

STRENGTHENING NATIONAL CAPACITY AND EMPOWERING INDIGENOUS PEOPLES AND LOCAL COMMUNITIES TO ACCELERATE IMPLEMENTATION TOWARDS SDG 14: 7 JUNE 2017

“Strengthening national capacity and empowering indigenous peoples and local communities to accelerate implementation towards SDG 14” took place on 7 June 2017 at the UN Headquarters in New York during the high-level UN Conference to Support the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14 (SDG 14) (Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development). Representatives of governments and civil society gathered to discuss ways to harness the knowledge and energy of indigenous peoples and local communities (IPLCs) in the design and implementation of effective management systems for the conservation and sustainable use of marine biodiversity. The event was co-organized by the Government of Costa Rica and the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), and included a screening of the Sustainable Ocean Initiative (SOI) Film.

The event showcased the role of the SOI in empowering IPLCs for the implementation of SDG 14. Established in 2010, the SOI provides a holistic and strategic framework through which to catalyze partnerships, build on lessons learned and knowledge gained, and facilitate improved coordination and two-way dialogue to address the capacity needs to support countries in their efforts to achieve the Aichi Biodiversity Targets in marine and coastal areas.

REPORT OF THE SIDE EVENT

Delivering opening remarks on behalf of Cristiana Paşca Palmer, CBD Executive Secretary, Jihyun Lee, CBD, said capacity building and empowering IPLCs are two critical

elements for achieving SDG 14. She further stressed that the SOI is “greater than the sum of its parts” because it is built on the collective efforts of a vast network of stakeholders across a variety of sectors.

Juan Carlos Mendoza García, Permanent Representative of Costa Rica to the UN, underscored the need to put an end to unsustainable fishing practices and invest in IPLCs to make them active agents of change.

Christophe Lefebvre, the French Biodiversity Agency, highlighted the importance of engaging indigenous peoples and communities to the achievement of the Aichi Biodiversity Target 11 (By 2020, at least 17% of terrestrial and inland water areas and 10% of coastal and marine areas, especially areas of particular importance for biodiversity and ecosystem services, are conserved through effectively and equitably managed, ecologically representative and well-connected systems of protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures, and integrated into the wider landscape and seascape). He said the SOI: creates a world of solidarity by providing a platform for sharing science, knowledge, and good practices; contributes to the reconciliation between the fishers and scientific communities; and will have a crucial role in laying a foundation for the CBD Action Plan 2020-2030.

Luis Guillermo Solís Rivera, President of Costa Rica, *via* video message, underscored the importance of engaging IPLCs in the design and implementation of management systems for the conservation and sustainable use of maritime biodiversity, thus promoting the health of the Ocean.

Lee explained that the SOI contributes to empowering IPLCs through: creating partnerships that provide targeted capacity-building and technical assistance; providing two-way communication between global policy and scientific communities, and local stakeholders; and improving the scientific basis for implementing both the SDGs and the Aichi Biodiversity Targets through improved technologies, cooperative



Panel (L-R): **Vivienne Solís-Rivera**, International Collective in Support of Fishworkers; **Christophe Lefebvre**, the French Biodiversity Agency; **Juan Carlos Mendoza García**, Permanent Representative of Costa Rica to the UN; and **Jihyun Lee**, CBD Secretariat.



Vivienne Solis Rivera, International Collective in Support of Fishworkers

research efforts, objective monitoring, results-based initiatives, open access data and analysis, and the integration of local knowledge and science. She added that the SOI is currently also trying to engage IPLCs through a programme called “the SOI Local Champions.”

Vivienne Solis Rivera, International Collective in Support of Fishworkers, called for recognizing the rights and responsibility of local and indigenous communities to govern and manage local fisheries. She presented the conclusions of a SOI Regional Capacity-Building Workshop for the wider Caribbean and Central America, held in Costa Rica in February 2017. These, she said, called for: managing ocean resources equitably; viewing traditional and sociocultural knowledge as a continuous process of learning linked to values and the generation of a new relationship that respects the culture of local communities; promoting dialogue and power-sharing; and recognizing a rights-based approach to marine ecosystems.

Puri Canals, Mediterranean Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) Network, presented the work of the Network, which represents a joint collaborative effort for long-term MPA capacity building in the Mediterranean through annual experience-sharing workshops on income generation, education, enforcement, monitoring, tourism and pollution. She added that the Mediterranean MPAs



Dixon Waruinge, Nairobi Convention Secretariat

Network is also organizing regional training on climate change, sustainable financing, MPA monitoring, and communication, as well as practical guides and video tutorials.

Dixon Waruinge, Nairobi Convention Secretariat, presented the conclusions of the SOI Capacity Development Workshop for East Africa, held in Madagascar in January 2016, including: the need to work with international, regional and local organizations already working on the same issues in the region; and the need to ensure local policy makers use regionally-produced science.

Jeremy Hills, Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat, said customary forms of management for local fisheries can be effective, calling for a more collaborative management approach that include local communities, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), and national agencies. He presented the Fiji Locally Managed Marine Area (FLMMA) network, which covers 79% of Fiji’s fishing area and has been extended to include 15 countries.

In the ensuing discussion, participants raised issues on, *inter alia*: the gender dimensions of empowering IPLCs to locally manage marine areas; respecting local fishermen and ensuring their sense of pride in the crucial role they play in poverty eradication and maintaining the Ocean’s health; and providing local fishermen, including the poorest and most vulnerable, with the necessary tools to effectively contribute to the sustainable management of marine areas.



Puri Canals, Mediterranean MPAs Network



Jeremy Hills, the Pacific Islands Forum Secretaria