

Summary of the Sustainable Ocean Day: Ocean Voices 23 October 2018

“Sustainable Ocean Day: Ocean Voices” was held on 23 November 2018 in Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt, on the sidelines of the fourteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP 14) to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD).

The event provided a unique forum for diverse ocean stakeholders and partners to share stories conveying a range of “voices,” such as those of coral reefs, mangroves/seagrass, deep-sea habitats, marine mammals/migratory species and fish, together with the voice of ocean peoples whose life is closely inter-connected with marine and coastal biodiversity.

Different ocean stakeholders represented these voices and delivered their stories in non-conventional formats, such as through virtual reality experiences, film, poetry, music, and performances, in an effort to inspire delegates to take bold action on ocean conservation. This one-day event was convened by the CBD Secretariat, with financial support from the Government of Republic of Korea, the Government of Sweden, the European Union, and the French Agency for Biodiversity, and in collaboration with various international partners.

Report of the Sustainable Ocean Day

Opening – Prelude of Ocean Voices

Joseph Appiott, CBD Secretariat, Moderated the session and welcomed attendants from multiple backgrounds, whom he said, could learn from each other and improve ocean conservation.

Alexander Shestakov, CBD Secretariat, noted the event comprised a group of dedicated people and said that the parties’ engagement and partnerships are instrumental for the work of

the Secretariat. He encouraged the negotiators to “listen to the voices” from different parts of the ocean to ensure a holistic approach to marine conservation.

Peter Thomson, UN Secretary General’s Special Envoy for the Ocean, via video message, said that biodiversity is under threat, notably because of chemical pollution and climate change. He stressed that a global plan to save the oceans is in place, including through the Paris Agreement on Climate Change and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). These efforts he said, will allow us to bequeath a “healthy ocean to our children.”

On behalf of Yongseok Kang, Director General, Ministry of Oceans and Fisheries, Republic of Korea, **Hoon-geun Kim**, noted that humanity’s footprint threatens marine biodiversity, stressing that conservation and sustainable use of the oceans require advances science.

Karolina Skog, Minister for the Environment, Sweden, via video message, thanked the CBD Secretariat for scaling up efforts to protect marine biodiversity, stating that “safeguarding of nature and human livelihoods are not secondary.”

On behalf of Christophe Aubel, General- Director, the French Agency for Biodiversity (AFB), **Cyrille Barnerias**, stressed that there is a need to enhance synergies among multiple stakeholders, noting that the event is an opportunity to protect our coasts, marine mammals, migratory species, and ocean communities.

Moustafa Fouda, Minister Advisor on Biodiversity, Egypt, noted the rich biodiversity that exists in the Ras Mohammed National Park, stressing the importance of mangroves and suggesting that the issue of blue economy should be properly exploited.

Jihyun Lee, Coordinator for Marine and Coastal Biodiversity, CBD Secretariat, shared her personal journey overcoming her fear of swimming in the ocean and explained



Moderator **Joseph Appiott**, CBD Secretariat



Jihyun Lee, Coordinator for Marine and Coastal Biodiversity, CBD Secretariat



Delegates gather for the opening of the Sustainable Ocean Day

that this event is intended to creatively celebrate the growing ocean community, and the support of over 20 Sustainable Ocean Day partners.

Voices of Coral Reefs- Give Reefs a Voice or Face Tomorrow Without Them

Neville Ash, UN Environment World Conservation Monitoring Center (UNEP-WCMC), moderated the session. He noted the landmark UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change warning there is only a dozen years for global warming to be kept to a maximum of 1.5C to avoid significantly worsening the risks of a changing climate.

Susan Lieberman, Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS), highlighted the need to raise awareness, build advocacy, support and activate bold action from government leaders for 2020 targets, announcing a major new global coalition that will focus on these needs with the following organizations: the CBD Secretariat, UN Environment, WWF, the Nature Conservancy (TNC), the Ocean Agency, Wildlife Conservation Society, Vulcan, the International Coral Reef Initiative, and the Third International Year of the Reef.

An interactive game show on biology, ecosystem services, threats, and interventions in relation to coral reefs took place. **Rowenna Trevelyan**, the Ocean Agency, **Claire Rumsey**, International Year of the Reef, and Lieberman, WCS, moderated a quiz session. The NGO HEPICA received a donation from the quiz winner group, which will serve to combat environmental threats in the Red Sea.



David Johnson, the Global Ocean Biodiversity Initiative, dressed as an acorn worm, invites participants to jump on board his submarine to explore the deep sea

Voices from the Deep Sea- A Journey Through the Deep Sea

To engage the audience, David Johnson moderated the session disguised as a deep-sea creature, the acorn worm.

John Ruthven, Producer of the Blue Planet, shared the challenges of underwater filming, screening samples of his work tracking sperm whales under threat in the Caribbean. He highlighted the complex and sophisticated communication methods used by this species and called for creative ways to communicate the need to protect the ocean.

