

OCEAN CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHTS: WEDNESDAY, 7 JUNE 2017

On Wednesday, plenary continued the general debate. Two partnership dialogues addressed: making fisheries sustainable; and increasing economic benefits to SIDS and LDCs, and providing access for small-scale artisanal fishers to marine resources and markets.

PLENARY

The HOLY SEE called for an ethical approach to environmental management, emphasizing the responsibility to care for vulnerable populations, SIDS and future generations. FIJI reiterated its intention to be at the frontline of SDG 14 implementation and called for ending “selfish behavioral patterns” that jeopardize ocean health. KENYA highlighted its recent ban on plastics, creation of a state department for fisheries and blue economy, and ratification of the FAO Port State Measures Agreement; and expressed interest in hosting a follow-up conference on SDG 14. MADAGASCAR announced its intention to create a cross-sectoral, multi-stakeholder committee on the SDGs, and emphasized regional engagement through the Nairobi Regional Seas Convention. TIMOR LESTE highlighted its zero-plastic policy and intention to ratify the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES). GUYANA pointed to its programme on mangrove management to protect against coastal erosion, and regulations aiming to address bycatch and IUU fishing. Highlighting that half of global military expenditure would be enough to achieve all SDGs, CUBA stressed developed countries’ moral duty and historical responsibility to provide means of implementation, including technology transfer under favorable terms, and noted that 18.9% of its waters are MPAs.

MONTENEGRO, PERU and POLAND called for appointing a Secretary-General’s special representative for the ocean to promote SDG 14 implementation. ARGENTINA noted its intention to increase MPA coverage from 3 to 10% by 2020, and drew attention to the upcoming WTO Ministerial Conference, to be held in December 2017 in Buenos Aires, which will address relevant issues. SPAIN highlighted commitment to combat IUU fishing, including operations resulting in financial penalties and a ban on fishing activities for violators, and efforts to reach 10% MPA coverage of its waters by 2020.

SIERRA LEONE reported on actions on IUU fishing and oil pollution, and stressed the importance of fully implementing the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, especially regarding investment in technology. SAUDI ARABIA highlighted its commitment to address environmental degradation through promoting scientific research and increasing renewable energy production. VIET NAM stressed local community engagement, and cooperation mechanisms

at all levels, including for maintaining peace in disputed waters. DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO reported on the positive impact of his country’s decade-old ban on plastic wrappings, and emphasized his country’s leadership in establishing the Congo Basin Blue Fund.

GUATEMALA and PERU highlighted their national development plans are aligned with the SDGs. PERU prioritized attention to small-scale fishing as source of livelihoods for coastal communities. The UK stressed support to SIDS through the Commonwealth Marine Economies Programme, and announced joining the UN Environment Clean Seas campaign. GEORGIA underscored efforts to improve monitoring of fishing vessels.

Bangladesh, for the LDCs, stressed the need for: fiscal policies and subsidies’ reform; sufficient and predictable resource allocation; G-7 marine-related initiatives; and access to markets for small-scale artisanal fishers. Zambia for LANDLOCKED DEVELOPING COUNTRIES (LLDCs) highlighted their right to access the ocean and benefit from it under UNCLOS, and the need for technical assistance and financial support to enable this. The NETHERLANDS stressed: good governance and regional cooperation; effective partnerships; and interlinkages among the SDGs and synergies with other international frameworks. HUNGARY underscored the SDGs’ interconnectivity.

Supporting the voluntary commitment put forward by UNESCO, the OCEAN FRONTIER INSTITUTE called for investment in ocean literacy initiatives and supported an international decade of ocean science. FUTURE EARTH drew attention to a report by the International Council for Science on interactions between the SDGs. The WORLD OCEAN COUNCIL pointed to engaging young professionals in building sustainable ocean economies. The WOMEN MAJOR GROUP stressed the role of women and small-scale fishers in achieving SDG 14 and urged for addressing systemic issues, such as unequal distribution of wealth. The SWEDISH INSTITUTE FOR MARINE ENVIRONMENT suggested considering an ecosystem-based definition of the maximum sustainable yield for fisheries.

The US highlighted its role in creating the Safe Ocean Network to combat IUU fishing. CHILE announced plans for two new MPAs totaling 520,000 square kilometers by 2018, noting its total MPA area will then exceed 1 million square kilometers. CHINA proposed a blue partnership to build mutual trust in ocean governance for sustainable marine development. CROATIA pointed to the special vulnerability of semi-enclosed seas such as the Adriatic; and lauded international collaboration through regional fisheries management organizations (RFMOs) or frameworks such as the Barcelona Regional Seas Convention.

