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IMPAC5 Highlights: Monday, 6 February 2023

Cécile Tang, IMPAC5 Young Professional Committee, expressed their goal of representing and sprouting the youth voices on IMPAC5 and beyond. Britt Wray, Stanford University, referred to eco-anxiety as the chronic fear of ecological doom but also as the trigger for harnessing eco-distress for a deeper sense of purpose.

Dalee Sambo Dorough, University of Alaska Anchorage, provided a historical overview of the Inuit Circumpolar Council, and spoke of the inherent right of Inuit people to their territories, and their rights to manage these in accordance with their values, knowledge and traditions, stressing that marine conservation is an act of securing food sovereignty and fulfilling Inuit rights to self-determination.

In her moving presentation Asha de Vos, Oceanswell, called out the colonial systems surrounding Ocean conservation, referencing her experience of researchers from the Global North “parachuting” to countries of the Global South and presenting their research without equitable inclusion and leaving no long-term knowledge or investment.



Asha de Vos, Oceanswell

She pointed out financial and visa restrictions as important hurdles for qualified researchers from the Global South, noting that many colleagues are missing at this conference because of the places they come from. De Vos called for decolonizing conservation science and storytelling, and stressed the need to have these “uncomfortable conversations.” She finished by saying that every coastline needs a local hero if we want to save the Ocean.

Impact of climate change on MPAs

Alex McDonald, Parks Canada, moderated the session. Steven Mana’oakamai Johnson, Oregon State University, presented his work on capturing multi-varied climate change effects on marine ecosystems, with his findings indicating that most large MPAs will see a departure from “normal” conditions. Lee Hannah, presenting on behalf of Isaac Brito-Morales, University of Queensland, introduced their work studying climate change velocity to assist climate-smart planning by accounting for changing climate effects across the water column.

Vincenzo Corelli, Institut National de la Recherche Scientifique, presented his work on creating a framework



Dalee Sambo Dorough, University of Alaska Anchorage



Harjit Sajjan, Minister of International Development, Canada

for what action would look like for climate-responsive MPA management.

Jennifer Munroe, NEOM, talked about work under the NEOM project for increasing carbon sequestration and reduction in Saudi Arabia.

Decolonizing Environmental Non-Government Organization Advocacy Work for Marine Conservation and Marine Protected Areas

Kate MacMillan, Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society (CPAWS), reminded attendees that Indigenous Peoples successfully stewarded their lands before it was known as Canada. Gwen Bridge, Consulting LTD, reflected on the term decolonization and reminded about the inherit assumption in western systems that humans have the authority to make decisions over nature, and Indigenous practices have a different understanding which focuses on conservation. Natalie Groulx,

CPAWS, spoke about regulations that take the rights away from Indigenous territories. Véronique Bussi eres, CPAWS, explained that they work closely with Indigenous communities and establish long-lasting partnerships.

One participant asked about CPAWS' broad efforts to shift the approach. Bridge highlighted the development of the rapid reconciliation readiness assessment, including learning how to listen to Indigenous Peoples' stories. Another participant asked how to soften up structures and policies to allow relationships of trust be built.

Tech-Based Conservation Solutions

Tammy Norgard, Department of Fisheries and Oceans Canada, moderated the session. Frederick Whoriskey, Ocean Tracking Network presented on acoustic tracking for monitoring MPAs in the Maritimes, Canada. Amos Barkai, OLSPS Group, spoke of a novel, practical and operational approach to holistic management of fisheries.

Roanan DeMeyer, University of Victoria, presented some results of his ongoing research to contribute to the cetaceans and vessel presence baseline in the Gwaii Haanas National Marine Conservation Areas Reserve using manual analysis of passive acoustic monitoring.

The Voice of the Ocean Room

Frank Murphy, Tetiaroa Society, moderated the session. GwaaGanad Diane Brown, Haida Nation, told participants that "we all come from the ocean, it is who we are". Highlighting the connection between land and seas, she spoke of the unspeakable horror of losing important species for community wellbeing, and the harm suffered by the Ocean because of government decisions taken far away.

 al iya sila Frank Brown, Heiltsuk Nation, spoke in honor of those who have resisted colonial efforts of homogenizing and



undoing cultures, knowledges, and languages. Reflecting on the strength of his ancestors in the region, who have persisted in the face of climatic change and colonial violence, he said that “we continue to fight the good fight.”

Tamatoa Bambridge, National Center for Scientific Research, French Polynesia, introduced the Rāhui Forum and Resource Center, promoting a range of management measures to sustainably preserve coral ecosystems by working alongside communities.

Dan Hikuroa, UNESCO Aotearoa New Zealand Culture Commissioner, emphasized that the Ocean is facing an existential crisis and that Indigenous Peoples are the ones showing the way on how to address it. He stressed the importance of developing an Oceanic vision, underpinned by the notion that the Ocean has its own independent life.

Aulani Wilhelm, Conservation International, highlighted the need for way-finders and reconnecting to Indigenous Peoples ancestors’ knowledge to help find the way to address the crises facing the Ocean.

Resistance to Deep-Sea Mining – Voices from Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities across the Pacific

The session opened with a call to the ancestors by Uncle Sol Kaho’ohalahala. Jessica Battle, WWF, noted that we are told that deep-sea mining is essential to extract minerals to help combat climate change, but this is not true. Jonathan Mesulam, Alliance of Solwara Warriors, talked about an advocacy project against deep-sea mining licensing in Papua New Guinea. Judith Sayers, Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council, reflected on the difficulties of getting governments to acknowledge that they have territories in the Ocean.

