



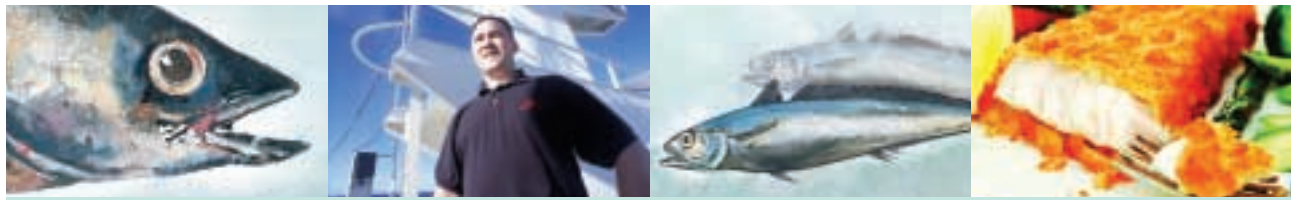
# Fishing for the future II

UNILEVER'S FISH SUSTAINABILITY INITIATIVE (FSI)



Unilever

# Contents



<b>Chairmen's message</b>	1
<b>Global fisheries under threat</b>	2
<b>Unilever's fish business</b>	4
<b>Unilever's Fish Sustainability Initiative (FSI)</b>	6
<b>The Marine Stewardship Council (MSC)</b>	8
<b>Case studies</b>	10
<b>Marketing sustainable fish</b>	12
<b>Fish species used by Unilever</b>	13

This brochure (published December 2003) updates the original (2002)

## Unilever's corporate purpose

Our purpose in Unilever is to meet the everyday needs of people everywhere – to anticipate the aspirations of our consumers and customers and to respond creatively and competitively with branded products and services which raise the quality of life.

Our deep roots in local cultures and markets around the world are our unparalleled inheritance and the foundation for our future growth.

We will bring our wealth of knowledge and international expertise to the service of local consumers – a truly multi-local multinational.

Our long-term success requires a total commitment to exceptional standards of performance and productivity, to working together effectively and to a willingness to embrace new ideas and learn continuously.

We believe that to succeed requires the highest standards of corporate behaviour towards our employees, consumers and the societies and world in which we live.

This is Unilever's road to sustainable, profitable growth for our business and long-term value creation for our shareholders and employees.

## Who we are

Unilever is a multi-local multinational with consumers, employees, business partners and shareholders on every continent.

The Unilever Group was created in 1930 when the UK soap-maker Lever Brothers merged its businesses with those of the Dutch margarine producer, Margarine Unie. Unilever has operations in around 100 countries and our products are on sale in 150.

Unilever has two divisions – Foods and Home & Personal Care. Food brands include such well-known names as *Birds Eye*, *Hellmann's*, *Iglo*, *Knorr*, *Lipton* and *Magnum*. Home & Personal Care brands include *Dove*, *Lux*, *Omo*, *Pond's* and *Sunsilk*.

At the end of 2002, we employed 247,000 people and our turnover was €48,760 million. By the very nature of our business in cleaning, grooming and

feeding people, our success depends on our companies being close to consumers and deeply rooted in the societies and environments in which we operate.

# Chairmen's message



In 1996 we ambitiously committed to source all our fish from sustainable stocks. As one of the world's largest fish buyers, we recognised the need to take the initiative and work with others to make fishing more sustainable and, of course, to secure our fish supplies for the future.

Our fisheries work is one of our three sustainability initiatives, alongside agriculture and water. These support our brands and our Path to Growth business strategy.

All those involved in promoting sustainable fisheries – governments, companies such as ours and other stakeholders – face many complex challenges.

For example, there is a lack of conclusive scientific knowledge on the ecological impacts of fishing and a clear need to involve the communities who earn their livelihood from it. These important considerations contribute to the lengthy time it takes to certify fisheries as sustainable. Furthermore, some governments are slow in taking action to conserve their fish stocks.

However, by working closely with others we have made significant advances. Our suppliers have responded well to our strong encouragement to adopt sustainable fishing practices, which we assess using the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation's guidelines.

The Marine Stewardship Council (MSC), which we helped set up with the WWF, has established an increasingly well-recognised global standard for sustainable fisheries. We continue to support its work and encourage our suppliers to seek certification to the MSC Standard.

In 2001, we started selling our first whitefish product made from New Zealand hoki certified to the MSC Standard. Three important fisheries for Unilever – US Alaskan pollock, Chilean hake and South African hake – are making good progress towards certification. This will significantly increase the supply of certified fish, giving consumers a wider choice.

At the end of 2002, we were buying more than a third of our fish from sustainable sources. By 2005 we expect the figure to rise to three quarters. Although it is short of our 1996 target to source all our fish in this way by 2005, we have demonstrated substantial progress.

We remain firmly committed to our goals and are determined to help drive the whole fisheries market towards a sustainable future.

