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Theme: Aquaculture

Session: TuA1 - Policy, planning & development 1

Title: **The Role of Industry Self-Regulation in the Development of Sustainable Aquaculture**

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Abstract: The world aquaculture industry is expanding its output but at the same time it is generating concerns about environmental sustainability. It is often heavily concentrated in coastal areas where there is strong competition for space and water resources and where it has been associated with externalities such as habitat destruction and pollution. Fortunately, awareness of these problems is spreading and key sectors of the aquaculture industry are taking responsibility for their environmental performance. Their response is being driven partly by the realisation that fish and shellfish farmers are often the first to suffer when the environment is degraded, and partly by pressure from NGOs, consumers, and major buyers of aquaculture products. The aquaculture industry's reaction has involved a wide range of technological improvements (particularly in the areas of nutrition, selective breeding, disease control, and intensive production systems) and the drafting of numerous codes of conduct focusing on responsible practices. Some of these voluntary codes are being refined into global aquaculture standards and, backed-up by third party certification, they are starting to deliver improvements, particularly in situations where the alternative of new legislation is unappealing because of cost, poor enforcement or because of concerns about non-tariff trade barriers.

One industry body, the Global Aquaculture Alliance, established to promote sustainable aquaculture, has started by focusing on shrimp farming and is addressing food safety concerns, and social and environmental issues through its Best Aquaculture Practices (BAP) programme. It has written standards for hatcheries, farms and processing plants and these are gaining widespread support. There are now major seafood buyers in the USA and Europe that are demanding that their shrimp suppliers meet the BAP standards. A separate organisation, Aquaculture Certification Council, Inc. certifies conformity with the standards.