

GLOBAL OCEAN FORUM NEWSLETTER – JULY 2013

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Overview

In this issue, we bring you good news about Rio+20 implementation. Significant implementation activities are underway, both by national and international entities. As we reported in the last issue of the newsletter, many of the major institutional aspects related to the Rio+20 outcomes, were deferred to the UN General Assembly for decision, involving a complex set of parallel processes which are somewhat difficult for civil society to access. Until this month, oceans were not doing well in these processes, especially in the UN Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals and the post-2015 development agenda.

In June, we saw a significant shift in this situation, both in an event organized by the Global Ocean Forum and UNDESA, and in an event organized by the Government of Palau, in the margins of the 14th Meeting of the UN Open-ended Informal Consultative Process (ICP) on Oceans and Law of the Sea and a meeting of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals.

There is strong and growing support for the development of a Sustainable Development Goal on Oceans, both among a wide range of governments from various regions and from civil society. The GOF will spearhead the involvement of ocean leaders around the world in this process, working with leading governments and civil society representatives. Watch for more news in the coming months. In the meantime, the GOF has put together an informal information document on oceans in the post-2015 development agenda (prepared by Joseph Appiott), available [here](#).

The 14th Meeting of the UN Open-ended Informal Consultative Process (ICP) on Oceans and Law of the Sea was also successful in bringing the important issue of ocean acidification into the spotlight in the context of the UN. The meeting explored “the other CO₂ issue” and heightened the awareness of this growing threat to the health and productivity of marine ecosystems, also serving to inform the upcoming discussions on the UN General Assembly resolution on Oceans and the Law of the Sea.

As the reader will recall, at the 2010 Conference of the Parties of the Convention on Biological Diversity, nations adopted, inter alia, Aichi Target 11, calling for effectively-managed protected areas for 10 percent of coastal and marine areas by 2020. To support the achievement of Aichi Target 11, the GOF has concluded a collaboration agreement with the French Marine Protected Area Agency to highlight effective approaches that may be utilized to achieve “effectively and equitably managed, ecologically

representative and well-connected systems of protected areas” for the world’s oceans. These efforts will be featured at IMPAC 3, the International Marine Protected Areas Congress, to be held in Marseille, on October 21 to 25, 2013. We hope to see you there!

Dr. Biliana Cicin-Sain, President, Global Ocean Forum

GOF and UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) Co-Organize Side Event on Oceans in the Post-Rio+20 Context at the Recent meeting of the UN Open-ended Informal Consultative Process on Oceans and the Law of the Sea

The recent 14th Meeting of the UN Open-ended Informal Consultative Process (ICP) on Oceans and the Law of the Sea, which was held at the same time as a meeting of the UN Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals, presented a great opportunity to engage stakeholders in discussing priorities for oceans in the post-Rio+20 process. The Global Ocean Forum and UNDESA took advantage of this opportunity by convening a side event on *Challenges and Opportunities in Implementing the Rio+20 Outcomes* at the United Nations headquarters in New York on 20 June 2013. The event, which was attended by 60 participants, hosted dialogue on implementing the Rio+20 ocean outcomes as well as perspectives for oceans in the ongoing negotiations on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The event was moderated by Mr. Nikhil Chandavarkar, Chief, Outreach and Communications Branch, Division for Sustainable Development, Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA), and Dr. Biliana Cicin-Sain, President, Global Ocean Forum and Director, Gerard J. Mangone Center for Marine Policy, University of Delaware.

The meeting featured remarks from the following:

Ambassador Isabelle Picco, Permanent Representative of Monaco to the United Nations

Ambassador Carlos Michelen, Permanent Representative of the Dominican Republic to the United Nations

Mr. Jón Erlingur Jónasson, Deputy Permanent Representative, Permanent Representative of Iceland to the United Nations

Mr. John Brincat, Administrator, Directorate-General Maritime Affairs and Fisheries, European Commission

Mr. Vladimir Jares, Deputy Director in Charge of Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea (UN-DOALOS), Office of Legal Affairs (OLA)

(Note: The government representatives present spoke in their personal capacity.)