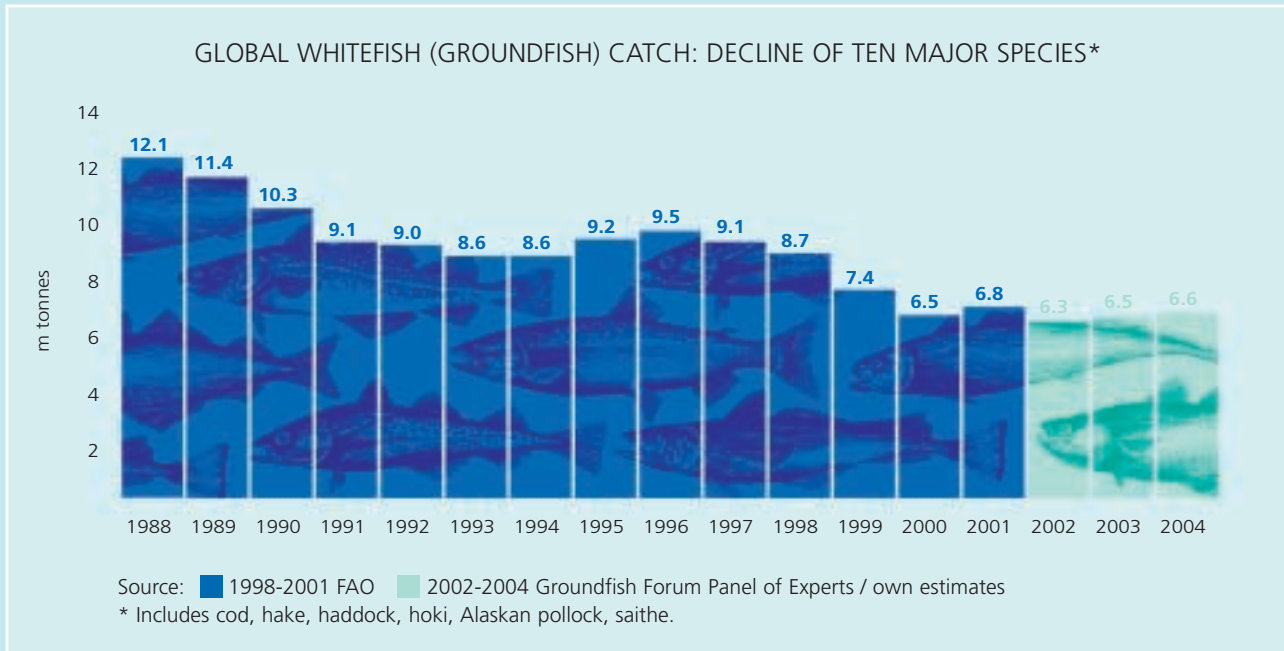
**Antony Burgmans**

**Niall FitzGerald**

**Chairmen of Unilever**

# Global fisheries under threat

Fish stocks worldwide are in serious decline: 48% are fully exploited, 16% overfished, and 9% depleted, according to the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO).



Important fisheries remain under threat. It is estimated that every year fishing practices kill up to 20 million metric tonnes of unwanted fish, seabirds, sea turtles, marine mammals and other ocean life.

There are social implications too. Many coastal communities throughout the world have been sustained by nearby fisheries for centuries and have suffered severe loss of jobs and the breakdown of social structures as a direct result of the decline in fish stocks. One billion people in Asia and 20% of Africans depend on ocean fish for all their protein.

Worldwide catches of the commercially important whitefish (groundfish) species (e.g. Alaskan pollock, cod, haddock and hake) have been in decline since the mid-1980s. The collapse of the cod fishery off Newfoundland in the early 1990s reflects the problem that others face. Scientific evidence, when available, was often neglected for

political reasons and quotas were set higher than recommended. In areas in which quotas were in line with the science, controls were often ineffective and catches were too high. As a result, the total catch of the 10 major whitefish species almost halved within 15 years.

Illegal and unreported fishing make the problem worse. The FAO reports that "abusive practices take 30% of the catch, in some important fisheries".

Over-exploitation of specific species also has a knock-on effect on marine ecosystems of which they are a part. Researchers have shown how over-fishing of one species disrupts the balance of marine ecosystems and threatens biological diversity. For example, a dramatic rise in the number of crown-of-thorns starfish, which preys on coral reefs, has been attributed to the decline in the starfish's natural predators that have been fished out<sup>1</sup>.

Despite these problems, consumer demand for fish continues to grow. Seafood consumption in the US and Europe has doubled in the last 30 years. From 1960 to 1996 world fish production for human consumption increased from 27 million to 91 million tonnes.

Damaging fishing techniques and decline in fish stocks have led to calls for dramatic action on conservation. At the World Summit on Sustainable Development in 2002, governments agreed that fish stocks should be restored "on an urgent basis and where possible not later than 2015".

<sup>1</sup> Historical Overfishing and the Recent Collapse of Local Eco-Systems, Scripps Institution of Oceanography, University of California, San Diego. *Science*, July 2001.



South African hake

**Dr Keith Sainsbury**

*Senior Principal Research Scientist  
CSIRO Marine Research in Australia*



Many fisheries are now overfished, often with devastating ecological, economic and social consequences. But it is not all doom and gloom. The requirements for sustainable fisheries are now widely understood and the number of well-managed fisheries is growing. The commitment of companies such as Unilever to source products from well-managed and sustainable fisheries is vital to protect future supplies. By encouraging its suppliers to seek certification to the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) Standard, Unilever promotes consumer choice, rewards sustainable fisheries and sends a strong message to fisheries that do not yet meet the Standard.

