

Global insurers unite to cut financial lifeline to pirate fishing

Insurance industry tackles illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing as part of joint Oceana and United Nations initiative on sustainable marine insurance

St. Julian's, Malta, 6 October 2017—Leading insurers from around the world have committed to take action on pirate fishing, an unlawful practice that costs the global economy tens of billions of dollars in losses every year and contributes to overfishing and the destruction of vital marine habitats and ecosystems.

[Allianz Global Corporate & Specialty](#), [AXA](#), [Generali](#), [Hanseatic Underwriters](#) and [The Shipowners' Club](#) have co-sponsored the world's first insurance industry statement on sustainable marine insurance. [The Statement](#) confirms their commitment to not knowingly insure or facilitate the insuring of vessels that have been blacklisted for their involvement in pirate fishing—also known as illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing. This pioneering initiative was launched at the [Our Ocean conference](#) in Malta, an international gathering of world leaders hosted this year by the European Union.

"IUU fishing has ramifications for all of us and contributes to overfishing. It takes away jobs from honest fishers and supplies the unsuspecting public with illegally-caught food. Today is a major breakthrough with leading insurers committing to deny a financial lifeline to pirate-fishing vessels. We call on other insurers to show corporate responsibility and sustainability leadership by joining this fight against IUU fishing," said **Lasse Gustavsson, Executive Director of Oceana Europe**. Oceana is the largest international advocacy organisation dedicated solely to ocean conservation.

"We live on the Blue Planet, so it's a tragedy that pirate fishing, polluted oceans and dead coral reefs are out-of-sight and out-of-mind to many. With this commitment, insurers are showing foresight and leadership. They're making it crystal clear that responsible and sustainable maritime industry practices and healthy oceans go hand in hand with insurability and business sustainability," said **Butch Bacani, who leads UN Environment's Principles for Sustainable Insurance Initiative (PSI)**, the largest collaborative initiative between the UN and the insurance industry. *"Going forward, the insurance industry—as risk managers, insurers and investors—should be a lighthouse for UN Sustainable Development Goal 14 to conserve and sustainably use our oceans, seas and marine resources."*

IUU fishing is an unresolved and internationally pervasive problem, with illegal and unreported fishing costing the global economy between USD 10 billion and 23.5 billion annually, which translates to 11 million to 26 million tonnes of fish¹.

Those that participate in IUU fishing break or avoid fisheries management rules and succeed in operating outside the effective reach of government control. IUU fishing can deplete already overfished populations and can destroy vital marine habitats and ecosystems. This activity can also harm law-abiding fishers that suffer reduced fishing opportunities when their targeted fish stocks are targeted by IUU fishing vessels.

To tackle IUU fishing on a global scale, Oceana and the PSI facilitated the development of a landmark industry statement on sustainable marine insurance—[Assisting ocean stewardship through marine insurance](#)—for insurers to support efforts that can help reduce and ultimately eliminate IUU fishing.

¹ Agnew DJ, Pearce J, Pramod G, Peatman T, Watson R, Beddington JR, et al. (2009) Estimating the Worldwide Extent of Illegal Fishing. PLoS ONE 4(2): e4570. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0004570>

IUU fishing exposes insurers to various risks such as financial, legal and reputational risks. The Statement lays the foundation for insurers to help combat IUU fishing through education, awareness building, risk management, and insurance underwriting—the process of evaluating, defining and pricing insurance risks.

Currently, more than 20 leading insurers, insurance market bodies and key stakeholders from across the globe have signed and supported the Statement. Oceana and the PSI are calling on more insurers, reinsurers, brokers and agents to sign the Statement. Industry bodies and stakeholders such as insurance associations, insurance regulatory and supervisory authorities, and civil society groups are also welcome to show their support by becoming a supporting institution to the Statement.

Quotes from co-sponsors of the world's first sustainable marine insurance statement

“As a leading marine insurer, AXA is well aware of the risks posed by illegal fishing, notably overfishing and pollution risks owing to the fact that the vessels involved are generally in a very poor condition. AXA encourages sustainable marine insurance practices and in doing so, specifically supports Sustainable Development Goal #14, “Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development,” **said Jad Ariss, Group Head of Public Affairs and Corporate Responsibility, AXA.**

“Hanseatic Underwriters recognises the work done by Oceana and the PSI Initiative in seeking to limit the ability of any individual or organisation to unlawfully and unfairly exploit the world's fishery resource. As members of the marine community we will support that work not only by way of endorsing this Statement – an initiative we are proud to co-sponsor – but in ensuring its spirit is complied with in our day-to-day operations,” **said Tobias Braun, Managing Director, Hanseatic Underwriters.**

Next steps

Ending IUU fishing is underscored in [UN Sustainable Development Goal 14](#)—the UN's “healthy oceans goal”—by committing countries to take action to eliminate IUU fishing by 2020.

Beyond the Statement, Oceana and the PSI will be working with insurers to enhance risk management and insurance underwriting guidelines in order to reduce the risk of insuring vessels and companies associated with IUU fishing.

Going forward, the PSI will shape the broader sustainable marine insurance agenda at the global level and harness the role of the insurance industry as risk managers, insurers and investors to help achieve UN Sustainable Development Goal 14:

- As risk managers, marine insurers provide risk management advice to their clients which can reduce risk, prevent losses and lead to better maritime industry practices that contribute to conserving and improving the health of our oceans
- As insurers, marine insurers provide insurance coverage against risks to which shipping and fishing fleets are exposed, including coverage for marine cargo, marine hull and machinery, and marine liability risks
- As institutional investors, insurers—whether or not they underwrite marine insurance business—can invest in companies that adopt and support responsible and sustainable maritime industry practices



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About Oceana

Oceana is the largest international advocacy organisation dedicated solely to ocean conservation. Oceana is rebuilding abundant and biodiverse oceans by winning science-based policies in countries that control one third of the world's wild fish catch. With over 100 victories that stop overfishing, habitat destruction, pollution and killing of threatened species like turtles and sharks, Oceana's campaigns are delivering results. A restored ocean means that one billion people can enjoy a healthy seafood meal, every day, forever. Together, we can save the oceans and help feed the world. Oceana kindly acknowledges the generous support of EU LIFE Programme and The Waterloo Foundation.

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About UN Environment's Principles for Sustainable Insurance Initiative

Endorsed by the UN Secretary-General and insurance CEOs, the Principles for Sustainable Insurance (PSI) serve as a global framework for the insurance industry to address environmental, social and governance risks and opportunities—and a global initiative to strengthen the insurance industry's contribution to building resilient, inclusive and sustainable communities and economies.

Developed by UN Environment's Finance Initiative, the PSI was launched at the 2012 UN Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) and is the largest collaborative initiative between the UN and the insurance industry. More than 100 organisations worldwide have adopted the four Principles for Sustainable Insurance, including insurers representing more than 20% of world premium volume and USD 14 trillion in assets under management.

In 2016, UN Environment—through its PSI Initiative and its Inquiry into the Design of a Sustainable Financial System—and insurance regulators and supervisors launched the Sustainable Insurance Forum for Supervisors (SIF). The SIF is an international network of insurance regulators and supervisors working together to strengthen their understanding of and responses to sustainability issues for the insurance business.

www.unepfi.org/psi

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