Threats and Responses Fact Sheet

- Seafood provides almost 20% of the world's total animal protein intake.
- More than 90% of goods traded between countries are transported by sea.
- The largest waterfall on Earth is actually underwater. It is found in the Denmark Strait, and slowly cascades downward for 3.5km.
- Beyond the continental slopes, rocky substrates suitable for growth of cold water corals are rare habitats occupying only 4% of the vast deep sea floor.
- Tropical coral reefs are arguably the richest of all ecosystems in the ocean. In the 110 countries where they are found, 30% of reefs have perished and another 30% will become seriously depleted if no action is taken within the next 20 – 40 years.
- The Gulf Stream carries more water than is carried by all the rivers on Earth.
- Every year 100 million sharks and related species are caught in fisheries. Some species have been reduced by more than 80% over recent years, and many are on the brink of extinction.

Commotion: "A condition of turbulent motion". Our ocean generates incredible power, as experienced with the South East Asia tsunami, causing destruction and despair in coastal communities. Beneath the surface of the ocean, however, lies an extraordinarily-diverse and relatively peaceful world. It is estimated that more than 1 million species live on coral reefs alone, and perhaps as many as 10 million in the deep ocean. Our terrestrial environment is relatively well known, and 10% of the Earth's land masses are now in protected areas.

Many of us have now heard of "the green revolution", but it is time to engage in the "blue revolution", in recognition of the enormous value that marine systems have for the maintenance of life on our planet, including our economic systems. The variety of threats facing our global marine environment is as vast as the ocean is deep. How can society assist the planet to avoid suffering the "ocean blues"?

- In the last 42 years, capture of wild marine fsh for human consumption increased from 20 million tonnes to 84.5 million tonnes, with more than 40% entering

Over 75% of the world's major fsheries are currently fully exploited, over- exploited, or depleted.

Around 3.5 million fshing boats use the world's ocean. Only 1% of these are classifed as large, industrial vessels, capable of signifcantly reducing the capacity of some fsheries to ever recover. This sector of the world fshing feet has the capacity to take around 60% of all the fsh caught globally.

Around 15 million people work aboard fshing boats globally; 90% of them work from small-scale, non-industrialized vessels. There are relatively few large fshing vessels, but they dominate the global catch, forcing millions of small-scale operators to compete for heavily depleted stocks of fsh.

Populations of large fsh with high commercial value, such as tuna, cod, swordfsh and marlin, have declined by as much as 90% in the past century.

"The rapid destruction of the coral reefs of the Indian Ocean demonstrates a need for more resilience in our management approaches." *Carl Gustaf Lundin: Head, IUCN Global Marine Programme*.

"The world's oceans are increasingly under stress as coastal settlements expand and the exploitation of marine resources intensifes. Impacts on the High Seas are now mounting, and these too must be dealt with before it is too late." *Kristina M. Gjerde, High Seas Policy Advisor, author: Ecosystems and Biodiversity in Deep Waters and High Seas (UNEP, 2006)*.

"It is important that the protection of marine life and the oceans should not be a case of 'out of sight, out of mind'. Marine conservation is a matter of global priority and utmost urgency; it is time to reverse the trend of marine exploitation". *Mr. Valli Moosa, IUCN President*.

"The world urgently needs a comprehensive system of Marine Protected Areas to conserve biodiversity and to help rebuild the productivity of the oceans." *Graeme Kelleher: Author, Guidelines for Marine Protected Areas (1999). IUCN*.

The goal of IUCN's Global Marine Programme is to

: “Any area of intertidal or subtidal terrain, together with its overlying water and associated flora, fauna, historical and cultural features, which has been reserved by law or other effective means to protect part or all of the enclosed environment.” These are special places in our marine environment.

: The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea defines coastal states as having territorial jurisdiction out to 12 nautical miles (n.m.) (22.22km) from a coastal baseline and an Exclusive Economic Zone up to 200 n.m. (370.4km) out.

The water column beyond the territorial sea and Exclusive Economic Zones and the seabed Area beyond national jurisdiction are collectively referred to as the High Seas. In particular circumstances, a coastal state may exercise exclusive jurisdiction over seabed resources to the edge of the continental margin up to 350 n.m. (648.1km) from the baseline.

The most biologically diverse marine systems on our planet, and built by coral animals (polyps) and coralline algae that make hard skeletons of calcium carbonate, these “reefs” provide a myriad of habitats for around a million species of specialized animals and plants worldwide. The most spectacular and accessible coral reefs are found in the tropics in association with clear warm water and abundant sunshine, although new species are increasingly found with each journey to the deep sea. Cold-water coral reefs are located off the coasts of 41 countries as well as on seamounts and the mid-ocean ridge. Coral communities are sensitive to changes in temperature, and provide an indication of the forecasted changes in global climate.

: “Biodiversity” means the variability among living organisms from all sources including, *inter alia*, terrestrial, marine and other aquatic ecosystems and the ecological complexes of which they are part; this includes diversity within species and of ecosystems.