

**Action Network on Sustainable Food from Oceans**  
**Rome 5 July 2018**

Welcoming address

Ambassador Inge Nordang

Your excellences, distinguished ambassadors, ladies and gentlemen,

I have the honour to wish you all welcome to this meeting, where focus will be on the important role fish and seafood can play in meeting the global nutrition challenges. These challenges are huge and action is needed.

On behalf of Norway, let me wish you all welcome to this meeting. We are delighted to have such a strong participation here today.

Norway is highly committed to action for healthy oceans. Our prime minister, Erna Solberg, has established a high-level panel on building a sustainable ocean economy, which gathered for the first time in Oslo in June, with the presence of UN Secretary General António Guterres.

Norway has also initiated a new, global multi-donor World Bank fund to combat marine litter and micro-plastics, focusing on waste management systems in developing countries to eliminate contamination of the oceans.

Being at FAO, I also want to mention the EAF-Nansen Programme, which is a cooperation between Norway and FAO. The Nansen research vessel is an international platform where knowledge is generated, capacity developed and research exchanged, to preserve the oceans as a sustainable providers of nutritious food. The main focus is on supporting African countries.

Norway has closely followed the discussions relevant to sustainable aquatic food - in the context of global food security and nutrition. We see an increased awareness of this food source over the last years, but we still have a job to do. Aquatic food can be a part of the solution for global food security and nutrition. However – it is still left out of too many relevant discussions, strategies, policies and programmes

At Rio+20 in 2012, the world's leaders highlighted the role of healthy marine ecosystems, sustainable fisheries and sustainable aquaculture for food security and nutrition and in providing for the livelihoods of millions of people.

In 2014, The UN Committee on World Food Security (CFS) recognized, based on a thorough HLPE report, that aquatic food is central to improving global food security and nutrition. CFS

gave recommendations on how to maintain and enhance the contribution of sustainable fisheries and aquaculture to nutrition and food security.

At the International Conference on Nutrition (ICN2) in 2014, participating parties agreed to eradicate hunger, prevent all forms of malnutrition and to enhance sustainable food systems.

Moreover, through the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) we have committed ourselves:

- to end poverty (SDG1)
- to end hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable fisheries and aquaculture (SDG2)
- to ensure healthy lives and wellbeing (SDG3)
- to reduce food loss and waste (SDG12) and
- to conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources (SDG14)

The UN Decade of Action on Nutrition aims to accelerate implementation of the commitments from ICN2 and the SDGs, and to achieve the global targets both on nutrition and on non-communicable diseases (NCDs). Global Action Networks, under the leadership of government institutions, are inclusive, informal coalitions aimed at aligning and accelerating nutrition action.

We all learned from the HLPE report to CFS: Higher priority needs to be given to aquatic food to improve global food security and nutrition. This is the reason why we have invited you all to this Global Action Network meeting. Together we can make aquatic food a visible element in the strive to improve food security, nutrition and health. Likewise, we can make food security and nutrition an element in the work related to the oceans and the seafood sector.

We wish to raise the awareness of the role of this food source, and increase the production and consumption of sustainable and healthy aquatic food. To do this we must include both competence on sustainable waters, sustainable aquatic food production, nutrition, health and food consumption.

Food security is about making sure that all of us get: enough, safe and nutritious food, that meets our dietary needs and our food preferences.

To increase the role sustainable aquatic food plays in the overall nutrient intake - sectors must work together. Considering the entire aquatic food system. Learn from each other. Identify and set in motion actions for this food source to play a part in global food security and nutrition.

Food from the oceans as well as inland waters do not contribute to food security and nutrition unless it is eaten as part of a healthy diet. To make that happen, we need to make sure that each link in the food system is strong. One weak link and we will have less income and less safe and nutritious food available.

Action should be based on knowledge. We must gain and share knowledge all the way from the healthy waters to the healthy people: How do we ensure a healthy marine environment, which will continue to produce enough, healthy and safe food for the future? What should be a part of a healthy diet and how do we get people to eat healthy? We will explore some of these issues in a thematic session later today.

Here today we have a broad representation from around 50 countries, a diversity of technical experts, and representatives from several UN agencies – including UN Environment Programme, FAO, and WHO. This reflects the need to take a holistic food chain approach, from healthy waters to healthy people. We are going to hear from a wide range of technical experts that will share their knowledge with us on what needs to be done to achieve greater understanding of the importance of seafood in fight against hunger and malnutrition.