PANAMA announced coverage of 14% its waters as MPAs. FINLAND reported on its nutrient recycling programme; advocated the circular economy; and called for increased protection of the

Arctic Ocean. JAPAN highlighted its actions on marine debris, ocean acidification, and sustainable fisheries; emphasized “reduce-reuse-recycle” approaches; and underlined its support to SIDS and LDCs. Noting unprecedented levels of IUU fishing in its EEZ, PAPUA NEW GUINEA, with CAMBODIA, called for support to improve monitoring and surveillance. MEXICO prioritized, *inter alia*, improving living conditions of coastal communities through sustainable marine resource exploitation. HONDURAS recalled the principle of CBDR.

LEBANON described challenges to address legacy oil pollution caused by Israel’s bombardment of a power plant in 2006, and announced plans for 15 MPAs and waste water treatment plants. Lamenting the ongoing occupation of Crimea by the Russian Federation, UKRAINE pointed to its submission on 12 May 2017 of a case before the International Court of Justice (ICJ) for a breach of the law of the sea; and emphasized the need to promote a peaceful use of the ocean.

MALTA reported a 30% coverage of its waters through MPAs; and pointed to its continuous efforts in advancing ocean policies, referring, among others, to: its role in drafting UNCLOS; the Valletta Declaration on Strengthening Euro-Mediterranean Cooperation through Research and Innovation; and its upcoming hosting of the “Our Ocean” conference. OMAN delineated its action on marine pollution, including oil spills and illegal discharge of ballast waters, and sustainable fishing. As member of the 10x20 Ocean Sanctuary Initiative’s steering committee, POLAND encouraged other countries to join this effort to promote MPAs.

The INTER-PARLIAMENTARY UNION highlighted parliaments’ role in promoting sustainable ocean use, including through decisions on budget allocation. FAO recalled the importance of ocean products for food security, health and nutrition, emphasizing that in many LDCs fish accounts for more than half of the total animal protein intake. UNIDO reported on developing value chains for poor fishing communities, and promoting green circular economy and renewable energy to reduce marine pollution. IMO outlined its role in addressing sea- and land-based pollution and efforts to address energy efficiency of shipping, invasive alien species and waste dumping at sea. CBD expressed hope that MPAs would follow the success of terrestrial protected areas. UNESCO-IOC explained its contributions to conserving marine and coastal ecosystems and underwater cultural heritage, and proposed an “all-of-society, all-of-government” approach to implementation. UNDP suggested diverting funding from harmful subsidies to support sustainable fisheries.

HIGH SEAS ALLIANCE underscored that target 14.5 to protect at least 10% of coastal and marine areas should only be the starting point of ocean conservation. OCEAN CARE, on behalf of a consortium of NGOs, called for addressing underwater noise, including in an ILBI on BBNJ. The CENTER FOR OCEANIC AWARENESS, RESEARCH, AND EDUCATION advocated a shift from considering marine plastic debris a waste management problem to an issue of plastic manufacture. FRIENDS OF MARINE LIFE highlighted the need to use the knowledge of indigenous fishing communities.

PARTNERSHIP DIALOGUE 4: SUSTAINABLE FISHERIES

Co-Chair Dominic LeBlanc, Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, emphasized: MPAs as part of sustainable fisheries and WTO as the venue to achieve enforceable fisheries subsidies rules. Co-Chair Oumar Guèye, Minister of Fisheries and Maritime Economy, Senegal, reported on reserving marine areas to small-scale fisheries, strengthening the ecosystem approach to fisheries to benefit future generations, and stronger sanctions against IUU fishing.

Arni Mathiesen, Assistant Director-General, FAO, underscored, among others: the challenges of IUU fishing, shared and straddling fish stocks management in the high seas, support for small-scale

fisheries, and fisheries subsidies; and the need for resources for RFMOs. Jennifer Dianto Kemmerly, Director, Monterey Bay Aquarium, US, drew attention to sustainable seafood movements in the US and EU markets driving sustainable fisheries and aquaculture worldwide; and compliance gaps in tuna and shrimp fisheries being filled by educating and involving smallholder fishers in sustainability fisheries chains. Karl Brauner, WTO Deputy Director-General, noted: emerging consensus among WTO member states on prohibiting subsidies promoting IUU fishing and harming overfished fish stocks; and the direct effect of subsidies on access to fish in areas beyond national jurisdiction, and their indirect effect on trade. Milton Haughton, Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism, reported on cooperation and partnerships to build sustainable fisheries in the Caribbean, with local fishers’ organizations and fisheries management organizations.

