



## UNICPOLOS-6 HIGHLIGHTS: WEDNESDAY, 8 JUNE 2005

On Wednesday, delegates to the sixth meeting of the UN Informal Consultative Process on Oceans and the Law of the Sea (UNICPOLOS-6 or Consultative Process) reconvened the Discussion Panel on fisheries and their contribution to sustainable development in the morning and afternoon. The Discussion Panel on marine debris commenced in the afternoon.

### DISCUSSION PANEL ON FISHERIES AND THEIR CONTRIBUTION TO SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

**ARTISANAL AND SMALL-SCALE FISHING: Keynote presentations:** Fábio Hazin, Director, Fisheries and Aquaculture Department, Universidade Federal Rural de Pernambuco, presented on artisanal and small-scale fisheries' contribution to sustainable development, in particular through GDP growth, tax generation, and employment creation. He listed challenges faced by small-scale fisheries, including: ecosystem pollution; overexploitation of fish stocks; overcapacity; IUU fishing; and fishermen's low living standards. Hazin outlined actions to improve small-scale fisheries management, emphasizing enhanced participation of small-scale fisheries in policy development, capacity building, and improved storage and transportation facilities.

Sidi El Moctar Ould Mohamed Abdallahi, Head, Coastal Fisheries Development, Ministry of Fisheries and Maritime Economy, Mauritania, presented on coastal and small-scale fishing in Mauritania. He highlighted the contribution of fisheries to economic development, employment, poverty reduction and food security. He described conservation measures in the fisheries sector, such as the establishment of: a license system for small-scale fisheries; a marine national park; biological rest periods and catch limits. He highlighted national constraints, *inter alia*: limited infrastructure; lack of alternative economic resources; and competition with illegal fishing.

**Fisheries management approaches:** The US and MEXICO urged the promotion of an ecosystem approach to fisheries. CANADA called for involving local communities in small-scale fisheries' decision making. MEXICO suggested promoting the certification of catches, in line with FAO's relevant guidelines. The REPUBLIC OF KOREA cautioned against the potentially devastating economic effects of MPAs and moratoria in the high seas. NEW ZEALAND, MEXICO and NAMIBIA called

for the abolition of fisheries subsidies, with Hazin adding that developing countries should have the right to use subsidies to develop their fishing industries.

**Technology transfer:** PAPUA NEW GUINEA, supported by NEW ZEALAND, underlined the need for technology transfer to Small Island Developing States (SIDS). THAILAND and ARGENTINA questioned the viability of the small-scale fishing industry's access to the high seas, with Hazin emphasizing that a wide array of technology can be transferred, such as longline and global positioning system technology.

**Fisheries and sustainable development:** MEXICO underscored the role fisheries play in food security and sustainable development. INDONESIA called for international and regional cooperation to enhance small-scale fisheries management and eradicate poverty.

**Scientific information:** MEXICO said access to scientific information must be improved for sound decision making. The REPUBLIC OF KOREA called for objectively verified scientific knowledge.

**IUU:** MEXICO suggested preventing IUU fishing by introducing satellite monitoring systems and promoting the creation and use of a list of IUU fishing vessels by RFMOs. AUSTRALIA drew attention to the risk of small-scale fisheries, unable to sustain their communities, engaging in IUU fishing.

**Small-scale and industrial fisheries:** THAILAND, CAMBODIA and INDIA stressed the need to define small-scale fisheries, with Hazin noting the difficulty of agreeing on a definition at the global level. CHILE emphasized that both industrial and small-scale fishermen have to adopt conservation measures. Responding to NAMIBIA's question on how to foster a harmonious coexistence between small-scale and industrial fisheries, Hazin underlined their different yet important roles.

### SCIENTIFIC AND CIVIL SOCIETY PERSPECTIVE ON FISHERIES AND THEIR CONTRIBUTION TO SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: Keynote presentations:

Boris Worm, Assistant Professor in Marine Conservation Biology, Dalhousie University, provided an overview of the global decline of large predatory fish, and identified industrialized fishing and habitat destruction as driving causes. He said this decline will catalyze a dramatic increase in the price of fish, and described how the loss of biodiversity will trigger a weakening of ocean resilience. He listed tools to mitigate the decline of fish stocks, including: reducing fishing mortality of



sensitive species; banning use of unselective fishing gear; and protecting key areas.

Callum Roberts, Professor of Marine Conservation Biology, University of York, detailed the contribution of MPAs to sustaining ecosystem services and fisheries, including: recovery of fish stock's size, abundance, reproduction and resilience; habitat recovery; greater food security; and increased fish catches and profitability for both artisanal and industrial fishing activities. He noted the importance of creating high seas MPAs in vulnerable areas for mobile species, such as migratory routes and bottlenecks, nursery and spawning aggregation sites. Emphasizing appropriate sizing and enforcement of MPAs, Roberts called for a large-scale international network of MPAs, that would target 30% of the oceans including high seas.

