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IMPAC5 Highlights: Saturday, 4 February 2023

Alexandra Dostal, Assistant Deputy Minister, Aquatic Ecosystem Sector, Fisheries and Oceans Canada, welcomed participants. Minna Epps, Director, IUCN Ocean team, stressed the importance of protecting coasts as well as the high seas.

Ruth Mthembu, Oceans youth advocate, spoke of her drive for protecting the Oceans, the “world’s greatest unifier” and reminded participants that protecting human well-being means protecting the Oceans.

Aulani Wilhelm, Senior Vice President for Oceans, Conservation International and serving at the US White House, presented positive conservation examples of building marine protected areas (MPAs) globally, particularly through the recognition of tenure rights of Indigenous Peoples and local communities.

Cristina Mittermeier, Conservationist, Sea Legacy, emphasized that the right story changes everything “because, without stories, the ocean dies in silence.” She underscored that “30 by 30” is not a magical number, but rather a target, and called upon Canada to create highly and fully protected MPAs.



Aulani Wilhelm, Senior Vice President, Oceans at Conservation International

Making 30x30 a Reality: Lessons Learned from Scaling up to MPA Networks Across a Global Marine Portfolio

Gabriella Balfour-Church moderated the session. Zau Lunn, Flora and Fauna International (FFI) shared Myanmar’s experience and benefits of empowering communities through participation and collaboration to conserve resources and livelihoods by designating “locally managed marine areas.” Tanguy Nicolas, MWAMBAO Coastal Community Network





Luisa Madruga, Fauna and Flora International

Tanzania, presented on community-based MPAs in Tanzania, highlighting how the approach provides a major opportunity for increasing the sustainable management of all MPAs.

Luisa Madruga, FFI, presented on the first MPA network in the Gulf of Guinea, highlighting initial suspicions on MPAs in São Tomé and Príncipe and the importance of including government officers in community consultation meetings. A member of the audience highlighted the risk that community members may be shy about speaking up in the presence of such officers.

Henry Duffy, FFI, discussed the establishment of MPAs in Cambodia, emphasizing ecological harms caused by plastic pollution and trawling, and lessons learned, including: planning for a future without donor financing, strengths and limitations of locally-led patrols, enabling legislation, and cross-sectoral MPA governance.

Working Together to Protect MPAs

Kevin McNamee and Jenna Boom, Parks Canada, shared lessons learned in achieving an Inuit boundary in Canada through negotiations with the government to remove leases given to Shell. Francheska Krysiak, Parks Canada, spoke about the approval process for certain activities in Canadian MPAs, including for bottom contact gear approval. Siyabonga Dzulisa, Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment, South Africa, shared how a network of 20 MPAs in South Africa contributed to a global network, highlighting the complexity of managing different ocean activities, such as fisheries, tourism, and mining, with the assistance of politicians. Alejandra Villalobos, Friends Cocos Island, shared lessons around the 5-year expansion process of MPAs on Cocos Island in Costa Rica, highlighting the importance of participatory dialogues involving different actors, such as NGOs, the fishing industry, governments, and universities.

Community-based management of coral reefs and conservation areas

Laurel McIvor, Parks Canada, moderated the session. Pablo Caldas, Conservation International, presented on community coral conservation efforts in San Andrés, Colombia, including large-scale coral nurseries and out-planting activities, coupled with capacity building and the certification of community coral gardeners. Gabriela Nava, Oceanus, began by reminding the audience that corals support approximately 25% of the Oceans inhabitants by providing food and shelter, with 30% having been lost over the past 50 years. Presenting on work in Mexico, she introduced efforts to tackle the fragmentation of reef colonies through, *inter alia*, coral nurseries, enhancing reproduction, and creating networks of local teams, reporting coral recovery of up to 30% in some areas.

