

## OPEN LETTER TO THE PRIME MINISTER AND MINISTERS OF THE GOVERNMENT OF NORWAY

Jonas Gahr Støre, Prime Minister

Andreas Bjelland Eriksen, Minister of Climate and Environment

Geir Pollestad, Minister of Agriculture and Food

Marianne Sivertsen Næss, Minister of Fisheries and Ocean Policy

Cecilie Myrseth, Minister of Trade and Industry

Espen Barth Eide, Minister of Foreign Affairs

Anne Beathe Tvinnereim, Minister of International Development

2<sup>nd</sup> July 2024

Dear Prime Minister, dear Ministers,

We are a group of NGOs, charities and academics dedicated to building a more sustainable and equitable food system. We are writing to urge the Norwegian government to take rapid action to regulate Norway's salmon farming industry in light of new findings highlighting its huge and growing appetite for wild-caught fish from food-insecure countries in the Global South.<sup>1</sup>

Norway is the world's biggest producer of farmed salmon and consequently has an enormous feed footprint. Farmed salmon feed is made up of various ingredients such as soy, vegetable oils (including palm oil), wheat, fish meal and fish oil (FMFO), which is produced using fish caught in the wild. Research published by Feedback, alongside SRFC, WADAF, Greenpeace Africa, RAMPAO and Spire shows that in 2020, nearly 2 million tonnes of wild fish – equivalent to a staggering 2.5% of global marine fisheries catch – were required to produce the fish oil supplied to the Norwegian farmed salmon industry. 75% of these were fish that are otherwise widely eaten, such as anchovy, sardine, sprat and herring, with the remainder made up of fish critical to the marine ecosystem, such as sand eels.

What some in Norway view as a corporate success story has come at the expense of communities and fish populations in the Global South. A significant share of the fish oil Norwegian farmed salmon companies use is imported from Northwest Africa, depriving up to 4 million people in the region of fish to meet their annual nutritional needs. This is fuelling a modern-day food imperialism which in addition to entrenching global inequity and food insecurity is extremely inefficient: Norway's annual output of farmed salmon is one-quarter (27%) lower than the volume of wild fish required to produce the fish oil used in Norwegian farmed salmon feed.

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<sup>1</sup> *Blue Empire: How the Norwegian salmon industry extracts nutrition and undermines livelihoods in West Africa* (2024) <https://feedbackglobal.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/Feedback-BlueEmpire-Jan24.pdf>

In 2022, the Norwegian government published *Norway's strategy for promoting food security in development policy*.<sup>2</sup> In the foreword to the strategy, Anne Beathe Tvinnereim, Minister of International Development, noted that, "An overall objective of the Government's development policy is to fight hunger and increase global food security." Despite the good intentions of Norway's development policy, the expansion of its salmon farming industry is in direct contradiction to these objectives. The inefficient and wasteful use of wild fish, in part to supply feed and aquaculture companies in the Global North, is driving the loss of livelihoods and exacerbating malnutrition, disproportionately impacting women and children, in nations including Gambia, Senegal and Mauritania.

With Norway's salmon farming industry planning to triple production on current levels by 2050, we urge Norwegian decision-makers to:

- Ensure that Norwegian companies' activities and feed sourcing practices do not run counter to its own development policy by mandating an immediate ban on the sourcing of fish oil from food insecure regions including Northwest Africa;
- Stop further growth in Norway's salmon farming sector so that it remains within planetary boundaries;
- Mandate genuine transparency throughout corporate supply chains, including full disclosure of suppliers – from source fisheries upwards.

We look forward to hearing your response.

Sincerely,

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Frank Mechielsen, Executive Director, Feedback EU

Dr Oulie Keita, Executive Director of Greenpeace Africa

Mor Mbengue, Coordinator of the Collectif Taxawou Cayar

Marie Suzanna Traoré, Executive Secretary, RAMPAO

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Noble Kwame Asare, Senior Lecturer, Department of Fisheries and Aquatic Sciences, University of Cape Coast

Beatrice Gorez, Coordinator, Coalition for Fair Fisheries Arrangements

Gytis Blaževičius, Head of Young Friends of the Earth Norway, (Natur og Ungdom)

Siri Martinsen, Director of the board, NOAH - for dyrs rettigheter

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.regjeringen.no/en/dokumenter/Food-security-strategy/id2948780/>

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