In the ensuing discussion, Prime Minister Elene Sopoaga, Tuvalu, and VANUATU outlined progress in sustainable fisheries management in the Pacific Islands, and called for more effective documentation and traceability, and effective vessel control by flag states. The PACIFIC ISLANDS FORUM FISHERIES AGENCY outlined the benefits of area-based management.

NORWAY called for global efforts to enhance the contribution of sustainable fisheries to food security now and in the future. THAILAND called for enhanced collaboration between coastal, flag and third states and RFMOs in controlling vessels. Deputy Prime Minister Kedrick Pickering, Virgin Islands, highlighted the importance of regulating sport fishing. The REPUBLIC OF KOREA urged increased aquaculture productivity, and combating IUU fishing on the basis of existing international law. SAINT KITTS AND NEVIS reported on national consultations on the ecosystem approach to fisheries linked to disaster risk reduction and climate change mitigation. GABON called for regional and international partnerships to build capacity, exchange data and promote scientific cooperation to address IUU fishing. ICELAND called for science-based approaches to sustainable fisheries management. MARSHALL ISLANDS recommended that existing and future partnerships on sustainable fisheries should not undermine SIDS governments and peoples, or perpetuate donor dependency. SPAIN underscored the need to investigate climate change impacts on fisheries. INDONESIA called on the UN General Assembly to acknowledge that IUU fishing is a transnational crime. CHILE advocated stronger international collaboration on fishing vessel inspection at sea and in ports, and control of trans-shipment activities, noting such tools should not become a trade barrier.

UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) called for genuine efforts to effectively eliminate harmful subsidies. SWEDEN offered lessons learned from participatory development of improved fishing gear, including offsetting yield penalties from experimentation and simple documentation requirements. The INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL FOR THE EXPLORATION OF THE SEA reported on integrated ecosystem assessments to analyze trade-offs between conservation and sustainable harvesting of fish species. UN Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) presented its Fisheries Language for Universal Exchange (FLUX) project for the standardization of fishing data exchange for improved monitoring and research. CBD reported on establishing a permanent global dialogue with regional seas organizations and RFMOs on accelerating progress towards Aichi Targets and SDGs. ILO recommended ratifying and implementing international instruments to combat forced labor at sea and trafficking of fishermen. INTERPOL offered investigative support, criminal analyses related to fisheries, and information on modalities of fisheries-related crime.

SWEDISH SOCIETY FOR NATURE CONSERVATION urged banning harmful fisheries and fuel subsidies by 2017 at WTO, and implementing the FAO Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries (SSF Guidelines). COMUNIDAD

Y BIODIVERSIDAD AC prioritized: empowering communities to form legal and sustainable fishers' organizations; recognizing women in the sector; and increasing coverage of marine reserves. PAUL G ALLEN FOUNDATION proposed work on real-time identification of illegal fishing boats. FRIENDS OF MARINE LIFE proposed a green tax for unsustainable fisheries, and a green subsidy for sustainable ones. MARINE STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL committed to engage 20% of global fish landings in sustainable fisheries certification by 2020 and 33% by 2030, noting the need to eliminate harmful subsidies to reach these targets. The WORLD ECONOMIC FORUM highlighted the Tuna Traceability Declaration and the Ocean Data Alliance to enhance SIDS' capacities and create leap-frog opportunities for RFMOs.

PARTNERSHIP DIALOGUE 5: BENEFITS TO SIDS AND LDCS AND ACCESS TO RESOURCES AND MARKETS

Co-Chair Keith Mitchell, Prime Minister of Grenada, stressed that SIDS can be "petri dishes for investment" in the blue and green economy, and noted technological advances in Africa that enable fishers to check fish prices while at sea. Co-Chair Marko Pomerants, Minister of Environment, Estonia, stressed the role of regional cooperation to enhance access to markets for small-scale fishers, and underscored the importance of cooperatives which enhance fishers' purchasing power. Moderator Dame Meg Taylor, Pacific Island Forum Secretariat, noted that addressing SDG 14 will also address SDGs on poverty, hunger, gender equality, sustainable consumption and production, climate change and partnerships.

Mohammed Shainee, Minister of Fisheries and Agriculture, Maldives, underscored impact assessment and regulation for tourism development, and better traceability and monitoring in traditional fisheries. Fekitamoeola Katoa 'Utoikamanu, UN High Representative for LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS, referred to the need for capacity and technology in aquaculture, seabed mining and tourism, to identify niche markets and ensure local community involvement in MPA identification and management. Laura Tuck, World Bank, urged: reducing pressure on fisheries, which would prevent the loss of US\$80 billion a year; enhancing governance, such as co-management with local communities, with strong enforcement of tenure rights; and facilitating access to markets for artisanal fishers through private and public investment. Mitchell Lay, Coordinator of the Caribbean Network Fisherfolk Organization, stressed that states should recognize and enhance the contribution of small-scale fisheries to their economies by ensuring access to resources in line with the SSF Guidelines. He emphasized that small-scale fishers' organizations are a precondition for meaningful participation in decision making, drawing attention to the limited participation of fisherfolk in the conference.