Alejandro Olivera, AIDA, spoke about a case relating to granting concessions and permits to sea mining project in

Baja California Sur, that involved corruption and intimidation tactics from the soliciting company. Zeid Ra’ad Al Hussein, International Peace Institute, observed that, in reference to the International Seabed Authority (ISA), the guarantor of rights is the one posing the very threats in deep seabed mining. The discussion included emotional interventions by the audience which included: corruption and intimidation practices by companies in the Cook Islands regarding mining permits; litigation against the Canadian government using the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples; and, considering rights of nature. One participant reminded that the ISA was established in the 1990s, when people thought the seabed was a barren wasteland, but we now have better knowledge and need to change a system where one organization has the power to grant mining rights to the deep-sea.

Flippin Paper Parks

Emilie Reuchlin-Hugenholtz, Doggerland, stressed the need for more effective MPAs. Alexandra Barron, CPAWS, highlighted the value of co-management and Indigenous leadership. Lance Morgan, Marine Conservation Institute, presented on the California MPAs network. He stated the need for strong leadership and management aligned with science for effective protection and conservation outcomes. Rili Djohani, Coral Triangle Center, presented the Autaro Island MPA case study, highlighting the key in enabling the flip from paper park to effective MPA: to build governance resilience, local ownership, resource-based partnerships, and alliances.

The ensuing discussion addressed some governance, regulatory, and biodiversity issues, including the difficulties of enforcing the paper parks boundaries, the review and update of legislation, and the capacity for the engagement of stakeholders.

Working together to conserve

Magena Warrior, LGL Limited, presented a case study on the challenges and opportunities for the Mi’kmaq Nation to play a



Kate MacMillan, CPAWS



Lynda Brown, SOI Foundation

greater role in marine protected area governance. Challenges detected included: systemic barriers; lack of understanding; fisheries conflicts; capacity; and, Mi'kmaq presence/absence. Bec Borchert, kwilmu'kw maw-klusuaq (Mi'kmaq Rights Initiative), also presented a case study on St. Annes Bank, working on fisheries and Ocean, which focused on relationships, and the need for Indigenous-led governance in MPAs. Achare Elvis Ayamba, Environment & Food Foundation, spoke about the value of Indigenous People in MPA management, and his work in creating awareness about a significant gap in the recognition and support of Indigenous governance and advocacy systems in international policy discussions regarding conservation work. Sarah Mynott, University of Victoria, presented a project in Brazil, where she used local students to deliver questionnaires to gather data about climate change to identify community needs and enable knowledge exchange.

Seascapes: Community and Indigenous Leadership as Core to Large-Scale Ocean Management

Shannon Murphy, Conservation International, moderated the session. Kris Thebu, Raja Amat Traditional Council of Leaders, spoke about work to champion local teams and traditional owners at the Birds Head Seascape of West Papua. He suggested that projects should always start with peoples' concerns, work to identify local leaders, and enable an adaptive management approach, underlining that not all problems can be solved at once. Christian Lavoie, Conservation International, presented, on behalf of Ana Gloria Guzmán Mora, on fisheries recovery and mangrove management programmes in the Eastern Tropical Pacific Seascape, highlighting interconnectivity between Ocean, culture, and human well-being. Semisi Meo, Conservation International, spoke of the Lau Seascape Initiative, reflecting on collaboration amongst chiefs, and the initiative's attempts to improve cultural integrity, food security and sustainable livelihoods by leveraging traditional values through a "ridge to reef" and "hook to cook" approach.

Working towards 30x30

Paul Macnab, Fisheries and Oceans Canada, moderated the session. Benne Wölfing, German Federal Agency for

Nature Conservation, discussed the efficacy of a 30 percent area target using MPAs on the German North Sea as a case study, highlighting that each MPA faces different stressors, and thus its management requires specific solutions. Jessica Couture, Conservation International, called for the use of an adaptive management approach in the MPA management plans development and implementation.

Adele Pedder, Australian Marine Conservation Society, called for: political leadership, First Nations leadership, bi-partisan support; acting on science; and collaboration across jurisdictions to achieve the 30 by 30 in Australia.

In the Corridors

On a rainy morning that delayed several attendees, the fourth day began with a call for hope, acknowledging that finding a purpose in an age of multiple crises is possible. Even though IMPAC5 is gathering hundreds of ocean lovers from a wide variety of backgrounds, Asha de Vos reminded the audience of the many colleagues missing from the room due to where they come from, stating that this congress is losing out on their expertise and experiences: "the world is your oyster... if you have a strong passport and funds." Walking through the venue and being surrounded by First Nations representatives' art, handicraft, and local products, the high stakes can be felt in the search for solutions to ineffective MPA management, often presented in rooms without the proper acknowledgment and leadership of communities at the frontlines of these crises. Beyond the Global North/South dichotomy, Dalee Sambo Dorrough reminded us of issues closer to the host territories, stressing the imperative of finding ways for co-producing knowledge through creative and culturally appropriate methodologies, and ethical and equitable processes, while recognizing Indigenous rights to self-determination, so to overcome – in the words of Asha – the flawed system of "parachuting" and colonial science. Twitter threads, in response to the keynote speeches, clearly show that in addition to science and policy, mental health, coloniality, and racial equality must also be addressed to achieve effective marine conservation.