Neha Acharya-Patel, University of Victoria, Canada, presented on her research exploring alternatives to traditional bio-monitoring methods for assessing the health and abundance of rockfish species in coastal waters of British Columbia. Rohmani Sulisyati, Karimunjawa National Park, Indonesia, presented on efforts to limit the negative impacts of diving tourism in Karimunjawa National Park in the Java Seas, including the setting up of an open and closed system. Some questions from the audience focused on lessons learned from capacity building, reducing impacts of diving tourism, and the scalability of bio-monitoring methods for community stewardship.

Putting Plans Into Action: How the Marine Plan Partnership First Nations and B.C. Provincial Partners are Implementing Four Marine Spatial Plans

Meaghan Calacari-Campbell, Gordon and Betty-Moore Foundation, moderated the session. Charlie Short, Ministry of Land, Water and Resource Stewardship, provided an overview of the development of four marine spatial plans, including their spatial zoning and regional implementation priorities. Rich



Kyle Clifton, EA Coordinator, Gitga'at First Nation

Chapple, Central Coast Indigenous Resource Alliance (CCIRA), highlighted the “Guardian Watchmen” as one of the highlights of the Marine Plan Partnership’s implementation of the Marine Spatial Plans.

Kyle Clifton, EA Coordinator of Gitga’at First Nation, underscored that the Plans offer the opportunity to integrate traditional coastal knowledge into management and contribute to the recovery of abalone fisheries. Taylor Mason, CCIRA, noted that the work done under this partnership has provided a solid foundation for other work in the region. Julien Braun, Haida Gwaii Marine Plan, highlighted capacity building as one of the successes of the Partnership.

Regarding implementation, Clifton reflected on the importance of dialogue for ensuring that potential partners understand community perspectives. Bruce Watkinson, Gitxaala Environmental Monitoring, highlighted the importance of the Plans in providing a grounding vision to counteract the changing priorities between governments, including the changing commitments to First Nations rights.

Several of the panelists talked about the evolving relationship with economic and conservation stakeholders. Watkinson recalled marked improvements over time yet stressed that respectful dialogue and collaboration must continue on into the future. Chapple highlighted the need for recognizing Indigenous stewardship principles.

Advances in Identifying and Recognizing Marine OECMs - Initial Lessons Learned on Their Contribution to the Global Area-Based Conservation Target

This session was moderated by Imen Meliane, UNDP. Jannica Haldin, HELCOM, presented on other effective area-based conservation measures (OECMs) and the role of the Regional Sea Conventions, with the Baltic Sea as a case study. She highlighted the cross-sectorial approach to developing a shared understanding of how to interpret the OECM criteria.

Souha El Asmi, UNEP-MAP, shared the experience of the OECM in the Post-2020 Regional Strategy in the Mediterranean.



François Simard, IUCN

She underscored the need to bring the socio-economic sectors into the conservation discussion, and clarify to all stakeholders the differences between MPAs and OECMs. Johnny Briggs, PEW, noted the role of NGOs in facilitating the identification of OECMs. Chloe Ready, Fisheries and Oceans Canada, presented on re-assessing Canada’s marine OECMs against revised guidelines. Felipe Paredes, Ministry of Environment of Chile, stressed the need for more understanding of the whole process in identifying and reporting on OECMs.

During the ensuing discussion, participants recognized that OECMs present a unique opportunity for stakeholders to get involved in conservation measures, and highlighted the importance of reducing data gaps for identifying and monitoring OECMs.

Marine Conservation and Sustainable Aquaculture, for Marine Protected Areas and Coastal Communities

Emmanuelle Cochen-Shacham, IUCN, spoke about their Global Standards for Nature-based Solutions (NbS). Raphaëla le Gouvello, IUCN, discussed NbS applied to aquaculture. Tiffany Walters, The Nature Conservancy, shared examples of restorative aquaculture in providing benefits to the environment, as well as for climate change mitigation. François Simard, IUCN, moderated the discussion, which addressed, *inter alia*: outreach and education strategies; Chile’s aquaculture strategy in their MPAs; developing regulation in conjunction with industry; the cultural value of aquaculture; and applying traditional knowledge in Hawaiian fishponds.