Nic Bax, Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organization, Australia, via video, recalled that working in the deep sea requires sophisticated gear and entails high costs, stressing that collaboration with different experts, such as engineers, mathematicians, and taxonomists, is pivotal for this work.

Diva Amon, Deep-Ocean Stewardship Initiative, underscored that the deep-sea environment is characterized by lack of sunlight, cold temperatures, high pressure, and low food input to explain that animals have slow metabolisms with low reproduction rates, which makes their recovery from disturbances very slow.

The session continued with the screening of a short film on bioluminescence, showing the rare mechanisms used by deep-sea animals to attract food and mates, and defend themselves against predators.

On ocean literacy, two other short clips were featured, the first, on the commitment of Nausicaá, the French National Sea Centre, to disseminate information on ocean issues to regular citizens and, the second, expanding on how the deep sea contributes to the water cycle and climate regulation.

Interlude- My Love for Oceans and the Life Therein

Xavier Sticker, Ambassador for the Environment, Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs, France, spoke on the Mediterranean Sea experiences and environmental pressures in this region, stressing the importance of several collaborative initiatives contributing to conservation. He also noted that France would host the next IUCN Congress in Marseille in 2020 and invited participants to make commitments for biodiversity and contribute to the resolutions that will be passed there.



Carolina Hazin, BirdLife International, dressed as 'Shirley, a Cory's Shearwater,' invites participants to 'take flight' in understanding migratory species

Voices of Marine Mammals/Migratory Species- Living Links Across the Oceans

David Johnson, Global Ocean Biodiversity Initiative, moderated the session, introducing it with an animation video by the artist Haruyoshi Kawai on marine mammals.

Carolina Hazin, BirdLife International, gave voice to "Shirley," a Cory's Shearwater, describing the migratory journey of this bird as a diary. She highlighted the challenges that these birds currently face to reproduce, nest and find food. Together with overfishing, climate change, she noted, has been one of the greatest threats to the species' survival.

John Ruthven, Producer of "the Blue Planet," discussed the importance of rethinking communication strategies calling for more imaginative audiovisual tools, providing examples of videos that have the power to connect people and drive change, such as 'The Majestic Plastic Bag' YouTube video with more than three million views.

Daniela Diz, WWF, highlighted the role of the ecologically or biologically significant marine areas (EBSAs), which support the healthy functioning of oceans, calling for policy coherence among the existing international instruments and conventions.

Participants engaged in the 'Migration Game' and the session closed with some of the event's partners highlighting the importance of synergies among conventions and calling for better data to improve conservation measures.

Delegates then viewed a video by The Pew Charitable Trusts, titled 'Southern Ocean Sanctuary.'

Voices of Fish- We Are the Fish

Kim Friedman, Food and Agriculture Organization, moderated this session. The event started featuring a video, "We Are The Fish."

Discussants presented their vision for fish in 2050 and approaches they are taking to help achieve these visions.

Jake Rice, IUCN, described the Sustainable Ocean Day event as a deeply spiritual experience and presented pictures with opera music to express his vision for fish. He said that stories about fisheries have shown that ocean resources face a continuous fight against human greed. This greed, he said, can't be controlled by marine protected areas (MPAs) alone, but needs concerted and combined efforts, as well as good will.

Tamara Thomas, TNC, presented, "FishPath," a web-based tool developed by TNC that organizes available fisheries data to support management options suited to each fishery.

Kate Brown, Global Island Partnership (GLISPA), presented her vision, which included: secured access to fish; surplus for local communities; long-term viability, where communities win; and long-term solutions that can preserve fisheries for future generations.

Hagi Yulia Sugeha, Indonesian Institute of Sciences, drew attention to a recent death of a sperm whale in Kapota Island in Wakatobi National Park, which revealed that the mammal's stomach contained over five kilos of plastic debris. She underscored the need for bold action to curb plastic pollution and other causes of species loss.

In closing the session, participants shared their visions and stories on "voices for the fish." One participant shared her child's comment on her work on the continental seabed, "mommy, if we do not take care of the seabed, the fish will have nowhere to sleep."

Voices of Mangroves/Seagrass- Guardians of Safe, healthy and productive coasts

Tamara Thomas, TNC, moderated the session, which began with a video titled 'One woman's journey' on the women of Papua New Guinea as guardians of safe, healthy, and productive coasts.

Mae Bruton Adams, TNC, presented on the development of economic opportunities for mangrove conservation, particularly in linking women to local markets. She spoke about a 'Blue Solutions' initiative in Papua New Guinea in which private sector banks and enterprises would offset their carbon emissions through investment in mangrove conservation. Adams then presented a poem illustrating the urgency of the moment to protect and conserve mangroves and seagrass ecosystems. Adams then read a poem illustrating the urgency of the moment to protect and conserve mangroves and seagrass ecosystems.

