

Marine Regions Forum 2019: 30 September - 2 October 2019

Held under the theme ‘Achieving a healthy ocean - Regional ocean governance beyond 2020,’ the first meeting of the Marine Regions Forum provided an opportunity for informal exchange and dialogue between decision makers, scientists, and civil society from the world’s marine regions. The aim was to catalyze the transformation of ocean governance through regional actions and initiatives, in support of the ocean dimension of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2030 Agenda), especially Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 14 “Life Below Water.”

The MRF took an informal approach facilitating solution-oriented exchanges between key actors in ocean sustainability. Participants highlighted the role of regions in filling the gap between global agreements and local action, and the importance of the regional level in supporting national voices calling for conservation. The organizers’ key messages will be finalized in the coming weeks, and will be forwarded to relevant global and regional processes, including the 2020 UN Ocean Conference (2-6 June 2020, Lisbon, Portugal).

The MRF is a contribution to the Partnership for Regional Ocean Governance, a collaborative initiative between the Institute for Advanced Sustainability Studies (IASS), the Institute for Sustainable Development and International Relations (IDDRI), TMG - Think Tank for Sustainability, and UN Environment. It stemmed from commitments made by Germany and the EU, at the UN Ocean Conference (5-9 June 2017, New York) and the Our Ocean Conference (5-6 October 2017, Malta) respectively, announcing their support in establishing a multi-stakeholder platform for regional ocean governance.

Its first meeting convened from 30 September - 2 October 2019, in Berlin, Germany and gathered approximately 200 participants. Discussions were held in plenary and dialogue sessions on: achieving SDG 14; underpinning global processes; and knowledge for ocean action.

On achieving SDG 14, sessions convened on: putting plans into action - implementing regional marine litter action plans; creating synergies - enhancing regional cooperation for ocean-related SDGs; delivering the Ocean SDG - accelerating progress; advancing implementation of the Ocean SDG through ecosystem-based management; sun, sea, sand, and sustainability - tourism in marine regions.

On underpinning global processes, sessions addressed: areas beyond national jurisdiction - towards a collaborative



Marine Regions Forum 2019 group photo

approach in ocean governance; keeping an eye on the high seas - strengthening monitoring, control, and surveillance; towards coherent and connected MPA networks - from challenges to possible solutions in high seas governance; deep-seabed mining in the Area - the role of regional ocean governance; our ocean in crisis - key findings from the Special Report on the Ocean and Cryosphere in a Changing Climate of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC); preparing marine regions for fisheries on the move; tackling climate problems with ocean solutions; and the ‘Blue COP’ - mobilizing regional stakeholders.

Under knowledge for ocean action, sessions focused on: building regional science-policy interfaces - good practices, lessons learned, and ways forward; inclusive ocean governance

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- weaving science with traditional ecological knowledge; the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development - engaging marine regions; enhancing the role of regions in global ocean assessments; and “we are ocean” - can the arts mobilize youth for ocean conservation.

This report provides an overview of plenty sessions and selected dialogue discussions.

Report of the Marine Regions Forum

Day 1: Understanding Challenges and Achievements

Opening Plenary: Achieving healthy oceans - challenges and opportunities: On Monday, 30 September, moderator Alexander Müller, Managing Director, TMG, opened the meeting by stressing the importance of achieving SDG 14 and how a regional focus can support its implementation. He drew attention to the financial and political support of the German government and the EU.

Klaus Töpfer, Founding Director, TMG, highlighted the role of new generations in pushing for change, and stressed the need to remove silos and better integrate science and policy in ocean governance. He remembered Alexander von Humboldt and his task to integrate his scientific findings, leaving boundaries behind and viewing oceans as a true global commons. On the SDGs, he emphasized the negative practice of setting higher targets for the distant future instead of achieving current targets.

Regina Dube, Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, and Nuclear Safety, Germany, noted that 2020 is a critical year for ocean governance, with highlights including the negotiations on marine biodiversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction (BBNJ) and submission of long-term climate strategies. Drawing attention to Germany’s experience in cooperation with regional seas conventions, she called for an integrated role for regional cooperation under a strong global body for the governance of the high seas.

In a video message, Karmenu Vella, Commissioner for the Environment, Maritime Affairs and Fisheries, European Commission, stressed that regional ocean governance is central to European policies and global ocean governance, providing the link between national rights and responsibilities and international



Inger Andersen, UNEP Executive Director

objectives and duties. He added that the MRF is filling a critical gap in the ocean policy landscape.

Inger Andersen, Executive Director, UN Environment, stressed that, to protect the ocean, the international community needs to: ensure effectiveness of the Paris Agreement on Climate Change; promote sustainable fisheries, including through ending subsidies at the negotiations of the World Trade Organization (WTO); address pollution beyond plastics, and invest in circular economy; and restore coastal ecosystems. She further called for measurable targets under the post-2020 global biodiversity framework, and for engagement with local communities.

In a panel discussion, Antje Boetius, Director, Alfred Wegener Institute, Helmholtz Centre for Polar and Marine Research, cautioned against overly reducing complexity, noting the risk of disregarding important interlinkages between ocean-related issues. She emphasized climate change as an “immensely urgent threat” and said monitoring is key to ensure that commitments, including those by businesses, are kept. David Obura, Director, Coastal Oceans Research and Development - Indian Ocean (CORDIO) East Africa, highlighted significant regional variations, not only in terms of environmental impacts but also regarding means of implementation, and noted the value of participatory scenario exercises in identifying a common vision among stakeholders at the regional level.

