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**To:** UNEP-civil society <[unep-civilsociety@un.org](mailto:unep-civilsociety@un.org)>

**Cc:** Christine Xu <[christine@ali.fish](mailto:christine@ali.fish)>

**Subject:** Aquatic Life Institute's written inputs for the UNEA-7 Ministerial Declaration

## **Integrating Aquatic Food Systems into Global Environmental Policy**

Aquatic Life Institute welcomes the opportunity to provide input on the UNEA-7 Ministerial Declaration. As the world grapples with urgent environmental challenges, it is critical that aquatic food systems and aquatic animal welfare are meaningfully integrated into UNEP's agenda. These sectors significantly impact biodiversity, climate resilience, and pollution, yet they remain underrepresented in global policy frameworks. By recognizing the role of aquatic food systems, UNEA-7 can take a more comprehensive approach to sustainability and environmental protection.

### Key Considerations for Inclusion

A holistic environmental strategy must acknowledge the sustainability challenges of aquaculture and fisheries. Industrial aquaculture has profound effects on biodiversity, water quality, and carbon emissions, while unsustainable fishing practices contribute to marine ecosystem degradation. Addressing these issues requires policies that promote responsible practices, reduce harmful subsidies, and ensure transparency in the sector:

- **Sustainability and Welfare:** Evidence-based welfare standards must be incorporated into aquaculture and fisheries management. This includes responsible feed sourcing, habitat protection, and science-based fisheries policies to prevent overexploitation.
- **Climate and Biodiversity Intersections:** Industrial aquaculture's environmental footprint—deforestation, eutrophication, and greenhouse gas emissions—demands urgent mitigation efforts. Regenerative and nature-positive approaches should be prioritized to align with climate and biodiversity goals.
- **Governance and Transparency:** Financial incentives should not support environmentally harmful practices. Global guidelines for humane treatment and sustainable production, alongside greater transparency in aquaculture subsidies, will promote responsible growth.

### Aligning with Global Policy Processes

The Ministerial Declaration should ensure coherence with existing and upcoming global environmental commitments. Integration with frameworks such as the UN Ocean Conference (UNOC3), the post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework, and UNFCCC climate strategies will reinforce commitments to a sustainable and just food system transition. A shift towards aquatic food systems that prioritize sustainability and welfare can support food security while addressing broader environmental goals.

UNEA-7 presents a crucial opportunity to recognize and act upon the interconnectedness of aquatic food systems, environmental sustainability, and animal welfare. Addressing these issues within the Ministerial Declaration will strengthen

commitments to biodiversity, climate resilience, and equitable food production. We urge UNEP to take decisive steps to ensure that aquatic food systems are acknowledged as a critical component of global environmental governance.

We appreciate the opportunity to contribute to this process and look forward to seeing how these considerations are integrated into the Ministerial Declaration. Please do not hesitate to reach out if further discussion or clarification is needed. We remain committed to supporting UNEP's efforts in advancing sustainable and welfare-conscious environmental policies.

Sincerely,

Giulia Malerbi  
Head of Global Policy  
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