

ICP-12 HIGHLIGHTS: THURSDAY, 23 JUNE 2011

On Thursday, delegates to the twelfth meeting of the United Nations Open-ended Informal Consultative Process on Oceans and the Law of the Sea (Consultative Process or ICP-12) convened in a plenary session involving a presentation on inter-agency cooperation and coordination, followed by discussions on: the process for the selection of topics and panelists so as to facilitate the work of the General Assembly; and issues that could benefit from attention in future work of the General Assembly. The meeting was adjourned at 11:40 am to allow the Secretariat time to produce two documents: a set of elements that could benefit from attention at Rio+20; and the draft Co-Chairs' Summary Report.

PLENARY SESSION

INTERAGENCY COOPERATION AND COORDINATION: Co-Chair Amb. Milan Jaya Meetarbhan (Mauritius) opened the second plenary session, inviting UN-Oceans to provide information on its activities for cooperation and coordination.

Andrew Hudson, UNDP and UN-Oceans, reviewed key results and activities of UN-Oceans' members, including: support from the International Atomic Energy Agency and DESA for the high-level oceans panel being convened by Monaco in November 2011; and UNEP's "Green Economy in a Blue World" report. He also noted UN-Oceans' task forces on ABNJ and MPAs. Hudson said UN-Oceans had discussed the proposed assessment review on 17 June 2011, and that it would follow procedures to place the review on an upcoming agenda of the UN System Chief Executives Board for Coordination.

Hudson also reviewed the role of the Joint Group of Experts on the Scientific Aspects of Marine Environmental Protection (GESAMP) as an interagency body that provides advice to UN agencies. He noted GESAMP has strengthened the scientific basis for implementing Chapter 17 of Agenda 21 and the JPOI, particularly in areas such as: integrated oceans and coastal management; environmental indicators; pollution; ballast water; monitoring and assessments; coordination and cooperation; and emerging issues, such as micro-plastics.

Responding to ARGENTINA, Hudson welcomed the suggestion for UN-Oceans to track meeting schedules to avoid overlap. In response to BRAZIL's suggestion to strengthen UN-Oceans ahead of the UNCSD and raise its capacity, visibility and relevance, Hudson spoke of the consensus among members that an assessment would be timely and relevant.

On ballast water, CANADA encouraged States to ratify the International Convention for the Control and Management of Ships' Ballast Water and Sediments.

PROCESS FOR THE SELECTION OF TOPICS AND PANELISTS SO AS TO FACILITATE THE WORK OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY: Co-Chair Amb. Don MacKay (New Zealand) opened this agenda item recalling that the outcome of the meeting will include a summary of issues and ideas to ensure a transparent, objective and inclusive process for the selection of topics and panelists for the consideration of the General Assembly. The topic for ICP-13 is marine renewable energies.

CANADA called for balanced agendas for future ICPs, suggesting that ICP topics continue to be decided for two consecutive years, and, supported by ARGENTINA, encouraged the selection of experts as early as possible. Argentina, for G-77/CHINA, cautioned against the selection of topics for two consecutive years, emphasizing the need for proper consideration of these topics. She also recalled an outcome from ICP-10 on the integration of the three pillars of sustainable development and, supported by CANADA and MOROCCO, emphasized the need for discussions of the Consultative Process to focus on all three elements.

ISSUES THAT COULD BENEFIT FROM ATTENTION IN FUTURE WORK OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY ON OCEAN AFFAIRS AND THE LAW OF THE SEA: Co-Chair MacKay directed delegates to consider the Co-Chairs' composite streamlined list of issues that could benefit from attention in future work of the General Assembly, which was distributed on Monday, or to propose other topics.

IUCN stressed that ocean acidification, particularly its consequences for fisheries and corals, affects all three pillars of sustainable development. He noted the warnings from scientists about the negative effects of this problem, such as increased

vulnerability of coastal areas to storms as corals degrade, and acidification's role in amplifying the negative consequences of ocean noise.

Co-Chair MacKay said the draft of the Co-Chairs' Summary Report will be available at 10 am Friday morning, and will include issues and ideas raised during the plenary sessions to facilitate the work of the General Assembly. He added that a second draft document with elements proposed for possible consideration at the UNCSD will be available at 2 pm on Thursday.

Serguei Tarassenko, Director, DOALOS, reiterated the appeal for contributions to the Voluntary Trust Fund. He noted two recent contributions from NEW ZEALAND, and said the current balance stands at approximately US\$15,000. He urged delegates to provide financial contributions to replenish the Fund. Noting its past financial support from the Fund, MADAGASCAR thanked those governments that have made contributions.

Co-Chair MacKay closed the plenary session at 11:40 am, noting it will reconvene Friday morning at 10:00 am.

IN THE CORRIDORS

Delegates dispatched the morning session quickly, leaving only consideration of the meeting's outcome and suggested elements for possible discussion at UNCSD. As the final touches were being made to the Co-Chairs' proposed elements, one participant predicted a short session on Friday, noting that "there is a lot of consensus." Others, more guardedly, stressed the careful balance the elements would need to tread to avoid triggering protracted debate on issues such as BBNJ. With the early 2 pm release of the draft document, groups formed in the conference hall to begin digesting the elements. Afterward, a number of participants noted that the document reflected many of the issues discussed. Others lamented the absence of attention to overcapacity and the need for MPAs, and one said, if the UNCSD's ocean agenda only embraces these somewhat superficial elements, "it will be pretty flat and boring." The stage was set for Friday's closing discussions.

ENB SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS: The *Earth Negotiations Bulletin* summary and analysis of ICP-12 will be available on Monday, 27 June 2011 online at: <http://www.iisd.ca/oceans/icp12/>



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