Regina Dube pointed at the 2020 UN Ocean Conference as an opportunity for further breaking down silos in ocean governance, and emphasized that the regional level is key for connecting global goals with local issues. Inger Andersen stressed that “unless we address climate change, everything is off the table in terms of sustainable development,” calling for rapid decarbonization, notably by removing fossil fuel subsidies.

Participants discussed: expectations on the BBNJ negotiations; how local actors can support regional governance; the possible benefits of setting short-term goals; consequences of deep-sea mining; and the role of marine biodiversity in tackling climate change. Andersen stressed the importance of stronger global governance and enhanced enforcement of commitments. Antje Boetius called for more research on negative emissions with a view to achieving the 1.5°C target of the Paris Agreement and



Klaus Töpfer, Founding Director, TMG - Think Tank for Sustainability



Alexander Müller, Managing Director, TMG - Think Tank for Sustainability

on the economic benefits of oceans. On deep-sea mining, Regina Dube said it can be avoided by investing in resource efficiency, and Boetius added there is no ecological way to achieve it.

Alexander Müller shared key takeaways, including: the kind of governance needed to interact with complex systems and already agreed targets; the need to share more success stories; and the important role regions play in achieving the SDGs.

Sébastien Treyer, Executive Director, IDDRI, recalled that the ocean is a global common good, and deciding now to protect it requires negotiation between countries and other stakeholders. In finding political agreement on ocean governance, he mentioned the importance of individual countries achieving sustainable development without impeding other countries' capacity to do so.

Treyer, with Patrizia Nanz, Scientific Director, IASS, noted the Forum's goals, including: providing space for exchange of experiences between regions and stakeholders; promoting new developments within marine regions; and forwarding the conclusions to key global and regional processes, including the BBNJ negotiations, the 2020 UN Ocean Conference, and the negotiations of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) on the post-2020 global biodiversity framework.



Sébastien Treyer, Executive Director, IDDRI, and **Patrizia Nanz**, Scientific Director, IASS

Dialogue Sessions on Achieving SDG 14: Putting Plans into Action: Implementing Regional Marine Litter Action Plans: Session hosts Lilian Busse, German Environmental Agency, and Christopher Corbin, UNEP - Caribbean Environment Programme, introduced the session, noting it aimed to share lessons learned, and understand regional challenges and achievements.

Gaetano Leone, Coordinator of the UNEP Mediterranean Action Plan - Barcelona Convention Secretariat, stressed challenges related to lack of enforcement capacity and of national-level integration. He drew attention to developments illustrating the importance of dialogue between regional and international organizations, and how regional seas conventions help achieve global goals.

Marta Ruiz, Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission (HELCOM), provided an overview of HELCOM work on litter in the Baltic Sea, including the regional action plan for marine litter, and development of proposals on new ecological objectives for marine litter as part of its review.

Pedro Sepúlveda, OSPAR Convention Secretariat, presented on OSPAR's integrated approach, illustrated by the intersessional correspondence group on marine litter; pillars on monitoring, regular scientific assessments, and decision making; the regional action plan for prevention and management of marine litter in the North-East Atlantic; and challenges with regard to designing and implementing the regional action plan.

Jerker Tamelander, UNEP - Coordinating Body on the Seas of East Asia (COBSEA), presented COBSEA's work, focusing on core activities under the regional action plan on marine litter. He pointed to the number and complexity of regional organizations in the East Asian region, as an illustration of the challenges and opportunities in regional cooperation. He concluded that regional and cross-sectoral collaboration is critical, and must entail leveraging and adding value to existing processes.

Participants then met in roundtable discussions. On regionally coordinated action plans and knowledge gaps, participants highlighted, among other issues: challenges regarding capacity, financing, engaging business, and cross-sectoral cooperation; the need to use existing mechanisms, including regional frameworks; knowledge gaps regarding the health impacts of microplastics; and the role of global frameworks in driving government response.

On enhancing exchange of knowledge and experiences, participants stressed that ocean governance needs to be addressed jointly with societal changes and circular economy. Some considered existing knowledge and the number of available platforms are sufficient, while others disagreed.

On the potential need for a global treaty on marine litter versus regionally focused action, participants noted that a global treaty should support regionally coordinated efforts to combat marine pollution, and discussed activities that could be more effective at the global, rather than a regional level, such as development of coastal policies and guidance on implementation, and noting that global commitments could have stronger impact on national authorities than regional ones.



Kristina Gjerde, IUCN

Dialogue Sessions on Underpinning Global Processes: Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction: Towards a Collaborative Approach in Ocean Governance: Carole Durussel, IASS, opened the session emphasizing as main objective considering how inter-institutional and inter-sectoral cooperation can be improved in the regions and at the interface between the regional and global level.

Kristina Gjerde, IUCN, presented the current state of ocean governance and on lessons learned from the regional perspective. Among other things, she the fragmented governance landscape and the lack of integration between conservation-focused organizations and sectoral ones. Gjerde highlighted ecosystem-based management as a means to foster a comprehensive response to stressors such as climate change, pollution, bottom trawling, and marine cables.

Jessica Battle, World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), emphasized the hope of universal participation in the BBNJ agreement and noted the agreement's future COP could be "the place where all ocean needs can be discussed." She said the sub-regional scale is oftentimes too weak to stand up to the interests of the maritime and shipping industry and of distant water fishing nations, and proposed establishing regional arrangements at the scale of ocean basins.

