Since 1950, the world fisheries grew enormously in terms of effort and catch. However, crashes due to overfishing began in the 1970s, and intensified in the 1980s and 1990s. In response, industrialized countries moved their effort toward deeper waters, and toward the south, i.e., to the coasts off developing countries and beyond, all the way to Antarctica. Today, the global expansion of fisheries is completed, and the real global catch, which is much higher than officially reported, peaked in the late 1980s and is rapidly declining. In parallel, the damage to marine ecosystems and biodiversity continues to increase. Also, the effects of global warming, which have been increasingly felt in the last decades, will strongly impact fisheries and global seafood supply. Solutions are available, but their implementation poses challenges.

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Daniel Pauly is University Killiam Professor at the Institute of Oceans and Fisheries, University of British Columbia, Canada, and Principal Investigator of the Sea Around Us. He has devoted his life to studying, documenting and promoting policies to mitigate the impact of fisheries on the world’s marine ecosystems. The concepts, methods and software he developed are documented in over 1,000 publications, which received more than 60,000 citations. His work has been recognized by numerous awards, notably the International Cosmos Prize, Japan, the Volvo Environmental Prize, Sweden, the Ramon Margalef Prize from the Government of Catalonia and the Peter Benchley Award.