

OCEAN CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHTS: TUESDAY, 6 JUNE 2017

On Tuesday, plenary continued the general debate. Two partnership dialogues addressed: managing, protecting, conserving and restoring marine and coastal ecosystems; and minimizing and addressing ocean acidification.

PLENARY

Prince Albert II of Monaco outlined, among other measures, a ban of single-use plastics, and Monaco's partnership with the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) to strengthen resilience to ocean acidification. Vice-President Vincent Meriton, Seychelles, committed to implementing marine spatial planning (MSP), protecting 30% of the Seychelles' EEZ, and joining the Fisheries Transparency Initiative. Prime Minister Tuilaepa Aiono Sialele Malielegaoi, Samoa, highlighted commitments on community-based fisheries management, and the Ocean Voyage initiative to revive the country's voyaging heritage. Deputy Prime Minister Didier Reynders, Belgium, noted his country's pledge of €100,000 to support the Global Ghost Gear initiative.

INDONESIA outlined its commitment to reduce marine plastic debris by 70% within eight years, and a US\$1 billion waste management strategy. COSTA RICA underlined its intention to protect 10% of marine and coastal areas, regulate fisheries, protect marine turtles, and substitute plastics. ICELAND announced it will establish harvest control rules for important fish stocks and reduce ocean acidification.

BARBADOS outlined its intention to enhance integrated coastal management, improve risk management including climate risks, and participate in fisheries vessel monitoring systems. KIRIBATI highlighted the designation of its entire EEZ as a shark sanctuary, the designation of 11% of the EEZ as a tuna spawning ground, and the creation of community- and village-based MPAs. CYPRUS drew attention to the Convention on Biological Diversity's (CBD) work on MPAs. NEW ZEALAND announced a US\$54 million contribution for addressing IUU fishing and managing fisheries in the Pacific. MOZAMBIQUE noted that his country's five-year development plan is aligned with the 2030 Agenda, with a focus on SDG 14.

SWEDEN outlined commitments on: climate mitigation, including its commitment to become net carbon neutral by 2045; ocean litter, including a ban on microplastics; and its role in the Arctic debris initiative. JAMAICA committed to increase MPA coverage from 13.5% to 15.5% by 2019 and adopt an improved MPA governance framework by 2020. SOUTH AFRICA highlighted engagement in Antarctic science and announced the intention to

designate 22 new MPAs. CABO VERDE highlighted his country's charter on Blue Economy and Growth. THAILAND drew attention to regional efforts to block the sale of IUU fish. MOROCCO underscored his country's commitment to the Blue Belt Initiative to boost sustainable fisheries and coastal resilience. BELIZE announced the intention to increase the number of no-take zones by 2020.

Ecuador, for the G77/CHINA, called for a global partnership for poor countries to implement SDG 14, including through mobilization of resources, capacity building, technology transfer and knowledge sharing. QATAR suggested "post-conference steps" to determine the need for a new instrument for overall ocean conservation.

ISRAEL reported on treating 95% wastewater; committed to reduce marine pollution by 80% from a 2012 baseline by 2017, and to increase MPAs by 1-3%; and offered sharing adaptation technologies. SOLOMON ISLANDS called for sharing the burdens of ocean conservation, and implementing the UNESCO-Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) Criteria and Guidelines on marine technology transfer. ESTONIA emphasized marine pollution monitoring technology development. UNITED ARAB EMIRATES reported a 17% increase in mangroves from 1990 to 2015.

ROMANIA noted "reduce, reuse and recycle" policies are key elements for marine environment protection. IRELAND committed to prohibit the sale and manufacturing of microbeads in cosmetics and other products; and announced contribution of US\$1 million for statistical capacity building for LDCs. PORTUGAL emphasized their commitment to protect at least 14% of its coastal and marine areas, and interlinkages between marine resources, research and development, and human health; and offered to host a follow-up ocean conference in 2020. DOMINICAN REPUBLIC stressed protection of more than 30% of its marine and coastal areas.

TANZANIA pointed to national cross-sectoral monitoring of SDG 14 implementation and law enforcement, and regional approaches, including on MSP. SENEGAL underscored habitat restoration and fisheries adaptation to climate change. MARSHALL ISLANDS called for stronger political commitment, pointing to burdens arising from World War II, the Cold War, and the nuclear testing era; and thanked individual countries "standing firm" on the Paris Agreement.