Roundtable sessions then addressed: what should be done at the regional level; who can take on these roles; and how to ensure the necessary linkages between the global and regional level. They notably reflected on the idea that the BBNJ agreement should "not undermine" existing frameworks and bodies, which is currently held up in the negotiations, with one participant calling this a looming "birth defect" of the agreement. Participants also noted, *inter alia*: capacity building and technology transfer is best done at regional level, while global standards are needed for environmental impact assessments; not all areas of the world have regional organizations and existing ones are not necessarily fit for purpose to take on new functions, especially regarding regulation and enforcement; and the need to reflect on decision-making procedures, notably to identify alternatives to consensus-based decision making.



Alice Vadrot, University of Vienna

Dialogue Sessions on Knowledge for Ocean Action: Building Regional Science-Policy Interfaces: Good Practices, Lessons Learned and Ways Forward: The session began with a presentation on science-policy interfaces for protecting oceans by Alice Vadrot, University of Vienna. She pointed to challenges, mainly expressed by global inequalities between the global north, which produces most of the scientific assessments, and the global south, as well as to opportunities, including communicating scientific knowledge in ways that are understandable to non-scientists.

Anne Christine Brusendorff, General Secretary, International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES), presented the work of ICES as a knowledge provider for its member countries, producing evidence for decision makers based on experiences in the North-East Atlantic region (NEA). Jacob Hagberg, Ministry of the Environment and Energy, Sweden, explained why the science-policy framework is working in the NEA region, noting cooperation in science, agreement on regional problems, creation of regional policy platforms, and cooperation on solutions by its member countries.

Dixon Waruinge, Nairobi Convention Secretariat, presented the state of science-policy interfaces in the Western Indian Ocean (WIO) region, and highlighted regional challenges, such as weak uptake of scientific information in ocean governance. Julius Francis, Executive Secretary, Western Indian Ocean Marine Science Association, spoke about the processes, structures, opportunities, and lessons learned from the WIO region and the evolution of science-policy in the context of the Nairobi Convention.

Henri Döring, Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), Germany, presented the *MeerWissen* initiative, created to strengthen marine science through partnerships between African and German marine researchers and to stimulate dialogue between marine researchers and policy-makers.

Thematic discussions then convened on:

- the NEA region, where participants considered ways to improve science-policy interfaces in the region;

- the WIO region, in which participants examined the role of the Nairobi Convention and possible linkages with other organizations;
- visions, where participants shared views on what an ideal science-policy interface would look like, and
- boundary organizations, where participants discussed how to strengthen institutions that can serve as brokers between science and policy.

Day 2: Developing Solutions

Dialogue Sessions on Achieving SDG 14: Creating Synergies: Enhancing Regional Cooperation for Ocean-Related SDGs:

Sebastian Unger, IASS, noted that the regional level is well-placed to bridge the gap between different stakeholders. He invited participants to reflect on recommendations regarding: building a stronger role for regional governance in SDG implementation; promoting visibility for regional level activity in global discussions; and using the SDGs as an integration driver to improve regional governance.

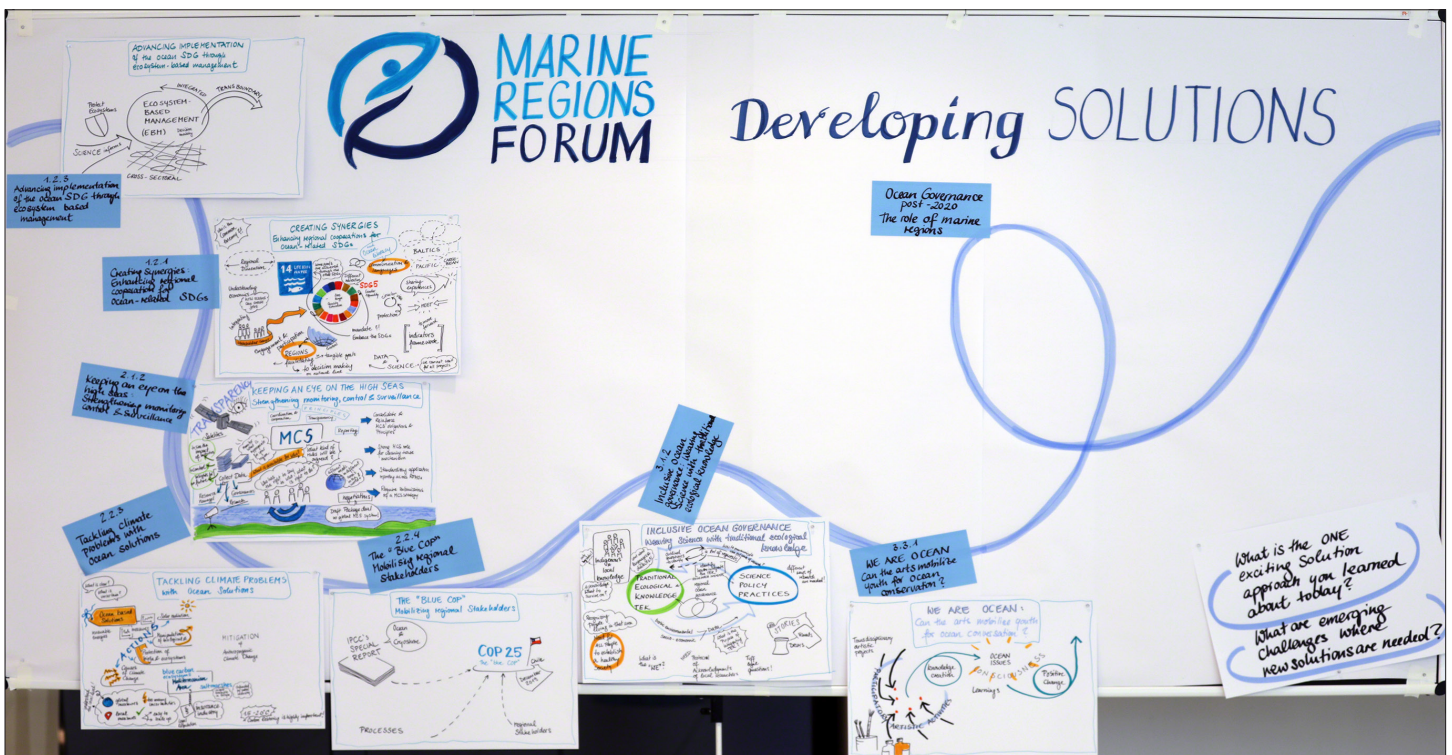
David Obura presented the SDGs as a narrative for identifying synergies across scales. Using coral reefs as an example, he drew attention to interlinkages among most SDGs, and pointed to opportunities for integrating ocean issues into national agendas. Michael Burgass, Biodiversify, addressed the use of evaluation principles to advance progress towards SDG 14, stressing the need to: move beyond monitoring; embed targets and indicators into context-specific systems; and develop evaluative judgements about the merit, worth, value or significance of an intervention.