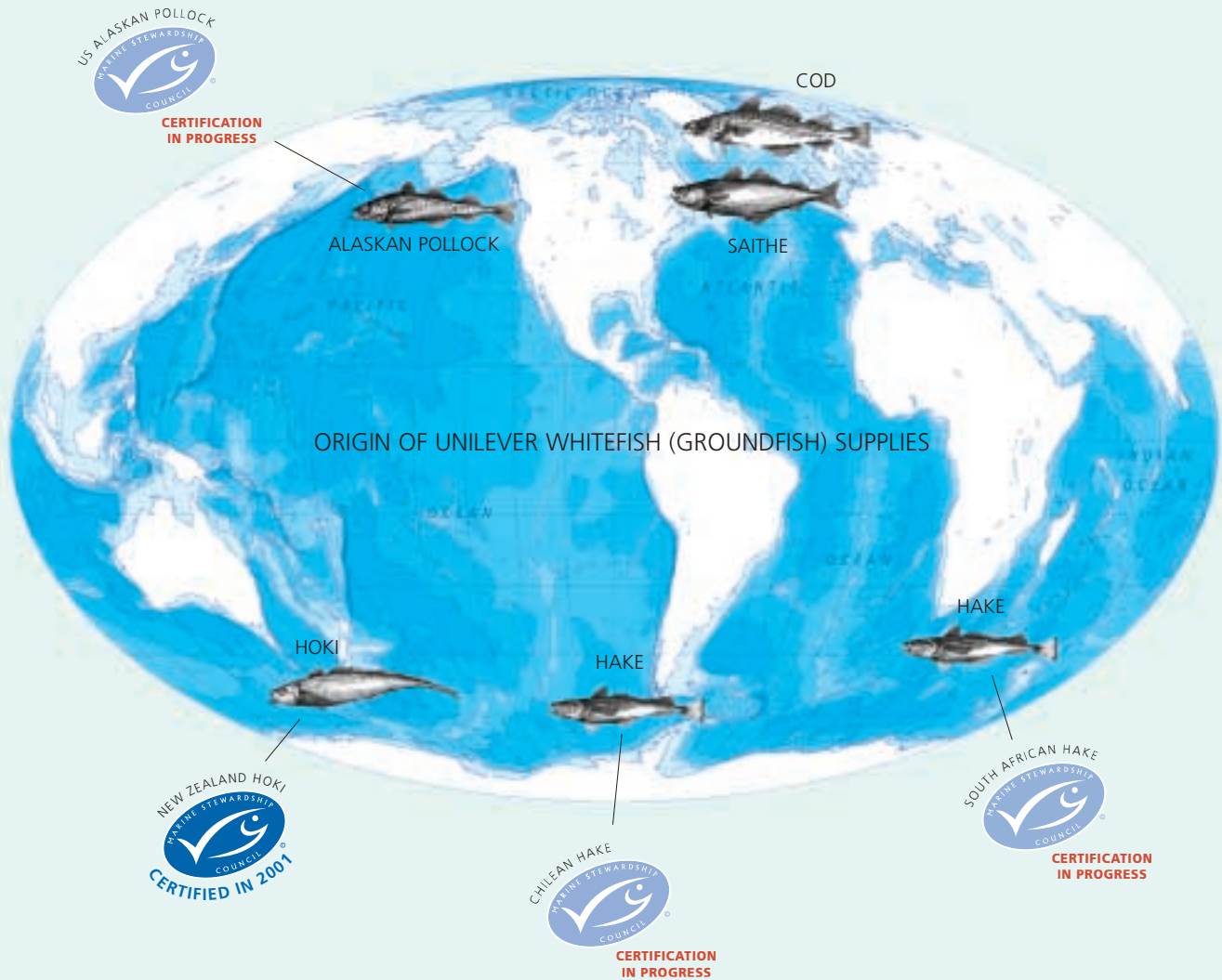
**“Fisheries, including aquaculture, provide a vital source of food, employment, recreation, trade and economic well-being for people throughout the world, both for present and future generations and should therefore be conducted in a responsible manner. The FAO Code of Conduct For Responsible Fisheries sets out principles and international standards of behaviour for responsible practices with a view to ensuring the effective conservation, management and development of living aquatic resources, with due respect for the ecosystem and biodiversity.”**

Introduction to the FAO Code of Conduct For Responsible Fisheries (1995).

Unilever’s sustainability assessment tool (see page 6) is based on the FAO Code.

# Unilever's fish business

We are one of the world's biggest buyers of fish. Our fish business relies on access to reliable supplies into the future.



Most of the fish we sell comes from whitefish (groundfish) species: Alaskan pollock, cod, haddock, hake, hoki, plaice and saithe. These are sold as frozen products, such as fish fingers and coated or uncoated fillets under our brands: *Iglo* (Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Greece, the Netherlands and Switzerland), *Birds Eye* (Ireland and UK), *Findus* (Italy), *Fruadesa* (Spain), *Knorr* (France, Spain).

We source most of our fish from the Northern Pacific (Alaskan and Russian pollock) and Northern Atlantic (Russian and Norwegian cod, saithe and haddock). We also source hake from Argentina, Chile, South Africa and Uruguay and hoki from New Zealand.

