

Mission Blue Calls on G-20 Nations to Halt Overfishing Subsidies

Strong Outcome Needed in WTO Fisheries Subsidies Negotiations

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OTTAWA, Ontario--(EON: Enhanced Online News)--Today, Mission Blue, a project of the TED Prize, delivered a letter written to The Right Honorable Stephen Harper, Prime Minister, Canada to call on G-20 nations to stop the expansion of worldwide fishing subsidy programs and to make a strong outcome in the World Trade Organization (WTO) fisheries subsidies negotiations a priority. Canada is hosting the Toronto Summit of the G-20 in late June. The letter expressed grave concern about the state of the world's fisheries and was signed by 67 Mission Blue participants, including Dr. Sylvia Earle, Chris Anderson, Andrew Sharpless, Leonardo DiCaprio, Glenn Close, Ed Norton, Chevy Chase, Fisher Stevens, Celine Cousteau, Jake Eberts and Daniel Pauly.

"We believe that the G-20 nations have a powerful opportunity this summer to halt the practice of fishing subsidies and put the world's fisheries back on a path to recovery and towards an abundant future," said Chris Anderson, TED curator. "Nearly all of the world's fisheries are in jeopardy from overfishing and could be beyond recovery within decades if current trends continue."

Despite international consensus on the dire state of the oceans, many governments continue to provide major subsidies to their fishing sectors. These subsidies promote overfishing by pushing fleets to fish longer, harder and farther away than would otherwise be economically feasible. The fleets are overcapacity – as much as 2.5 times what is needed to fish at sustainable levels. Destructive fisheries subsidies are estimated to be at least \$20 billion annually, an amount equal to approximately 25 percent of the value of the world catch.

"Governments are paying companies to overfish our oceans," said Andrew Sharpless, chief executive officer of Oceana and Mission Blue participant. "It's taxpayer-financed ocean depletion and it's crazy. Cutting government subsidies that produce overcapacity in the world's fishing fleets is the silver bullet to restoring our world's fisheries."

The Campaign to Halt Fishing Subsidies is the first public effort stemming from the Mission Blue Voyage, a first-of-its kind conference hosted by TED from April 6 to 10, 2010 aboard the National Geographic Endeavour in the Galapagos Islands. Mission Blue was launched collaboratively between TED and Dr. Sylvia Earle, the 2009 TED Prize winner and world-renowned, deep-ocean explorer.

"Subsidies encourage unsustainable operations, accelerating the depletion and ultimate demise of fish and fishermen alike. No fish, no fishermen." said Dr. Sylvia Earle. "A new commitment to fisheries would demonstrate that G-20 can contribute to solving environmental problems of global consequence while fulfilling its shared responsibility for the economy and well-being for people of the world."

The Mission Blue Voyage brought more than 100 global leaders, marine scientists, deep-sea explorers, technology innovators, policy makers, business leaders, environmentalists, activists, artists and cultural icons to work together in an experiment of radical collaboration. Voyage attendees worked in eight groups designed to create tangible solutions to help bring an urgency to ocean conversation.

About TED

TED is a nonprofit organization devoted to Ideas Worth Spreading. Started as a four-day conference in California 25 years ago, TED has grown to support those world-changing ideas with multiple initiatives. At TED, the world's leading thinkers and doers are asked to give the talk of their lives in 18 minutes. Talks are then made available, free, at TED.com. TED speakers have included Bill Gates, Al Gore, Jane Goodall, Elizabeth Gilbert, Sir Richard Branson, Benoit Mandelbrot, Philippe Starck, Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, Isabel Allende and UK prime minister Gordon Brown. For more information, please visit www.ted.org.

About OCEANA

Oceana campaigns to protect and restore the world's oceans. Our team of marine scientists, economists, lawyers and other collaborators are achieving specific changes in the legislation to reduce pollution and prevent the irreversible collapse of fish stocks, protect marine mammals and other forms of marine life. With an international perspective and dedicated to conservation, Oceana has offices in Europe, North America, South America and Central America. Over 300,000 collaborators and cyber activists in 150 countries have already joined Oceana. For more information, visit www.oceana.org.

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