Opportunities for, and challenges to, the future role of seafood in global food security

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To feed the world in 2050, agricultural output, originating from crops, livestock and fisheries must increase by over 60 percent. Meeting this target is a formidable challenge for the international community considering that an alarming number of people, mostly in developing countries, still suffer from hunger and poverty. Hence, finding opportunities to alleviate poverty and increase food security is vital and timely, and agriculture, fisheries and aquaculture have a central role play in achieving this goal. Foods derived from aquatic resources, hereafter considered as seafood\(^1\), have a significant role to play across the food supply and value chain, linking ecosystems, economic development and human wellbeing. Since the contribution of capture fisheries to global food fish supplies has levelled off, aquaculture production has taken over as a major supply factor. Aquaculture is still the fastest growing seafood producing sector in the world. Fifty percent of the global seafood currently originates from aquaculture (67 million tonnes in 2012, according to FAO. 2014). Aquaculture’s contribution to global food and nutrition security, income generation and poverty alleviation is well understood. Many countries are embarking on strategies for harnessing the potential of aquaculture for the social wellbeing of their people. The recent projections proposed in *Fish to 2030* (World Bank, 2014) predicts that aquaculture production will increase to the point where it equals global capture production by 2030 and contributes 62 percent of the global supply by 2030. Recent projections by FAO indicate that to satisfy the demand for seafood by the growing and wealthier population, by the year 2030, we have to nearly double the global seafood production, where the bulk has to come from aquaculture. If we are to achieve this goal, it appears that the aquaculture production growth rate needs significant acceleration. Failing to do so will undoubtedly reduce the per capita consumption of fish in many communities in the world, particularly in Africa. In order to adequately supply safe and nutritious seafood in a socially responsible and environmentally sustainable manner, to the growing population, there are many challenges. The most compelling challenges are: (i) improving the contribution of capture fisheries through better management of the seas and inland waters, (ii) ensuring sustainable growth of the aquaculture sector, and (iii) reducing waste in the seafood value chain. Current presentation will elaborate on the opportunities for aquaculture to contribute to the global seafood production and the challenges ahead.

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\(^1\) Seafood in this document refers to food derived from aquatic resources, originating from marine, brackishwater and freshwater environments, including mainly fish, crustaceans and molluscs.