Commercial fishing companies catch, process and freeze fish on the high seas or in factories on land, delivering it to buyers, such as ourselves, mainly in frozen blocks. We process and package the fish while it is still frozen. This maintains freshness and taste. Some premium products are also prepared from individually frozen fillets.

We buy fish from around 100 suppliers, with whom we have long-term relationships, contracting to take agreed quantities over a set period. To secure our fish supplies in the long term, we need to work closely with them to bring about change in the management of fish stocks and fisheries practices.

Through our fish sustainability initiative we are committed to source all our fish from sustainable fisheries.



1



2



3



4



5



6



7

### How hoki are caught

**1** A factory trawler catches and processes fish in the Tasman Sea, near New Zealand.

**2** Effective technology helps to ensure that the right species are caught and best practices are followed.

**3** A catch is brought on board.

**4** Matthew Kee, an independent observer working with the Fisheries

Audit Service, checks a fish sample for size and quality.

**5** All non-hoki fish, mainly ling and hake, caught accidentally with New Zealand hoki are sorted and iced for sale to local fish markets. All off-cuts (e.g. guts, heads and bones) are turned into fish meal during processing. MSC criteria specify that there should be as little waste as possible.

**6** Fillets prepared for freezing and

shipment on the trawler. Some smaller trawlers bring the catch to factories on shore for sorting and freezing.

**7** Unilever processes and packages the fish – using fillets that have been quickly frozen into blocks by our suppliers. This maintains freshness and taste.

The New Zealand hoki fishery is certified to the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) Standard. See case study on page 10.

# Unilever's Fish Sustainability Initiative (FSI)



Unilever is committed to buy all its fish from sustainable sources – we expect most will come from these by 2005.

## Leading the way

By the early 1990s conclusive evidence from the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) showed that over-fishing had put global stocks of fish for human consumption at serious risk. This in turn threatened supplies to our frozen fish business.

We responded with a bold commitment to buy all fish from sustainable sources. The challenge was huge and one we could not take on alone. We knew that progress could only come about by working with others who shared our goal, in the industry and outside.

In 1996 we started by engaging with our fish suppliers to encourage them to adopt sustainable fishing practices. That year we wrote to all our suppliers asking them to confirm that their fish were legally caught in specified FAO catch areas and that they were not involved in species threatened with extinction. We stopped doing business with those suppliers who could not offer confirmation. We then developed a method to assess our suppliers (see below).

In 1996, we began working with the international conservation organisation WWF, to help establish an independent certification programme for sustainable fisheries – known as the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC). In 2000, we launched our first product certified to the MSC Standard – Alaskan salmon in Switzerland (now discontinued). In 2001 we sold our first MSC certified whitefish – New Zealand hoki – and are encouraging other fisheries to work towards certification. See page 8 for more details on the MSC.

## Our sustainability assessment tool

Conserving biodiversity and the sustainable use of biological resources – as set out in the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity – are core to our fish sustainability initiative.

We have developed what we call a traffic light system to assess the sustainability of fisheries, based on the FAO's Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries.

Our dedicated sustainability manager assesses each fishery against five

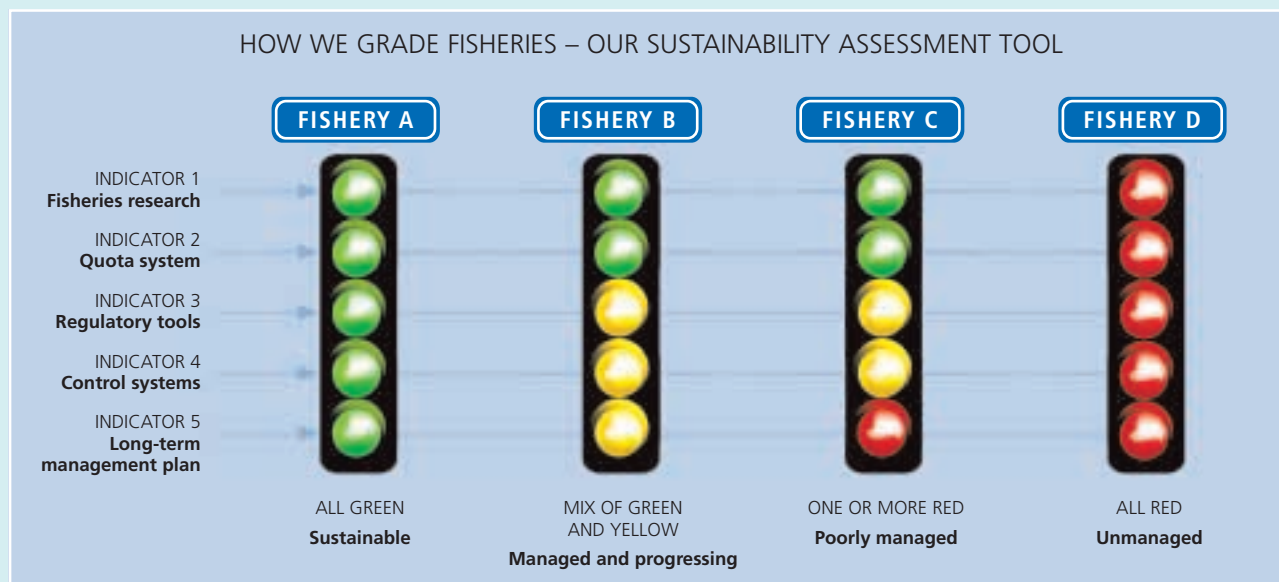
indicators: fisheries research; quota system; regulatory tools; control systems; long-term management plan. The effect of fishing on marine ecosystems is also taken into account.

