

## Summary of 2020 Ocean Pathways Week: 13 November 2019

On 13 November 2019, during the 2020 Ocean Pathways Week, participants convened for a joint session coordinated by the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and supported by the Ministry of Environment and Energy of the Government of Sweden and the Ministry of Oceans and Fisheries of the Republic of Korea.

The session bridged two interrelated meetings: “Advancing Ocean Action Towards SDG 14: Leveraging Synergies for Marine and Coastal Ecosystems, Mangroves and Coral Reefs” (11-13 November 2019); and a thematic workshop on marine and coastal biodiversity for the post-2020 global biodiversity framework (14-15 November 2019). The purpose of the workshop is to deliver concrete proposals to be considered in the post-2020 framework.

In the first half of the day, participants heard a report on discussions that took place during the first two days of the Advancing Ocean Action Towards Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 14 meeting. They discussed key opportunities and overlaps between the SDG 14 process and the process under the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) to develop the post-2020 global biodiversity framework, with breakout groups discussing sustainable fisheries; the overarching impact of climate change and other drivers of global biodiversity loss; and potential gaps within SDG 14 targets that may be addressed in the post-2020 framework. Participants also discussed using the SDGs to inform indicators, monitoring, and assessment of post-2020 targets, with breakout groups highlighting the need to: work across conventions; strengthen indicators; and work towards quantitative as well as qualitative measurement.

In the second half of the day, which marked the beginning of the post-2020 thematic workshop, participants heard from Elizabeth Mrema, Officer-in-Charge, CBD Secretariat. Mrema welcomed participants to the workshop and charged them with the task of creating the “gills and fins” of the post-2020 framework. They also heard from Ambassador Peter Thomson, UN Secretary-General’s Special Envoy for the Ocean, who reminded them that “everything being done for biodiversity must be integrated with ocean and climate tracks,” and that not “acting as one” would be “a dereliction of duty.” Participants heard a series of presentations on the status and trends of different areas of ocean action, including

- the state of the ocean;
- fisheries;
- Aichi Biodiversity Target 11 (area-based conservation);
- Mangroves and wetlands;
- coral reefs; and
- migratory species.



View of the session on Advancing Ocean Action Towards SDG 14

Following a presentation on lessons learned from implementing the Aichi Biodiversity Targets, participants broke into groups to discuss how these lessons could inform the post-2020 global biodiversity framework. They highlighted, among others, the importance of synergies between top-down global targets and bottom-up regional achievements.

The 2020 Ocean Pathways Week is taking place from 11-15 November 2019 in Montreal, Canada.

### Report of the Meeting

Joseph Appiott, CBD Secretariat, opened the meeting. He remarked that 2020 is the “super year for the ocean,” pointing to the 2020 UN Conference in Lisbon, Portugal and the ongoing process under the CBD to develop the post-2020 global biodiversity framework. He explained that this day in the 2020 Ocean Pathways Week overlapped two meetings whose subjects were highly interrelated. In the morning, participants

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would conclude discussions on areas related to SDG 14. In the afternoon, participants would begin discussions on the post-2020 global biodiversity framework, with the goal of producing concrete proposals for elements to be considered in the framework. He stressed that the Aichi Biodiversity Targets strongly align with SDG 14, and that these frameworks “should not exist in isolation.”

### **Advancing Ocean Action Towards SDG 14**

Appiott provided a summary of the discussions from the previous days of the “Advancing Ocean Action Towards SDG 14” meeting, highlighting the trends across several subject areas.

Under marine biodiversity and ecosystems, he reported discussions which highlighted positive trends in integrated conservation, designation of Marine Protected Areas, and the youth movement, among others; and identified needs and gaps around acquiring baseline information and understanding key thresholds. Discussions considered the role of SDG 14 in connecting to the youth movement and improving collaboration with scientists, as well as critical action around addressing carbon emissions and providing education for the next generation.

Under tools and approaches, Appiott reported that participants discussed the need to: adopt cross-sectoral approaches; improve data collection and analysis; and build bridges across sectors by identifying common goals.

Regarding indicators and ocean science, participants had discussed the need for well-established and functional communication channels between policy and action, and to include stakeholders and actors that are not traditionally engaged in the area.