Mr. Nikhil Chandavarkar Chief, Outreach and Communications Branch, Division for Sustainable Development, Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA), opened the meeting by describing the many services and benefits provided by oceans, including climate regulation, oxygen production, and food security, outlining the importance of oceans in sustainable development. He discussed the recent Expert Group Meeting on “Oceans, Seas and Sustainable Development: Implementation and Follow-up to Rio+20,” organized by UNDESA in New York from 18-19 April 2013. He also noted that oceans is expected to figure prominently at the Third International Conference on Small Island Developing States in 2014 as healthy oceans and seas are crucial to the survival of Small Island Developing States. Mr. Chandavarkar summed up the importance of oceans to planetary survival, saying that “Healthy oceans make for a liveable planet. The consumption, production and policy choices we make today will have significant implications for decades and generations to come.”

Dr. Biliana Cicin-Sain, President, Global Ocean Forum and Director, Gerard J. Mangone Center

for Marine Policy, University of Delaware, then set the stage for the meeting's discussion by reviewing the main elements of Rio+20 and the post-Rio+20 context with respect to oceans. She discussed the ocean-related outcomes of Rio+20 and what the conference added to the previous ocean related commitments of UNCED and the WSSD. She then outlined the major elements of the post-Rio+20 processes, including: the UN Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals, the post-2015 development agenda, the process to create a new High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) to replace the Commission on Sustainable Development, the development of a sustainable development financing strategy, the creation of a facilitation mechanism for development/transfer of clean and environmentally sound technologies, and opportunities for advancing oceans in these processes.

She noted that these processes are on separate negotiation tracks, with different timetables, and with varying levels of opportunity for involvement of civil society, which makes it challenging for intervention by the ocean community. She also reviewed major ocean-related proposals for SDGs that have been put forth thus far, especially: A current proposal by the Government of Palau (see story below), earlier proposals put forth by the Governments of Colombia, Peru, and the UAE in the lead up to the Rio+20 conference, several general proposals put forward by various civil society organizations, and a detailed proposal from German scientists for including oceans in the SDG negotiations. .

Dr. Cicin-Sain also described the Global Ocean Forum plan of work for supporting the implementation of the ocean outcomes of Rio+20, emphasizing, inter alia, that oceans are now firmly on the political global agenda, but this must be constantly maintained, rekindled, and advanced. There must be coordinated engagement of the ocean community in the Post-Rio+20 and Post-2015 processes, especially in the development of a Sustainable Development Goal on Oceans and Coasts. *“After a ‘big win’ at Rio+20, we must retain the momentum achieved, and continue advancing the ocean issues in the UN post-2015 development agenda processes,”* Dr. Cicin-Sain noted.

To see Dr. Cicin-Sain's Powerpoint presentation, click [here](#).

To see the GOF Strategic Directions, please follow this link:

<http://www.globaloceans.org/sites/udel.edu.globaloceans/files/GOF-Strategic-Directions.pdf>.

Ambassador Isabelle Picco, Permanent Representative of Monaco to the UN, stressed the importance of the UN General Assembly (UNGA) process with regards to oceans and sustainable development. She noted that the Rio+20 outcome, while an important achievement for oceans, did not address all relevant ocean topics, some of which are addressed in the UNGA omnibus resolution. She suggested that we should do a better job in formulating an SDG on oceans, including questions on how it should be coordinated and the legal instruments to take into consideration. She stressed the importance of Member States' participation in discussions on the upcoming UNGA omnibus resolution on Oceans and the Law of the Sea. Ambassador Picco emphasized the importance of partnerships and collaboration, including with actors in the private sector, to make real progress in implementing ocean-related commitments.

Ambassador Carlos Michelen, Permanent Representative of the Dominican Republic to the United Nations, emphasized the significant dependence of the Dominican Republic on ocean resources, noting that the country's identity is inherently linked to the ocean. He also stressed the need for scaling up protection of marine biodiversity and building multilateral partnerships to achieve real impacts, citing the interconnectedness of ecosystems and the transboundary nature of marine species. He spoke about the need to unify management and protection efforts in the Caribbean. Ambassador Michelen expressed his interest in the forthcoming outcomes of the Regular Process for Global Reporting and Assessment of the State of the Marine Environment, including Socio-economic Aspects, which will provide critical information for the management of ocean and coastal resources. He spoke about the value of emerging research on sea level rise as this is essential in managing tourism, the most important source of revenue for small island developing States. He stressed the importance of adopting a

precautionary approach on the issue of iron fertilization as it is not well understood in terms of potential impacts to the environment. Ambassador Michelen called for greater high-level political commitment on reducing illegal, unregulated, and unreported (IUU) fishing, a major threat to the economic development of SIDS. He concluded by saying that *“There is a need to act with a sense of urgency,”* noting that *“The planet does not belong to anyone, we belong to the planet. If we don’t show it respect, it will not show us respect.”*