We grade the assessment results into three colours – red, green and yellow (see diagram). A fishery that gets all green is deemed *sustainable* and we encourage them to seek certification to the MSC Standard (see page 8). Those that show a mix of green and yellow are deemed *managed and progressing*, and those that get one or more red, *poorly managed*. We categorise a fishery as *unmanaged* if it scores red against all five indicators.

We no longer source from fisheries that are unmanaged, and continue to support those that are making good progress towards sustainability.

In 1998 we started to use our traffic light system to assess our whitefish (groundfish) suppliers. We have now reached the stage where the checks and re-checks are continual.

## HOW WE GRADE FISHERIES – OUR SUSTAINABILITY ASSESSMENT TOOL





### Claude Martin

Director General  
WWF International



Unilever's fish sustainability initiative is an example of where good business, conservation and sustainable development clearly overlap. By protecting fish stocks, habitats and ecosystems, fish products can be safeguarded for the future.

Market incentives, such as the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) label, reward well-managed fisheries. We've seen clear improvements in the environmental performance of fisheries certified to the MSC Standard. It's still early days for the MSC, but we are confident that as the MSC grows it will be a major force to make world fisheries more sustainable.

### Maja Kirchner

Member of Commissioner Fischler's Cabinet  
European Commission



How do we promote sustainable fishing in Europe? More rules on bigger mesh sizes, closing further areas to fishing, or introducing better controls to prevent unrecorded landings and false declarations? Or does the answer lie in using market mechanisms? As one of the world's largest buyers of fish, Unilever focuses on the latter by giving consumers a choice. The company is buying an increasing amount of fish from sustainable fisheries and promoting this as a selling point to consumers. This is important because consumers need to be aware of the sustainable alternatives available.

### Challenges ahead

Although there are fisheries around the world that have made bold steps in pursuit of ecological and commercial sustainability (see case studies on pages 10–11), there are still many that are not well managed.

Many factors that determine progress towards sustainable fishing are outside our control, such as lack of action by governments to conserve fish stocks, lengthy challenges to fishery certification and lack of clear scientific knowledge on the ecological impacts of fishing. In addition, some in the industry, including raw material suppliers, manufacturers and retailers, have been slow to support sustainable fisheries.

As well as adapting our products to reflect the fish species available from sustainable sources, we also need to help consumers understand the environmental benefits of a shift in species (see page 12).

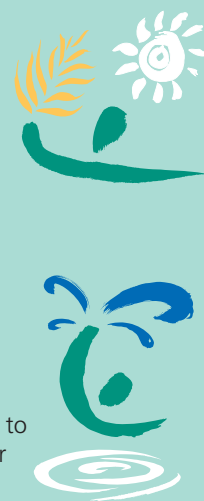
## OUR OTHER SUSTAINABILITY INITIATIVES

Besides fish, Unilever is also working on two other sustainability initiatives: agriculture and water.

We are working with a wide group of stakeholders to develop a set of standards for sustainable **agriculture**. We have completed guidelines for the sustainable management of all five of our key crops – palm oil, peas, spinach, tea and tomatoes. We are also working with other major food companies through the Sustainable Agriculture Initiative Platform ([www.saiplatform.org](http://www.saiplatform.org)).

Our sustainability initiative on **water** addresses the growing problem of water scarcity in many parts of the world. As well as reducing water consumption in our factories, we are also working with many local partners to conserve water resources. Our SWIM (Sustainable Water Integrated catchment Management) principles and guidelines have been used to evaluate and focus our current projects.

See more on [www.unilever.com/environmentalsociety](http://www.unilever.com/environmentalsociety)



# The Marine Stewardship Council (MSC)

The Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) makes it easy for consumers to choose sustainable fish.

## Promoting consumer choice

Increasingly, shoppers can choose fish products that bear the MSC logo. The logo provides the assurance that the fish comes from sustainable fisheries, independently certified to the MSC Standard.

“Certification completes the link from fishermen to consumers, allowing us to include on-pack information – in the form of a well-recognised, reputable logo – that allows consumers to demonstrate to suppliers that sustainable fishing counts,” says Unilever Co-Chairman, Antony Burgmans.

## How the MSC works

The MSC is an independent certification programme. It has developed a Standard (Principles and Criteria) for sustainable fisheries and accredits independent certifiers, who can assess fisheries against this Standard.

The MSC Principles and Criteria (see box) are based on the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries. They were agreed after extensive engagement with scientists, fisheries experts, environmental organisations and those with a strong interest in preserving fish stocks for the future. Fisheries that meet the MSC Standard may use the MSC logo on their products. These fisheries are audited

every year, with a full reassessment every five years.

