

# Agreement on the International Tuna Sustainability Declaration

The fishing activity is essential to guarantee food for a growing world population. Today, fish and fishery products are an essential source of nutrients that contribute to a balanced and healthy diet. They also represent a great economic value. A significant part is wild-caught, so it is necessary to suitably manage their exploitation to guarantee sustainability.

There are tuna fish in all the world's oceans and many countries depend on tuna a great deal for food security and nutrition, economic development, employment, livelihoods, culture and leisure. In fact, tuna fishing forms the basis for the socioeconomic development of numerous communities in which small-scale fishing has given rise to a great diversity of cultures and local ways of life. Currently, more than 80 countries have a tuna fisheries sector, with thousands of boats that fish in oceans all over the world, generating almost 60 million jobs. And, faced with the continuous increase of the demand for this healthy food, and source of natural proteins, the global fishing capacity continues to increase in all the oceans.

Fishing reached a global production of 93.4 million tonnes in 2017, 4.9 million tons of which corresponded to the main tuna species (tropical species such as the bigeye tuna, skipjack, yellowfin tuna, in addition to red tuna and white tuna). The main tuna species represent 20% of the value of global fisheries, and more than 8% of all sea products that are marketed in the world, including aquaculture.

Considering the tuna population evaluations carried out by the world's Regional Fisheries Organisations, and the current 4.9 million tonnes caught per year, 96% of the Maximum Sustainable Yield would be being fished, meaning that, in the future, we have no margin to increase tuna fishing if we also want to guarantee the exploitation of the fish populations in sustainable economic, environmental and social conditions.

Moreover, as a result of the foreseen increase in world population and climate change, among other factors, it is estimated that the global consumption of tuna per capita will significantly increase and the demand will be difficult to satisfy. Consequently, **it is not unreasonable to think that the raw materials in food will become more expensive,**

**especially tuna, and that food as a resource will become just as strategic as energy, fuelling factors that represent a serious threat for the long term sustainability of the fisheries sector:** overfishing, illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing (it is estimated that, already today, one million tonnes of tuna fish that are marketed could come from illegal fishing), the degradation of working conditions (precarious and even slave conditions in some cases, often linked to illegal fishing), and environmental degradation, among others. Not in vain, does the Agenda 2030, within its Sustainable Development Goal 14 (Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development) devote several objectives to ensuring sustainable fishing throughout the entire value chain.

Therefore, some high priorities for mankind emerge: recognise and safeguard the fundamental role of tuna in sustainable development, food security, economy and respect for the Human Rights of all those people who participate in the entire value chain; guarantee the sustainability of tuna resources and associated species, and also work in a responsible manner in those communities where we fish and produce.

Within this context, and totally committed to the UN 2030 Agenda and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals, specially the SDG 14, the **Bermeo Tuna World Capital** Association fosters the drafting of an **agreement on an International Tuna Sustainability Declaration**, whose aim is to compile commitments shared by the different actors at a GLOBAL level, with the ability to impact, and socially and economically transform the entire tuna value chain, to **protect these valuable resources and their ecosystems**.

We, the public, private and social entities, and signatories of this Declaration, are aware that, to achieve sustainable tuna management, as well as for the conservation and sustainable use of the ocean, collaboration, awareness-raising, joint and continuous work, are necessary. To this end, we acquire the following commitments:

## Commitments:

1. Comprehensively address tuna sustainability, recognising the environmental, social and economic characteristics of the fisheries, and the people involved in their management and exploitation.
2. Promote social standards and the improvement of the labour rights of all people involved in the tuna value chain, with special attention to the fishermen and fisherwomen.
3. Promote gender quality in all stages of the tuna value chain, ensuring that women have access to equal working conditions, as well as to decision-making spaces.
4. Support small-scale and responsible fishing communities, promote the participation of local communities in decision-making spaces, the distribution of profits, and respect for local social-cultural processes.
5. Promote the nutritional value of tuna as a healthy food source.
6. Foster the consumption of responsibly and sustainably caught tuna.
7. Implement tools that will guarantee the traceability of all the commercial transactions, thus avoiding fraud and the entry of illegal fish into the commercial circuits.
8. Foster the compulsoriness of reporting the origin of the fish on all products, above all on canned and frozen products.
9. Efficiently regulate fisheries management and exploitation, and reject any fish resulting from illegal fishing practices, both in terms of environmental standards, and social-cultural and labour standards.
10. Promote sustainability certifications, and good management and exploitation practices in the entire tuna value chain.
11. Improve governance systems with efficient control and auditing measures that will consolidate the practice of a sustainable fishing policy.
12. Facilitate and promote collaboration between the scientific and fishing communities.
13. Cooperate to improve information and data, to increase scientific knowledge, research capacity, and technology transfer in maritime-fishing matters.
14. Minimise negative impacts on the environment and people throughout the entire tuna value chain.
15. Protect and preserve the marine environment, and its living resources against pollution and environmental degradation.