Yoshinobu Takei, UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, provided an overview of developments leading up to the 2020 UN Ocean Conference, which aims to provide an update on the implementation of voluntary commitments made at the 2017

UN Ocean Conference, and share ongoing efforts between ocean-related initiatives.

The session then featured regional-level case studies. Dixon Waruinge presented the development of a Western Indian Ocean Governance Strategy, including acknowledging ocean contributions to poverty alleviation and livelihoods, and a mandate to create a mechanism for regional ocean governance dialogue on transboundary issues. Maria Laamanen, Ministry of the Environment, Finland, presented successes under the HELCOM Baltic Sea Action Plan, including work to involve stakeholders, address agriculture as a source of pollution, and designate the Baltic Sea as an emissions control area. Christopher Corbin drew attention to the Cartagena Convention framework, including its strategic action programme, highlighting the need to link all regional strategies to facilitate national-level implementation. Stuart Chape, Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) addressed the Pacific Oceanscape Framework and the 2017 Blue Pacific Commitment as core drivers of collective action in the region.

Following roundtable discussions on lessons learned from different regional models, David Obura synthesized key messages, including that: the regional level is an important intermediary between international processes and national decision making; communication and narratives are crucial to make the case for ocean protection among different stakeholders; regional frameworks may assist with development of indicators; and local-level engagement and participation is a priority. Sebastian Unger added that: the regional level is well-placed to translate global goals into concrete actions on the ground, and break long-term perspectives into more tangible goals; strong regional identities, appropriate science-policy interfaces, and



narratives around a “common enemy,” such as pollution, facilitate action; and the regional approach should be well-reflected at the 2020 UN Ocean Conference and the post-2020 global biodiversity agenda.

Participants identified take-home messages for the Nairobi Convention, the Baltic Sea, the Caribbean, and the Pacific, focusing on the role of communication, education, capacity building and partnerships, and linkages with climate change discussions.

Dialogue Sessions on Underpinning Global Processes: Tackling Climate Problems with Ocean Solutions: Dorothee Herr, IUCN, opened the session noting the objective of discussing challenges for advancing ocean-based climate solutions and identifying tangible options for increased regional cooperation to address them. Jean-Pierre Gattuso, IDDRI, presented findings from an assessment of ocean-based measures, such as developing ocean-based renewable energy, conserving and restoring coastal vegetation to enhance GHG storage, or producing long-lived ocean foam to increase solar reflection. He emphasized a tension between large-scale effectiveness on the one hand, and uncertainties and risks of negative collateral impacts on the other.

María del Mar Otero, IUCN, provided insights from the Mediterranean, regarding the protection of seagrass meadows and salt marshes through the Life Blue Natura Project. She pointed to feasibility studies on setting up voluntary carbon offset projects and emphasized the importance of stakeholder engagement, including to leverage local knowledge. Abou Bamba, Executive Secretary, Abidjan Convention Secretariat, shared experiences from the adoption of the Calabar Protocol on Sustainable Mangrove Management, highlighting it sets forth regional management modalities, including for stakeholder engagement in decision making. Noting the Protocol is the first international legal instrument dedicated to mangroves, he emphasized the potential for global-level cooperation with other mangrove-rich countries, such as Australia. Raphaël Billé, Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC), cautioned that nature-based solutions oftentimes “make more sense locally” than technology-based measures, but that they are not “cheap or easy solutions,” noting the need to address the original stressors for degradation and



María del Mar Otero, IUCN

to attend to the needs of local communities to ensure effective implementation.

The “Blue COP:” Mobilizing Regional Stakeholders: Loreley Picourt, Ocean and Climate Platform, moderated the session, which focused on concrete solutions for better integrating ocean issues in the climate regime. Kristian Teleki, World Resources Institute, provided a snapshot of discussions held at the 2019 UN Climate Action Summit and emphasized the need to:

- think about how to use the upcoming meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC COP 25) to maintain momentum on ocean and climate linkages ahead of the 2020 UN Ocean Conference and the CBD COP 15;
- provide compelling arguments for increased private sector engagement;
- mobilize a broader coalition of governments “beyond the usual suspects”; and,
- better connect the ocean-climate nexus to the overall sustainable development agenda.

