

# Sanaka Samarasinha Advocates for Sustainable Tuna Fishing: A Call to Action

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LOS ANGELES, CA, UNITED STATES, May 28, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Sanaka Samarasinha, a distinguished leader in international diplomacy and sustainable development, calls for immediate action to address the critical issue of sustainable tuna fishing. With tuna being a dietary staple and an essential economic resource for many countries, Samarasinha says, it is imperative to ensure the long-term sustainability of tuna stocks.

## The Importance of Tuna

Tuna, Samarasinha states, has long been celebrated for its nutritional benefits, being rich in Omega-3 fatty acids, minerals, proteins, and vitamin B12. This, he notes, has made it a popular choice in households worldwide, especially during the pandemic. However, Samarasinha warns that the overwhelming demand for tuna has led to significant overfishing, threatening the survival of this essential species. According to the latest data, 33.3 percent of stocks are fished at biologically unsustainable levels among the seven principal tuna species.

## World Tuna Day and Sustainable Initiatives

Recognizing the situation's urgency, the United Nations General Assembly voted in December 2016 to observe World Tuna Day. This initiative, Sanaka Samarasinha notes, emphasizes the importance of conservation management to prevent the depletion of tuna stocks. Many countries rely on tuna resources for food security, nutrition, economic development, employment, and cultural significance.

The Food and Agriculture Organization's (FAO) Common Oceans Tuna project, Samarasinha notes, aims to ensure that all significant tuna stocks are fished sustainably by 2027. This ambitious goal, he adds, is part of broader efforts to promote sustainable fishing practices and biodiversity conservation. Samarasinha is happy that, between 2014 and 2019, the project



Sanaka Samarasinha

successfully reduced the number of tuna stocks experiencing overfishing from 13 to 5.

### Global Impact and Legal Frameworks

Tuna and tuna-like species are harvested at an astonishing rate of over 7 million metric tons annually. These migratory species, Samarasinha notes, account for 20 percent of the value of all marine capture fisheries and over 8 percent of globally traded seafood. Samarasinha says that it is crucial to implement international legal frameworks effectively to address the decline in tuna stocks. This, he notes, includes the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) and the Code of Conduct for Sustainable Fishery, alongside the UN Fish Stocks Agreement and other global, regional, and national efforts.

Samarasinha says that over 96 countries are involved in the conservation and management of tuna, and the annual market value is nearly \$10 billion USD. Some FAO programs, he states, have shown promising results in reducing overfishing, providing hope for the future of tuna stocks.

### Sanaka Samarasinha's Vision for Sustainable Tuna Fishing

Sanaka Samarasinha, with his extensive experience in international diplomacy and sustainable development, brings a wealth of knowledge and leadership to the cause of sustainable tuna fishing. Holding a Juris Doctor degree from the University Of Maryland School Of Law and a Bachelor of Science in Journalism from the University of Kansas, Samarasinha has served in various leadership roles within the United Nations for over 25 years.

As the UN Resident Coordinator in the Pacific (2018-2023), Samarasinha led efforts across nine countries, managing an annual budget of \$250 million to drive sustainable development and resilience-building initiatives. His leadership during natural disasters and the COVID-19 pandemic highlighted his ability to mobilize resources and foster regional cooperation.

Before his tenure in the Pacific, Samarasinha served as the UN Resident Coordinator in Belarus (2013-2018), facilitating dialogues on democratic governance and human rights. His innovative initiatives empowered local communities to embrace the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and promote inclusive development.

### A Call to Action

Sanaka Samarasinha urges governments, organizations, and individuals to take collective action to ensure the sustainability of tuna stocks. By supporting initiatives like the FAO's Common Oceans Tuna project and adhering to international legal frameworks, we can protect this vital resource for future generations.

Sanaka Samarasinha's commitment to promoting sustainable development, good governance, and human rights positions him as a formidable advocate for sustainable tuna fishing. His expertise and dedication drive meaningful change in international diplomacy and development.

Jon Smith

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