Mr. Jón Erlingur Jónasson, Deputy Permanent Representative of Iceland to the UN discussed the pros and cons of different strategies to incorporate oceans in the post-2015 development agenda, especially whether to pursue a stand-alone Sustainable Development Goal on Oceans or, alternatively, to integrate ocean issues into the major thematic areas across other SDGs. He stressed the importance of pursuing an ecosystem-based approach and engaging all three pillars of sustainable development as the central vision for oceans. Mr. Jónasson spoke of the risks associated with working in isolation on different sectoral aspects of oceans (“working in silos”) on various ocean issues, stressing the need for coordination to avoid duplication and gaps. He also expressed dissatisfaction with the bundling of ocean issues into broad environmental categories, which discounts the critical importance of oceans to economic and social development. Regarding targets and indicators, he cautioned against devising a long wish-list of targets and indicators, and recommended focusing on integrating the three pillars of sustainable development and ensuring universality of the SDGs. He further noted that there are many good examples of non-quantitative targets to look to for guidance.

Mr. John Brincat, Administrator, Directorate-General Maritime Affairs and Fisheries (DG-MARE, European Commission), discussed the importance of ensuring that major commitments are actually implemented and the need to keep in mind that global-level commitments are meaningless unless they are carried out on the ground. Mr. Brincat spoke about marine debris as a major priority of DG-MARE, as there is now a tangible target from the Rio+20 Conference. He spoke about action being taken in the European Union to move towards sustainable management of ocean resources, including the EU Marine Strategy Framework Directive. He spoke about ocean acidification and the need to consider the issue as a symptom of a greater problem to be dealt with through ambitious emissions reductions. He also discussed the recent agreement to revise the EU’s Common Fisheries Policy, which is centered on achieving maximum sustainable yield (MSY) of fish stocks in the region, with the hopes of achieving MSY by 2020. He stressed the importance of eliminating discards, which is addressed in pelagic fisheries, and is expected to be extended to cover all waters by 2015. He also described EU efforts to address illegal, unregulated, and unreported (IUU) fishing, promoting zero tolerance through regulations that will involve working with external partners.

Regarding policy issues related to areas beyond national jurisdiction (ABNJ), Mr. Brincat noted that he is hopeful that there will be meaningful discussions at the forthcoming meeting of the UN Working Group on Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction in August as a result of the mobilization and discussion on this topic in the context of Rio+20 and at the May informal workshops. Mr. Brincat stressed that, despite some on-the-ground movement, much more ambition is needed to ensure the world’s ocean resources can be sustainable into the future, noting that *“We cannot wait for Rio+30 to take action.”*

Mr. Vladimir Jares, Deputy Director in Charge of Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea (UN-DOALOS), United Nations Office of Legal Affairs (OLA), also stressed the importance of implementation of existing commitments, noting the existence of a plethora of legally-binding instruments, which, if effectively implemented, would fulfill many of the Rio+20 commitments. He also spoke about the need to close the gaps in implementation, on the need for an understanding of commitments made at the global level to trickle down to those responsible for management and use of ocean resources at the ground level. Mr. Jares also stressed the need for capacity building and the

importance of scientific knowledge in understanding the services provided by the ocean and supporting effective management. He discussed the need to create the enabling economic and social conditions to maintain sustainable livelihoods and to consider governance issues at a broader level, focusing on how decisions are made.

The productive discussions of the side event demonstrated the strong support for oceans in the post-Rio+20 context, and the need for greater thought and mobilization of ocean stakeholders to ensure that ocean factors centrally into negotiations on the Sustainable Development Goals and the post-2015 development agenda.

Government of Palau Pushes for Incorporation of Oceans into the UN Sustainable Development Goals

On the margins of the 14th meeting of the UN Open-ended Informal Consultative Process (ICP) on Oceans and Law of the Sea and the UN Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals, the Government of Palau organized an informal discussion among governments and members of civil society on how to best incorporate oceans into the ongoing negotiations on Sustainable Development Goals.