He reported back on experiences from the Voluntary Commitments Registry, including the need to highlight information on global support mechanisms for voluntary commitments, and citing the role of the SDG 14 Communities of Ocean Action on Marine and Coastal Ecosystems Management, Coral Reefs, and Mangroves in supporting work on voluntary commitments. Appiott further reported that discussions considered the need to find common goals and solutions between sustainable use and conservation in the post-2020 global biodiversity framework.



Co-Chair **Ilham Atho Mohamed**, Maldives



**Elizabeth Mrema**, Officer-in-Charge, CBD Secretariat

### **Key opportunities and overlaps between the SDG 14 process/UN Ocean Conference and CBD post-2020 global biodiversity framework:**

Ilham Atho Mohamed (Maldives), Adam van Opzeeland (New Zealand), and Joseph Appiott (CBD Secretariat) co-facilitated a roundtable discussion on the potential synergies between SDG 14 and the post-2020 global biodiversity framework.

Appiott introduced the session by noting that the Aichi Biodiversity Targets are well-reflected in the SDGs, and that a number of links and trade-offs exist between biodiversity and other SDG targets such as food security. He asked participants to consider: which targets within SDG 14 could be used to inform the post-2020 framework; which other SDG targets or elements could also be useful; and what gaps within SDG 14 the post-2020 framework might address.

Reporting back from their discussions, some participants noted the importance of addressing issues across the SDGs in order to bolster work on SDG 14. In particular, participants pointed to the overarching impacts of climate change and the need to protect remaining biodiversity. One suggested that SDG 14 needs the support of other targets, including SDGs 6 (Clean water and sanitation), 12 (Responsible consumption and production), and 13 (Climate action).

Sustainable fisheries (SDG 14.4) emerged as a common theme in discussions, with participants discussing, among others: the need to focus on areas that are highly biodiverse so as to not lose species; how biodiversity may already be integrated in fisheries management; and integration of fisheries, biodiversity, science, and knowledge.

On gaps to be addressed in the post-2020 framework, participants highlighted, *inter alia*, vague language within certain SDG 14 targets and the fact that the “deep sea” is not mentioned in SDG 14. One opined that targets needed to be “better focused” and “sharper,” pointing to the need for SDG 14.2 (sustainably manage and protect marine and coastal ecosystems) to include national and regional efforts related to Other effective area-based conservation measures (OECMs). Some argued that targets for the post-2020 framework should reflect the current state of the science, and that they should be informed by global conversation efforts which have emerged since the development of the SDGs.



Joe Appiott, CBD Secretariat

Some groups suggested that the post-2020 framework should have a broader classification of global drivers of biodiversity loss and consider how SDGs reference these drivers. They said special attention should be paid to targets with a 2020 deadline, and that ambition may need to be increased to meet such targets.

Other groups highlighted the importance of management effectiveness, stressing that targets must consider management's role in building ecosystem resilience.

**Using SDGs to inform indicators, monitoring, and assessment of Post-2020 Targets:** Joseph Appiott introduced the roundtable discussion, noting the crossover between indicators for the Aichi Biodiversity Targets and those for many SDGs. He raised questions for participants to discuss, namely to consider: which of the SDG 14 indicators could be used to inform the post-2020 framework; which indicators for other SDG targets or elements could be used for marine and coastal biodiversity; which gaps indicators for the post-2020 framework can address, in particular with regard to biodiversity; and opportunities to align SDG and post-2020 framework reporting.

Reporting back from their discussions, participants highlighted some challenges with SDG 14 indicators. Some suggested that indicators are a good basis for the post-2020 framework. Others, however, argued that current indicators are: too technical to be clear for decision makers; too strongly based on quantitative rather than qualitative measurements; and not reflective of the present state of knowledge.

One participant called for indicators to be built from "concrete baselines and standards" that would help states meet targets. Others suggested that existing indicators could be strengthened by using indicators from other conventions, and pressed for indicators to be relevant in both biology and policy, as well as measurable and ambitious.

Participants also noted the need to work with other conventions, given that not all countries are parties to all agreements. Noting existing cooperation between conventions,

they highlighted the need for: standardization and coordinating information; indicators to reflect the bottom-up approach taken by many regions; and consideration of countries' differing needs for resources through technology transfer and resource mobilization, so that targets can be applicable to all CBD parties.

