



## Sustainable Blue Economy Conference

### FAO Statement

#### Leaders Commitment Session

Delivered by Dr. Gabriel Rugalema  
FAO Representative in Kenya

Monday, 26 November 2018

Excellences

Ladies and Gentlemen of the Press

Invited Guests

Ladies and Gentlemen

Let me on behalf of the Director General of FAO, Mr. José Graziano da Silva, congratulate the Government of the Republic of Kenya, under the leadership of His Excellency, Uhuru Kenyatta, for hosting this important and timely conference. In the same vein I congratulate the co-hosts of this conference namely the Governments of Canada, Japan, and Portugal as well as other countries, UN agencies, and other institution whose contribution has made this conference a reality.

My Organization, Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), has contributed significantly to this conference because we believe that time has come for countries, particularly those in the developing world, to effectively but sustainably harness the blue economy for jobs, income and food.

Excellences

Ladies and Gentlemen

When we talk about blue economy, we are essentially talking about the actual or potential wealth inside, on the surface and around the water bodies such as rivers, lakes and oceans as well as wealth from a variety of sectors that

provide services to the blue economy. It is a broad sector encompassing many sub-sectors ranging from maritime transport, salt industry, water desalination, fishing, sea weed farming aquaculture, tourism, production of fashion products, to mention just a few sub-sectors.

Excellencies

Ladies and Gentlemen

As you know, the blue economy falls squarely into the mandate of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. My organization's role in the context of blue economy is to provide technical support to FAO member states for the development, governance and sustainable utilization of the blue economy (fisheries, aquaculture and their associated value chains) to enhance food security, decent work and poverty alleviation.

As we put a renewed emphasis on the blue economy, we should not forget that it is faced with a number of challenges including dwindling of fish stocks due to overfishing, climate change, pollution, illegal, unregulated, unlicensed fishing, use of inappropriate fishing gear, and others.

Excellencies

Ladies and Gentlemen

The challenges I have mentioned above, can and should be addressed. The potential of the blue economy is immense. In 2016 fisheries alone employed 59.6 million people. Globally, demand for fish is increasing, the aquaculture sub-sector, now valued at 243.5 billion USD, is growing faster than other major food production sectors. We must build on this opportunities for the prosperity of our communities.

Excellences

Ladies and Gentlemen



Food and Agriculture  
Organization of the  
United Nations

Let me assure you of FAO's support to the blue economy – its development, governance and sustainability. Indeed FAO will continue to provide technical support to member countries to realize the dividends of the blue economy while ensuring that this is achieved in a sustainable manner.

Excellences

Ladies and Gentlemen

Thank you very much and I wish you a very successful conference.