Originally established by Unilever and WWF, the MSC became an independent non-profit organisation in 1999. It aims to involve many stakeholders in its decision making. It has a Board of Trustees to provide oversight of its work, as well as a Technical Advisory Board and a Stakeholder Council that meets annually. These bodies are made up of a broad range of members with expertise in varied fields and will help the MSC to adapt and evolve.

Seven fisheries were certified to the MSC Standard by October 2003 and some valuable lessons have been learned. In most cases, certification took longer than predicted, for three main reasons. First, detailed scientific knowledge of the effects of fishing on ecosystems is often lacking and it can take years to predict cause and effect. Second, it takes time to confirm that the fishery applies the MSC Standard in practice. And third, the certification process encourages the participation of all stakeholders, which is essential to transparency but can be very time-consuming.

The MSC has improved the certification process by introducing an objections

procedure. This means it can take longer to achieve certification but it ensures that stakeholder concerns are fully taken into account.

## Certified products

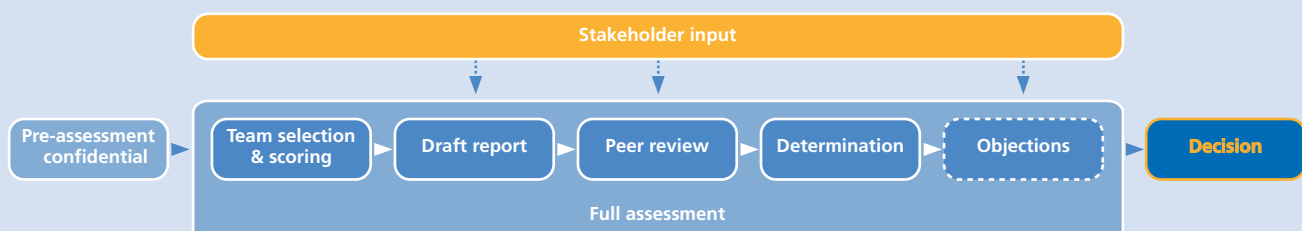
MSC certification is gaining momentum, with seven fisheries certified and a further 13 undergoing full assessment (end of October 2003). Nearly 200 products made by different companies worldwide now carry the MSC logo.

Unilever encourages its suppliers to seek certification to the MSC Standard. We now use certified New Zealand hoki in some of our products (see case study on page 10). At the end of December 2002, 5% of our fish was sourced from fisheries certified to the MSC Standard.

The bulk of our supplies come from sources that we have assessed to be sustainable or well managed, using our sustainability assessment tool (see page 6). Much of this comes from three large fisheries that are undergoing certification to the MSC Standard – US Alaskan pollock, Chilean hake, and South African hake (see case studies on pages 10–11).

We also need to help build consumer awareness of the MSC logo (see page 12).

## THE MSC CERTIFICATION PROCESS



## MSC PRINCIPLES AND CRITERIA FOR SUSTAINABLE FISHING

### Principle 1

A fishery must be conducted in a manner that does not lead to over-fishing or depletion of the exploited populations and, for those populations that are depleted, the fishery must be conducted in a manner that demonstrably leads to their recovery.

### Principle 2

Fishing operations should allow for the maintenance of the structure, productivity, function and diversity of the ecosystem (including habitat and associated dependent and ecologically related species) on which the fishery depends.

### Principle 3

The fishery is subject to an effective management system that respects local, national and international laws and standards and incorporates institutional and operational frameworks that require use of the resource to be responsible and sustainable.



## WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP WITH WWF

In 1996, Unilever started to work with the conservation organisation WWF to establish the now independent



certification organisation – the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC). Unilever and WWF had different motives but a common purpose: the need to ensure the long-term sustainability of global fish stocks and the integrity of the marine ecosystem.

The two partners each brought wide-ranging skills, knowledge and networks to support the formation of the MSC. WWF had already pioneered a similar approach with the Forest Stewardship Council.

The Unilever / WWF partnership achieved a key milestone in July 1999 when the MSC became a fully independent non-profit organisation. Although the MSC now operates independently from the founding partners, both Unilever and WWF clearly have a large stake in the successful implementation of the certification scheme among fisheries around the world.

### Margaret Wittenberg

*Chair  
Commercial Stakeholder Group  
Marine Stewardship Council*



Use and support of the MSC label is a manifestation of a company's concern for the environment. The label demonstrates to consumers and clients that a fishery works to protect fish stocks for the future. And it shows that your company works and thinks proactively and collaboratively. By providing a recognised logo on products, it helps consumers to be informed shoppers. Fishermen, distributors, food processors, retailers, restaurateurs and seafood business consultants all say that the MSC label is good for business.

### Michael Sutton

*Conservation & Science Program  
The David & Lucile Packard Foundation*



Unilever and WWF created the MSC to harness market forces and the power of consumer choice in favour of fisheries conservation. While the MSC is still a relatively young initiative, there are some early signs of success. Nearly 200 product lines bearing the MSC label are on sale in 14 countries. Around 4% of world production of edible wild fish production will be certified to the MSC Standard if the fisheries now being assessed win certification. Is that enough to transform the world seafood market to favour sustainable fisheries? Maybe not, but the MSC is certainly on the right track.

# Case studies

## New Zealand hoki

New Zealand hoki was the world's first whitefish fishery to achieve Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) certification, in 2001. Unilever uses New Zealand hoki in some of its products, as a sustainable alternative to other whitefish species.

