

ICP-13 HIGHLIGHTS: THURSDAY, 31 MAY 2012

On Thursday, the Consultative Process convened for a morning plenary session to discuss: a general exchange of views on marine renewable energies (MREs); inter-agency cooperation and coordination; 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 on oceans and the law of the sea. The plenary session ended at 11:36 am to allow time for preparation of the Co-Chairs' summary, which will be available at 10:00 am on Friday, 1 June 2012.

PLENARY

GENERAL EXCHANGE OF VIEWS ON MARINE

RENEWABLE ENERGIES: Co-Chair Amb. Milan Jaja Meetarbhan (Mauritius) opened the second plenary session for continued discussion on a general exchange of views on MREs.

NORWAY described two MRE projects: offshore, floating wind power, specifically a new Statoil project currently generating 15 megawatts of power; and industrial cultivation of kelp, which has potential as a bio-energy feedstock and as a contributor to carbon sequestration.

MEXICO stressed the need for national frameworks for MREs that are aligned with the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea and that include: deployment targets; stakeholder participation; pilot projects; environmental impact assessments to minimize negative environmental effects; and trust funds to foster technologies on these issues.

The INTERNATIONAL OCEAN INSTITUTE described a new master's program to enhance training for sustainable use of oceans, and a new web-based, interactive mapping platform for oceans, which includes considerations for MREs.

INTER-AGENCY COOPERATION AND

COORDINATION: Andrew Hudson, UN-Oceans, provided an update of the activities of UN-Oceans, noting that its tenth meeting will be held on 11 August 2012, in the Republic of Korea. He also highlighted, *inter alia*, that the review of UN-Oceans being conducted by the UN Joint Inspections Unit will be submitted to the 67th session of the General Assembly, and that a new terms of reference for UN-Oceans is expected to come from the review.

In response to CHINA's question on the working mechanism of UN-Oceans, Hudson clarified that UN-Oceans is not an organization or agency, but only a coordination mechanism. To BRAZIL's question on participation of states in the deliberations of UN-Oceans, he noted the role of the ICP for this purpose, underscoring that specific states' participation is beyond the mandate of UN-Oceans. On ARGENTINA's question on ensuring coherence within the UN system, he pointed to the UN-Oceans' terms of reference, which requires that UN-Oceans align its work with the desires of the General Assembly and other processes and outcomes, such as Agenda 21 and the Millennium Development Goals.

PROCESS FOR THE SELECTION OF TOPICS AND PANELISTS SO AS TO FACILITATE THE WORK OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY: Co-Chair Meetarbhan recalled the recommendation of the General Assembly in paragraph 228 of

resolution 66/231 that the Consultative Process devise a transparent, objective and inclusive process for the selection of topics and panelists.

ARGENTINA commended the Co-Chairs for having tried to improve the methods for selecting and approving topics. She urged for an earlier presentation of the topics so as to improve the understanding on the part of the delegations of the topics prior to them being adopted, and prevent the too hasty adoption of topics, as has happened in previous years. She also stressed, as was already suggested in the past, that topics should be chosen from the perspective of sustainable development.

ISSUES THAT COULD BENEFIT FROM ATTENTION IN FUTURE WORK OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY ON OCEANS AND THE LAW OF THE SEA:

Co-Chair Meetarbhan referred to the composite streamlined list that has been prepared by the Co-Chairs on the basis of part C of the reports on the work of the Consultative Process from its fourth to twelfth meetings, and that the Co-Chairs will inform delegates of other topics that will be proposed during this meeting.

BRAZIL suggested, without prejudice to any other item and considering the upcoming review of the effectiveness and utility of the Consultative Process at the 67th session of the General Assembly, that ICP-14 examine the outcomes of the UN Conference on Sustainable Development (UNCSD or Rio+20). She added that, in particular, the topic could focus on how these outcomes impact or benefit international cooperation and coordination on items that were under the purview of UNCSD.

Denmark, for the EU, proposed, without prejudice to any other items and considering the General Assembly's review, the topic of climate change and oceans, particularly as they relate to security and survival for low-lying nations and islands.

IN THE CORRIDORS

Following a brief exchange of views in the morning, discussion of MREs was left behind and delegates quickly moved through remaining agenda items. However, following the meeting, some delegates pointed out that while the Co-Chairs were praised for their balanced choice of panelists from developing and developed countries, the topics of the presentations themselves served as more of a "cheerleading exercise," according to one participant, than a holistic perspective of both the potential positive and negative impacts of MREs. The apparent general support from delegates for a renewal of the ICP mandate during the discussion of future topics was deemed by some to be a sign that ICP is likely to live on. However, while uncontested during the meeting, a return to the topic of Rio+20 during ICP-14, and the significance of the conference's outcomes for oceans, seemed to take some delegates by surprise and were not received with unanimous enthusiasm. A delegate noted that Rio+20 had already been the focus of ICP-12, it has divided attention of participants at ICP-13, and a focus on it at ICP-14 would not be forward looking. Others saw it differently. One delegate lamented the weak nature of the section on oceans in the current Rio+20 negotiating text. Another supported this, explaining the positives that could come from using ICP-14 as a forum for assessing how the likely broad outcomes of Rio+20 can focus discussions and really advance the marine conservation agenda.



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