### ***Thematic Workshop on Marine and Coastal Biodiversity for the Post2020 Global Biodiversity Framework***

Adam van Opzeeland (New Zealand) and Ilham Atho Mohamed (Maldives) co-chaired the first session of the workshop.

Elizabeth Mrema, Officer-in-Charge, CBD Secretariat, welcomed participants to the workshop, charging them with the task of creating the "gills and fins" of the post-2020 framework. She urged participants to think beyond traditional modes, open themselves to new ideas, and take stock of what works. Saying that the ocean encapsulates the "hopes and dreams" of the world's biodiversity, she stressed that the goals of SDG 14 and the global biodiversity framework are "one and the same."

Peter Thomson, UN Secretary General's Special Envoy for the Ocean, pointed out that only six and a half months remain before the 2020 UN Oceans Conference and that, as a result, this workshop is the "last and best" opportunity to get to the heart of SDG 14.2, which calls for the sustainable management of marine ecosystems. He reminded participants that everything being done for biodiversity must be integrated with ocean and climate tracks, and that not acting as one would be a "dereliction of duty."

Basile van Havre, co-chair of the Open-Ended Working Group (OEWG) on the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework, presented an overview of the preparatory process for the framework. He reminded participants that the OEWG intended to provide the upcoming Conference of the Parties not only with a package containing a framework and draft decisions, but also a positive climate for negotiations. He reported back on consultations, which stressed that: the framework should be easy



Co-Chair Adam van Opzeeland, New Zealand



Lisa Janishevski, CBD Secretariat

to communicate and linked with the 2050 Vision for Biodiversity; and targets need to be realistic and researchable in order to be effective. He called for participants to bring forward elements that could inform the framework.

Co-Chair van Opzeeland noted that the expected output of the workshop would be a report “containing concrete proposals for goals, targets, indicators, and baselines for consideration for inclusion in the post-2020 global biodiversity framework.” He reminded participants that the session was not a negotiation, and outlined the topics which participants would address in breakout sessions in the coming days, including

- Exploitation of marine living resources;
- Marine pollution;
- Important marine ecosystems;
- Ecosystem restoration;
- Area-based planning and conservation measures; and
- Threatened, endangered and declining species.

Lisa Janishevski, CBD Secretariat, reported back on the outcomes of the recent Workshop on Ecosystem Restoration for the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework, noting that participants had stressed the need for the framework to: generate outcomes for nature, culture, and society; and to have an ambitious, outcomes-oriented, holistic target on restoration. She also reported that participants had, among other things: proposed a global restoration fund; emphasized the need for traditional and indigenous knowledge, gender equity, and youth engagement; and pressed for international cooperation.

**Status and trends in marine and coastal biodiversity:** Participants attended a series of themed presentations on the current status and trends in marine and coastal biodiversity.

Simon Harding, University of the South Pacific, Fiji, presented on the state of the ocean. He listed the numerous pressures facing the ocean system, including: a decline in marine and coastal biodiversity; warmer, more acidic, and less oxygenated waters due to climate change; and direct exploitation of ocean stocks by humans. He highlighted current gaps in ocean knowledge, including on its physical structure, the impacts of human interaction, and composition and movement of waters.

Stressing the importance of marine and freshwater environments as biodiverse areas, Kim Friedman, Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN, provided an overview of fish and fisheries. He noted that there are more fish stocks sustainably fished than not but that despite this, there is a gap in knowledge of systems-level sustainability of coastal fisheries. He argued that: capacity and implementation support is central to conservation; local conditions must be taken into account; and sustainable use is equally as important as conservation.

Sadat Gidda, CBD Secretariat, spoke about Aichi Biodiversity Target 11 (Area-based conservation) and Area-Based Conservation Management in the marine realm. He stressed that the thematic workshop should provide practical inputs for negotiation text through SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, results-based, and time-bound) objectives. He also noted the need to focus on integration so that the post-2020 framework can facilitate the realization of the 2050 Vision for Biodiversity.

Presenting on status and trends in mangroves and coastal ecosystems, Maria Riviera, Ramsar Convention, described how 50% of global mangrove coverage has been lost since 1940 and that coverage remains in decline. She pointed out areas of potential overlap between the Aichi Biodiversity Targets and other conventions. She called for: proactive approaches which build on international and national protections; nature-based solutions; and the work of the UN Communities of Action for Mangroves. Among other considerations, she highlighted addressing climate change, and finding synergies between the SDGs and the post-2020 framework as key to the post-2020 discussion.

