



UNITED NATIONS GLOBAL SEAWEED INITIATIVE

Communiqué

Geneva, July 16, 2026,

We, the members of the UN Global Seaweed Initiative (UNGSI), met in Geneva, Switzerland, on June 29 and 30, 2026, for the Initiative's first Annual Meeting. As the UNGSI takes shape as a global platform where trade, environment, economic and social development, science, and finance come together to advance sustainable seaweed value chains, we welcome the shift from vision to implementation and reaffirm the principle that UNGSI should remain practical, inclusive, science-based, and action-oriented. We affirm that:

- Seaweed is a high-potential sector for sustainable development, climate action, biodiversity, value addition, trade diversification, food systems, food security and resilience of coastal communities, green and blue jobs, and circular materials that can act as sustainable non-plastic substitutes and alternatives.
- To realize this potential, Member States are encouraged to integrate seaweed into national planning, including Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs), National Adaptation Plans (NAPs), Sustainable Ocean Economic Plans, marine spatial planning documents, and national aquaculture or blue economy strategies.
- Production and commercialization constraints remain significant. Addressing them requires investment in key areas: seed quality, disease and climate resilience, post-harvest trade and processing infrastructure, reliable testing and certification, market intelligence, training, strong collective organizations, value-added processing, and technology transfer.
- Trade, regulations, and standards will be decisive. Greater visibility and disaggregation of seaweed and its by-products in trade classifications, improved Non-Tariff Measure (NTM) transparency and data, science and risk-based Sanitary and Phytosanitary Standards (SPS) and Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) approaches, and inclusive standard-setting are needed to reduce fragmentation, improve trade facilitation, and support market access, while ensuring that standards remain proportionate and do not unintentionally accelerate market concentration or create unnecessary barriers for small-scale actors. Priorities include creating a commercial species and by-products

registry, improving the Harmonized System classification, undertaking NTM mapping, and supporting Codex and standards processes.

- Transformation of the sector requires the necessary national quality infrastructure system (NQIS) (standardization, metrology, and accreditation) as well as conformity assessment services (testing, certification, and inspection) to verify compliance with quality, safety, and sustainability requirements of downstream markets and build trust with consumers. Beyond verifying product compliance with requirements, Member States are encouraged to establish robust Monitoring, Reporting, and Verification (MRV) systems capable of reporting on the results of investment projects along the seaweed value chain towards national adaptation, mitigation, and biodiversity goals and objectives.
- Financing must become more coordinated and accessible. Public, private, and blended finance solutions are needed to build bankable pipelines, support innovation, and enable countries and coastal communities to capture more value. Priorities include developing fundraising proposals, blended finance concepts, pilot projects, market studies, and investment-readiness support, including: “Transforming Global Seaweed Systems for Climate-Resilient Coastal Livelihoods, Biodiversity and Inclusive Blue Economies”, involving GEF or Adaptation Fund pathways, to be led by UNIDO and FAO; the UNCTAD-UNEP Sustainable Materials Trade Programme GEF proposal, focused on non-food applications; the programme proposed by Agence Française de Développement (AFD) and Islamic Development Bank (IsDB) to support Indonesia; and, for eligible and interested Member States to submit proposals for possible financing by the Global Agriculture and Food Security Program (GAFSP).

To strengthen our governance and coordination, we aim to:

- Activate and run national working groups, following the examples of Brazil and France; and
- Use Member-led communication modalities, including a common mailing list and principles guiding social media engagement under the Co-Chairs.

We welcome the interest shown by private-sector actors and emphasize the importance we attach to involving civil society and representatives of smallholders and producers. We will explore ways to facilitate engagement with civil society, the private sector, and academia, including the possibility of creating an advisory group consisting of volunteers from these stakeholder groups.

We appreciate the attention drawn to the recommendations in the policy brief developed by the Global Seaweed Coalition in partnership with the International Seaweed

Association, on seaweeds as a complementary source of iodine. Member States are encouraged to reach out to their respective Codex focal points to follow up.

We note several upcoming global events that will enable stocktaking and provide opportunities to coordinate, expand membership, secure financing, and share evidence about seaweed with broader sets of stakeholders. These include the:

- 37th session of the Committee on Fisheries (COFI) in Rome, Italy, 7-11 September 2026;
- Committee on World Food Security (CFS), 54th Plenary Session (CFS54) in Rome, Italy, 19-23 October 2026;
- Biodiversity COP (CBD COP17) in Yerevan, Armenia, 19-30 October 2026;
- Climate COP (UNFCCC COP31), including follow-up on the Algae Plan to Accelerate Solutions and the Seaweed Breakthrough, in Antalya, Türkiye, 9-20 November 2026;
- High Seas Treaty COP (BBNJ COP1) in New York City, United States of America, 11-22 January 2027 (tentative);
- Ocean Impact Summit in Bali, Indonesia, March 2027 (tentative);
- EU Algae Summit, 2027;
- Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee on plastic pollution, fourth part of the fifth session (INC-5.4), 13-24 March 2027;
- 6th UN Ocean Forum, 2027–2028;
- International Seaweed Symposium, in Qingdao, China, 23-28 April 2028; and
- 4th UN Ocean Conference, in the Republic of Korea, June 2028.

Next steps include:

- Update the governance note, reflecting the discussion on membership, observers, communication modalities, and partner engagement;
- Prepare an implementation action matrix;
- Circulate an events roadmap for 2026–2027;
- Refine the fundraising pipeline, including the status of concept notes, donor engagement opportunities, and possible pilot countries; and
- Consult members on the date, venue, and objectives of the next annual UNGSI meeting.

We welcome the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and the Republic of Ghana as new members and United Nations University (UNU) and International Trade Centre (ITC) as new supporting partners. We encourage members and supporting partners to sustain the work

of the Secretariat, including through direct engagement and voluntary financial contributions, and call on other interested countries and partners to join the UNGSI and support the seaweed sector, *inter alia*, through financing and coordinated policy measures.

We express our deep appreciation to UN Trade & Development (UNCTAD) for hosting the First Annual Meeting of the Initiative and to the Secretariat (UNCTAD and the Global Seaweed Coalition) for their invaluable support.

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