Ambassador Stuart Beck, Permanent Representative of Palau to the UN, opened the meeting by welcoming the many friends of the ocean present and highlighting the significant opportunity presented by the Sustainable Development Goals negotiations. He described some of the initiatives that Palau has undertaken to work towards sustainable use of ocean resources, but noted that the global community as a whole must be fully engaged if we hope to keep the oceans healthy and productive for future generations. Ambassador Beck discussed the proposal for an Oceans SDG that the Government of Palau has developed, which builds on lessons learned through the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Palau's proposed Oceans SDG aims to include measurable targets and indicators related, in particular, to ensuring healthy marine environments and sustainable fisheries. Despite the strong support for oceans, Ambassador Beck outlined key challenges facing oceans in the SDG process, including challenges in gaining the support of land-locked countries. He stressed the need for more substantive thought, dialogue, and mobilization of political support for oceans.

Ambassador Gary Quinlan, Permanent Representative of Australia to the UN, thanked Palau for its leadership. As co-chair of the States' Friends of the Ocean for the Rio+20 Conference (a political coalition mobilized to support oceans in the Rio+20 Conference), Australia is in a key position to mobilize support for oceans in the SDG process. Ambassador Quinlan highlighted the recent report from the High-Level Panel on Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Development Agenda, noting that oceans is mentioned briefly in the context of food security and ecosystems, but that it is not given sufficient attention.

Ghislaine Maxwell, Founder of the TerraMar Project, emphasized the importance of the oceans for future generations and the need to build a trusteeship for the oceans.

Amir Dossal, founder and chairman of the Global Partnerships Forum (GPF), noted that there are many fora where political will and action on oceans can be mobilized, including the upcoming Global Conference on Land-Ocean Connections in Jamaica on 2-4 October 2013. He encouraged the ocean community to think creativity about new opportunities and avenues for engaging a broader range of ocean stakeholders, including through the use of online crowdsourcing for the development of an SDG on oceans.

Ambassador Robert Aisi, Permanent Representative of Papua New Guinea to the UN, speaking on behalf of the Pacific Small Island Developing States (PSIDS), emphasized the need to building strong coalitions both within and outside the UN to build support for oceans in the SDG process. He also expressed disappointment with the lack of coverage that oceans was given in the report of the High-Level Panel on Eminent Persons. He emphasized that advocacy for an oceans SDG should target Member States, as these will be the key actors in achieving this goal. He also stressed that an SDG on oceans should be underpinned by building understanding of sustainable development at all levels.

Ambassador Isabelle Picco, Permanent Representative of Monaco to the UN, stressed that an oceans SDG must centrally incorporate social and economic dimensions and have people at its core. She also noted that the talks on the future development agenda should be linked to the discussions on the Sustainable Development Goals, as these two areas are inherently interdependent.

Many other governments, including high-level representatives from Colombia, Costa Rica, New Zealand, Singapore, Dominican Republic, and Samoa, as well as representatives from civil society, such as Google, expressed strong support for the building of a coalition for oceans in the SDG process. Many highlighted the need to broaden the ocean community, gaining more “friends of the ocean,” and building the understanding among a broader range of stakeholders of the benefits to be gained through the establishment of an Oceans SDG. Meeting participants also highlighted the upcoming SIDS conference (in Samoa in September 2014) as an important opportunity to build momentum for a strong ocean outcome from the SDG process. The need to stress the social and economic dimensions of oceans, in addition to the environmental aspects, was stressed by many, as the full spectrum of sustainable development with respect to oceans is often ignored. Discussions also touched on the need to give coherence to a wide range of ocean issues. With regards to competition among the various issues-areas in the context of the SDG discussions, one delegate noted that it is not a zero-sum game and that a focus on oceans does not need to take away from other areas.

The discussions highlighted various political and conceptual challenges faced in pushing for oceans in the SDG process, but that the mobilization of a core group of ocean supporters from both from government and civil society, as exemplified by those gathered in the meeting, signifies an important step in the right direction.

In a final intervention at the event, **Biliana Cicin-Sain, President, Global Ocean Forum**, noted, *“I feel privileged to be part of this meeting, which marks the beginning of a broad alliance of nations from all regions of the world to actively pursue an SDG on oceans.”* She pledged the mobilization of civil society groups and noted that strategic decisions regarding an SDG for oceans would need to be made, e.g., whether to pursue a separate ocean SDG or to insert ocean issues into other sustainable development goals, including in areas such as food security. She also noted that an SDG on oceans must be people-centered and emphasize the economic, social, and ecological benefits that flow from wise ocean and coastal management.

