COVID-19 – Global Market Trends of Fish and Fish Products

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What the news say about the impact of COVID-19 on fish trade?
What latest trade statistics tell us about species? The case of Tuna

Source: FAO Globefish 2020
Impact of COVID-19 pandemic on international fish trade

**Demand side:**
- **Falling consumer demand** (closure of restaurants, hotels & retail business, specially of fresh produce)
- **Changes in consumer demand** (more local & processed fish consumption)
- **Changes in means of purchase** (more e-purchases and e-auctions)
- Potential increase or stricter application of sanitary measures on fish and seafood products (human & animal species health)

**Supply side:**
- **Impossibility to fish** in some countries due to social/economic confinement measures
- **Missing profitable fishing seasons** in some countries
- **Disrupted trade routes** (e.g. air transport has ceased in many routes) for fishers in many countries
- Lack of sanitary and social protection for fishers and processors
- Lack of capacity to process overstock of fresh fish
Coping with the challenges (1)

**Harvesting**

*Fish* remains an essential food/animal protein that it can support post-pandemic recovery

*Keep the fight against illegal fishing* in all shores and rely as much as possible on electronic MCS systems complemented with targeted interventions at sea & port

*If conditions allow, adjust fishing seasons*, i.e. when below MSY & without disturbing reproduction periods, so fishers can compensate lack of activity (*case by case*)

**Processing**

Introduce *sanitary and social safety readiness and adaptation plans* for most vulnerable workers in key blue economic sector such fisheries and seafood processing

*Support fresh production shifts to seafood processing* when feasible, as well as new product development and effective logistic support

*Enhance digitalization & coordination*: fish producers & suppliers with transport, warehousing & logistical services (to avoid food losses & waste)
Coping with the challenges (2)

Commercialization & distribution

- Apply the least possible trade-restrictive & at the same time effective sanitary measures
- Minimize unnecessary controls and burdensome procedures associated with trade in fish clearance
- Make effective use of online sales and auction platforms

Recovery

- Rescue packages need not only to be green but also BLUE (focus on sustainability vulnerable populations)
- Phase out unsustainable public expenditure including fish and fuel subsidies, shifting resources to stock management & responsible small-scale fishers support
- International cooperation must continue: UNCTAD-FAO-UNEP Plan of Action for SDG implementation
See UNCTAD resources on trade and COVID-19 at: https://unctad.org/en/Pages/coronavirus.aspx