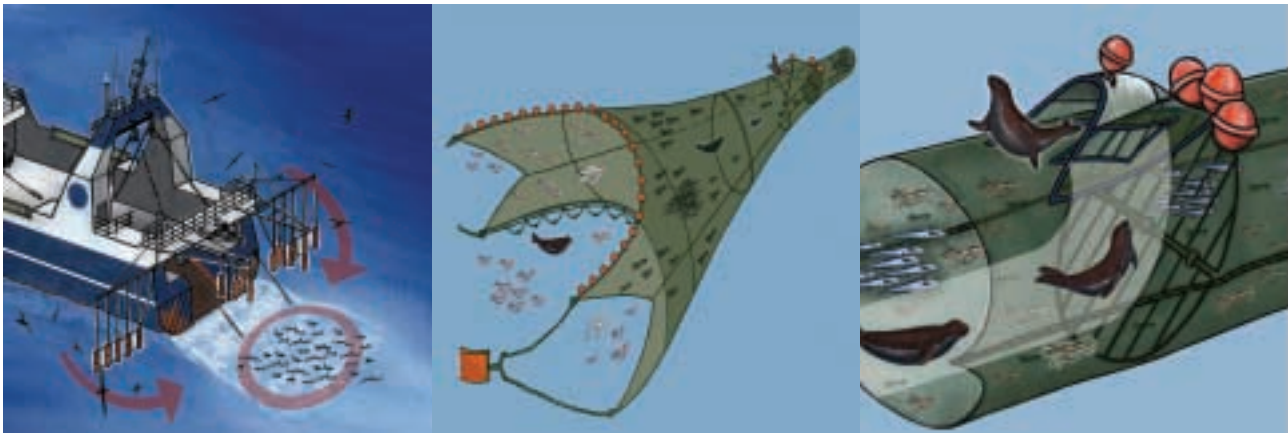
Certification was complex and lengthy – the assessment took a full year. It highlighted the difficulties in defining sustainability (particularly ecological impacts) but underlined the value of involving all stakeholders in the process. Many lessons were learned. For example, after the hoki certification the MSC introduced an objections procedure to make the certification process more inclusive.

The hoki fishery, which is based around New Zealand, has a strictly enforced quota management system to prevent over-fishing and to guarantee long-term fish supplies. Hoki

fishermen ensure that their catch is not wasted. All non-hoki fish caught accidentally – by-catch – are sold to local fish markets. Off-cuts, such as guts, heads and bones, are turned into fish meal.

The fishery management is constantly looking for ways to improve and spends around US\$1.9 million on research each year. Trials are under way into methods to avoid accidental by-catch of seabirds and marine mammals, such as fur seals and sea lions. These include the Brady Bird Baffles that prevent seabirds coming close to the stern of large fishing vessels and seal-excluder devices that allow seals to escape from fishing nets.

Trawler crews and new recruits are being trained in sustainable fishing practices.



Sea birds follow fish trawlers to pick up scraps and collect fish from the net. The Brady Bird Baffle keeps birds away from the sides of the vessel, and out of harm's way.

Seal-excluder devices act like an escape hatch, enabling seals that enter the net in search of fish to get away unharmed.

### Scott Burns

Director  
WWF International  
Marine Conservation Programme



I think the hoki certification process shows that the MSC can be an effective tool to improve the environmental performance of fisheries – the hoki fishery has taken positive steps that would not have happened without the MSC. At the same time this case underlines the need for fisheries to move quicker in meeting new conditions imposed by the certification process.

### Richard Cade

Chief Executive  
Hoki Fishery Management Company Ltd  
New Zealand



MSC certification of the New Zealand hoki fishery has brought commercial benefits for fishing companies. It has helped raise the profile of hoki, particularly in Europe, which means that fishermen have been able to get better prices.

I can't see a future for the hoki fishery without MSC certification. The public increasingly expect the fishing industry to take more notice of environmental issues and certification to the MSC Standard ensures we do so.

## US Alaskan pollock

The Alaskan pollock fishery in the Aleutian Basin, Eastern Bering Sea and Gulf of Alaska, is the world's largest whitefish fishery. Over one and half million tonnes of pollock are caught there, accounting for about a third of the US total catch of fish and seafood.

Alaskan pollock is a versatile white fish used in many Unilever products, including fish fingers.

The fishery, generally considered well managed, is undergoing MSC certification, a process that started in 2001. A draft assessment report was published in September 2003.

A variety of measures have been introduced by the fishery to help protect the marine ecosystem. Annual catch limits are set well within the levels recommended by scientists. Trained observers are on board most vessels and at onshore processing plants to monitor the catches and collect data. Many fishing grounds are closed – either permanently or seasonally – to help maintain fish stocks and sensitive habitats.

A central reporting system has been introduced to track levels of by-catch – sealife caught unintentionally. This helps trawlers avoid areas where a lot of by-catch is expected.

The fishery funds research into the marine ecosystem and the impact of commercial fishing activities. Fish is also donated to local and national food banks, organisations that provide free food to those in need.

## South African hake

Hake is by far the most valuable fish resource in South Africa. It is fished both inshore and in deep water. Nearly half the catch is exported to Europe.

