

Africa takes centre stage at Blue Belt Initiative Conference for sustainable fisheries, aquaculture

The Blue Belt Initiative Conference for Sustainable Fisheries and Aquaculture meeting, held in Agadir, Morocco recently, welcomed representatives from 22 countries; including African delegates from countries like Norway, Spain and the Russian Federation, as well as international experts and members of FAO.



The Blue Belt Initiative is a platform for the sustainability of fisheries and aquaculture in Africa. It is part of the agenda of the United Nations Conference on climate change.

Launched in 2016 by Morocco, the initiative provides a unified framework, exploring the emergence of low carbon and low ecological footprint on the ecosystems, in building a sustainable and prosperous fisheries economy.

Africa's global contributions

During the conference, Aziz Akhannouch, Minister of Agriculture, Maritime Fisheries, Rural Development and Water and Forests of the Kingdom of Morocco, highlighted the enormous potential that Africa has. "This continent, which will be responsible for the growth of half of the population in the next thirty years, only now contributes 7% toward global fish production and only 3% toward international fishing products.

At the end of the conference, the parties presented the Blue Belt Initiative Declaration. This statement reaffirmed the strategic role of the ocean economy and of aquaculture in Africa in terms of food, economic growth, jobs and innovation echoed by all representatives.

The declaration also raised the challenge posed by climate change, but also its threats to the balance of coastal and marine ecosystems and its impacts on fisheries and aquaculture, that are sources of employment and food security for millions of people on the continent.

The Agadir Declaration previously also called for investment in the blue economy; specifically in sustainable, innovative and protective fisheries and aquaculture through technological and social innovation; the exchange of good practices and the promotion of sustainable development to increase socio-economic and environmental benefits that will, among other things, create jobs, youth training, food security, eradicate poverty, preserve marine ecosystems and adapt to climate change.

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