

# Oceans and Coasts at Rio+20

Informal Dialogue and Information-Sharing Session at PrepCom2  
Organized by the Global Forum on Oceans, Coasts, and Islands and the  
Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission, UNESCO  
Tuesday, March 8, 2011, UNESCO Office, New York

## Co-chairs:

Biliana Cicin-Sain, Co-Chair and Head of Secretariat, Global Forum on Oceans, Coasts, and Islands

Wendy Watson Wright, Executive Secretary, IOC and Assistant Director-General, UNESCO

## Participants:

Ambassador Ronny Jumeau, Permanent Mission of Seychelles to the UN

Ambassador Isabelle Picco, Permanent Mission of Monaco to the UN

Valérie Bruell-Melchior, Deputy Permanent Representative, Permanent Mission of Monaco to the UN

Julian Barbieri, Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission

Miriam Balgos, Program Coordinator, Global Forum on Oceans, Coasts, and Islands

Gwenaelle Hamon, Research Fellow, Global Forum on Oceans, Coasts, and Islands

Joseph Appiott, Global Forum on Oceans, Coasts, and Islands

Michele Ameri, UN Division of Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea, Office of Legal Affairs

Francois Baillet, Program Advisor, UN Division of Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea, Office of Legal Affairs

Alice Hicuburundi, UN Division of Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea, Office of Legal Affairs

Mohammad Mohiuddin, UN Division of Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea, Office of Legal Affairs

Michael Shewchuk, Legal Officer, UN Division of Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea, Office of Legal Affairs

Diana Bronson, ETC Group

Kate Brown, Global Island Partnership (GLISPA)

Jessica Robbin, Global Island Partnership

Pamela Hay, Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, Canada

Caroline McDonald, Director, Environment Decision, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, New Zealand

Nay Htun, Professor, State University of New York Stonybrook, Director, International Programs, Advanced Energy Center

Susan Lieberman, Director, International Policy, Pew Environmental Group

Duncan Currie, Senior Advisor, Pew Environment Group

Anne Namakan Mutelo, Counselor, United Nations Mission of Namibia

Ashley Naidoo, Directorate: Oceans Conservation, Environmental Affairs, Oceans and Coasts, South Africa

Razeena Omar, Chief Directorate: Integrated Coastal Management, Department of Environmental Affairs, South Africa

Anne Rogers, (Former) Department Chair, United Nations-Oceans

Richard Rosenman, United States Department of State

Mayumi Sakoh, World Society for the Protection of Animals

Karin Siölin-Frudd, Senior Adviser, Marine Environment Division, IMO

Paul Todd, International Fund for Animal Welfare  
Gloria Yona, Research Fellow UN-NIPPON

### ***Summary of Discussions***

The co-chairs opened the informal information-sharing session, welcoming participants and thanking them for their interest in oceans and coasts in Rio+20.

Wendy Watson-Wright highlighted the fact that a number delegations present at the second meeting of the Preparatory Commission of the UNCSD (PrepCom 2), including Monaco, the EU, the Alliance of Small Island States, and the Pacific SIDS, emphasized the importance of oceans and coasts, which is encouraging. Dr. Watson-Wright stressed, however, that time is quickly running short and that the global ocean community has a valuable opportunity in the Rio+20 process to build the necessary political support to address ocean and coastal issues. She noted, however, that we must discuss how to do so meaningfully, devising bold answers to key questions while not shying away from tricky issues.

Biliana Cicin-Sain's opening remarks briefly outlined the purpose of the meeting, which was intended to provide a venue for sharing of information, perspectives, and initiatives on Rio+20, to foster a process of collaboration to ensure that oceans and coasts are adequately addressed in the Rio+20 process, and to provide input on how the Global Forum could help contribute to these goals through critical assessments and regional consultations (please see the attached Powerpoint presentation). Dr. Cicin-Sain gave an overview of the original Rio process (1992 UN Conference on Environment and Development) as well as the activities of the Global Forum at the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development. She went on to describe the Global Forum's planned activities for the Rio+20 process, which include critical assessments on the major themes of Rio and regional consultations on progress made in achieving the ocean-related goals of Agenda 21 (Please see the attached handout).

Ambassador Ronny Jumeau from the Seychelles also noted the rising profile of oceans and coasts in the Rio+20 process. Ambassador Jumeau highlighted a recent meeting of the Global Island Partnership (GLISPA) steering committee, which discussed the role of small-island developing States (SIDS) in the Green Economy. Ambassador Jumeau stressed that the definition of the Green Economy must integrate oceans and coasts.

Ambassador Picco from Monaco, who highlighted oceans in her statement during PrepCom2, emphasized the need to renew our vision on oceans. She also announced that Monaco will host a pre-Rio+20 Expert Workshop meeting to be held in November 28-30, 2011, which will gather experts to discuss issues related to energy, food security, and tourism as they relate to oceans and coasts and the relationship of these issues with the themes of Rio+20.

Richard Rosenman, US State Department inquired as to the expected outcomes of the 6<sup>th</sup> Global Oceans Conference (GOC6) in 2012 and how they will feed into the Rio+20 process. Dr. Cicin-Sain replied that the results of the assessments will be discussed at the GOC6 with ocean leaders from around the world, which will inform the drafting of succinct recommendations for the Rio+20 process.