Teleki further shared findings from a recent report commissioned by the High-level Panel for a Sustainable Ocean Economy. He noted the report shows that scaled-up ocean action could deliver 21% of the emission cuts needed by 2050 to meet the 1.5°C target and identifies as priorities for action: ocean renewable energy; decarbonizing shipping; increasing protection and restoration of blue carbon ecosystems; and increasing the share of low-carbon fish and seaweed proteins in diets.

Waldemar Coutts, Ambassador of Chile to Norway and Iceland, highlighted high-level support within the Chilean Presidency for COP 25 to make progress on the ocean-climate nexus, including through a political declaration and support for adopting an agenda item on the issue.

Joanna Post, UNFCCC Secretariat, provided an overview of key modalities of the Paris Agreement and pointed to, *inter alia*, the Nairobi Work Programme (NWP), the Warsaw International Mechanism for Loss and Damage, and National Adaptation Plans (NAPs) as relevant UNFCCC processes to address ocean issues. She indicated that the 2019 NWP Focal Point Forum taking



Waldemar Coutts, Ambassador of Chile to Norway and Iceland

place during COP 25 will focus on the ocean and highlighted the opportunity for experts to provide input for the development of technical guidelines for NAPs.

Théophile Bongarts, Ocean and Climate Platform, presented the “Because the Ocean” initiative, noting the founding declaration was signed in 2015 in Paris and pointing to regional preparatory meetings for the UNFCCC COP 25 in Madrid, Spain, and Suva, Fiji. He shared findings from an upcoming “Because the Ocean” report, identifying key areas for action, including blue carbon, blue energy, sustainable fisheries and aquaculture, and greening the shipping industry.

Dorothee Herr cautioned on the need to understand the technicalities and politics underlying the UNFCCC process to make wise use of the opportunity presented by COP 25 for making progress on addressing the ocean-climate nexus. She emphasized the importance of building a pipeline of bankable nature-based solution projects to gain traction with the private sector, pointing to the Natural Capital Financing Facility in this regard.

In the ensuing discussion, participants highlighted that: the wish to see “the ocean” mentioned should not go at the expense of pushing for ambitious land-based mitigation action, which is key to reduce climate change impacts on the ocean; and the ocean-climate nexus should also be considered in areas beyond national jurisdictions.

Dialogue Sessions on Knowledge for Ocean Action:

Inclusive Ocean Governance: Weaving Science with Traditional Ecological Knowledge: The session began with Elle Merete Omma, Saami Council, speaking about the Ottawa Principles and the understanding of the Arctic Council that indigenous knowledge and science are “different yet complementary systems and sources of knowledge, and when appropriately used together may generate new knowledge and may inform decision making and policy development.”

Anna-Katharina Hornidge, Leibniz Centre for Tropical Marine Research (ZMT), presented her research on local knowledge and science-policy in the Asian and African regions. She highlighted that societies with lower levels of scientific literacy often have stronger reliance on local knowledge, and there is tension

between resource use for short-term coping and long-term adaptive capacity.

Clement Yow Mulalap, Permanent Mission of the Federated States of Micronesia to the UN, shared experiences and legal issues from the perspective of the Pacific Islands. Examples included the difficulty of being treated as indigenous peoples in different UN bodies, and the lack of a regional approach for integrating traditional knowledge in the Pacific.

The group then explored:

- the relationship between traditional knowledge and science in the Western sense of the term;
- how traditional knowledge integration at regional level contributes to a stronger ocean governance;
- mechanisms, tools, and principles needed to better integrate traditional knowledge into science-policy processes, with the Ottawa Principles used as an example of an instrument that maps out how traditional knowledge can be integrated into policy; and,
- mechanisms to ensure traditional knowledge is not exploited.

Plenary on Ocean Governance Post-2020: The Role of Marine Regions: On Tuesday afternoon, Sébastien Treyer opened the plenary session reflecting on how the regional scale is ideal for various institutions to leverage more ambition on climate change and biodiversity by individual stakeholders.

Hans-Otto Pörtner, Co-Chair of Working Group II of the IPCC, presented key findings of the IPCC Special Report on the Ocean and Cryosphere in a Changing Climate. Highlights included that: human-induced climate change is affecting the ocean and coastal regions; the ocean has been taking the heat from climate change for decades and consequences for humans and nature are severe; ice sheets are losing mass, accelerating global sea-level rise, and will continue to melt, committing the planet to long-term sea-level rise; ocean physics and chemistry are changing, affecting marine life; and virtually all ocean regions are impacted by climate change, especially vulnerable ecosystems like warm water coral reefs and mangroves.

Pörtner reflected on how climate change impacts and their societal consequences operate on time horizons that are longer than those of governance arrangements. On finding regional



Anna-Katharina Hornidge, ZMT



Hans-Otto Pörtner, Co-Chair of IPCC Working Group II

solutions, he mentioned the benefits of networks of protected areas to maintain ecosystem services, including carbon uptake and storage. Responding to questions, he advised local policy-makers to pressure regional and international actors to act more decisively, and noted that the series of IPCC special reports released in the last year give a comprehensive picture on the impacts of climate change, leading to unprecedented societal action led by youth.

Peter Thomson, UN Secretary-General's Special Envoy for the Ocean, via video message, stressed the urgency of global action to address the planetary emergency illustrated by the recent reports of the IPCC and the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES). Referring to greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions as "the enemy," he stressed the need for: radical transformation of consumption and production patterns; a robust BBNJ agreement; and application of the precautionary principle. Thomson said the MRF can be central to the development of a strategic approach bringing together different ocean-related processes, while recognizing varied regional priorities and needs.

A panel discussion ensued, moderated by Sébastien Treyer.

