



## Global Action Network Sustainable Food from the Oceans and Inland Waters for Food Security and Nutrition

Summary from the Network Meeting, 21<sup>st</sup> October 2024, FAO Headquarter Rome and virtually

The Global Action Network, led by Norway under the UN Decade of Action on Nutrition, held its [annual network meeting](#) in connection with [CFS 52](#). This was a hybrid meeting with in-person participation at FAO headquarters and virtual attendance via Zoom, bringing together a total of 177 registrants from 56 countries, as well as representatives from the EU and the UN. Participants included members of government, institutions, NGOs, and industry.

**Welcoming remarks were held by the Norwegian Deputy Minister Bjørg Sandkjær.** She reminded us that it was WHO and FAO that encouraged Norway to take the lead on sustainable aquatic food systems within the UN Decade of Action on Nutrition. She highlighted that the network, since 2017, has been instrumental in raising awareness about the importance of these systems for global food security, also emphasizing that the network provides us with an opportunity to pool resources, share knowledge, and create innovative solutions for a sustainable future.

Following, **welcoming remarks were held by the joint FAO/WHO leadership of the [UN Nutrition Decade](#).** FAO pointed out that the Global Action Network has been the most active in the UN Nutrition Decade. For the end appraisal of the Nutrition Decade in 2025 all action networks will be included in the dialogue on how to keep the momentum beyond 2025 and several events will be used as platforms for stocktaking. The WHO emphasized the construction of networks as an effective approach for sharing experiences, providing support, and fostering cooperation. They also highlighted the importance of having member states lead these action networks. There are multiple ongoing processes, and Brazil has indicated that they want to lead the discussion on extending and the Nutrition Decade to 2030. They also noted that there has been some progress toward achieving the [Global Nutrition Targets 2025](#) and if the timeline is extended, the targets will maintain the same focus areas but include more ambitious goals for certain aspects.

**Participants shared 2024 relevant for the [networks mission](#).** **Island** as part of the Action Network and as chair of the Blue/Aquatic Food Coalition mention the good cooperation between the Coalition and the Network. The Coalition has noticed that private sector often is missing, and they are working to include this sector in future work. **Brazil** suggests increasing the focus on inland water resources in the work on aquatic food systems and SDG 14. They emphasized the focus on combating illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing, as well as FAOs Guidelines for Sustainable Aquaculture and FAOs Blue Transformation Roadmap. **West Bengal University of Animal & Fishery Sciences** presented a project on the importance of aquatic food in feeding the Indian population. **CGIAR** presented their [2030 Research and Innovation Strategy in Transforming food, land, and water systems in a climate crisis](#). **EBCD** presented activities performed in cooperation with the Network, including side events at UNFCCC COP28, Our Ocean Conference, COFI36, CBD COP16 and UNFCCC COP 29. **Wageningen University & Research** presented their work to ensure accessibility of sustainable fish production systems to the small-scale farmers, using Affordable Aquaculture Recirculation systems (A-RAS) in Kenya. **IFAD** then elaborated on their growing portfolio of aquatic food projects, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa and Asia Pacific countries, and highlighted significant partnerships and progress. **Norway** mentioned a regional cooperation between the Nordic countries on sustainable aquatic food systems, to identify knowledge gaps and provide recommendations to decision makers.

Since the network meeting in 2023 the **Global Action Network** has organized and contributed to six side events in support of the network mission. The network has also supported the applications for side events at the upcoming CBD COP16 and UNFCCC COP 29 by the EBCD.



**The four Network working groups** on specific topics gave a short status of their contribution as part of the Network: The **Food Composition Data group** contributed to the COFI36 side event led by the Network together with the Blue Aquatic Food Coalition: [The case for aquatic blue food in achieving SDG 2 \(zero hunger\)](#). The **Small-Scale Fisheries group** contributed to the CFS52 side event led by FAO: [Milestones in advancing the right to food through sustainable small-scale fisheries and resilient aquatic food systems](#). The **One Food System group** contributed to a HLPF side event in NY led by the Network: [One Food System - integrating terrestrial and aquatic food systems](#). The **Bridging the Decades group** contributed to an UN Ocean Decade satellite event arranged by the Network: [An Ocean of Food Science and Solutions for Ocean-Climate-Food Challenges](#).

The Bridging the Decade group mention highlighted a white paper on [Sustainably nourish the global population](#), by IOC, emphasizing the nutritional aspects of sustainable blue foods. This shift towards a nutrition-sensitive approach highlights the importance of equitable production and distribution methods, which are crucial for food security over the next five years. Through this working group the Action Network has been connected to the Portuguese National Decade Committee giving the opportunity to work more closely with Portugal, Ireland and Canada on bridging the decades.

In 2024 the **Global Action Network** has followed up on suggestions from network participants, e.g. including young voices in our work, emphasising the importance of data collection at regional and country level and highlighting food safety issues. Furthermore, the network has strived to include aquatic foods in the general discussions on food security, including promoting the use of inclusive language, such as “*food production*” or “*food systems*” instead of “*agriculture*” or “*agri-food systems*”.

The **secretariate** presented the Network communication toolbox. The Action Networks [webpage](#) has been visited 50 thousand since the launch in 2017. Our newsletter is sent to more than 2000 subscribers. Participants are welcome to send in contributions to the [newsletter](#), the [event calendar](#) the [Gain and Share tool](#), or to make use of or follow the Networks [X](#) and [LinkedIn](#).

In line with the CFS policy recommendations, ways to enhance the recognition of fisheries, aquaculture's aquatic foods in achieving food security and nutrition in 2025 were discussed. The **Network** considers organizing events in conjunction with both a nutrition conference and an ocean conference to highlight the importance of aquatic foods in food security, engaging stakeholders focused on sustainable aquatic environments as well as those involved in nutrition. In 2025. **Connecting ocean and nutrition communities** will be essential. Key events include [UNOC3](#) and the [One Ocean Science Congress](#) (OOSC), where OOSC will focus on sustainability and equity in ocean-based food systems. To **bridge the Decade of Action on Nutrition and the Ocean Decade**, engagement with upcoming nutrition-focused events will be prioritized, many hosted in France, such as the [Nutrition for Growth Summit](#), mobilizing the international community, particularly the private sector and civil society, toward the SDG's, and [IUNS ICN](#) which will highlight "Sustainable Food for Global Health", with a potential symposium on "Climate Change, Sustainability, and Nutrition". [COP30](#) in Brazil will additionally address food systems and would be relevant arena.

Furthermore, there are several upcoming relevant processes including updating the CFS HLPE report [Sustainable fisheries and aquaculture for food security and nutrition](#).

**The Network Task Force** includes participants who wish to partake actively during the year. Contributions from the Task Force in 2024 was highly appreciated. Network participants are invited to join the Task Force for 2025. The exciting Task Force expressed their interest to continue in 2025. **Network participants may contact the [Network's secretariate](#) to join the Task Force or any of the [four network working/resource groups](#).**

Summing up, and closing remarks were given by **IFAD** pointing out that these meetings have a valuable function, enabling experts and partners to share their work on sustainable aquatic food systems. The range of topics covered by different partners speaks loudly on our collective efforts in placing aquatic foods at the centre of ensuring access to sufficient safe nutritious foods, meeting dietary needs and food preferences.