

11th Monaco Blue Initiative—Digital Edition: 28 May, 9 and 24 June 2020

The 11th meeting of the Monaco Blue Initiative (MBI) convened for its first-ever digital edition under the presidency of HSH Prince Albert II of Monaco. This meeting, initially scheduled to take place from 22-23 March 2020, was postponed due to the global health crisis related to the Coronavirus disease (COVID-19), and took place virtually through three workshops held on 28 May, and on 9 and 24 June 2020. These workshops addressed the following themes:

- Placing marine protected areas (MPAs) and other effective area-based conservation measures at the center of international discussions and acting collectively for their development;
- Lessons learned from community-led initiatives in the management and preservation of protected areas; and
- Reconciling the blue economy with the sustainable management of oceans in the fields of tourism, transport, energy, fisheries and aquaculture.

The workshops were held with the objective of maintaining momentum on global discussions on oceans, and articulate key recommendations to important global ocean meetings, many of which have also been affected by the global pandemic.

Launched in 2010 by HSH Prince Albert II of Monaco, the MBI is a platform for discussion that is co-organized by the Oceanographic Institute, the Prince Albert I of Monaco Foundation and the Prince Albert II of Monaco Foundation. Its members meet annually to discuss current and future challenges of ocean management and conservation.

[Click here for more detailed information.](#)

Opening Session

The opening session for the 11th MBI workshops took place on Thursday, 28 May 2020.

In his opening statement and welcome address, HSH Prince Albert II of Monaco noted that the COVID-19 pandemic has revealed the vulnerability level of societies. He noted that this special edition of the MBI provides an opportunity to discuss ways of ensuring engagement of all stakeholders, including coastal communities, in effective management of MPAs. He expressed hope that the 11th MBI will take place under the banner of change of human behavior with regard to interactions with the marine environment and the use of marine resources. He reminded participants that the 10% target for MPAs in the last decade was not only unattainable but also is no longer viable.



HSH Prince Albert II of Monaco

He called for protecting 30% of land and oceans by 2030. He also highlighted opportunities offered by The Medfund, a trust fund established by France and Tunisia, to develop MPAs in the Mediterranean, and the commitment of 1.8 million Euros for their benefit in Tunisia and Albania over the next five years.

The three workshops were facilitated by Pierre Gilles, Oceanographic Institute, Prince Albert I of Monaco Foundation, and Lina Hansson, Prince Albert II of Monaco Foundation.

Workshop 1: How can we place MPAs and other effective area-based conservation measures at the center of international discussions and act collectively for their development?

The first workshop, held virtually on Thursday, 28 May 2020, discussed the ways in which MPAs and other effective conservation measures can promote international objectives outlined in biodiversity-related multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs).

Delivering a keynote address, Brune Poirson, Secretary of State to the Minister for the Ecological and Inclusive Transition, France, noted that COVID-19 has increased recognition of the ‘One Health’ approach to ensuring the health of people, animals and nature. Poirson reported on France’s support for the High Ambition Coalition for Nature and People, co-piloted with Costa Rica to gather a critical mass of countries to commit to protecting 30% of land and oceans by 2030 in international negotiations. She further drew attention to a national strategy to achieve the 30% protected areas target by 2022.

Virginijus Sinkevičius, European Commissioner for Environment, Oceans and Fisheries, in a pre-recorded keynote



Brune Poirson, Secretary of State to the Minister for the Ecological and Inclusive Transition, France

address, reported on the EU's commitment to protect 30% of the area covered by oceans by 2030 for biodiversity and to restore carbon sinks. He noted the need for nature-based solutions to address the global decline of biodiversity and the impacts of climate change. He further highlighted the Green Diplomacy Network, created in 2018 to promote international environmental conservation and sustainable development.

Panel discussion: José María Figueres Olsen, Former President of Costa Rica, Co-founder and Board Chair of Ocean Unite, moderated the panel discussion.

Serge Segura, Ambassador of France for the Oceans, underlined opportunities raised by the pandemic to transition to a blue economy. He said achieving progress in prioritizing oceans in international conventions requires strong political will. He also stressed the need to ensure civil society and global citizens are engaged. He explained that 30% ocean protection by 2030 is also achievable through increased multilateralism and collaborative efforts of all stakeholders.

Sabine Jessen, Executive Director, 5th International Marine Protected Areas Congress Secretariat, Canada, attributed her country's success in reaching the MPA target to political will and recognition of the role of indigenous knowledge. She highlighted legislative initiatives to prohibit bottom trawling



Virginijus Sinkevičius, European Commissioner for Environment, Oceans and Fisheries



Panelists of the first workshop of the 11th MBI (clockwise from top left): **Atsushi Sunami**, President, Ocean Policy Research Institute, Sasakawa Peace Foundation; **Enric Sala**, Pristine Seas project; Moderator **José María Figueres Olsen**, Former President of Costa Rica, Co-founder and Board Chair of Ocean Unite; **Serge Segura**, Ambassador of France for the Oceans; **Shirley Binder**, Ministry of Environment, Panama; and **Sabine Jessen**, Executive Director, 5th International Marine Protected Areas Congress Secretariat, Canada

and dumping in MPAs, and the use of indigenous and local knowledge for more inclusive management of MPAs.