Sebastian Mathew, Program Advisor, International Collective in Support of Fishworkers, India, underlined that fisheries are a source of livelihood and employment, especially for women. He indicated that the trade in fish and fish products in developing countries is of greater importance than that in agricultural commodities. He outlined measures to improve fisheries' contribution to sustainable development, including: protecting traditional fishing grounds; reducing land-based pollution and mangrove destruction; creating exclusive zones for indigenous fishermen; and eliminating trade barriers and fisheries subsidies in developed countries. He called for greater interagency cooperation and the use of selective fishing gear.

Karen Sack, Oceans Policy Advisor, Greenpeace, on behalf of the NGO community, reiterated its call for urgent protection of the oceans for future generations. Noting that only one percent of the deep sea has been explored, and that three new marine species are discovered each week, she underscored the need for effective regulation of the high seas. She said scientific data on the damage to the sea bed by bottom trawling is irrefutable, adding that this fishing technique is "a weapon of mass destruction" used against deep sea life. Insisting on the application of the precautionary principle, she stated that failure to take action would contravene States' obligations under international law.

**Scientific data:** IUCN proposed considering a global mechanism to provide scientific advice and support for RFMOs. JAPAN, supported by the INTERNATIONAL COALITION OF FISHERIES ASSOCIATIONS (ICFA), noted that regional tuna management bodies arrived at grossly different conclusions about the status of tuna stocks than those presented by Worm, with the ICFA adding that stock populations and conditions fluctuate.

**MPAs and high seas management:** FAO underlined that for MPAs to be effective, total fishing pressure in an area must be contained and reduced, and enforcement must be ensured. SPAIN outlined a number of successful national marine reserves. Roberts stressed the urgent need for zoning in the high seas. He acknowledged that the problem with MPAs is often lack of implementation, and added that MPAs enable industry to continue fishing at high levels while conserving vulnerable species.

Following SIERRA CLUB's and ITALY's concern about the impact of underwater noise on marine resources, the NATURAL RESOURCES DEFENCE COUNCIL suggested addressing sources of noise when regulating MPAs. ARGENTINA and CANADA recognized the difficulty of ensuring compliance with high seas MPAs, and Roberts highlighted the need for new legal instruments to deal with IUU fishing on the high seas. CANADA encouraged a more active role of the *Ad Hoc* Open-ended Informal Working Group, recently established by the

General Assembly to study issues relating to the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity beyond areas of national jurisdiction.

**Fisheries management:** CANADA noted that no single solution will save fish stocks, and, supported by the SEA TURTLE RESTORATION PROJECT, proposed using a wide range of methods. Following McGuinness' statement that other fish have benefited from the decline of predatory fish stocks, Worm maintained that manipulating ecosystems is detrimental to their sustainable management. The ANGLICAN COMMUNION called for a broader societal participation in oceans management.

**Sustainable development:** Stressing the need to focus on the sustainable development of countries relying on fisheries, KIRIBATI called for enabling SIDS to play a greater role in the exploitation of their own resources. While Worm indicated that climate change threatens food security, ICELAND deemed it too early to determine its impact on fish resources, as research is still in its fledgling stages.

### DISCUSSION PANEL ON MARINE DEBRIS

**Keynote presentations:** Seba Sheavly, Director, Office of Pollution Prevention and Monitoring, Ocean Conservancy, reported on her organization's international coastal cleanup campaign targeting marine debris in 127 countries and the resulting international database, which reveals that 60% of marine debris relates to land-based activities. She highlighted the presence of fishing nets as recurrent marine debris and called for action on this issue. On reducing marine debris, Sheavly emphasized: education; data collection and monitoring; stakeholder engagement, particularly government and industry; regulation and enforcement; and innovations and incentives. In closing, she defined marine debris as a global marine problem that is ubiquitous but solvable.

Cees van de Guchte, Senior Programme Officer, UNEP/GPA Coordination Office, stressed that marine debris is persistent and highly mobile, resulting in: threats to marine life, such as entanglement, ingestion, destruction of habitats and transportation of invasive species; threats to human health; visual contamination of beaches; and damage to the fishing and tourism industries. He noted that most marine debris end up on the seabed, and called attention to the 2005 UNEP analytical overview of sustainable management of marine litter. Van de Guchte emphasized: a global trend towards increasing marine debris; the lack of a comprehensive international legal framework addressing the issue; increasing deficiencies in implementation and enforcement; and lack of awareness.

In ensuing discussions, the IMO outlined the existing legal framework on marine debris and the prevention of pollution from ships, and CANADA enquired about best practices in waste management programmes in remote communities.

### IN THE CORRIDORS

Throughout the day on Wednesday, delegates gathered in regional group meetings to hone their lists of elements that will be negotiated on Friday for suggestion to the General Assembly. As a result of the lengthy and passionate debates of the past few days on fisheries, participants anticipate that issues relating to high seas management will be the main bone of contention. Noting that presentations on marine debris had not elicited heated debates, some wondered if the reconvening of the discussion panel on this issue on Thursday would be the calm before the "debris" hits the fan.