

**Statement by Mr Koji Sekimizu  
Secretary-General  
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Ministers, Vice-Ministers, Ambassadors, Excellencies, Director-General, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen,

It is with great pleasure that I am here with you today and I am particularly grateful to Director-General Graziano da Silva for extending his personal invitation to me to join you and to say a few words about a topic that is of fundamental importance; not only to the work of our two agencies but in a far broader context.

It is a perfect opportunity, I think, not only to reflect on those areas of substantive work that IMO and FAO share in common, but also to highlight the wider point that, as fellow agencies within the United Nations family, FAO, IMO – and others – must spare no effort to work together as one, and to deliver as one.

We have a duty to do this; we have an obligation to do this. But, much more than that, by working together we can achieve so much more. In this global context, one plus one equals far more than two!

If anybody is unsure as to the central part that fisheries and aquaculture are now playing in the sustainability and development of mankind, a glance through the FAO report on the State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture issued just last month would leave them in no doubt. As the report highlights so clearly, there are some truly eye-opening figures. The share of fisheries production used by humans for food has increased to a record high of more than 85%, or some 136 million tonnes, in 2012. At the same time, annual fish consumption per capita has soared from 10 kg in the 1960s to more than 19 kg in 2012. Fish now accounts for almost 17% of the global population's intake of protein – and, in some coastal and island countries it can rise above 70%; and the report estimates that fisheries and aquaculture support the livelihoods of 10 to 12% of the world's population.

All of which serves to reinforce our understanding that oceans, and fisheries, are genuinely vital resources; and just how crucial it is that we protect them, preserve them, and manage them. In this context, there is a vast amount of common ground – or perhaps I should say common water – that unites us. Indeed, IMO and FAO – and others – have a long history of strong cooperation and collaboration and there are many areas in which our work and yours are clearly complementary.

We have, for example, placed a strong emphasis on efforts to improve safety within the fishing sector. Taken on a global basis, the fishing industry does not have an acceptable safety record; and, while there may be a number of factors that have contributed to this, there can be no doubt that the lack of an effective, global regulatory regime has played a significant part. Fishing vessels do not, generally, fall under the auspices of the primary safety instrument of IMO, the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS) – an instrument that has done so much to improve safety and reduce casualties and loss of life in the cargo and passenger ship sectors.

The Torremolinos Convention of 1977 and its subsequent Protocol of 1993 were adopted to create international standards for fishing vessel safety, but neither has entered into force. Two years ago, after five years of intensive discussion and preparation at IMO, the Cape Town Agreement was adopted with the intention of rectifying this and I sincerely hope, in a year in which IMO is placing special emphasis on the implementation of conventions, this instrument, the Cape Town Agreement, will gain wide acceptance among States without further delay. It should be remembered that the very idea of such an Agreement was first considered by a joint FAO/IMO ad hoc working group on Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated fishing - an excellent example of cooperation between FAO and IMO. I personally led the IMO team at that joint working group and encouraged the group to activate a mechanism to create a new legal instrument that took us five years to conclude.

At that time, IUU Fishing was still a serious issue for the global fishing sector that impacts negatively on safety, on environmental issues, on conservation and on sustainability. In addition to harming fish populations, such fishing creates unfair market competition for – and threatens the livelihoods of – fishermen who follow sustainable practices.

Our two agencies have long seen this as an area of mutual interest where cooperation takes place as very fruitful routine work. In December last year, a significant breakthrough was made when the IMO Assembly adopted a resolution that allowed countries to extend the application of the IMO Ship Identification Number Scheme to fishing vessels – thereby enabling the IMO Number to be used as the Unique Vessel identifier in FAO's Global Record for fishing vessels. Your Committee, at its last session, recognized the necessity of such a key component of the Global Record, and FAO, together with a number of IMO Member States and the World Wide Fund for Nature, co-sponsored a proposal, which the IMO Assembly adopted.

It is a move that offers the potential for a new era of transparency in fisheries, making control measures harder to circumvent and vessels more accountable and visible to fisheries authorities and is, I think, a good example of the enhanced cooperation between our two agencies.