Enric Sala, Pristine Seas project, advocated for fully protected MPAs, where no extractive or destructive activities are allowed, and all impacts are minimized. He pointed to evidence that fully protected MPAs provide four times more benefits to communities than lightly protected ones. He highlighted benefits derived by fishing communities in Chile, which has 20% fully protected MPAs compared to less than 1% in 2010.

Atsushi Sunami, President, Ocean Policy Research Institute, Sasakawa Peace Foundation, underscored the role of science in achieving 30% protection of marine areas by 2030. He underlined the importance of risk assessments, standard monitoring methods, and evidence-based solutions. He further called for ambitious goals in the post-2020 global biodiversity framework under the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD).

Shirley Binder, National Director of Environmental Policy, Ministry of Environment, Panama, discussed the involvement of civil society in the management of MPAs. She emphasized that empowering coastal communities is key to sustaining long-term benefits of MPAs. She reported that, in her country, community-based organizations have legal status to work with the Ministry of Environment to support sustainable tourism in MPAs.

Workshop 2: What lessons can be learned from community-led initiatives – and more generally by civil society – in the management and preservation of protected areas?

The second virtual workshop was held on Tuesday, 9 June. The discussions addressed: local and global lessons on community-led initiatives in protecting and managing MPAs; the role of governments, civil society, and indigenous peoples and local communities; and measures to protect natural infrastructure to ensure sustainable livelihoods.

Delivering a keynote address, Andrés Couve Correa, Minister, Science, Technology, Knowledge and Innovation, Chile, said local communities and initiatives are the driving force of



Andrés Couve Correa, Minister, Science, Technology, Knowledge and Innovation, Chile

well-managed MPAs. He shared his country's experiences in community-led actions in Easter Island, which protect the artisanal fishing practices of the Rapa Nui from commercial fisheries and mining. Preserving people's way of life, he noted, is key to ensuring the recognition of community rights.

Panel discussion: Grethel Aguilar, Acting Director General, International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), moderated the panel discussion.

Divya Karnad, Founder, InSeason Fish, India, discussed the role of local communities in creating and managing MPAs. She noted the need to support ecologically determined, rather demand-determined, fish markets to ensure fishers receive benefits from less marketable species. Providing examples from India, Karnad said community protected areas are heterogeneous in nature and that different management measures are required. She urged legalization and international recognition of these community initiatives.

Adam Miller, Executive Director, Planet Indonesia, said local engagement and participation should be considered indicators of success, and emphasized local governance structures as key to MPA sustainability. He noted that community-led conservation is successful where local governance structures are recognized and respected. He explained that COVID-19 has had detrimental



Panelists of the second workshop of the 11th MBI (clockwise from top left): **Esther Wolfs**, Founder, Wolfs Company, Germany; Moderator **Grethel Aguilar**, Acting Director General, IUCN; **Marco Lambertini**, Director General, WWF International; **Divya Karnad**, Founder, InSeason Fish, India; **Haydée Rodríguez Romero**, Vice-Minister for Water and Seas, Costa Rica; and **Adam Miller**, Executive Director, Planet Indonesia

impacts on MPAs at the community level and support for their management efforts to ensure sustainable livelihoods is urgently needed.

Esther Wolfs, Founder, Wolfs Company, Germany, emphasized the need to ensure private investors include natural capital in their business strategies and for increased transparency in tradeoffs and mutual benefits proposed for local communities. Sharing her experiences with communities in the Cayman Islands and Bonaire, she highlighted the need to support community efforts for sustainable fisheries, aquaculture and tourism.

Marco Lambertini, Director General, World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) International, said recognizing the rights of coastal communities is critical to successful MPA management. He noted the significant role of a sustainable blue economy to ensure sustainable MPA management and called for wider recognition of the concept of community-led initiatives in biodiversity-related MEAs.

Haydée Rodríguez Romero, Vice-Minister for Water and Seas, Costa Rica, said marine spatial planning, environmental impact assessments, and nature-based solutions are important when designing blue economy models. She emphasized the importance of nature-based solutions to catalyze creating a balance between sustainable use and conservation. She highlighted her country's involvement in the High Ambition Coalition for Nature and People, which proposes including the target of 30% protected areas by 2030 in the post-2020 global biodiversity framework.

Workshop 3: How can blue economy and sustainable management of the ocean in the fields of tourism, transport, energy, fishing and aquaculture be reconciled?