Waldemar Coutts drew attention to the integration of ocean issues at UNFCCC COP 25 and the difficulty of introducing a new factor to the climate negotiations. He further noted that Chile is working, among others, on an oceanic nationally determined contribution and an assessment of co-benefits for mitigation and adaptation in marine protected areas (MPAs).

David Johnson, Coordinator of the Global Ocean Biodiversity Initiative, shared views on integration of marine issues in the discussions on a post-2020 global biodiversity framework, highlighting the need to: address climate resilience and linkages with other sets of global targets; leave room for regional governance; and include targets on the high seas.

Charlotte Karibuhoye, Director, MAVA Foundation West Africa, stressed challenges facing Western African countries, including lack of capacity to domesticate and implement existing regional instruments on coastal management and fisheries, among others, noting that regional cooperation can also help with implementation.



Charlotte Karibuhoye, Director, MAVA Foundation West Africa

Andreas Papaconstantinou, European Commission, highlighted that the ocean will remain high on the EU agenda, including in terms of research funding; referred to the Agreement to Prevent Unregulated High Seas Fisheries in the Central Arctic Ocean as a success story; and pointed to an EU stakeholder forum on international ocean governance to take place in March/April 2020.

Kristina Gjerde reflected on the status of BBNJ negotiations, noting universal membership should not be sought at the expense of ambition, and highlighting that states can showcase leadership by making use of their power "as ports, flags, and markets." She emphasized establishing a strong mandate for reporting on regional progress at the global level, including to hold regional fisheries management organizations accountable, and going beyond defining the precautionary principle in terms of pollution to better account for broader biodiversity implications.

Participants discussed: precise implications of the IPCC reports; challenges and progress in regional leadership; the state of BBNJ negotiations and its effects on other intergovernmental processes; and raising ambition in a timely manner.

Sébastien Treyer highlighted that 2020 is a year of opportunity for regional organizations, noting challenges to be addressed relate to leadership, implementation mechanisms, and strategic use of knowledge.

Day 3: Accelerating Progress and Creating New Pathways

Dialogue Sessions on Achieving SDG 14: Delivering the Ocean SDG: Accelerating Progress: Manuel Castillo, UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), presented a progress report from the Asia-Pacific region, highlighting political commitment to accelerate action, the vital role of the ocean in the region, and ESCAP tools to accelerate national action on SDG 14.

Stefanie Schmidt, European Commission, presented research qualifying the nature of interactions between SDG targets, noting that while interactions are context-specific, the method can highlight trade-offs and assist with practical SDG implementation. She further presented the EU approach to delivering the 2030 Agenda and SDG 14 in particular, including



Manuel Castillo, ESCAP



Jeremy Hills, ESCAP

internal working methods to break silos within the Commission, and the EU ocean governance agenda.

Karina Barquet, Stockholm Environment Institute (SEI), presented the SDG Synergies Approach, including a methodology and tool aiming to track how targets influence each other in positive and negative ways. She showed how the exercise results in a matrix indicating the direct interactions between the selected targets, adding that network analysis looks into the second-order effects.

Jeremy Hills, ESCAP, presented a methodology for accelerating delivery of SDGs, developed through a country-led process. He outlined the process, including selecting the targets to be used as entry points, intervention scenarios development on the basis of identified interlinkages, and creation of Accelerator Action Plans. He noted that both the SEI Synergies Approach and the ESCAP Accelerator Approach are based on SDG interactions and capture the bi-directional interaction between SDG targets. He added that the approaches can be combined, as the SEI approach uses more analytical detail, while the ESCAP one is more linked with policy making.

Participants then explored interactions among different targets, and planned policy interventions addressing the identified interactions, in two roundtable discussions.

Dialogue Sessions on Underpinning Global Processes: Towards Coherent and Connected MPA Networks: From Challenges to Possible Solutions in High Seas Governance:

Tim Packeiser, WWF Germany, opened the session recalling major global advances on MPAs such as CBD Aichi Target 11 and SDG 14.

Carolina Hazin, BirdLife International, presented seabird research informing conservation action and ocean governance. She illustrated how GPS tracking devices allow for identifying areas where seabirds congregate, notably breeding and foraging grounds, and emphasized that such knowledge is crucial for devising management approaches to conserve species across their entire range. Hazin emphasized the need for mechanisms to ensure coordination between regions and with sectoral organizations, especially pointing to threats for seabirds arising

from bycatch, overfishing, as well as oil and artificial light pollution. She pointed to ongoing research showing a number of bird species spend a significant share of their time in areas beyond national jurisdiction (ABNJ), underscoring the need for a coherent network of MPAs within, across, and beyond national jurisdictions.

Ben Boteler, IASS, emphasized that the objective of a coherent MPA network entails representativeness, replication, and connectivity. He noted that while the coverage of MPAs has continuously increased within exclusive economic zones (EEZs), only 1.18% of ABNJs are covered, but emphasized this may change, since MPAs are being considered as one element of the package in the BBNJ negotiations. Boteler pointed to emerging agreement between negotiating states that proposals for MPAs should be based on best available science and traditional knowledge, underscoring that discussions currently do not specifically address the need for MPA networks.

In the ensuing discussion, participants discussed examples of existing scientific bodies and science-policy interfaces and exchanged views on possible institutional set-ups for the BBNJ agreement. Discussions also addressed *inter alia*: the appropriate scale for defining “connectivity”; MPAs not being “no go areas,” but being tailored to reducing the area-specific stressors; regional variations in terms of scientific capacity; the need for regional organizations to report to the global level, including with regard to MPA effectiveness; the role of the BBNJ agreement in fostering coordination and synergies between regional organizations, intersectorally and with global bodies; and the need to set up a financial mechanism for MPAs.