Describing the loss of tropical warm-water coral reefs, Emily Corcoran, International Coral Reef Initiative, reminded participants that six million people worldwide rely on coral reefs for food security. She highlighted that proactive policies to regenerate coral reefs can create substantial economic and social benefits. She pressed the need: to learn from implementing the Aichi Targets due to their complexity to implement; to work with the engaged community of countries and experts of the Targets; and for the framework to “evolve with our evolving knowledge.”



Emily Corcoran, International Coral Reef Initiative

Carolina Hazin, BirdLife International, presented on the state of migratory species, communicating that 21% of migratory species globally are threatened by such drivers as invasive species, climate change, bycatch and ocean pollution. She underlined the positive role of: international policy instruments for migratory species; the global call to action on migratory species; and an integrated, multi-level approach to conservation. Addressing gaps and challenges, she stressed the need to keep migratory connectivity and international cooperation within the community's sights.

**Taking stock of lessons learned:** Joseph Appiott presented on lessons learned from the design, implementation, and monitoring of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets.

Considering the gaps and limitations which have emerged regarding the Aichi Targets, he highlighted, among others: limited focus on biodiversity benefits and use sectors; lack of focus on behavioural change; lack of targets on climate change; and inadequate reflection of gender issues and capacity building.

He outlined possible reasons for the variable progress between targets. Though suggesting that no single factor was responsible, he noted that: more progress had been made on targets regarding process, rather than those requiring outcomes; targets related to existing networks had been more likely to succeed than other targets; and the interdependencies related to targets could provide unexpected complexities.

Regarding lessons with which to move forward, Appiott highlighted that targets should be: realistically achievable; articulated into simple and communicable language; and able to be disaggregated to the regional and levels. He noted that targets should also make more effort to address the direct and indirect drivers of biodiversity loss.

### Upcoming Meetings

#### Eleventh meeting of the CBD *Ad Hoc* Open-ended Working Group on Article 8(j) and Related Provisions:

The meeting will discuss the contributions of cultural diversity and of indigenous peoples' and local communities' traditional knowledge to the post-2020 global biodiversity framework, as

well as institutional arrangements. **dates:** 20-22 November 2019 **location:** Montreal, Canada **www:** <https://www.cbd.int/meetings/WG8J-11>

**CBD SBSTTA 23:** The 23rd meeting of the CBD Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA 23) will address, among other issues, scientific aspects related to the post-2020 framework, and biodiversity and climate change. **dates:** 25-29 November 2019 **location:** Montreal, Canada **www:** <https://www.cbd.int/meetings/SBSTTA-23>

**UNFCCC COP 25:** The 2019 UN Climate Change Conference will feature the COP 25 to the UNFCCC and meetings of the UNFCCC subsidiary bodies. Dubbed the "Blue COP," the meeting is expected to feature ocean-related issues and a special event on the IPCC report on ocean and the cryosphere. **dates:** 2–13 December 2019 **location:** Madrid, Spain **www:** <https://unfccc.int/cop25>

**26th Session of the International Seabed Authority (ISA) Assembly and Council (Part I):** This meeting will feature meetings of the ISA Council, the Legal and Technical Commission (LTC), and the 3rd Meeting of the Open-Ended *Ad Hoc* Working Group. Discussions will continue on, *inter alia*, the election of members of the LTC, the payment mechanism, and the draft exploitation regulations. **dates:** 17 February – 6 March 2020. **location:** Kingston, Jamaica **www:** <https://www.isa.org.jm/sessions/26th-session-2020>

**CBD SBSTTA 24:** The 24th meeting of the CBD's Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice will focus on scientific and technical matters in preparation for CBD COP 15. **dates:** 18-23 May 2020 **location:** Montreal, Canada **www:** <https://www.cbd.int/meetings/>

**High-Level UN Conference to Support the Implementation of SDG 14 (UN Ocean Conference) 2020:** The overarching theme of the Conference is "Scaling Up Ocean Action Based on Science and Innovation for the Implementation of Goal 14: Stocktaking, Partnerships and Solutions." **dates:** 2-6 June 2020. **location:** Lisbon, Portugal **www:** <https://oceanconference.un.org/>



Participants from the 2020 Ocean Pathways Week