



A Special Report on Selected Side Events at the
Second Round of 'Informal-Informal' Negotiations on the zero draft of
outcome document of the UN Conference on Sustainable Development
(UNCSD or Rio+20)

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Events convened on Tuesday, 24 April 2012

Interactive Panel Discussion on Sustainable Fisheries and Rio+20

Organized by FAO, DOALOS/OLA, DESA and World Bank, IUCN and the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD)



Rolf Willmann, FAO, said Rio+20 provides an important opportunity to redress the decline in fish stocks worldwide.



Julio Baez, DOALOS, underscored the importance of protecting marine biodiversity.

This event, moderated by Ambassador Donatus Keith St. Aimee, Permanent Representative of St. Lucia to the UN, is part of a series of consultations of the Rio+20 Friends of the Ocean to host strategic discussions on the steps necessary to achieve a strong outcome for oceans, coasts and Small Island Developing States (SIDS).

Julio Baez, Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea (DOALOS), outlined the functions of DOALOS relating to fisheries, including: conducting intergovernmental meetings, conferences and workshops on the law of the sea and sustainable fisheries; and cooperating with other international organizations and bodies dealing with oceans issues. Kathleen Abdalla, UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA), urged parties to register their commitments voluntarily on the DESA website.

Rolf Willmann, UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), said the fisheries and aquaculture sector is often overlooked as a contributor to food, nutrition security and poverty reduction. Tim Bostock, World Bank, introducing the Global Partnership for Oceans, called for significant governance reforms that focus on establishing and enforcing institutional arrangements that address the "open access, commons" nature of ocean living resources.

Harlan Cohen, IUCN, called for integrated, multidisciplinary and multisectoral ocean management to ensure that activities of one sector, such as shipping and mining, do not harm the management of activities in fisheries.

Mathew Sebastian, International Collective in Support of Fishworkers (ICSF), urged recognizing traditional practices and the needs and interests of indigenous people and local fishing communities who are dependent on fishery resources.

During the ensuing discussion, participants reflected on: marine protected areas; biodiversity beyond national jurisdiction; eco-certification; the effects of off-shore wind turbines; and the impacts of subsidies on agriculture and fisheries.

More information:

<http://www.un.org/en/development/desa>
<http://www.un.org/depts/los/index.htm>

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Environmental Health Initiatives: Innovative approaches for building sustainable cities

Presented by Parliamentarians for Global Action

Moderated by Ambassador Herman Schaper, Permanent Representative of the Netherlands to the UN, this event discussed the challenges facing modern cities, and addressed steps to be taken to build healthy, sustainable cities.

Shazia Rafi, Secretary-General, Parliamentarians for Global Action (PGA), stressed that environmental protection must not be at the expense of economic development, and urged the “silos” of health, energy, development and the environment to work together to find innovative solutions.

Elizabeth Thompson, Rio+20 Executive Coordinator, noted that planning for sustainable cities is unique to each city due to their individual characteristics. She cited specific issues to be addressed, including: the increase of asthma and other diseases as a direct result of climate change, suggesting effective planning and legislation can minimize such outbreaks; and disaster risk planning to reduce the incidence of disease in post-disaster environments.

Pindi Chana, Member of Parliament, Tanzania, spoke on the legislative initiatives for sustainable urban planning in Tanzania. Noting that her country’s experience is applicable to many Sub-Saharan countries, she highlighted three broad categories for action: legislative; budgetary; and governance. She underscored the importance of political will to underpin any action that is taken.

Ruby Pawankar, President, World Allergy Organization, suggested the development of guidelines to prevent disease and allergies and called for global partnerships of multidisciplinary teams to work towards the common goal of reducing the burden of non-communicable disease and provide innovative strategies to achieve this.

Gabriela Rodríguez, Director General, VerdMX, outlining the work her organization does, noted that many citizens are eager to participate in “green” sustainability initiatives, and that her organization works to find ways to involve them. Noting that “ecology is economy,” she said working with private companies can provide win-win solutions, as well as contribute to environmental education and public awareness.

Ramón Cruz, Institute of Transportation and Development Policy, detailed a number of transport principles for sustainable cities, including: “cycling” through prioritizing cycle networks; “connect” through creating dense networks of streets and paths; “transit” through supporting high quality transit methods; “mix” through planning for a balance of mixed-use neighborhoods and buildings; “densify” through matching transport with capacity; and “compact” through “compacting” areas to provide short commutes.



L-R: Ramón Cruz, Institute of Transportation and Development Policy; Ruby Pawankar, President, World Allergy Organization; Mónica Adame, PGA; Amb. Herman Schaper, Permanent Representative of the Netherlands to the UN; Shazia Rafi, Secretary-General, PGA; Pindi Chana, Member of Parliament, Tanzania; Elizabeth Thompson, Rio+20 Executive Coordinator.



Ms. Elizabeth Thompson
Elizabeth Thompson, Rio+20 Executive Coordinator, underscored the challenge of planning for cities where the majority of citizens are slum dwellers.