Lilian Mwhiki Mugi, Kenyan Marine and Fisheries Institute, stressed that local communities in Kenya depend on mangroves and seagrasses for their livelihoods. She presented on a blue carbon mitigation project for mangroves titled 'Mikoko Pamoja,' which focuses on mangrove restoration, mangrove protection, and forest monitoring.

Thomas then presented the 'Mangrove Restoration Map' film identifying mangrove restoration opportunities around the world.

Robert Kibugi, University of Nairobi, stressed the importance of taking a human rights approach to reinforce governance frameworks for mangroves, especially as they relate to the procedural rights of public consultation to propose development projects.

Raphaëlle Flint, IUCN, emphasized that mangroves provide food and shelter, sequester carbon, protect shorelines, and serve as the basis for local livelihoods.

To conclude the session, a collective poem was read, highlighting the voices of mangroves and seagrass and calling on humankind to develop empathy and kindness to protect the sea.

Voices of Ocean Peoples

Vivienne Solís Rivera, CoopeSoliDar R.L, ICCA Consortium, and International Collective in Support of Fisherworkers (ICSF) moderated the session.



Lilian Mwhiki, Kenyan Marine and Fisheries Institute

A short video was shown on food security and Indigenous People and Local Communities’ traditional knowledge to illustrate their role in ocean protection.

Henri Rakotoson, Tafo Mihaavo, shared a story in his native Malagasy on how his community overcame unsustainable fishing practices. He explained the functioning of innovative financial structures that improved market access for local communities, allowing more equitable commercialization of fish.

He highlighted that local communities are committed to establish sustainable fishing schemes that provide their livelihoods.

A music video written by children from Nanook Community in Nunavut, Canada, illustrated the importance of protecting marine life for the wellbeing of the Arctic people.

Kate Brown, GLISPA, noted that the CBD has 135 countries with islands as parties with 53 being island nations themselves. She highlighted that Pacific islanders have had the capacity to move vast distances across the ocean, calling for the respect and use of traditional knowledge.

Mae Bruton Adams, the Federated States of Micronesia, shared a poem titled “Who Am I?”

Participants from island nations then gave a rendition of the Redemption Song by Bob Marley, recalling the importance of fairness and justice in coastal communities.

Manas Roshan, ICSF, told a story from small-scale fishing communities in south India and said that there are difficulties in harvesting seagrass from protected areas by local communities.

A short video was shown delivering a message from the Costa Rican Marine Responsible Fishing Youth Network for COP14 and a second video followed, presented by Kier Pitogo and Arshita Jindal, Global Youth Biodiversity Network, on the future of Ocean Voices. The presenters expressed their hope that young people and NGOs can improve on their collective work.

Finale

Humberto Delgado Rosa, European Commission, stated that oceans are being degraded at a dangerous pace but that there is huge potential for ocean restoration and shared the EU’s efforts in increasing marine protected areas between 6 and 10% of their seas.



Humberto Delgado Rosa, European Commission

Alain de Comarmond, Ministry of Environment, Energy and Climate Change, Seychelles, exclaimed “the ocean is judging us,” noting the importance of monitoring progress of ocean conservation.

Tomas Anker Christensen, Ambassador of Denmark to Egypt and Chief Advisor to the UN Secretary General’s Special Envoy for the Ocean, cited upcoming events and meetings that would provide an opportunity for maintaining “ocean momentum,” noting the creation of the Ocean Pathway, launched at the UN Climate Summit in the twenty-third session of the Conference of the Parties (COP 23), which took place in 2017 in Bonn, Germany.

Vera N. Agostini, FAO, said national boundaries are a major threat to oceans and constrain action. She said that we must build the bridges that ensure transformational change, in order to achieve and succeed in the lofty goals and ambitions on oceans. She encouraged dialogue, saying the participants at the Ocean Voices side event formed the right group of people to build bridges and bring about transformation and effective action for oceans.

Purificació Canals, Network of Mediterranean MPA Managers, stressed the importance of emotions in building strong collaborative networks for sustainable ocean management. She urged all participants to leave their comfort zones in the search for creative solutions for marine protection. She urged that to “overcome our fears, we must go back to our hearts.”

Cristiana Paşca Palmer, CBD Executive Secretary, emphasized our “special moment in time” to protect biodiversity and the marine environment for future generations, particularly considering the technologies, knowledge, and political tools at our disposal.

A short film by the CBD Secretariat titled ‘Ocean Voices in Harmony’ was then played to conclude the event. Moderator Appiott thanked all participants and closed the Sustainable Ocean Day at 7:21 pm.

Glossary

CMS	Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals
CBD	UN Convention on Biological Diversity
ICSF	International Collective in Support of Fisherworkers
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature
MPAs	Marine protected areas
NGOs	Non-governmental organizations
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
TNC	The Nature Conservancy

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