

**PRESS RELEASE**

# Sixteen Countries Adopt Mombasa Declaration to Advance Fisheries Transparency and Combat Illegal Fishing

Mombasa, Kenya – 17 June, 2026 – Sixteen national governments from across Africa, Asia, the Caribbean, Europe, and the Pacific today adopted the [Mombasa Declaration](#) at the 11th Our Ocean Conference, committing to advance global fisheries transparency and strengthen efforts to combat illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing.

[The Mombasa Declaration](#) is a call to action for coastal and flag States on fisheries transparency, with a particular focus on better collection and dissemination of vessel information and allowing for better access to fisheries data. It builds support and momentum for the [Global Charter for Fisheries Transparency](#), which outlines 10 low-cost or no-cost policy principles that governments can adopt globally, in law and in practice.

Endorsed at Our Ocean by a diverse coalition of countries – including Belgium, Cameroon, Chile, the Dominican Republic, France (on behalf of its overseas territories), Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Liberia, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Peru, Republic of the Congo, Somalia, and South Korea – the Mombasa Declaration unites nations committed to strengthening ocean governance and leading global action on fisheries transparency. Once adopted, signatory countries will begin putting the Declaration into action. The signing launches a campaign for other nations to join the effort in advance of the next Our Ocean Conference in 2027.

Coastal communities, small-scale fishers, and economies that depend on marine wildlife bear the brunt of IUU fishing, which threatens livelihoods, food security, and the long-term health of ocean ecosystems. The Mombasa Declaration responds to these challenges by advancing practical transparency measures, outlined in the Global Charter, to improve access to information on vessel ownership, licensing, and fishing activity; strengthening accountability; and enabling more sustainable and equitable management of marine resources.

**Hon. Emelia Arthur, Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture, Ghana**, said, “In my country, our very existence depends on fish. Sixty percent of our animal protein comes from fish, and ten percent of our population depends on the fisheries value chain for livelihood. Fisheries are a matter of culture and national security for us. I’m happy that Ghana is among the first countries to sign the Mombasa Declaration, because it provides a platform for all of us, the different governments, to come together and declare on an international platform that we are working together, fighting together for transparency in the fisheries sector.”

**Madame Catherine Chabaud, Minister Delegate for the Sea and Fishery, France**, said, “France is proud to be among the first supporters of the Mombasa Declaration on Fisheries Transparency, through its Overseas Countries and Territories (OCTs).

This initiative is based on a simple conviction: we will not be able to effectively combat IUU fishing without greater transparency and international cooperation. The Declaration provides an important opportunity for governments to demonstrate their political commitment to improving fisheries governance. We hope that many more countries will join this initiative and implement the commitments it promotes, making transparency the norm in the fisheries sector.”

The Mombasa Declaration was developed with support from the Coalition for Fisheries Transparency and its partners, including academics and practitioners, who are working with governments to advance increased transparency and accountability in fisheries governance and management.

Through the Declaration, signatory countries commit to advancing concrete transparency reforms, including modernizing vessel registries, publishing fishing authorizations, and strengthening information-sharing to support enforcement and accountability across fisheries sectors.

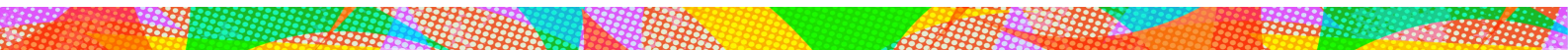
IUU fishing is a pervasive global challenge that undermines coastal communities, distorts markets, and weakens sound ocean governance. Experts estimate this costs the global economy up to \$50 billion annually, while depriving legitimate fishers—particularly in low- and middle-income countries—of income and access to resources. IUU fishing contributes to declining fish stocks, threatening food security and livelihoods, and is often linked to serious human rights abuses, including unsafe working conditions and forced labor. Limited transparency in vessel ownership, tracking, and fishing activity and supply chains allows these practices to persist, making stronger access to reliable fisheries data and accountability mechanisms essential to protecting marine ecosystems and the communities that depend on them.

**Maisie Pigeon, director of the Coalition for Fisheries Transparency, said,** “There is growing recognition that a productive and sustainable blue economy depends on strong ocean governance, effective monitoring, and accessible data. The countries signing the Mombasa Declaration today represent a diverse range of economies and geographies, demonstrating that momentum for transparency at sea is truly global. We look forward to working with these countries and others to advance meaningful fisheries reforms.”

**Beth Lowell, Vice President at Oceana, said:** “For too long, fisheries have operated far from shore, with inadequate oversight and opaque supply chains. These fishing practices have depleted fish stocks, undermined coastal communities, and enabled illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing and human rights abuses. Transparency is essential to protecting our oceans and the livelihoods of those that depend on them. The Mombasa Declaration signals that governments around the world are ready to act against illegal fishing, and to work together for a more transparent, equitable, and sustainable ocean for all.”

**Steve Trent, CEO and Founder of the Environmental Justice Foundation, said:** “Transparency is how we expose abuses, support coastal communities, and rebuild trust that fisheries can be managed sustainably and fairly. I applaud the leadership of every state endorsing the Mombasa Declaration today, and urge others to follow.”

**Tony Long, chief executive officer of Global Fishing Watch, said:** “For too long, illegal fishing has thrived in the dark. Today’s Mombasa Declaration is a turning point in changing that reality. When governments commit to transparency — sharing vessel identities, ownership or tracking data — they create an interconnected network where bad actors have nowhere left to hide. Global Fishing Watch stands ready to equip these nations with the open data and analytical power to drive these transparency measures forward.”



**Antha Williams, who leads the Environment Program at Bloomberg Philanthropies, said:** “The countries that have endorsed the Mombasa Declaration are sending a clear signal that transparency is essential to a healthy ocean and sustainable fisheries. By improving access to reliable data, governments can make better decisions to manage marine resources. This declaration reflects a shared commitment to greater transparency in global fisheries, and we look forward to supporting efforts to turn this vision into meaningful action for coastal communities and marine ecosystems.”

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## **ABOUT THE CFT**

The Coalition for Fisheries Transparency is a global network of more than fifty global civil society organisations that work together to improve transparency and accountability in fisheries governance and management. It is committed to advancing the Global Charter for Fisheries Transparency, a set of 10 low-cost and no-cost policy principles designed to ensure that information about vessels and fishing activity is widely available to promote responsible fisheries management, eliminate illegal practices, and protect human rights at sea. Learn more at [fisheriestransparency.net](http://fisheriestransparency.net).