Alice Hiciburundi, UN DOALOS, noted the upcoming 12<sup>th</sup> meeting of the UN Open-ended Informal Consultative Process on Oceans and the Law of the Sea (ICP 12), which will focus on

Rio+20 and, therefore, represents a valuable opportunity to discuss the key oceans issues that must be addressed at the UNCSD.

Professor Nay Htun, SUNY, (formerly UN Assistant-Secretary General at UNDP and UNEP, and Programme Director for UNCED, helping to draft Agenda 21) discussed his experience with the previous UNCED process, in which the UNCED Secretariat was challenged to push oceans into the agenda. He noted that Rio+20 presents a critical opportunity to address the growing concerns associated with oceans and coasts and that there are two major pathways for integrating oceans in the discussions; 1) process—through which various actors work together to push for the inclusion of oceans text into the zero draft; and 2) content—through which governments are convinced of the importance of ocean issues by providing them with supporting information, including socio-economic data and information on ecosystem functions, in order to incorporate compelling language on oceans into the outcomes of the UNCSD. He also mentioned four emerging issues that need to be addressed: 1) ocean acidification; 2) alien invasive species; 3) increasing plastics in the ocean that pose disruption to the food chain; and 4) depletion of dissolved oxygen and formation of “dead zones” in the oceans.

Kate Brown from GLISPA also discussed the recent GLISPA steering committee meeting, as mentioned by Ambassador Jumeau. She noted the issues of importance to GLISPA, namely: 1) lack of implementation; 2) invasive species; and 3) determining what the Green Economy means to small island states. She mentioned that GLISPA is linking up with Rio+20 regional consultations and other small island initiatives.

Duncan Currie from the Pew Environment Group, noting that few of the Rio targets relating to oceans have been achieved, stressed that ocean governance reform is central to addressing those goals and that ocean governance reform could be a major beneficial outcome of the Rio Summit. He discussed the need to be bold and visionary and to identify opportunities to implement tools such as high seas Marine Protected Areas and Environmental Impact Assessments.

Susan Lieberman, also from the Pew Environment Group, supported Mr. Currie’s statements and directed participants attention to background document prepared by Pew for the Rio+20 process. She noted that the Pew Environment Group is currently working with governments to take advantage of the valuable opportunity presented by Rio+20 to improve the state of the world’s oceans.

Anne Rogers (formerly UNDESA) spoke about the need to strengthen the UN system to achieve progress on oceans and coastal issues. She also stressed that, although there is fragmentation of activities and responsibilities related to oceans, there can also be a valuable benefit in specialization, not often present in other areas.

Razeena Omar from the South African Department of Environment Affairs noted that fragmentation is a central issue and suggested the formation of committees tasked with pushing the oceans agenda in terms of process and content. She noted that the oceans community is a marginalized group in the Rio+20 process and that it must speak with a unified voice to be effective.

Wendy Watson-Wright noted that the oceans community needs to be more effectively reaching out to heads of state to mobilize political support, rather than continuing to “preach to the converted.”

Professor Htun, following up on the comment related to fragmentation, discussed a significant lack of coordination at national levels as a major obstacle to effective ocean governance.

Francois Baillet, UNDOALOS, emphasized that the central issue of capacity is often disregarded in these discussions and that there is often little funding to accomplish what we know needs to be done.

Anne Namakan Mutelo, Namibia, stressed the need to put oceans at the highest political agenda. She noted that this is especially important in the Rio+20 process, as it can often become buried in the myriad of other issues in the sustainable development agenda.

Ashley Naidoo from South African Department of Environmental Affairs noted that focusing too much on one sector, such as fisheries management, can lead to the neglect of other important oceans issues. He mentioned that South Africa is in the process of developing a national ocean policy, which will address multiple oceans issues in an integrated manner, including problems associated with the coal mining industry and its transport by ships, as well as ocean warming and climate change issues. He noted the need to link oceans more directly with other global processes, such as the climate cycle, and the need to discuss earth systems when discussing ocean and coastal issues.

Karin Sjölin-Frudd, IMO, noted that although the IMO has focused much on climate and will continue to do so, it is now giving increased attention to sustainability issues affecting the oceans and would like to see a greater focus on ocean-related issues in the Rio+20 agenda.

Alice Hicuburundi added that this year's celebration of World Oceans Day (June 8) could also be an opportunity to bring focus on the oceans in the Rio+20 process.

Julian Barbieri noted that the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission is closing its 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration, and that its June 2011 General Assembly will produce a declaration on oceans as input to PrepCom3. He also mentioned that the IOC will mobilize its member States to support the inclusion of the oceans in the Rio+20 agenda and outcomes.

Duncan Currie mentioned the upcoming meeting of the UN Ad Hoc Open-ended Informal Working Group to study issues relating to the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity beyond areas of national jurisdiction, which will be a very valuable opportunity to advance issues related to ocean governance. Mr. Currie noted that discussions on ocean issues must also address issues related to fisheries and food security. He highlighted the success of the South Pacific Regional Fisheries Management Organization (SPRFMO) and the need to learn from success stories such as this.

Professor Htun added that in order to widen the support base for oceans beyond typical ocean interest, perhaps the scope of oceans issues could be expanded to include issues related to security, so as to address interlinkages with other important topics of interest to various stakeholders, such as military issues.

The co-chairs closed the meeting, thanking participants for their attendance and valuable input and encouraged them to play an active role in advancing ocean and coastal issues in the Rio+20 process.