If further proof is needed, another important outcome of this cooperation among UN agencies has been the development of the three FAO/ILO/IMO instruments on the design, construction and equipment of fishing vessels of all types and sizes.

As I mentioned a few moments ago, more people than ever before rely on fisheries and aquaculture for food and as a source of income. The rapid expansion of aquaculture, including the activities of small-scale farmers, is driving this growth in production. Indeed, fish farming holds tremendous promise in responding to surging demand for food which is taking place due to global population growth. But harmful practices and poor management threaten the sector's sustainability.

One of the major threats comes from the presence of invasive, alien species in local ecosystems, introduced as a result of transfers of unmanaged ballast water and sediments from ocean-going ships. This is now recognized as one of the greatest dangers to the ecological and the economic well-being of the planet. The spread of invasive species is causing enormous damage to biodiversity and the damage to the environment is often irreversible.

Shipping simply cannot avoid this issue, and IMO spent more than 10 years developing the International Convention for the Control and Management of Ships' Ballast Water and Sediments (otherwise known as the BWM Convention), a legal instrument to deal with it. Another decade has passed since its adoption in 2004, but the instrument is now close to satisfying the ratification criteria necessary for it to enter into force.

Ladies and gentlemen, I am sure all of you are aware that yesterday, 8 June, was World Oceans Day. This annual event was officially recognized by a UN General Assembly resolution passed in 2008, and provides a perfect opportunity to highlight and to reflect upon a resource that supports global society in so many different ways. The world's oceans provide raw materials, energy, food, employment, a place to live, a place to relax and the means to transport about 90% of global trade.

The fact that the world's oceans are physically so connected with each other is a perfect metaphor for the connected nature of the problems and challenges that they face. Our collective work under the banner of the inter-agency collaboration mechanism UN-Oceans reflects this, too. None of us can tackle ocean issues in isolation; that approach simply won't work.

In this context, I should specifically like to mention GESAMP, the Joint Group of Experts on the Scientific Aspects of Marine Environmental Protection, which has been long administered by IMO. FAO had been a sponsoring organization of GESAMP since its inception in 1969. I should very much like to see FAO continue its involvement and participation in GESAMP, as I have no doubt that, given recent emerging issues such as microplastics in the marine environment, the important work of this group would be greatly strengthened by your input.

And GESAMP is just one good example; we should explore other ways to enhance our cooperation and collaboration. Consider the Torremolinos Protocol and Cape Town Agreement as another field in which our cooperation could be of great benefit. With its constituency of national maritime administrations, IMO can adopt these safety regulations. But, to promote ratification of the Cape Town Agreement, we need good understanding and support from the fishing industry. This is an area where FAO, and national agencies that support FAO, could make significant contributions.

We might even seek support from the research and academic communities dealing with ocean issues, such as the UNESCO Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission. The real point is that, although the instrument was adopted by IMO, all UN agencies that deal with ocean issues can, and should, encourage governments to ratify the Cape Town Agreement.

IMO and FAO should seek to enhance their collaboration still further. Such collaboration would be beneficial to both agencies. For example, IMO is dealing with environmental issues from a wide perspective, such as the designation of Particularly Sensitive Sea Areas, and could facilitate FAO in seeking cooperation from the shipping industry on appropriate issues on its own agenda.

There may be many fields of common interest. Indeed, in the search for greater cooperation, I believe it would be greatly beneficial if all the core agencies of the UN system dealing with ocean-related issues could meet on a regular basis, at the highest level, to exchange views, share information and explore common themes. Some sort of mechanism to enable such

collaboration would be an important step forward and very much in keeping with the concept of the United Nations delivering as one.

We cannot, we must not, work in silos, tackling issues from our own, separate standpoints. We must recognize that so much of what we do has impacts elsewhere. Yes, we each have our areas of specialization; but so many of the issues that we deal with cannot be poured simply and easily into a single pot. Ocean issues are, by definition, global issues – cross-cutting issues – and we must reflect this in the approach we take in tackling them. Cooperation and collaboration are the way forward. By working together; by uniting around our common aims, objectives, interests and responsibilities, we really can make a difference. We really can, deliver as one.

Thank you.