Dialogue Sessions on Knowledge for Ocean Action: The UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development: Engaging Marine Regions: Julian Barbière, Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission Secretariat of the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (IOC-UNESCO), opened the session underscoring possible links between the 2021-2030 UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (Ocean Decade) with regional processes. He explained the background for the designation of the Ocean Decade, highlighting that it is based on a bottom-up process with a view to communicate science in a broad way, trying to address global and regional ocean targets in collaboration with other UN processes and regional bodies.

Martin Visbeck, GEOMAR Helmholtz Centre for Ocean Research Kiel, representing the Executive Planning Group of the Ocean Decade, explained the objectives of the Ocean Decade, mainly being for science to provide solutions and motivate action. He identified challenges, including under-financed ocean science, weak governance, and unevenly distributed capacity in engaging in ocean activities around the globe.

Anne Parge, Federal Ministry of Education and Research, Germany, presented organizational issues relating to a kick-off conference for the Ocean Decade, to convene in 2021 in Germany. Robert Glazer, Gulf and Caribbean Fisheries Institute, pointed out complexities in the Caribbean region, notably: language and cultural barriers; complex patterns in connectivity



Gaetano Leone, UN Environment - Barcelona Convention Secretariat

issues; and bringing together a large amount of regional governance organizations.

Gaetano Leone highlighted the difficulty of strengthening interface between science and policy in the Mediterranean region. He mentioned possible contributions of the Barcelona Convention to the Ocean Decade, including data exchange, connecting with other platforms, and anticipating emerging issues. Joanna Post provided an overview of climate-related processes linked to oceans. Ibukun Jacob Adewumi, National University of Ireland Galway, presented his views as an early-career ocean professional, highlighting challenges for developing country researchers, including: lack of capacity of research institutions; inadequate funding; gaps in knowledge transfer; and difficulties to attend conferences.

Participants discussed, among other issues: building national capacities for implementation and action; communicating ocean science; and lack of access to the high seas by developing countries.

Enhancing the Role of Regions in Global Ocean

Assessments: Ana Tejedor Arceredillo, European Environment Agency, gave a presentation on how to enhance the role of regions in global oceans assessments from the European perspective, highlighting the role of sub-regions, and pointed to two reports on aligning indicators and creating repository templates for action. Kyle Fawkes, Future Earth Coasts, presented key results of the First Global Integrated Marine Assessment (first World Ocean Assessment), and concerns regarding limited uptake in policy development, insufficient geographical representation and limitations on regional engagements. Valerie Cummins, Future Earth Coasts, gave a presentation on the IPBES Global Assessment on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services, noting that it leads to significant awareness on the biodiversity crisis.

Participants then discussed: the history, aim, purpose, lessons learned and lack of visibility of the first World Ocean Assessment; how regions can facilitate impactful assessments; opportunities for partnerships and innovation ecosystems; shifting towards sustainability pathways in assessment; and how to mobilize institutional support for engaging in such assessments.



Svenja Schulze, Federal Minister for the Environment, Nature Conservation, and Nuclear Safety, Germany

Closing Plenary: On Wednesday afternoon, the closing plenary convened under the theme ‘Accelerating progress, creating new pathways,’ moderated by Alexander Müller and Sébastien Treyer.

Svenja Schulze, Minister for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety, Germany, highlighted climate change-related threats to the ocean, and drew attention to MPA networks in the high seas as a tool to increase resilience, stressing the historic opportunity the BBNJ negotiations offer in that regard. She pointed to the “huge risks” related to deep-sea mining and the imperative for international regulation before any activity takes place, adding that with effective circular economy and reduced consumption, there would be no reason for deep-sea mining. In closing, she stressed that the MRF should continue to support the regional transformation for ocean health.

Following a video presentation on Namibia’s ocean-related commitments, Bernhardt Esau, Minister of Fisheries and Marine Resources, Namibia, presented relevant national policies. He drew attention to risks related to climate change, biodiversity loss, and overfishing; highlighted the importance of communication and effective science-policy interfaces; and called for addressing illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing in the high seas, and for eliminating harmful fishing subsidies in the WTO negotiations.

Alexander Müller and Sébastien Treyer presented draft key messages of the MRF from their perspectives as organizers. They noted that the MRF has successfully tested an informal approach for solution-oriented exchange between key actors in ocean sustainability. They pointed to the role of regions in filling the gap between global agreements and local action, including in terms of implementation, and emphasized the importance of the regional level in supporting national voices calling for conservation in face of adversity. Müller and Treyer addressed the importance of enabling conditions, not just in terms of financial resources, but also political leadership and inclusiveness. In terms of conditions for success, they emphasized the need to: account for the specific needs of vulnerable regions and make their voices heard; promote “knowledge for action,” by fostering science-



L-R: **Ingrid-Gabriela Hoven**, BMZ; **Angelique Pouponneau**, Seychelles' Conservation and Climate Adaptation Trust; **Jens Frølich Holte**, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Norway; **Árni Mathiesen**, FAO; and **Maria Damanaki**, The Nature Conservancy

policy interfaces and applying the precautionary principle; break down global long-term goals into measurable action to foster accountability; and speed up regional leadership and mutual learning, including by sharing lessons learned from failures.

In a final panel discussion, Jens Frølich Holte, State Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Norway, who spoke about Norway's progress in achieving the 2030 Agenda, stating that "in order to achieve change you need to have a moment, recognize it, and be able to catch it." He pointed to Norway's efforts to address marine pollution and take action for the ocean, including through political leadership and funding.