By the end of the 1970s, the South African hake fishery was severely overfished. Fishing companies and the South African government have worked hard to reverse this decline and secure the future of the fishery. Measures introduced include a larger mesh size for fishing nets that allow young fish to escape, a conservative quota system and limitations on the number of fishing vessels. Some fishing grounds have been closed to give fish stocks a chance to recover.

Hake stocks are still significantly lower than 50 years ago. But conservation measures have brought about a gradual recovery in catch rates that are now reaching their highest level in 25 years.

The fishery is the first in Africa to begin the process of certification to the MSC Standard. The assessment, which began in August 2002, is evaluating the status of the fish stock, the effect of fishing on the aquatic ecosystem and the effectiveness of the fishery's management.

### Jim Gilmore

*Director of Public Affairs  
At-sea Processors Association  
USA*



The future of fishing depends on good stewardship of fisheries. Alaskan pollock producers have for many years made conservation a high priority. This results in mutually beneficial long-term business relationships with our customers. Certification to the MSC Standard will help assure our customers and consumers that our fishing practices are sound.

### Chuck Bundrant

*Chairman  
Trident Seafoods  
USA*



Short-term thinking and poor fisheries management have caused a serious decline in fish stocks, which regulation alone has proved unable to check. The MSC provides an effective solution by harnessing the power of the market.

Environmental awareness is growing among consumers. The MSC label provides consumers with a choice and helps increase the demand for fish harvested in an environmentally responsible manner. Most important, it changes the incentives for fishery managers. MSC certification is good for the environment, the fisheries business and consumers.

### Denis Handley

*Customer Service Director  
Sea Harvest  
South Africa*



Certification to the MSC Standard will reaffirm that the South African hake fishery is managed in a responsible and sustainable way. We also think there will be commercial benefits, although there is still much work needed to make consumers aware, and accepting, of the MSC label. Brand owners and retailers will need to do a considerable amount of marketing to explain the benefits of the MSC Standard to consumers. If the MSC is widely recognised and adopted, there will be true long-term benefits to marine resources and their sustainability.

# Marketing sustainable fish

Our efforts to source fish from sustainable fisheries will only count if consumers buy the products.



Examples of marketing sustainable products to consumers

We have started promoting the sustainability of our raw materials as part of our brand marketing. This is a big challenge. Some shoppers may not know that sustainable fish products are available, while many are unaware of the problems of over-fishing and don't understand why they should choose sustainable fish.

Consumers are understandably resistant to change without good reason. For example, in the UK we are limiting the use of cod – now severely overfished in some areas – and introducing sustainably sourced New Zealand hoki in some products. While both are white fish, the hoki is unfamiliar to UK consumers who are used to eating cod. We need to help consumers understand the

environmental reasons for these changes and find ways to reassure them that eating a new type of fish does not mean compromising on quality, cost or taste.

We are working with the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) and others in the food industry to raise consumer awareness of the benefits of sustainable fishing.

## Jonathon Porritt

Co-founder and Programme Director  
Forum for the Future



Broadly speaking, consumers – certainly in the UK – find the whole notion of sustainable fishing extremely confusing. They may hear all the dire warnings about cod in the North Sea being fished to extinction, but there still seems to be plenty of the stuff around in their local fish and chip shop and supermarket. So why bother about the alternatives, especially if they sound more like ice cream brands or exotic drinks? This puts a huge burden on both retailers and companies like Unilever: like it or not, they will have to shoulder the lion's share of the educational work that now needs to be done if the whole idea of only eating fish from sustainable sources is ever going to make much impact. Unilever's fish sustainability initiative has made serious progress over the last few years, but 'engaging the consumer' is going to be the toughest challenge of all.

## Prof. Dr Edda Müller

Executive Director  
Verbraucherzentrale Bundesverband e.V. (vzbv)  
(Federation of German consumer organisations)



Opinion polls show that sustainability is important to consumers and some companies have felt the harsh consequences when consumers think their products or methods are unsustainable. But shoppers can be slow to change their habits. People know that fisheries are threatened by overfishing although they don't necessarily realise that they can choose sustainable products. Companies such as Unilever need to make a special effort to educate consumers about the availability of good quality sustainable products.

# Fish species used by Unilever

These are the main species used in Unilever frozen fish products.



**Alaskan pollock** *Theragra chalcogramma*



**New Zealand hoki** *Macrurus novaezealandiae*



**Alaskan salmon** *Oncorhynchus gorbuscha*



**Saithe** *Pollachius virens*



**Atlantic cod** *Gadus morhua*



**South Pacific hake** *Merluccius gayi gayi*

## Credits

Writing and consultancy	Context, London
Illustrations	Sally Rush (pages 4, 13, back cover) New Zealand Seafood Industry Council (page 10)
Cover photograph	Saithe <i>Pollachius virens</i> ©Rick Price/SAL Oxford Scientific Films
Photography	Chris Martin ©Unilever (page 5) Kornelia Danetzki (photo of Prof. Dr Edda Müller)
MSC logo	Customer Licence Code MSC10191 www.msc.org ©
WWF logo	©1986 WWF ©1986 Panda symbol WWF
Design	Red Letter Design, London
Printing	Scanplus, London