Coming Together to Conserve MPAs

Pippa Shepherd, Parks Canada, chaired the session. Tamlin Jefferson, University of Auckland, presented his research assessing zoning methodologies for assisting decision-making in conserving the Oceans while maintaining healthy fisheries.

Sarah Enright, University College Cork, introduced her work on transboundary protected areas in the Eastern Tropical Pacific, touching upon the importance of tackling challenges facing



efforts for harmonizing different legal, political, and cultural systems. She argued for a stronger legal basis for the concept of “ecological connectivity.”

Purificacio Canals, Mediterranean Network of Marine Protected Areas Managers, told audiences about her Network’s efforts for strengthening connections between MPA managers, highlighting four key strategies: the sharing of information, knowledge, and tools between MPA managers; building capacity; providing policy support and advocacy across levels of governance; and enabling financing of activities.

Marce Gutiérrez-Graudiņš, Azul, spoke on the importance of elevating Latinx voices within marine conservation for achieving environmental justice. She stressed that the 30 by 30 target must be implemented in ways that protects the Ocean “with” communities, not “from” them.

Geopolitics and Transboundary MPAs

Catherine Dougnac, Wildlife Conservation Society, spoke about the initiative of a civil society network for the conservation of the Patagonian Sea, focused on the representativity of protected areas in Chile, Argentina, and Brazil, and the challenges of achieving effective protection, and highlighted the role of a management school to standardize views and share common perspectives between decision-makers of different countries.

Alain Pibot, French Office of Biodiversity, shared the results of a study and of a European seminar that sought to understand how the sociological, historical, and geopolitical contexts influence the effectiveness of protections in 22 European countries with coastal access.

Alvaro Alonso, Ministry of Ecological Transition, Spain, presented on marine biodiversity and MPAs in Spain, noting the increase from 1% to 12% of protected areas in the last decade. He mentioned that different management authorities represent a challenge in the effective advancement of establishing MPAs. Victoria González, Intemares Project, spoke about the transboundary nature of this project, noting three integrated components promoted by the EU: fisheries, actors, and policies.



Álvaro Alonso, Ministry of the Ecological Transition of Spain and **Victoria González**, Coordinator, Life Integrated Project Intemares

She shared some of its achievements and lessons learned since its establishment in 2017.

Spotlight on Migratory Species

Yacqueline Montecinos, WWF Chile, presented on Protecting Blue Corridors for Whales initiative. She stressed the ecological role of whales in reinserting iron in the water columns supporting phytoplankton carbon sequestration and oxygen production. She highlighted that during its lifetime, a whale sequesters the same amount of carbon as 1000 trees. She stressed the massive call to protect six “blue corridors for whales” by 2030.

Raphael Leprince, French Biodiversity Office, underscored that the involvement of local stakeholders, in addition to scientific evidence to propose management measures, has more effective results.

In the Corridors

Tearful participants clapped as they watched breathtaking images and videos of marine wildlife while listening to Cristina Mittermeier’s call to stand up for the Oceans and not “S.E.L.F.I.E” – someone else is likely fixing it ...eh”. After the moving opening, they scattered across the many conference rooms to learn of the latest exciting research and conservation outcomes. Some rooms were packed with participants sitting on the floor. In one of them a collective of coastal First Nations conservation leaders and partners described how 17 First Nations and the Province of British Columbia came together to draft four sub-regional plans in a process centering the First Nations culture, welfare and rights. The session was clearly inspiring to many – several statements drew supportive nods from the audience, with one person shouting out “OECMs” for reaffirming one panelist’s statement that implementation should not wait for a green light from the government. Alongside community participation in coastal conservation being a key focus of the day, so was the protection of the high seas, with many braving the weather, taking to the streets over lunch to protest against proposals currently being negotiated on deep sea mining.

