

STATEMENT BY ELIZABETH MARUMA MREMA**EXECUTIVE SECRETARY, CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY**

on the occasion of

WORLD OCEANS DAY 2021*“The Ocean: Life and Livelihoods”*

This year’s World Oceans Day theme, “Life and livelihoods”, serves as a reminder that life in the ocean is intimately linked to the lives and livelihoods of the multitudes of people dependent on a healthy ocean. Without healthy oceans, life nor livelihoods would exist.

Yet, our oceans are in trouble. Overfishing, pollution, coastal development and climate change are causing a growing spectrum of adverse effects across marine ecosystems. The importance of oceans for our survival cannot be overestimated.

Over three billion people depend on marine and coastal biodiversity for their livelihoods, with about 250 million of these drawing their livelihoods either partially or fully from fisheries.

The continued decline in biodiversity in the oceans impacts all these people. It has a particularly detrimental effect on coastal populations including coastal indigenous peoples and local communities, and, given their reliance on biodiversity for their welfare, the world’s poor and vulnerable, many of whom directly depend on the oceans for their survival.

Thus, saving the richness of life in the ocean is to fulfil the wishes of the billions of people worldwide so critically dependent on the ocean for their life, livelihoods and well-being.

As Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity negotiate the successor to the Aichi Biodiversity Targets in the form of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework, the aim is to ensure that the interlinkages between nature and people and the services that ocean ecosystems provide for a well-functioning, happy and healthy society are strengthened.

The recent fifth *Global Biodiversity Outlook* outlined eight major transitions needed to slow, then halt nature’s accelerating decline and move our societies into a more sustainable co-existence with nature. This includes the sustainable fisheries and oceans transition, whereby countries strive to protect, restore and sustainably use marine and coastal ecosystems, rebuild fisheries and manage aquaculture and other uses of the oceans to enhance food security and livelihoods.

We know that we do not need to sacrifice ocean health for human needs. In fact, recent research shows that we could increase the amount of food we get from the sea if we use more sustainable approaches and under-utilized resources. Trends in food waste, with about 35 per cent of fisheries and aquaculture harvest being lost or wasted every year, outlines the need for a food system transition that places greater emphasis on a diversity of foods and reduced waste in food supply and consumption.

Furthermore, we also know that when good management is applied, the results can be positive for both nature and people. We have clearly seen, for example, that when good fisheries management is applied, fish stocks are being maintained or rebuilt.

We have the wherewithal to take care of our oceans while simultaneously taking care of ourselves. By doing what's right for our oceans, we help secure a future of living in harmony with nature. Clean and healthy oceans support our own health and survival, let's ensure that we do our best for them.
