per cent or more in some SIDS, and up to over 90% in a couple of them. That seafood contributes almost a quarter of animal proteins consumed by people in Low Income Food Deficit Countries underlines the high importance this food source has for vulnerable peoples and countries.

We know that women account for at least 15 per cent of all people directly engaged in the fisheries primary sector in 2010. In Africa, 59 per cent of fishers (marine, inland and aquaculture) are women. These are high numbers, and yet the percentage of women engaged in fisheries or seafood collection activities in many SIDS where subsistence lifestyle are still prevalent may even be higher still. As such the role of women in seafood security, particularly at the local and national levels, need to be fully acknowledged. A majority of them are definitely doing so at the family level.

Necessary support measures will need to be put in place to ensure the security of this food source which not only provides nourishment but also supports the livelihood of the small fishing communities, including those of women.

We know that the seafood industry is a big business. It is crucial to ensure that the marine resources upon which this industry relies are harvested sustainably and equitably. Indeed, it makes business sense to adopt sustainable seafood harvest and production. This will need the cooperation and collective effort of resource owners, food manufacturers and consumers at the national, regional and global levels. Developing countries, including SIDS, will continue to rely on the close cooperation of the international community.

Secondly, we must ensure that the big marine seafood business has strong backward linkages in the countries and areas surrounding their operation.

One of the conclusions of the report is that the communities living below the poverty level, in particular in developing countries, including SIDS, face critical challenges in their efforts to ensure the availability of, access to, and sustainability of seafood for food security. It also called for international cooperation and coordination to assist these States in addressing these challenges, including through capacity-building and transfer of technology.

Given what we now know of the crucial role that seafood plays for global food security, and the dependency of many of the world's most vulnerable countries and peoples on seafood for their nutritional and protein intake, Some of the areas that need our immediate attention is as follows:

- Capacity-building and development need to be promoted in the areas of sustainable fisheries together with integrated coastal management including through the precautionary and ecosystem based approach;

Sharing of best practices and innovation need to be promoted in the management of oceans and their resources, protection of the marine areas as well as promotion of aquaculture. Global support will be critical in these areas.

- Transfer of appropriate technology, including on infrastructure including off-grid, renewable energy sources that could contribute to reduce spoilage through development of proper cool storage facilities. This would tremendously help promote food supply.
- Promote and integrate traditional knowledge on marine resource management, recognizing that the best knowledge, be it scientific or traditional, is collected over time and especially by those who live on site over a long period of time;
- Explore innovative ways to curb IUU fishing, recognizing that many of the world's tuna catches are caught in the jurisdiction of developing countries, including SIDS;
- Raise more awareness by highlighting just how important and crucial seafood is globally, and need to sustainably harvest this resource, through the involvement of all the facets of the seafood industry.
- Promote the livelihood of Small scale fish farmers and women
- Linking with the global value chain and promotion of aquaculture would be critical as well.

Lastly, and further to my earlier point on the timeliness of this topic, the Third International Conference on SIDS to be convened in September this year provides another opportunity to continue discussions on some of the elements you may be touching upon here this week. In this context, my Office, UN Office of the High Representative for LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS, will be convening a private sector partnerships forum as a pre-conference in Apia Samoa on 30 and 31 August.

One of the segments of the forum will be on oceans and marine resources in the context of SIDS private sector partnerships which will deal with some of the issues you will be considering this week. I encourage those of you who may be interested to be involved to get in touch with my office.

I wish you every success in your consultations and I look forward to its outcome.

Thank you for your kind attention.