Maria Damanaki, Global Managing Director for Oceans, The Nature Conservancy, noted the importance of protecting marine ecosystems and the need for private sector involvement. Recalling the IPCC special report on the ocean, she stressed that "now that the science is clear, we are able to act."

Árni Mathiesen, Assistant Director-General, Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN, said that sustainability can be achieved through management policies, compliance and value chains, and gave an example on the benefits of creating area-based management tools in EEZ.

Angelique Pouponneau, Chief Executive Officer, Seychelles' Conservation and Climate Adaptation Trust, recommended addressing the obstacles to achieving the 2030 Agenda, including lack of resources and capacity, and working in silos. She gave an example of small-scale fishers piloting and managing a voluntary no take area in the Seychelles, as a bottom-up approach to achieve sustainable development targets. She also cautioned that making finance available is not automatically the answer, since sustainability requires awareness.

Ingrid-Gabriela Hoven, Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, Germany, spoke about cooperation projects in Africa and the value of nature-based solutions. She drew attention to the Blue Action Fund to support ocean and coastal conservation in the developing world, and the *MeerWissen* initiative on partnerships between African and German marine researchers.

During the discussion, participants highlighted: the disconnect between progress in policy and calls for urgent action; the

need to promote the engagement of the next generation of ocean professionals; making a business case for private sector engagement in blue carbon conservation and restoration; supporting coastal wetland conservation for climate adaptation, including through increasing public adaptation funding; breaking down long-term goals to better fit the timescale of politicians' mandates and thus increase their accountability; the need for informal and dialogue-oriented exchange between regional actors and across sectors; and identifying strategies to get ocean action "from niche to norm."

Participants then viewed a video, shot at the Forum, which showcased impressions from the event and highlighted key messages on improving ocean governance, including through better regional cooperation. Müller and Treyer closed the meeting at 3:41 pm.

Upcoming Meetings

III Latin American and Caribbean Congress of Protected Areas: The meeting will address, *inter alia*: interlinkages between well-being, protected areas, and the SDGs; protected areas' contribution to climate change mitigation and adaptation; and coastal and marine conservation and sustainability. **dates:** 14-17 October 2019. **location:** Lima, Peru **www:** <https://www.iucn.org/theme/protected-areas/about/congresses/iii-latin-american-and-caribbean-congress-protected-areas>

Our Ocean Conference 2019: The conference will bring together leaders from governments, businesses, civil society, and research institutions to share their experience, identify solutions, and commit to action for a clean, healthy, and productive ocean. **dates:** 23-24 October 2019 **location:** Oslo, Norway **www:** <http://www.ourocean2019.no>

2020 Ocean Pathways Meeting: Charting the Course for a Sustainable Future for the Ocean: Organized by the Secretariat of the CBD, in collaboration with The Nature Conservancy, IUCN and others, this meeting will provide a platform for members of the Communities of Ocean Action to exchange experiences and lessons learned to support the implementation of voluntary commitments, and to discuss key priorities for the 2020 UN Ocean Conference and the CBD post-2020 global biodiversity

framework. **dates:** 11-15 November 2019 **location:** Montreal, Canada **www:** <https://www.icriforum.org/meeting/2020-ocean-pathways-meeting-charting-course-sustainable-future-ocean>

SEA of Solutions 2019: Partnership Week for Marine Plastic Pollution Prevention: The meeting is the first annual partnership week convened by SEA circular, an initiative from the UN Environment Programme and the Coordinating Body on the Seas of East Asia (COBSEA) to inspire market-based solutions and encourage enabling policies to prevent marine plastic pollution in South-East Asia. **dates:** 11-14 November 2019 **location:** Bangkok, Thailand **www:** <http://sos2019.sea-circular.org>

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 Santiago 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:** Santiago, Chile **www:** <https://unfccc.int/Santiago>

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/>

IUCN World Conservation Congress: This meeting will bring together leaders and decision-makers from government, civil society, indigenous peoples, business, and academia, with the goal

of conserving the environment and harnessing the solutions nature offers to global challenges. **dates:** 11-19 June 2020 **location:** Marseille, France **www:** <https://www.iucncongress2020.org>

CBD COP 15, COP/MOP 10 to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety, and COP/MOP 4 to the Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit-sharing: The 15th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP 15) to the CBD, the tenth Meeting of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety (COP/MOP 10) and the fourth Meeting of the Parties to the Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit-sharing (COP/MOP 4) are expected to address a series of issues related to implementation of the Convention and its Protocols, and adopt a post-2020 global biodiversity framework. **dates:** to be announced **location:** Kunming, China **www:** <https://www.cbd.int/conferences/post2020>

For additional upcoming events, see <http://sdg.iisd.org/>

Glossary

BBNJ	Marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
COBSEA	Coordinating Body on the Seas of East Asia
COP	Conference of the Parties
CORDIO	Coastal Oceans Research and Development in the Indian Ocean
EEZ	Exclusive Economic Zone
GHG	greenhouse gas
HELCOM	Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission, also known as Helsinki Commission
IASS	Institute for Advanced Sustainability Studies
IDDR	Institute for Sustainable Development and International Relations
ICES	International Council for the Exploration of the Sea
IPBES	Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature
MRF	Marine Regions Forum
NAP	National Adaptation Plan
OSPAR	OSPAR Convention to protect the marine environment of the North-East Atlantic
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SEI	Stockholm Environment Institute
SPREP	Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme
TMG	TMG - Think Tank for Sustainability
UNESCO	UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
WTO	World Trade Organization
WWF	World Wide Fund for Nature