14th Meeting of UN Open-ended Informal Consultative Process on Oceans and the Law of the Sea Addresses Ocean Acidification

The fourteenth meeting of the UN Open-ended Informal Consultative Process on Oceans and the Law of the Sea (Consultative Process or ICP-14) took place from 17-20 June 2013 at the UN Headquarters in New York and was co-chaired by Ambassador Don MacKay, former Permanent Representative of New

Zealand to the UN and Ambassador Milan Meetarbhan, Permanent Representative of Mauritius to the UN.

The meeting hosted panel presentations and discussions on a number of issues related to ocean acidification, including the process of ocean acidification, impacts of ocean acidification on marine resources, ongoing activities at the global, regional, and national levels to address those impacts; and opportunities and challenges for addressing the impacts of ocean acidification on the marine environment, including through enhanced cooperation on scientific and technical aspects.

Expert panelists first explained the process of ocean acidification indicating that oceans have absorbed 26% of anthropogenic carbon dioxide (CO₂) emitted since the mid-1700s. Discussions focused on areas and ecosystems that are especially vulnerable to the impacts of ocean acidification, including the Arctic and Antarctic areas, coral reefs, and shell-forming organisms.

In addition to the ecological impacts of ocean acidification, discussions also focused on its socioeconomic impacts, namely impacts on fisheries and aquaculture; tourism; coastal protection from storms; and cultural and heritage values. These impacts significantly degrade the many services provided by the ocean, including food security and protection of coastal areas from the impacts of sea-level rise. A number of commercially-important fisheries are also vulnerable to the impacts of ocean acidification.

Discussions also focused on various means to address this threat. Reduction of emissions was identified as a central means to halt ocean acidification by reducing the amount of CO₂ in the atmosphere. Monitoring and observation were also discussed, with reference to new ambitious monitoring initiatives such as the Global Ocean Acidification Observing Network (GOAON). Marine protected area networks were also discussed as a means to build resilience to ocean acidification. With regards to aquaculture, various options were put forth, including using resistant strains of shellfish, buffering water with sodium carbonate, and replenishing habitats with used shells.

Inter-agency cooperation and coordination within the United Nations was also discussed. The UN Secretary-General's Oceans Compact, an initiative aimed at strengthening system-wide coherence across the UN with regards to ocean issues, became a central topic of conversation. The initiative, which is coordinated through the UN High-Level Committee on Programmes, was an area of concern for a number of delegations who felt that it did not adequately incorporate the input and interests of Member States. In this respect, delegations called for greater transparency with regards to the Oceans Compact.

For the summary of the meeting produced by the Earth Negotiations Bulletin, please visit:

<http://www.iisd.ca/download/pdf/enb2589e.pdf>

The Global Ocean Forum Concludes a Partnership Agreement with the French Marine Protected Areas Agency to Support the Achievement of the Convention on Biological Diversity's Aichi Targets

The Global Ocean Forum (GOF) and the French Marine Protected Areas Agency (FMPAA) are collaborating on the achievement of the CBD's Aichi Targets (especially Target 11 which focuses on having, by 2020, at least 10 per cent of coastal and marine areas conserved through effectively and equitably managed, ecologically representative and well-connected systems of protected areas, and in the organization of the 3rd International Marine Protected Areas Congress (IMPAC 3), co-organized by the FMPAA together with the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN).

IMPAC 3 will be held on October 21 to 25, 2013, in Marseille, with a high level policy meeting following on October 26-27, 2013, in Corsica.

The major intent of the Congress is to provide a global link among all marine-conservation players – managers of protected areas and users alike. It seeks to define ways to reconcile ocean conservation and the sustainable development of coastal and maritime activities.

The GOF will be organizing various events at IMPAC 3, especially focused on issues related to marine Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction (ABNJ) and on Progress Made on Ocean Commitments from the 1992 Earth Summit and 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development, and Next Steps Emanating from the Rio+20 Outcome Document.

For more information on IMPAC3, including registration and accommodation, please follow this link: <http://www.impact3.org/en/>.

We look forward to seeing you there!