

SUSTAINABLE OCEAN NIGHT: BIODIVERSITY FOR THE FUTURE WE WANT: 6 JUNE 2017

The event “Sustainable Ocean Night: Biodiversity for the Future We Want” took place on 6 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). During the special high-level reception, high-level policy makers and representatives of UN and international organizations shared insights on how marine and coastal biodiversity can provide solutions for addressing critical challenges in achieving sustainable oceans. The event was convened by the Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), together with the Government of the Republic of Korea, and the Government of Costa Rica.

The side event showcased the Sustainable Ocean Initiative (SOI) and its contribution to the implementation of SDG 14. Established in 2010, the Sustainable Ocean Initiative 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. The SOI focuses on facilitating partnerships to link various initiatives.

REPORT OF THE SIDE EVENT

Delivering opening remarks, Peter Thomson, President of the UN General Assembly (UNGA), stressed the dangers brought by the Ocean’s pollution through microplastics used in cosmetics and through single-use plastic products, explaining that it “disrupts food chains and ends up on our plates.” “There is a fundament on which humankind lives,” Thomson underlined, “and that is the climate and the environment, and this is why we need ocean and climate action.”

Cristiana Paşca Palmer, CBD Executive Secretary, observed that when we say “biodiversity” we mean “life” and underscored the need to spread that message widely. While noting that the threats facing Oceans and the communities depending on them have never been greater, she invited participants to focus on the opportunities these challenges provide. As positive



Peter Thomson, President of the UN General Assembly

developments in biodiversity, she highlighted: the progress realized through partnerships leveraged through the SOI—the latest data shows that 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”) will be achieved; the International Convention for the Control and Management of Ships’ Ballast Water and Sediments will enter into force in September 2017; and the Port State Measures Agreement entered into force in June 2016. Noting that the CBD has focused on building bridges between sectors and stakeholders, Paşca Palmer stressed that strategic frameworks such as the Aichi Biodiversity Targets are an essential element for achieving the SDGs, especially SDG 14, and for building the “Future We Want.”



Cristiana Paşca Palmer, CBD Executive Secretary

Shin Hee Cho, Director General of the Ministry of Oceans and Fisheries, Republic of Korea, said that since 2012, her Ministry has been collaborating with the CBD on different initiatives through the SOI. She further highlighted the need for cross-sectoral collaboration for the achievement of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets and the SDGs, and invited participants’ support for the SOI.



Shin Hee Cho, Director General of the Ministry of Oceans and Fisheries, Republic of Korea

Erik Solheim, Executive Director, UN Environment (UNEP), noted progress made in India on tiger conservation, in China on panda conservation, and in Botswana on elephant conservation. However, he stressed, these successes do not “add up” thus



Erik Solheim, Executive Director, UNEP

governments and stakeholders need to jointly step up their actions and mobilize political leadership to address the global decline in biodiversity and protect the threatened species in order to “make the planet great again.”

Luis Guillermo Solís Rivera, President of Costa Rica (*via* video message), highlighted the contribution of oceans and biodiversity to poverty eradication,

economic growth, and health. He invited governments to become champions of conservation and the sustainable use of maritime resources.

Luis Felipe Arauz Cavallini, Minister of Agriculture and Livestock, Costa Rica, identified two key conflicts that hinder achieving marine sustainability: there is a tremendous wealth in the Ocean but that does not translate into wealth for coastal communities as the benefits of exploiting the Ocean are being shared by only a few and these are generally private sector actors; and that people need to exploit marine biodiversity to produce what they need for their livelihoods, and at the same time marine biodiversity needs to be conserved. He called for moving from conflict to synergy, adding that “conservation needs to be done with the people, otherwise sustainability will not be achieved.”



Luis Felipe Arauz Cavallini, Minister of Agriculture and Livestock, Costa Rica

Noting that Sweden is currently limiting the consumption



Karolina Skog, Minister for the Environment of Sweden

of fish because of its contamination with chemicals, Karolina Skog, Minister for the Environment of Sweden, expressed her optimism for the achievement of both the SDGs and the Aichi Biodiversity Targets given the 864 voluntary commitments registered so far in the voluntary registry of the Ocean Conference and Portugal’s desire to host

a second Ocean Conference.

Hamdallah Zedan, Chair, Preparatory Committee for CBD Conference of Parties (COP) 14, on behalf of Khaled Fahmy, Minister of Environment of Egypt and CBD COP 14 President, stressed that the CBD is not an environment convention, but a sustainable development convention. He further underlined that biological diversity is “the cornerstone for sustainable development,” which could not be realized without biodiversity. He noted that the Government of Egypt is committed to mainstream biodiversity in the economic, energy, health and other sectors.



Hamdallah Zedan, Chair, Preparatory Committee for CBD COP 14