



For Immediate Release

SUSTAINABLE SEAFOOD FESTIVAL FOSTERS COLLABORATION FOR SEAFOOD SUSTAINABILITY

Singapore, August 29, 2014 – Riding on the success and learnings from Singapore’s inaugural Sustainable Seafood Festival held in June this year, WWF (World Wide Fund for Nature) Singapore, in partnership with the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC), hosted a business forum today to give the local seafood industry insights into the latest innovations from around the region.

Participants at the forum heard from technical experts in conservation and sustainability, certified sustainable fisheries and farms from the region and seafood buyers such as hotels and restaurants. Together, they addressed the supply-chain challenges commonly faced by businesses embarking on responsible procurement.

“The Sustainable Seafood Festival helped us to identify the key strengths and challenges faced by the seafood industry in its journey towards sustainable sourcing. By bringing together the region’s experts and showcasing successful business case studies from around the region, we can ease the kinks in the supply-chain, encourage collaboration between the businesses and provide tried and tested solutions,” said Ms. Elaine Tan, CEO, WWF-Singapore.

WWF has been at the forefront of advocating for MSC and ASC (Aquaculture Stewardship Council) certifications as the highest available standards for seafood sustainability, recommending businesses to source seafood products carrying these ecolabels. However, achieving a level of performance consistent with these Standards has long been identified as a major challenge for this region with the majority of farms and fisheries in the Asia Pacific, that supply favoured species such as tiger prawns and Asian sea bass, a long way from achieving this accreditation.

To address this, the forum discussed opportunities for how businesses can develop supply chain partnerships to source these species from fisheries and farms who are formally engaged in Fishery Improvement Projects (FIPs) and Aquaculture Improvement Projects (AIPs) with WWF. These programmes actively guide the implementation of responsible practices in these fisheries and farms, guiding them towards certification.

“WWF acknowledges that achieving certification takes time and investment and in the meanwhile, there is a gap in supplying more responsibly harvested products for certain species. The alternative is for supply chain businesses to work together on step-wise improvement programs that can incrementally move fisheries towards certification. At the same time those fisheries and farms that have made firm and clear commitments to engage in improvement projects should be recognised by the market to provide additional incentive for continuing their journey towards certification,” said Dr. Geoffrey Muldoon, from WWF’s Coral Triangle Global Initiative.

Other highlights from the forum included sharings from WWF-Australia on their sustainable seafood partnership with major retailer Coles, and a presentation from the Maldives Fishermen’s Association on their MSC-certified pole and line skipjack tuna sector and how its commitments to sustainability has made important contributions towards improvements to fishermen’s livelihood and food security.

“The MSC adheres to the most rigorous international standards applicable to certification programs and has proven to have significant impacts to sustainability of the seafood sector. What is unique about the MSC is that this is a market based program and Singaporeans can come

together and make a difference by choosing a brand or product that carries the MSC ecolabel. By doing so we safeguard the seafood supplies for this and future generations of Singapore.” added Mr. Kelvin Ng, Asia Pacific Director, MSC.

The forum also tackled the issue of shark conservation, including the topic of shark fin and heard the latest updates on the global status of sharks and WWF’s new Shark & Ray Initiative. Headed by Dr. Andy Cornish from WWF International, this initiative is focused towards addressing the threats facing shark populations worldwide.

“Populations of sharks and rays have never been in worse shape globally, and overfishing continues unabated in most areas. One quarter of all sharks, rays and their close relatives are now threatened with extinction. It is clear that demand for shark fin in Asia, and shark and ray meat in other regions has driven overfishing, so building on current momentum amongst businesses in Asia to forgo shark fin is key to reversing the dramatic declines” said Dr. Cornish.

Hilton Worldwide, which announced a global ban on shark fin at all restaurants and F&B facilities operated by its 669 owned and managed properties, acknowledged the urgency to protect the oceans by sourcing for sustainable seafood.

Said Mr. Markus Schueller, Vice President, F&B Operations, Asia Pacific, Hilton Worldwide, “Sustainability is and remains a core pillar of Hilton Worldwide’s corporate responsibility strategy, Travel with Purpose. We acknowledge that the journey towards responsible seafood sourcing requires introspection, research, commitment and patience, and is a process that will involve thoughtful and continuous stakeholder engagement. Collectively however, the global hospitality industry has significant potential to raise guest awareness, and to advance responsible business operations at large – including the sourcing of sustainable seafood.”

--

Sustainable Seafood Festival 2014

Organised by WWF-Singapore, in partnership with the MSC, the week-long Sustainable Seafood Festival (SSF) created a new movement for responsible consumption of seafood by empowering over 20 suppliers, retailers, restaurants and consumers to ‘pick the right catch’ by running simultaneous sustainable seafood promotions to drive sustainability throughout the seafood supply chain. www.picktherightcatch.com

About World Wide Fund for Nature Singapore

WWF – World Wide Fund for Nature is the world’s largest and most respected independent conservation organizations, with almost five million supporters and a global network active in more than 100 countries. WWF’s mission is to stop the degradation of the planet’s natural environment and to build a future in which humans live in harmony with nature, by conserving the world’s biological diversity, ensuring that the use of renewable natural resources is sustainable, and promoting the reduction of pollution and wasteful consumption. www.wwf.sg

About Marine Stewardship Council

The Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) is an international non-profit organisation set up to help transform the seafood market to a sustainable basis. The MSC runs the only certification and ecolabelling programme for wild-capture fisheries consistent with the ISEAL Code of Good Practice for Setting Social and Environmental Standards and the United Nations Food and Agricultural Organisation Guidelines for the Eco-labelling of Fish and Fishery Products from Marine Capture Fisheries. msc.org

For more details, please contact:

WWF-Singapore

Leanora Gaffar,
Assistant Communications Manager
E: lgaffar@wwf.sg
M: 9844 6486 | T: 6730 8112

MSC-Asia Pacific

Alex Lin,
Regional Corporate Engagement Manager
E: alex.lin@msc.org
M: 8181 5287 | T: 6472 3280