Mr. Ramón Cruz
Ramón Cruz, Institute of Transportation and Development Policy, underscored economic growth does not mean “driving all the time.”



Pindi Chana, Member of Parliament, Tanzania, highlighted the role of public-private partnerships in planning for sustainable cities.

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Consultations of the Rio+20 Friends of the Ocean

Organized by the Global Ocean Forum, the State Oceanic Administration of the People's Republic of China, the Global Environmental Facility (GEF), UN Development Programme (UNDP), Ocean Policy Research Foundation (OPRF), the Government of Japan, and the University of Delaware

This event considered contributions from participants on the current text of the zero draft of Rio+20 outcome document, ensuring oceans' prominence on the Rio+20 agenda, and assisting implementation of the Rio+20 outcomes *vis-à-vis* oceans.

Biliana Cicin-Sain, President, Global Ocean Forum, facilitated the session, highlighting the commitment to: continue striving for a strong outcome at negotiations and building on the priorities for Rio+20 with regards to oceans; showcase initiatives that will spur on action for oceans, coasts, and SIDS in a post-Rio+20 world; and consider the opportunities and challenges for implementing the "oceans package" arising from Rio+20.

Andrew Hudson, UNDP, spoke of the need to incentivize positive actions, placing an economic value on oceans, and bringing the market into the oceans discussion.

Ambassador Dessima Williams, Permanent Representative of Grenada to the UN, highlighted the need to prioritize critical areas, as well as negotiate follow-up actions, to ensure that the real impact of Rio+20 is not missed. She stressed the need for people to have a better understanding of managing resources, called for mobilizing citizens into action and urged linking science to steps needed for achieving sustainable development.

Participants also addressed: building a strong coalition of stakeholders for oceans; putting targets into timelines; accountability for partnerships; and lack of funds contributing to collapsed partnerships.

One participant suggested a moratorium on subsidies, while another focused on the impacts of harmful chemicals and persistent organic pollutants on the coastlines of SIDS. Most participants called for realistic outcomes from Rio+20 that are achievable, and others voiced concern that the competing uses of the oceans complicate the management of oceanic resources.



Biliana Cicin-Sain, President, Global Ocean Forum, said Rio+20 affords a historical opportunity to elevate oceans in the process.



Andrew Hudson, UNDP, said "we need to get the numbers and methodology right".



Alice Revell, Permanent Mission of New Zealand to the UN, called for stronger emphasis on capacity development and SIDS to benefit more from their fisheries.



Representatives from governments, international organizations, NGOs, industry and the scientific community discussing issues involving the sustainable use of ocean resources.

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Roundtable Discussion on Rights at Risk in the Green Economy

Presented by IBON International, Council of Canadians, Peoples Coalition for Food Sovereignty, France Libertes, Roots for Equity, Global Forest Coalition, Food and Water Watch, Third World Network, Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy

This event, moderated by Anil Naidoo, Council of Canadians, discussed the current round of negotiations on the zero draft of the outcomes document for Rio+20, and strategized on how to link campaigning efforts “outside” with lobbying efforts “inside” and vice versa.

Chee Yoke Ling, Third World Network (TWN), outlined the civil society call for reaffirming the Rio Principles, saying that the current dialogue in the negotiations may either dilute the Rio Principles or “rewrite” them. She cautioned against possible Sustainable Development Goals being implemented as a solution for sustainable development.

Marcos Orellana, Center for International Environmental Law (CIEL), noted the call for the Human Rights Council (HRC) to provide a human rights perspective for the Rio+20 negotiations. He lamented that despite the involvement of the HRC, many references to human rights and human rights principles are still being bracketed in the negotiating text.

Melinda Ching Simon, Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), urged for Member States’ commitments to be made without undermining or disrespecting human rights and called for the outcomes of Rio+20 to be grounded in the rule of law.

Andre Abreu de Almeida, Frances Libertes Foundation, lauded a G-77/China proposal for the zero draft to differentiate between rights to water and access to water, as rights to services are a separate issue that need to be considered in an ethical manner. Anita Nayar, Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era (DAWN), called for separating the debate on environmental degradation from the debate on population growth.

In the ensuing discussion, participants debated: social protection floors; the need for decent jobs; the use of law to promote sustainable development implementation; the rights of Mother Earth being included in final outcomes of Rio+20; disregarding the right to development; and the need for action beyond Rio+20.

In closing, Chee Yoke Ling, lamented that the debate is moving away from the complexity of sustainable development, noting that human rights are integral to sustainable development.



L-R: Melinda Ching Simon, OHCHR; Anil Naidoo, Council of Canadians; Chee Yoke Ling, TWN.



Melinda Ching Simon, OHCHR, noted a paucity of human rights language in the zero draft of the outcome document.



Marcos Orellana, CIEL, said that human rights are central to the green economy discussion.



Anil Naidoo, Council of Canadians, highlighted the concern due the uncertainty of the definition and conceptualization of the green economy.

More information:

<http://www.iboninternational.org/>
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