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For Immediate Release

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BUSINESSES AND CONSERVATION ORGANIZATIONS CHALLENGE THE STATUS QUO AT SEAFOOD SUMMIT

Aquaculture and developing world fisheries hot topics as first European Seafood Summit concludes; Alliance announces 2009 conference location

(January 31, 2008 – Barcelona, Spain) The first European Seafood Summit came to a close with a visit to the Mercabana Central Fish Market in Barcelona. The tour of the iconic Spanish market concluded three packed days during which some of the best and brightest minds from the industry, conservation and scientific communities and government explored the challenges and potential solutions facing the sustainable seafood movement.

Over 350 representatives from 35 countries attended the three-day conference, making it the most diverse and popular Summit ever. Mike Boots, director of the Seafood Choices Alliance, noted in his closing speech on Tuesday the need to engage the fishermen and fish farmers in order to fully address the challenges of aquaculture and organic certifications for farmed fish, the carbon footprint of seafood and further engagement of “problem fisheries.”

“The Seafood Summit is only as good as the people that attend and we will continue to reach out to the harvesting sector,” said Boots. “They are the ones that bring about real change that is tangible on the water and in the marketplace. We urge all the attendees to continue the conversations started here over the coming year for the future of the seafood market.”

Popular panels this year included an examination of the carbon footprint of seafood and what this means for the industry. Jim Cannon of the Sustainable Fisheries Partnership, Rupert Howes of the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) and Chris Brown of ASDA explored Wal-Mart’s commitment to the MSC and how this has been a positive development for ongoing work with ‘problem fisheries.’ Cannon pointed to the MSC pre-assessment phase as a critical component for fisheries improvement.

IUU (illegal, unregulated and unreported) fishing was a major focus as well, with the world’s media reporting on the continued problem of European and Asian countries targeting the waters off the coast of West Africa. With over 80 percent of Europe’s fish coming from outside the EU, the countries of the European Union have a responsibility to ensure their fish is legally caught. A second related panel examined the effects of industrialized fishing in West Africa and the effects this has on local artisanal fishing communities.

Many groups and organizations used the Summit as an opportunity to announce new initiatives and reports. The Alliance revealed the ten finalists for the 2008 Seafood

Champion awards during the Sunday reception, which also included a welcome message for Summit attendees from the regional Government of Catalonia. The Seafood Champion winners will be announced at the Boston Seafood Show in the US in February. Greenpeace launched its aquaculture report, Challenging the Aquaculture Industry on Sustainability, on Monday and WWF took the opportunity to urge European retailers to remove critically threatened blue fin tuna from their shelves. The French supermarket Auchan and the Italian subsidiaries of Coop and Carrefour have already removed bluefin.

The final plenary session raised interesting points on the future of the sustainability movement. Market experts examined the movement's past five years and predicted where it would go in the next ten. Fatima Ferdouse of Infofish said that Asian domestic seafood consumption would continue to increase as regional economies develop. This would have a serious effect on the rest of the world's seafood supply as Asia currently supplies around 90 percent of its seafood to foreign markets. Howard Johnson, a US seafood economist, predicted that 2007 per capita US seafood consumption would be a record high of 16.8 pounds (7.5 kilograms) when the data is released later this year. Higher seafood prices and the weakening US economy could spell trouble for the industry in 2008.

The Alliance announced that the 2009 Seafood Summit will take place in San Diego, California (January 31-February 4). More information on the Barcelona Summit, including panels and presentations, is available at www.seafoodchoices.org.

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NOTE TO EDITORS:

The Seafood Summit is an annual conference organized by Seafood Choices Alliance and convening the leaders of the sustainable seafood movement. The **Alliance** is a non-profit international association for ocean-friendly seafood with more than 3,000 members from around the world. The Alliance helps the seafood industry – from fishermen and fish farmers to distributors, wholesalers, retailers and restaurants – to make the seafood marketplace environmentally and economically sustainable. Seafood Choices Alliance mobilizes and connects the world's leading voices in support of a sustainable supply of seafood choices, highlighting the need for a global solution to threats facing the ocean. The Seafood Champion Awards annually recognize individuals and companies for outstanding leadership in promoting environmentally responsible seafood. The Alliance established the award to honor those in the seafood industry whose past and/or present contributions demonstrate a commitment to advancing the marketplace for ocean-friendly seafood. The 2008 finalists were announced at the opening reception of the Seafood Summit in Barcelona. The winners will be announced at the Alliance's reception at the Boston Seafood Show, February 24-26. To attend the Champion's reception, please contact Stephanie Faison at stephanie@seafoodchoices.org.

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