TONGA committed to devoting 30% of its EEZ as MPA for restoration and conservation; and called for launching the BBNJ intergovernmental negotiations in 2018. SAINT LUCIA called for information sharing and innovation tailored to the needs of the vulnerable for integrated SDG implementation. DENMARK emphasized: the circular economy; the role of traditional

knowledge and of indigenous peoples and local communities in conservation and sustainable use; and the role of women in SDG 14 implementation.

KAZAKHSTAN called for collectively addressing environmental challenges in the Aral and Caspian Seas. FRANCE committed to increase coastal area protection. ITALY underscored: reducing use of non-biodegradable plastic bags by 50%; establishing two new MPAs to reach 20% MPA coverage in its waters; and financing an expert group meeting on CBD Aichi Target 11. AUSTRIA stressed: mobilizing all stakeholders; reducing plastic bag use by 25%; and providing financial incentives to reduce harmful discharges into rivers. NORWAY announced a new development programme to combat marine litter and microplastics, and highlighted their new research vessel to promote sound fisheries management. The COMMONWEALTH SECRETARIAT committed to supporting its vulnerable member countries in transitioning to a blue economy.

PARTNERSHIP DIALOGUE 2: MARINE AND COASTAL ECOSYSTEMS

Co-Chair Tommy Remengesau, President of Palau, highlighted his country's decision to designate 80% of its waters as a no-take zone; and underscored the need for funding mechanisms accessible to SIDS and LDCs. Co-Chair Silvia Velo, Under-Secretary of State, Ministry of Environment, Land and Sea, Italy, highlighted the contribution of the 10x20 Initiative to improve the geographical coverage of MPAs; and announced willingness to increase Italian support to sustainable ocean-based economy. Moderator Martha Rojas-Urrego, Secretary General, Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, highlighted the critical role played by coastal ecosystems in achieving progress on various SDGs.

Lin Shanqing, State Oceanic Administration, China, stressed his country's integrated approach linking land- and sea-based pollution control and monitoring measures, and a payment-based system for use of marine resources to ensure financial sustainability of conservation measures. Noting that CBD implementation can inform SDG 14 implementation, Cristiana Paşca Palmer, CBD Executive Secretary, highlighted: expected achievement of Aichi Target 11 (10% of coastal and marine areas conserved through PA systems by 2020); science-based policy making; policy coherence; and engagement of stakeholders, including local communities, for synergistic implementation.

Cyrie Sendashonga, Program and Policy Group, IUCN, discussed lessons learnt, including: identifying alternative livelihoods arising from a holistic understanding of ecosystem goods and services; supporting community empowerment with finance and inclusive governance; and using partnerships for dialogue and learning, without imposing a certain worldview. Jake Rice, Fisheries and Oceans Canada, outlined as challenges in measuring progress: limited scientific information on the ocean; integration of traditional knowledge in planning and assessments; inequitable distribution of benefits and costs from marine management and the blue economy; and participation of potentially affected stakeholders.

Henry Puna, Prime Minister of Cook Islands, announced the imminent designation of his country's entire EEZ as multiple use marine park, including 16% as MPA; and supported a blue fund to support conservation action. Tuilaepa Lufesoliai Neioti Aiono Sailele Malielegaoi, Prime Minister of Samoa, delineated his country's approach to stakeholder involvement in developing, among others, fisheries and waste management policies.

UNITED ARAB EMIRATES announced it will hold an ocean segment at the 2018 World Government Summit. SWEDEN highlighted 13.6% of MPA coverage in its waters, and emphasized continuous efforts in improving MPA ecological representativity, connectivity, and effective management.

The HOLY SEE called for robust regulatory measures to improve the livelihoods of marine-dependent communities, tax incentives, elimination of harmful subsidies and loans for environmentally friendly investments. FRENCH POLYNESIA drew attention to its network of educational marine areas managed by school students. TONGA noted challenges in meeting its commitment of establishing 30% of its EEZ as MPA, and lack of sustainable financing mechanisms. The PRINCE ALBERT II OF MONACO FOUNDATION prioritized: creation of new MPAs to achieve Aichi Target 11; support for scientific studies on MPAs; and sustainable financing mechanisms for MPA management, following establishment.

