



*The Australian Mission to the United Nations and the Pew Environment Group
present*

“Keeping the Green Economy Blue” *A workshop in preparation for Rio+20*

The green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication is one of the two themes of the upcoming United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (UNCSD). While the green economy concept is still being developed, consensus is emerging that a green economy needs to benefit the coastal communities in developing States who depend on a healthy ocean for their survival. At the second Preparatory Committee Meeting for UNCSD in March 2011, Member States and stakeholders made calls to ‘keep the green economy blue’ and prominently feature oceans and fisheries issues on the agenda of UNCSD.

Healthy oceans are essential for sustainable development for hundreds of millions of people. These ecosystems underpin core tourism sectors and directly affect the food security of many of the world’s poorest and most vulnerable communities. Despite their importance, these ecosystems are under threat. 60% of all coral reefs are at risk of destruction, populations of fish and freshwater vertebrates have declined by nearly 50%, and 40% of ocean fish stocks are over-exploited compared to 20% in 1992. The outlook is bleak. This is undisputed.

What is less clear is the path forward to ensuring a strong oceans outcome at UNCSD, and how to galvanize momentum to ‘secure renewed political commitment’ for this purpose. This workshop will (1) assess the current state of the oceans and marine environment; (2) review the commitments made at Rio 1992 and at the World Summit for Sustainable Development in 2002; (3) analyse the social and economic implications for preserving a blue economy; and (4) consider policy recommendations for transitioning to a blue economy.

At this workshop, an oceans scientist will provide an overview of the current state of the world’s oceans, including future trajectories. Two fisheries economists will present on the state of the world’s fisheries with an analysis of linkages with food security, and identify best practices. Finally, a coral reefs expert will present the social and economic implications of coral reef loss and what is needed to transition to a ‘blue economy’.