



STATEMENT OF SUPPORT FOR THE SHANGHAI DECLARATION

The Shanghai Declaration is an incredibly important international accord that builds on and significantly expands the scope of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries and other earlier international declarations. In particular, it has taken the next step of providing guidance on how the aquaculture industry can maximise its contribution to Agenda 2030 for Transformation and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The overarching vision of the Declaration is for an aquaculture sector that not only leads on developing food systems that are “productive, efficient, resilience, climate-smart and socially responsible”, but are also “safe, healthy and affordable”, with “reduced impacts on the global environment”. The Declaration provides five commitments to assist with the implementation of this vision that are to be applied across 10 strategic priorities. These commitments and priorities embody the key theme of the Declaration, which is to ‘leave no one behind’.

To succeed, implementation of the Shanghai Declaration will require economic and social transformation, based on the best innovations and available research and development. It will also require stakeholders to strengthen their partnerships and build greater capacity through North-South and South-South cooperation. Open and transparent communication and dialogue between stakeholders will also be imperative to improve perceptions, scaling and acceptability of this important industry.

The GlobalSeaweedSTAR (GSSTAR) initiative, funded by UK Research and Innovation and led by the Scottish Association for Marine Research (SAMS), whole heartedly supports the vision of the Shanghai Declaration and is committed to playing a role in supporting and providing guidance to ensure that the industry can maximise its contribution to Agenda 2030. GSSTAR is, therefore, pleased to align itself with the commitments of the Declaration and to support the strategic priorities through its continued engagement with the industry, policy makers, associations, government officials and other stakeholders globally.

Looking forward, we believe that promoting the culture of aquatic plants (including seaweeds) and other un-fed aquaculture species, which typically have a lower impact on the surrounding environment, either in co-culture with fed species or with other maritime activities will assist the industry with meeting its commitment to the Agenda 2030 SDGs. Seaweeds are remarkable: they can grow over 30 times faster than many terrestrial plants and their long-term carbon burial outranks mangroves and tidal marshes. They absorb excess nutrients, which can reduce eutrophication, absorb carbon dioxide, increase biodiversity by up to 40% and as well as providing food and other commercially important products. Over 54 countries worldwide culture seaweeds with an annual global production of 30M tonnes, valued at over USD \$14.7 billion in 2019. This industry employs millions of farmers globally – men and women – including some of poorest and most marginalised in coastal communities.

Through **innovation and collaboration** between producers, local communities and government agencies, we believe seaweed production needs to be upscaled 10-100-fold by 2030 to meet global food security and nutrition demands, to provide a nature-based solution to restoring degraded coastal and marine communities and to mitigate considerable quantities of carbon dioxide worldwide. For this up-scaling to succeed, national, regional and global policies need to be in place to ensure good governance along seaweed value chains and to promote gender-sensitive and inclusive approaches to the production, processing and marketing of the seaweed. Innovation throughout the industry needs to be science-based, recognising the importance of maintaining biosecurity, conserving wild stocks and monitoring the wider impacts of up-scaling to ensure the sustainable and inclusive growth of this industry – collectively, the One Health Aquaculture approach.

To support the aquaculture industry in addressing the SDGs, we intend to:

- 1) **Seek further investment to support innovative research and development** to enable the sustainable upscaling of aquatic plant and un-fed species aquaculture and to address key environmental, social and economic challenges facing the industry, including poverty reduction, gender equality, inclusion, conserving and restoring ecosystems and biodiversity, adaptation to and mitigation of the impacts of climate change.
- 2) **Promote aquatic biosecurity management**, including the prevention of disease and integrated disease and pest management for the seaweed industry. We will continue to provide best practice documents and policy guidance to national governments, regions and international agencies and institutions and share knowledge on pathogen control initiatives in other sectors of the aquaculture industry.
- 3) **Encourage capacity building, technology transfer, networking, and the strengthening of existing partnerships**; particularly promoting South-South and South-North cooperation for this purpose. We have gained significant experience at capacity building, providing training material and workshops for a wide variety of stakeholders. We intend to continue to strength this experience through the launch of our ‘Seaweed Academy’ by the end of 2021.

GSSTAR recognises that aquaculture has a pivotal role in global food security and in addressing the climate crisis. It is relevant to almost all the SDGs and it can make a significant contribution to Agenda 2030. This can only be realised, however, if all stakeholders act and work together towards a common vision. We are committed to playing a positive role in supporting the industry to achieve the strategic priorities provided in this Declaration.