TIMOR LESTE reported on co-managed MPAs based on communities' culture and science, noting the role of national legislation to implement SDG 14. GRENADA reported on a blue economy masterplan that has been translated into a sustainable investment prospectus, and on the government-private sector Caribbean Challenge Initiative. COLOMBIA reported on MPAs, marine ecosystem restoration, blue carbon projects, and ecosystem-based adaptation. FRANCE underscored progress towards protecting 32% of its marine waters and 55% of mangroves by 2021, and support for the Ocean and Climate Initiatives Alliance.

UNESCO highlighted MSP, including a joint roadmap submitted with the European Commission to accelerate MSP processes at the global level, and the Underwater Cultural Heritage Convention. UNION NATIONALE DES TRAVAILLEURS DEMOCRATES highlighted the contribution of aquaculture to revenue diversification for local communities, including for women, and for food self-sufficiency.

SEYCHELLES reported on the recent introduction of an import ban on single-use items such as plastic cutlery and Styrofoam cups. The PHILIPPINES highlighted adoption of a ridge-to-reef management approach and drew attention to: the need for an enabling science-policy environment; and reliable institutional and financial instruments. The PACIFIC COMMUNITY emphasized the importance of knowledge and data transfer, underlining that the Pacific islands are doing more than their share.

CANADA recalled his country's aim to protect 5% of its marine and coastal areas by the end of 2017, based on a science-based approach. TOGO underscored his country's integrated marine and coastal management, and challenges regarding coastal erosion. SRI LANKA drew attention to its network of special management areas, and establishment of new MPAs using a multi-stakeholder approach.

NEPAL emphasized linkages between oceans and wide catchment areas, and the need for dedicated partnership windows for landlocked countries. EGYPT recalled decisions of the CBD Conference of the Parties (COP) on biodiversity mainstreaming in agriculture, forestry, fisheries and tourism, and future mainstreaming work in other sectors at COP 14. BRAZIL pointed to the proposal for establishing a whale sanctuary in the South Atlantic at the International Whaling Commission as a partnership opportunity for SDG 14.2 (sustainable ecosystem management). GERMANY supported: a global network of terrestrial and coastal protected areas for equitable benefit-sharing at all levels, including the local level; and the convening of an intergovernmental conference for the rapid conclusion of the negotiations of the ILBI on BBNJ.

OCEAN SANCTUARY ALLIANCE described a scientific consensus statement on the factors that enhance MPA effectiveness, and reported on new science showing that "marine reserves are also climate reserves." UN DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME (UNDP) emphasized the role of healthy oceans for poverty reduction, noting that 29 UNDP initiatives have been entered in the voluntary commitments registry. UN INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT

ORGANIZATION (UNIDO) underscored capacity-building programmes on pollution control and renewable energy. WWF INTERNATIONAL drew attention to its principles on sustainable blue economy. PARTNERSHIPS IN ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT FOR THE SEAS OF EAST ASIA committed to scale up integrated marine and coastal management in the region by 25% by 2021. Concluding the dialogue, Co-Chair Remengesau urged establishing a blue fund and appointing ocean champions.

PARTNERSHIP DIALOGUE 3: OCEAN ACIDIFICATION

Co-Chair Prince Albert II of Monaco outlined threats of ocean acidification to marine species, emphasizing regeneration of affected waters and increasing species' resilience for survival. Co-Chair Agostinho Mondlane, Minister of the Sea, Inland Waters and Fisheries, Mozambique, explained how ocean acidification hinders Mozambique's efforts to build alternative livelihoods for coastal communities based on mariculture. Both Co-Chairs stressed the importance of the Paris Agreement to mitigate ocean acidification.

Petteri Taalas, Secretary-General, World Meteorological Organization (WMO), explained the link between atmospheric CO₂ and ocean acidification. Noting that acidification will continue for at least 60 years even if CO₂ emissions decline rapidly, he underlined the need for adaptation. Carol Turley, Plymouth Marine Laboratory, UK, highlighted how science improved our understanding of ocean acidification, noting that, while the priority is to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, we also need to reduce other environmental stressors, such as unsustainable fishing.

David Osborn, International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Environment Laboratories, illustrated nuclear and isotopic research applications to the study of ocean acidification and described the Ocean Acidification International Coordination Centre. Rahanna Juman, Institute of Marine Affairs, Trinidad and Tobago, highlighted SIDS' special vulnerability to climate change impacts, and challenges in accessing adaptation finance; and recommended strengthening research capacity on ocean acidification, including through partnerships and regional networks. Cardinal Turkson, Holy See, outlined principles to address climate change and ocean acidification, including: education on ecological citizenship; "integral ecology," which ensures that humans consider themselves as part of the environment; and an integrated approach to climate change solutions to inspire the "moral motivation" to address ocean acidification.

