

## **Joint Statement on Japan's "Act on Ensuring the Proper Domestic Distribution and Importation of Specified Aquatic Animals and Plants"**

16 March 2021

Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated (IUU) fisheries are a serious threat to the sustainable use of seafood resources and conservation of the marine ecosystems, which international society is committed to tackling jointly.

The amount of IUU fisheries production is estimated to be 13-31% of total fisheries production in the world and there is also a number of reports on IUU fisheries in Asia and imports of IUU products to markets in Asia. As the biggest importer of fisheries products in Asia, Japanese government has a special interest and responsibility to sustainable management and commerce of global fisheries resources.

With this regard, we welcome the initiative by the Japanese government to establish the new "Act on Ensuring the Proper Domestic Distribution and Importation of Specified Aquatic Animals and Plants" which includes the measures to prevent the distribution of illegal fish catch in Japan and to prevent the import of illegal fish catch outside Japan. We the undersigned organisations are committed to sustainable fisheries practices and regulatory efforts to combat IUU fishing. Collectively, we are dedicated to working with Asian seafood distributors and governments to build their aspirations and commitment towards fisheries traceability and transparency to compliment the new law in Japan.

This Japanese government's action will be a very important step to eliminate IUU fisheries and promote sustainable fisheries management in Asia and across the world.

In order to further advance this effort to tackle IUU fisheries in Asia, we propose that all governments in Asia should take the following actions:

- 1) Strengthening the management and surveillance of fishing vessels to prevent IUU fisheries.
- 2) Establishing the import control system, such as requiring a catch certificate, to prevent the import and distribution of IUU seafood. The system should aim to cover all species to motivate effective compliance and correct labeling of products across all traded species without loopholes.
- 3) Working on seafood traceability and transparency of the seafood supply chain. Traceability systems will not only benefit the consumers on food safety and tackle seafood fraud, but it will also be an effective tool to eliminate IUU seafood from the market.

- 4) Strengthening collaboration among governments in Asia to tackle IUU fisheries. Some of the agenda may be to exchange information and best practices on fisheries management and surveillance measures, as well as aligning Key Data Elements (KDEs) of catch certificates. Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum may be a good place to do this.

### Supporting organisations

Environment and Animal Welfare Society Taiwan

Environmental Justice Foundation

Greenpeace East Asia

Greenovation Hub

Oceana

Qingdao Marine Conservation Society

Serve the People Association, Taoyuan

