

Joint Statement

Global encouragement for the Japanese government to implement the new ministerial ordinance: Improvement of Domestic Trade of Specific Marine Animals and Plants Act

May 23rd, 2022

The following 17 organizations and platforms welcome the new ordinance issued on April 26th by Japan's Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, under the Improvement of Domestic Trade of Specific Marine Animals and Plants Act. Japan – the fourth biggest seafood importing market after the EU, US, and China – is now taking a decisive step to prevent seafood sourced by illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing from entering its domestic market, further contributing to the sustainability of marine ecosystems and fisheries industries globally. We encourage the Japanese government's leadership through the effective implementation of the ordinance.

At the same time, we recognize there are many more actions that could be taken to improve controls to eliminate IUU fishing throughout seafood supply chains. While there have been successful prosecutions against IUU fishing in Japan in recent years, there are advantages to promoting greater transparency and traceability, including opportunities for Japanese companies to access international markets which have already prioritized environmental sustainability and social responsibility. In particular, we recommend improvements in four key areas which include anti-IUU fishing measures successfully implemented in other parts of the world:

1. Establish an electronic catch documentation and reporting system which can be extended in a stepwise fashion to all seafood distributed in Japan.
2. Utilize greater transparency throughout the entire system and develop a system of traceability consistent with relevant international standards such as those promulgated by the Global Dialogue on Seafood Traceability (GDST), including harmonized key data elements (KDEs) with the existing import control schemes of the EU and US.
3. Promptly provide information to the FAO Global Record of Fishing Vessels, Refrigerated Transport Vessels, and Supply Vessels, as 65 other countries already have done.
4. Increase the number of species covered by Japan's import control scheme, such as tuna, eel, and other wild-caught and aquacultured species which are heavily consumed in Japan, and at risk of IUU fishing.

Furthermore, acknowledging the growing concerns about human rights and labor abuses in the seafood sector, we recommend the following as well:

5. When importing seafood, implement additional checks to ensure that no human rights abuses have taken place during production and/or processing.

We believe that further cooperation between governments and industries is essential for more sustainable seafood sourcing and supply practices. We commend Japan on the introduction of this new Ministerial ordinance as a positive first step toward greater transparency and enhanced monitoring, control, and surveillance in the fisheries sector, in line with the outcomes of the High Level Panel for a Sustainable Ocean Economy.

We, the undersigned, continue working with governments and other stakeholders to eliminate IUU fishing across the globe, promote sustainability, and promote effective management and cooperation.

<Signees>

- Advocates for Public Interest Law
- Anti IUU Forum Japan
- Aquaculture Stewardship Council
- Environmental Jurist Association
- EU IUU Fishing Coalition
- Environment & Animal Society of Taiwan
- FishWise
- Global Sustainable Seafood Initiative
- Global Tuna Alliance
- Good Fish
- Greenovation: Hub
- Korea Federation for Environmental Movements
- KUROSHIO Ocean Education Foundation
- Monterey Bay Aquarium
- Oceanus Honors Gaia, Taiwan
- Qingdao Marine Conservation Society
- Wild at Heart Legal Defense Association, Taiwan

