Fish and fishery products are an international export item contributing to foreign currency earnings in more than 180 countries. In value terms about 50 percent of total exports originate from developing countries. For some countries fishery trade represents a significant source of their total foreign currency earnings. The top ten exporting nations account for nearly 50 percent of the total value of US$52 billion and a further ten countries account for an additional 25 percent. Most of the fishery exports are of high-value items such as frozen shrimps and prawns, tunas, salmon.

World Trade of Fishery Products by Continent: 1976-1996

and frozen fish fillets, and are destined mainly to the more developed economies whose imports in 1996 accounted for more of 80 percent of total world value of fishery trade.