In the discussion, Enele Sopoaga, Prime Minister of Tuvalu, described local adaptation strategies to address ocean acidification, including the designation of MPAs and the protection of sea cucumbers, which digest CO₂. ICELAND reported on eliminating incentives to heavy polluting industries, and called on others to follow suit. The EUROPEAN INVESTMENT BANK committed to leverage support for climate projects and the development of the blue economy in SIDS with a US\$100 billion investment.

President Tommy Remengesau, Palau, underscored the role of MPAs for marine and coastal ecosystem restoration and resilience, calling on participants to implement IUCN's objective to protect 30% of the global ocean. ZERO VISION TOOL outlined its collaboration method to support the European Commission's vision of a maritime industry without negative impact on air and water. INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR MIGRATION (IOM) reported on climate-induced displacement, suggesting developing best practices for migration as an adaptation approach. PEACEBOAT reported on progress in building an energy efficient eco-boat that reduces emissions by 40%, calling for more efforts by the maritime industry to build greener ships.

IUCN recalled its focus on communicating scientific findings to decision makers and other non-academic stakeholders; and urged addressing ocean acidification, as well as deoxygenation and ocean warming. The INTERNATIONAL CHAMBER OF SHIPPING recalled the industry's target of a 50% reduction of CO₂ emissions per tonne/km compared with 2008 levels; and announced it will call upon agreeing at the IMO on keeping annual CO₂ emissions of the sector below 2008 levels and further reduce its emissions by 2050.

NEW ZEALAND recalled providing NZD1.8 million to its partnership with SPREP to foster Pacific islands' resilience to ocean acidification and expressed hope that other countries will join in providing funding for this partnership. VANUATU cautioned against "turning our back" on the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities (CBDR); and emphasized the need for a "one ocean approach," where no regional ocean is left behind, and the critical nature of partnerships in advancing SIDS' capacity to conduct ocean acidification research.

The SCIENTIFIC CENTRE OF MONACO illustrated an interdisciplinary approach to fostering research on ocean acidification. The INTERNATIONAL ALLIANCE TO COMBAT OCEAN ACIDIFICATION highlighted its goals to take meaningful action, enhance awareness and build support to address acidification. The OCEAN FOUNDATION reiterated its voluntary commitment to train entry- and mid-level scientists to participate in monitoring ocean acidification, and address it through climate adaptation and mitigation measures.

FINLAND announced a joint voluntary commitment with Sweden and Canada on the Arctic MPA network toolbox project to support MPA network development and promote resilience of Arctic marine ecosystems. FRANCE highlighted the results of the Tara Pacific Expedition to study biodiversity of coral reefs impacted by climate change, lamenting the 15% mortality rate of coral reefs found in the 15 countries studied. The US outlined its commitment to enhance global ocean acidification monitoring, including training for developing countries, increasing data streams, and a mentorship programme. ARGENTINA called for regional collaboration in implementing the Paris Agreement.

COLOMBIA described action to improve scientific and local information on tropical marine and coastal ecosystems, quantifying impacts and modelling. IRAN described research on the impacts on endangered species, sources and management of dust, and national and regional cooperation for disaster management and addressing harmful algal blooms. Co-Chair Mondlane pointed towards his country's commitment to restore 55,000 hectares of mangrove ecosystems.

IN THE CORRIDORS

On day two of the Ocean Conference, the indivisibility of the SDGs took center stage, as participants delved into the partnership dialogues on marine ecosystems and on ocean acidification. "You can't address oceans without addressing biodiversity loss, climate change or food security, and vice versa," one delegate opined. And while the complexities of interlinkages and trade-offs are yet to be fully explored, another pointed to the underlying question: how to secure funding for integrated SDG implementation? Many queried the availability of resources, outside traditional development assistance channels and in light of the global partnership agreed in the Addis Ababa Action Agenda. In plenary, one of the speakers argued that sustainable development challenges can be turned into "good business" and that innovative solutions can be good for "people, profits and planet." However, some wondered precisely where and when such funding would materialize. "We need new ideas from a broad range of stakeholders to come up with sustainable financing to revive and restore life below water," stressed a seasoned participant. "And we need them fast."