The third virtual workshop of the 11th MBI was held on Wednesday, 24 June 2020. It addressed, *inter alia*:

- adapting tourism to the capacity of natural environments;
- mobilization of different players in society, business and other sectors to save the oceans;
- the contribution of blue economy to the development of coastal communities; and
- the role of certification schemes in shaping the blue economy.

Delivering a keynote address, Jens Frølich Holte, State Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Norway, drew attention to his country's establishment of the High-level Panel on Building a Sustainable Ocean Economy, which, among other things, addresses the importance of the ocean economy for sustainable development. He noted the plight of coastal communities faced with the economic collapse of their fishing and other economic sectors due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and called for increased support to ensure their recovery.

Panel discussion: Nina Jensen, CEO, REV Ocean, moderated the panel discussion. Carl Folke, Director, Beijer Institute of Ecological Economics, and Science Director, Stockholm Resilience Centre, presented on the Seafood Business for Ocean Stewardship (SeaBOS), an initiative involving 13 seafood business companies that carry out dialogues to combat negative impacts of their operations on oceans. These companies, he noted, are responsible for 15% of the global marine catch, consisting of over 200 species from 20% of the most valuable stocks. He reported that SeaBOS is a science-business



Panelists of the third workshop of the 11th MBI (clockwise from top left): Moderator **Nina Jensen**, CEO, REV Ocean; **Carl Folke**, Director, Beijer Institute of Ecological Economics, and Science Director, Stockholm Resilience Centre; **Maren Hjorth Bauer**, Co-founder, Katapult Ocean; **Rupert Howes**, CEO Marine Stewardship Council; **Hugo Tagholm**, Chief Executive, Surfers Against Sewage; and **Wassim Daoud**, Head, Corporate and Social Responsibility and Sustainability, Ponant

collaboration and reported progress through Keystone Dialogues between scientists and seafood companies, and taskforces on: illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing; forced labor; transparency; climate resilience; and microbial resistance and antibiotic use.

Wassim Daoud, Head, Corporate Social Responsibility and Sustainability, Ponant, discussed how his company, a French cruise ship operator, involves tourists in ocean stewardship, and is integrating green and blue economy principles to enhance positive impacts of the tourism sector on ocean sustainability. He reported that Ponant cruises operate through a green model, which includes catalytic inverters to reduce emissions, water recycling and treating on board, and support of local food supply chains.

Hugo Tagholm, Chief Executive, Surfers Against Sewage, emphasized the importance of mobilizing global citizens in sustainable blue tourism to increase the aesthetic value of their experiences, while ensuring ecosystem healing and restoration. Tourists, he emphasized, are highly aware of the declining state of oceans and are some of the most effective ambassadors and champions for ocean restoration. He called for recognizing social justice to safeguard communities from inequalities experienced in benefit sharing.

Maren Hjorth Bauer, Co-founder, Katapult Ocean, said her company has a portfolio of 22 companies striving towards oceans in harmony with economic development. She highlighted, among others, Arc Marine, a company that is building reef cubes utilized in constructing artificial reefs in offshore infrastructure, such as windmills. She also cited the Dream Explorer, a Norwegian cruise ship that operates on clean energy and provides cruisers with ocean sounds to enable appreciation of the marine environment.

Rupert Howes, Chief Executive Officer, Marine Stewardship Council (MSC), discussed the role of the MSC label and other certification schemes in shaping the blue economy. He highlighted effective results achieved through citizen preference for sustainably captured fisheries, and the purpose of certification schemes in informing their choices. He noted that political



Olivier Wenden, Vice-President and CEO of the Prince Albert II of Monaco Foundation

goodwill is critical for the success of certification schemes and lauded the SeaBOS initiative for garnering such significant support.

Closing Session

During the closing session on Wednesday, 24 June, Olivier Wenden, Vice-President and CEO of the Prince Albert II of Monaco Foundation, reported that the 11th MBI attracted over 200 participants. Summarizing some of the findings, he highlighted, *inter alia*:

- the COVID-19 pandemic is closely linked to environmental degradation through its connection to anthropogenic activities;
- the need to ensure that marine conservation is prioritized globally and does not become a casualty of economic constraints due to the COVID-19 pandemic;
- marine environment protection must continue to be placed at the center of discussions on biodiversity- and ocean-related MEAs;
- the need for 100% sustainable use of global oceans; and
- science-based decision making.

Robert Calcagno, CEO of the Oceanographic Institute, Prince Albert I of Monaco Foundation, lamented that we are still a long way from making a sustainable blue economy a reality. He noted the need for scientists and business to work together, and for multidisciplinary and robust science to advise policymakers. He announced that the 12th edition of the MBI would convene from 21-22 March 2021 in Monaco. He called on partners to identify champions of sustainable blue economy to share success stories, challenges and lessons learned.

Glossary

CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
COVID-19	Coronavirus disease 2019
MBI	Monaco Blue Initiative
MEAs	Multilateral environmental agreements
MPAs	Marine protected areas
SeaBOS	Seafood Business for Ocean Stewardship