In the ensuing discussion, President Baron Divavesi Waqa, Nauru, stressed: regional efforts to sustainably manage tuna stocks; disproportionate conservation burden; and long-term partnerships to build communities' capacities. SEYCHELLES drew attention to its plan to issue a blue bond to support marine conservation and sustainable fisheries. AUSTRALIA emphasized financial commitments to assist Pacific SIDS in building technical capacity to delineate maritime boundaries and address IUU fishing. The Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD) reported on its work on MPAs and its ability to draw sustainable tourism in SIDS, and a new database to combat IUU fishing. RARE committed to mobilizing US\$100 million over the next 10 years to support small-scale fishers, and called for support on this. SOLOMON ISLANDS stressed that poor countries are at the frontlines of combatting IUU fishing. SAINT LUCIA said that international fishing quotas should not disadvantage small-scale fishing, and stressed the importance of implementing the SAMOA Pathway.

International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) described the SIDS Lifehouse Initiative to mobilize funding and political will to advance renewable energy deployment in SIDS. The Indigenous Peoples' and Local Community Conserved Areas and Territories (ICCA) CONSORTIUM called for implementing the SSF Guidelines. NEW ZEALAND noted their contribution of US\$29 million to address IUU fishing in the Pacific, including enhancing measures such as genetic testing of tuna to detect misreporting.

DENMARK reported on supporting small-scale, low-impact coastal fisheries, and involving tourism and large-scale fisheries sectors in decisions on ecosystem restoration and infrastructure development. KIRIBATI illustrated efforts to climate-proof development and public infrastructure. PAPUA NEW GUINEA described the role of the Vessel Day Scheme set by the Parties to the Nauru Agreement to exercise leadership in managing distant-fishing vessels and ensure economic returns. INDIA described support to small-scale fishing communities in terms of market access, equipment purchase, and creation of cooperatives; and cautioned against sanitary and phytosanitary barriers to trade that impact fisheries.

COMMONWEALTH SECRETARIAT proposed a "blue Commonwealth charter" to apply agreed principles to marine sustainable development to foster ocean regeneration. CONSERVATION INTERNATIONAL reported on a social responsibility initiative for global fisheries and aquaculture to tackle slavery through good business practices and regulation. FAO illustrated the Blue Growth Initiative to reinforce efforts to rebuild fisheries and increase economic benefits to SIDS, and offered technical assistance on market access and harmful subsidies.

TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO stressed infrastructure development to improve market access, processing facilities to add value to fisheries products, and assistance for organization of fishers' cooperatives. INTERNATIONAL WHALING COMMISSION drew attention to its support for best-practice management of whale watching. THE NATURE CONSERVANCY highlighted commitments to promote and finance nature-based coastal adaptation for vulnerable communities, in partnership with risk-modeling and re-insurance companies. FRENCH POLYNESIA underscored the MPA to be created through its entire EEZ, which will include limitations to small-scale fishing in consultation with local communities. Pacific Islands Association of NGOs (PIANGO) stressed that people, not profits, should be at the heart of SDG 14 implementation. The INTERNATIONAL SEABED AUTHORITY (ISA) highlighted voluntary commitments on promoting participation of SIDS, LDCs and women in marine science, and working with the African Mineral Development Centre to support Africa's blue economy.

IN THE CORRIDORS

At the mid-week juncture, Ocean Conference delegates discussed the challenge of relating the voluntary commitments to action on the ground. As one NGO put it, "instead of focusing on catch phrases like capacity building, we need to listen to the needs of those most affected," such as island states, least developed states, and fishing communities. In the partnership dialogues on fisheries, governments called for more partnerships with industry, whereas one NGO lamented the lack of government response to its business-led initiative on tuna tracing. One seasoned delegate warned, "Business engagement can be a double-edged sword, as we don't know what business' demands will be in exchange for 'fish-before-profit' commitments to resuscitate global fisheries." Regarding small-scale fisheries, many agreed with a panelist emphasizing that both private and public support is needed for ensuring their access to markets. Another participant surmised, "the key is recognizing that we all have much to learn from each other: governments, business and artisanal fisheries."

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